

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday, June 9

Senior Menu: Oven-Fried chicken, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, buttermilk biscuits, banana pudding with bananas.

10 a.m.: Reading Time at Wage Memorial Library

5 p.m.: Legion hosts Mobridge, 1 game

7 p.m.: Jr. Legion hosts Mobridge, 1 game

**PP to June 22:** Jr. Teeners at Britton, DH

6 p.m.: U12 SB hosts Webster, DH, Nelson Field

6 p.m.: U8 SB hosts Webster, 1 game, Nelson Field

7 p.m.: U10 SB hosts Webster, 1 game, Nelson Field

## Friday, June 10

Senior Menu: Turkey sub sandwich, potato salad, broccoli, fruit, cookie.

6 p.m.: U10 hosts Renegades, DH, (R/B), Nelson Field

6 p.m.: T-Ball Scrimmage

## Saturday, June 11

SEAS Confession: 3:45-4:15 p.m., SEAS Mass: 4:30 p.m.

U10 at Aberdeen Tourney (R/W)

U8 Tourney in Groton

3 Team Pool Play

POOL A (Falk Field)

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



“WHEN WE LOSE ONE  
BLESSING, ANOTHER IS  
OFTEN MOST UNEXPECTEDLY  
GIVEN IN ITS PLACE.”

-C.S. Lewis

9:00 Groton White vs Britton

10:15 Hannigan vs Britton

11:30 Groton White vs Hannigan

Pool B (Nelson Field)

9:00 Groton Red vs Borge

10:15 Borge vs Milbank

11:30 Groton Red vs Milbank

12:45 Pool A #3 vs Pool B #3 Falk Field

1:30 Pool A #2 vs Pool B #2 Nelson Field

2:45 Pool A #1 vs Pool B #1 Falk Field

June 12

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45

a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

2 p.m.: Legion hosts Redfield, DH

U10 at Aberdeen Tourney (W/B)

June 13

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, coleslaw, peaches, whole wheat

**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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## Updated:

### **Garcia resigns as Groton Police Officer**

The Groton City Council met in regular session Tuesday night where a resignation, some hirings and a pay increase were given.

The council accepted the resignation of Tony Garcia as city police officer. An offer was extended to Casey Hight but on Wednesday morning, he informed Police Chief Stacy Mayou that he would not accept the position. That means the city will be advertising for a new police officer.

Aaron Severson, seasonal employee, was given a raise to \$16 an hour. Ryan Groeblichhoff was hired as grounds keeping and Mia Crank as a ticket tacker.

In other action:

\* Approved of a Farmers Market on Main Street for one time to see how it will go.

\* Approved the installation of electricity at the airport at a cost of \$12,000. The airport is currently closed through the end of June due to flooding on the south end of the airport.

\* Approved to provide mosquito control to the City of Bristol at a rate of time and half for the employee plus mileage and cost of chemicals.

\* Appointed Andrea Eisenbeisz for a one-year term on the Library Board.

\* Approved to have painted art and activities on the sidewalk around city hall.

\* Approved Harrison's First Addition Plat.

\* It was reported that the Pantry received 700 pounds of food from the rural mail carriers food drive.

### **Pool Update**

The Groton City Council has been in contact with the contractor for refinishing the swimming pool, Go Get Fred. The concern from Go Get Fred was that if it rained during the installation process, the plaster could be ruined and would have to be removed.

When there is a chance of rain during a three-day stretch, they would not do the work. Councilmembers Kevin Nehls and Brian Bahr were in contact with Go Get Fred and along with Mayor Scott Hanlon. It was agreed that Go Get Fred needs to get to town and begin the work on Thursday. There are a few days with a chance of rain. The National Weather Service has said that the rain cycle is unprecedented for this time of year.

It will be a calculated risk by the city to proceed with the work. A tarp will be purchased and if it does rain during the work period, councilmen will consult with Go Get Fred on the best way to proceed. Normally, if it rains during an installation, the plaster needs to be removed and started from scratch. The city has agreed not to hold Go Get Fred liable for costs incurred due to rain.

### **Proposed Opening**

**Date of the Pool:**

**June 15th**

**Weather Permitting**

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## 2022 South Dakota High School Track and Field Academic All-State Athletes

Aberdeen Central – Ashlyn Beyer, Jada Hammer, Jordan Phillips, Katelin Stoebner, Sadie Struble, Karly Wellman  
Aberdeen Roncalli – Morgan Fiedler, Rose GutenkAndes auf, Sidney Hansen, Carson Helms, Sophia Madsen, Sarah Mitzel, Ella Ulmer, Olivia Ulmer  
Andes Central/Dakota Christian – Sonya Hansum  
Arlington – Hadley Carlson, Tanley Goebel, Grace Parry  
Avon – Samantha Brodeen, Katie Gretschnann, Makayla Kopp, Lincoln Thury  
Baltic – Jetta Hefty, Julia Pittmann  
Belle Fourche – Devon Burns, Aiden Griffin, Ibsabelle Jackson, Dru Keegan, McKenzie Lyons, Elijah Pomrenke  
Britton/Hecla – Aidan Fredrickson  
Brookings – Kat Charging, Allie Clark, Nick Diersen, Abbie Dubro, Jenna Eischens, Talon Everding, Sydney Grendler, Torry Harding, Jensi Jensen, Carter Johnson, Ella Kjelden, Brock Longville, Brookl Carter Johnson, Ella Kjelden, Brock Longville, Brooklyn McGuire, Emma Moerke, Magnus Nelson, Tessa Nelson, Ryan Nielsen, Madison Overby, Ainsley Shelsta, Rowen Vostad, Riley WeisbeckK  
Burke – Elenna Koenig, Taron Serr, Ben Witt  
Castlewood – Logan Eng, Kennedy Gallisath, Jaron Tharaldsen, Kegan Tvedt  
Chamberlain – Autumn Kurtz, Samantha Peppel  
Chester – Connor Bates, Ryan Benson, Stratton Eppard  
Clark/Willow Lake – Wyatt Anderson, Tate Burke, Kolby Merkel, Tyler O'Neill  
Colman/Egan – Austin Gullickson, Mackenzie Hemmer, Hailey Larson, Kelby Voelker  
Corsica/Stickney – Morgan Clites, Rachel Gerlach, Jacob Woerner  
Custer – Kadense Dooley, Justin Doyle, Preston Drew, Miles Ellman, Dossen Elmore, Kellyn Kortemeyer, Matt Merrill, Taylor Neugebauer, Eva Studt, Josey Wahlstrom  
DeSmet – Kennadi Buchholz, Kalen Garry, Rett Osthus, Blake Van Regenmorter  
Deuel – Josie Billups, Alyson Hagberg, Elise Holzler, Tagne Tvedt  
Elkton – Jack Hemmen  
Ethan/Parkston – Evynn Gerlach, Jaxon Koch, Noah Mahoney, Troy Norden, Cole Prunty, Lindsey Roth, Allison Ziebart  
Flandreau – Alex Anderson, Austin Kulm, Maria Parsley, Isabella Pavlis, Liam Streitz  
Florence/Henry – Chase Kelly, Kaitlynn Koll, Ethan Paulson, Catie Reiter, Colton Schamber, Andrew Schroeder, Lauren Wishard  
Garretson – Lily Ranschau, Samantha Shellum, Erin Steen, Oliviyah Thornton  
Gregory – Gracie Kenzy, Carson Klundt  
**Groton** – Maddie Bjerke, Jackson Cogley, Trista Keith, Kaden Kurtz  
Hamlin – Dawson Arbach, Zole Fraser, Joel Opdahl, Xander Sheehan  
Harding County – Emily Comes, Dade Martian, Logen Rolph  
Highmore/Harold – Grady Aasby Letha Jessen, Grace Knox, Alexis Roth, Emilee Schied, Wendy Sherwood  
Hitchcock/Tulare – Kyle Hamilton, Madison Hofer, Danielle Nowell, Bethany Wiebe  
Hot Springs – Hannah Haertel, Carl Massa, Kyra Uttecht  
Ipswich – Emily Deraad, Zach Geditz, Carson Gohl, Ty Kadlec, Taylor Thorson  
Kadoka – Lanie Blair, Dawson Reckling, Rebecca Shuck  
Langford – Ben Gustafson  
Lemmon – Cord Beer, Tanner Miller, Tell Mollman, Talon Trogstad  
Lennox – Tiffany Haas, Madison Johnson, Carter Van Houten, Alicia Ruud, Jacob Stubbe  
Lyman – Ellie Erikson, Tj Moran

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Madison – Cam Buchholtz, Katherine Comes, Aspen Dahl, Mickale Dohrer, Braeden Keller, Kylie Krusemark, Bella Maxwell, Abigail Morse, Elijah Olson, Michael Peters, Nate Ricke, Trey Smith, Peyton Wolf  
Milbank – Nick Batchelor, Maiah Brown, Kaden Krause, Savannah  
Miller – Alana Howard, Sara Jessen, Noah Johnson, Andrew Knox, Taya Pawlowski  
Mitchell – Kendell Fick, Taylor Haring, Sarah Sebert  
Mitchell Christian – Audrey Hofer, Keely O’Neill  
Parker – Lixi Even, Macy Kippes  
Philip – Reese Henridy  
Pierre – Jenna Bush, Addison Cumbow, Katelyn Harris, Canyon Jones, Emily Lingle, Marissa Mathews, Hayden Shaffer, Emerie Stephens, Olivia Swenson  
Platte/Geddes – Addyson Boltjes, Collin Engebretson, Kiana Shevling-Major, Chase Varilek  
Potter County – Kristie Lake, Makaivry Schatz  
Rapid City Central – Trenton Farren, Jhancellor Potter, Madison Preston, Jesse Williams  
Rapid City Stephens – Megan Baloun, Keaton Fierro, Jada McNabb, Alexander Otten, Alexandria Salazar, Carter Schmitz, Giana Smith, Hailey Uhre, Baylee VanZee, Matthew Werner  
Scotland – Tatum Andretta, Delanie VanDriel, Jocelyn Walloch  
Sioux Falls Christian – Daniel Colby, Jocelin Jasper, Nathan Koole, Emma Korn, Grace Runia, Hailey Scholten, Derrek Vander Leest, Rachel Van Nieuwenhuyzen, Patrick Vogel, Jaden Witte  
Sioux Falls Lincoln – Lila Batcheller, Hannah Dumansky, Kadin Groen, Kasi Infield, Chase Johnson, Kyra Knudtson, Jaykob Knutson, Bryce Kwiecinski, Jordan Levesque, Laine Mannes, Lauren Merkley  
Sioux Falls O’Gorman – Hosea Bennett, Alea Hardie, Preston Konechne, Jorja Muller, Christopher Nyangamoi, Sam Parady, William Peterson, Gabriel Ripperda, Emanuel Struck, Claire Thornton, Megan VanDenHemel, Victoria Vasquez, Matthew Viehweg  
Sioux Falls Washington – Aaron Alberts, Conner Beckstrand, Alexander Bittner, Gabe Frerichs, Garret Hoffman, Gavin Lewis, Emma Maloney, Morgan Sayler, Gabrielle Spain, Ashton Zych  
Spearfish – Samantha Allred, Drayson Craig, Max Ensor, Halle Fjelland, Cadence Jones, Peyton Millis, William Williams  
Sturgis – Hannah Aston, Konner Berndt, Torre Buus, Kenna Goebel, Ray Henderson, Slade Keierleber, Dezi Rhodes, Madison Schaefer, Kaylee Whatley  
Todd County – Thaddeus Allen, Thailee Baker  
Tri Valley – Barrett Althoff, Michael Beyer, Brandon Havlovic, Paige Jewett, Isaac McFarland, Jose Mendoza, Jaden Siemomsma  
Vermillion – Mya Dejong, Hari Kadarkaraisamy, McKenzie Kerkman, Kaleb Preister  
Viborg/Hurley – Brooklyn Andersen, Delana Mach  
Wagner – Alcista Dion, Jessica Kocer, Myles Kokes, Camden Roth  
Wall – Ava Dinger, Reid Hansen, Keaunna Poor Bear  
Warner – Dillon Browning, Abigail Dunlavy, Peyton Jung  
Waverly/South Shore – Alex Pekelder  
Webster – Jaiden Bauer, Jadon Keller, Ben Kwasniewski, Paige Snell  
Wessington Springs – Carter Grohs, Mason Schelske, Kaden Wolter  
West Central – Tommy Berg, Brayden Eisenbeisz, Blake Stark  
White River – Andrew Hoffman, Dylan Marshall  
Winner – Adam Bohnet, Ellie Brozik, Jenna Hammerbeck, Michael Olson, Kelsey Sachtjen, Sidda Schuyler  
Wolsey/Wessington – Hailey Clark, Marty Gohn, Payson Gohn, Alyssa Hiles, Faith Nelson, Carson Zomer

To receive Academic All-State recognition an athlete must be a senior, have participated in track and field for at least three years, have an overall GPA of 3.5 or better, and be nominated by their head coach.

## Formula Shortage Update

PIERRE, S.D. – Late last month, the FDA announced that the U.K.'s Kendamil will send three types of routine formula to the U.S. including Classic First Infant Milk Stage 1, Organic First Infant Milk Stage 1, and Goat First Milk Stage 1. These products are expected to hit store shelves in the U.S. beginning this month. Consumers can receive updates and locate product on the Kendamil website.

In addition, the FDA announced that Abbott will release about 300,000 cans of EleCare specialty formula on a case-by-case basis and will prioritize its release to consumers beginning on or around June 20. Parents and caregivers in urgent need of EleCare products should contact their healthcare provider or Abbott at 1-800-881-0876 for additional information. Abbott will release the product immediately and free of charge to children in need.

The Department of Health reminds parents and caregivers to consider the following:

Call the HelpLine Center at 211 to locate food distribution sites in your area that may have formula.

Unless your baby is on a specialized formula for medical needs, consider using a different formula brand, including store brand.

To increase breast milk supply contact your local Community Health Offices - S.D. Dept. of Health and work with a breastfeeding expert.

Click here to learn about choosing an infant formula that's safe for your baby.

Do not feed your baby cow's milk, goat's milk, or other non-dairy milk until 1 year old, unless approved by your child's pediatrician. These do not provide adequate nutrition for infants.

Do not make homemade infant formula or watered-down formula. There are serious health and safety concerns.

Do not buy formula online that comes from outside the U.S., which could be counterfeit. National efforts are underway to secure safe, imported formula for U.S. retailers.

Pay close attention to online retailers if purchasing formula. Make sure they are a legitimate, safe source and a verified seller of formula, especially with a possible increase of online scammers.

Talk to your pediatrician about introducing complementary foods at 6 months or when showing signs of readiness.

Purchase only the formula you need and do not stockpile. This will help make sure others have access to formula for their infants and allow manufacturers and retailers time to restock shelves.

South Dakota now has waivers in place to allow for imported formulas from USDA. All of the formulas will be available for WIC participants when they become available.

For more information, visit [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov) for updates on additional formula products headed to the U.S.



## 40% Off all Flowers

**Weber Landscaping Greenhouse  
final day of the season!**

**Closing today at 6 p.m.**

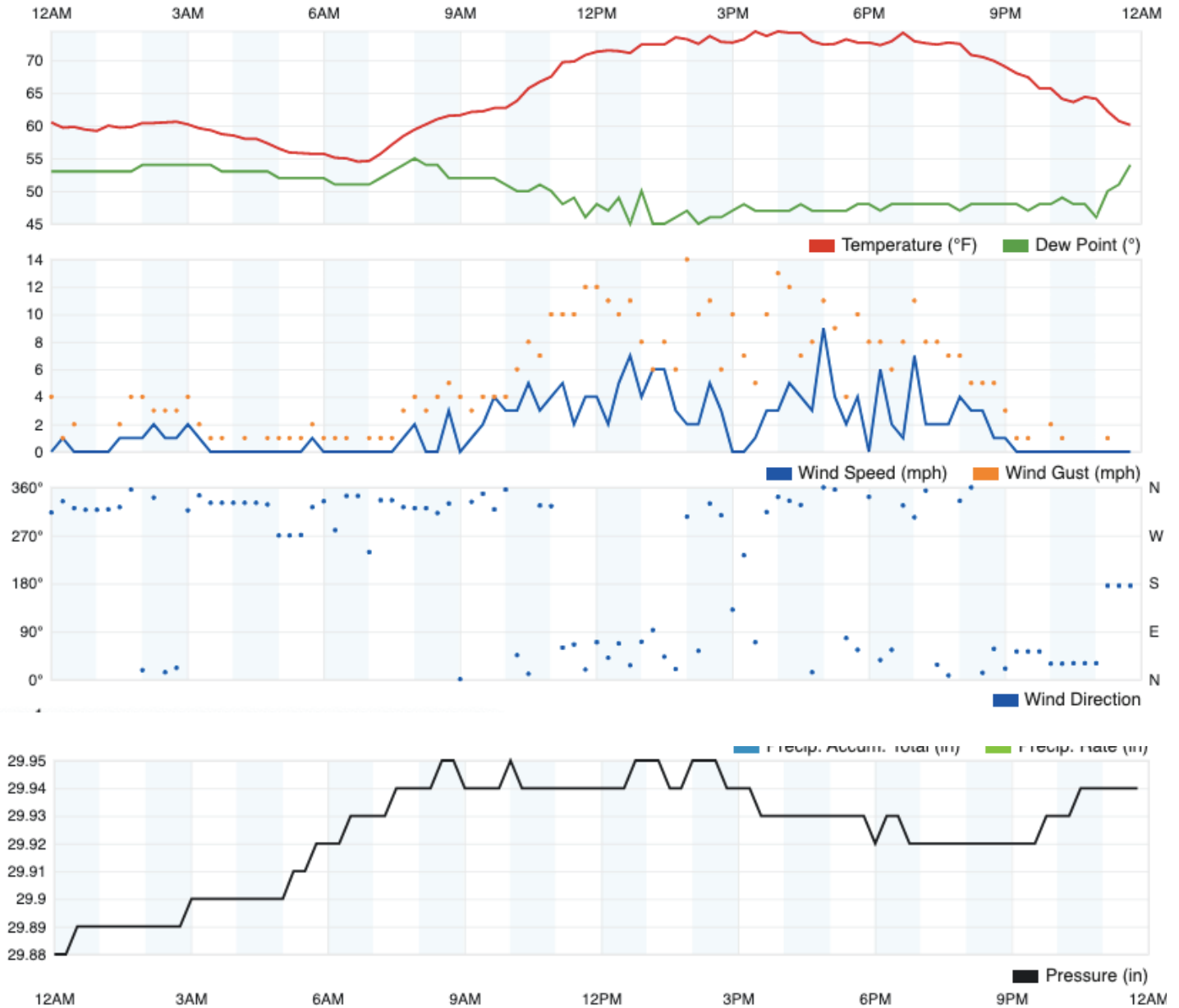
**(605) 380-6587**

**204 N. State St, Groton, SD**

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
				
Partly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Slight Chance T-storms then Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms
High: 75 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 61 °F	High: 86 °F

## Marginal Risk

of severe thunderstorms over South Central SD



Hazards

A **couple of strong to severe storms** could have the potential to produce lightning, large hail over the size of quarters, and wind gusts near 60 mph.

Timing

Mid afternoon into the early evening hours over mainly south central SD.

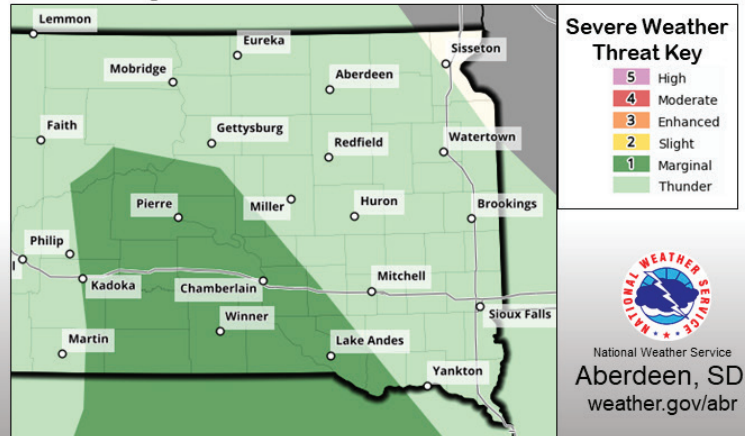
Some Locations at Risk

Pierre, Murdo, and Chamberlain

Action

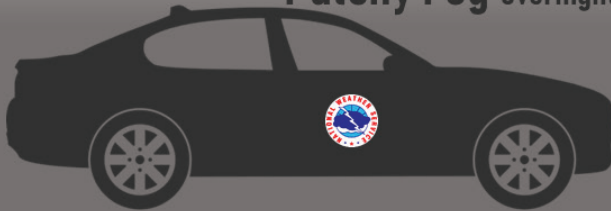
Pay close attention to the weather, and be prepared to seek shelter if necessary.

## Today's Severe Weather Outlook



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD  
weather.gov/abr

## Patchy Fog overnight into early Friday morning over mainly central SD



- Slow Down
- Increase Following Distance between Vehicles
- Keep Headlights On
- Reduce Distractions

Created: 6/9/2022 5:20 AM

Thunderstorms will be possible this afternoon into the early evening hours, with the highest chance of a couple of strong to severe storms being over portions of south central South Dakota. If you are around Pierre and south, make sure to stay weather aware. Patchy fog will be a concern over portions of mainly central South Dakota overnight into early Friday morning.



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## Today in Weather History

June 9, 1957: Southwest of Faulkton, one of four funnel clouds finally touched down and cut an unusual path to the northeast. One home was reduced to "matchsticks and tidbits." The tornado strength was an F3.

June 9, 1968: A brief F2 tornado moved northeast from 6 miles northeast of Britton. Barns were destroyed, and trees were uprooted on three farms. Two cars were picked up and thrown into a ditch. One person in a car was hospitalized. Damage was estimated at \$150,000 to property and another \$80,000 to crops.

June 9, 1972: A steady flow of warm moist air near the surface fed storms and anchored them against the Black Hills for six to eight hours. A flash flood killed 238 people in the Rapid City area after as much as fifteen inches of rain fell over the eastern Black Hills.

1966: Hurricane Alma made landfall over the eastern Florida panhandle becoming the earliest hurricane to make landfall on the United States mainland.

1953 - A tornado hit the town of Worcester MA killing ninety persons. The northeastern states usually remain free of destructive tornadoes, however in this case a low pressure system, responsible for producing severe thunderstorms in Michigan and Ohio the previous day, brought severe weather to New Hampshire and central Massachusetts. The tornado, up to a mile in width at times, tracked 46 miles through Worcester County. It mangled steel towers built to withstand winds of 375 mph. Debris from the tornado fell in the Boston area, and adjacent Atlantic Ocea. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1972 - A cloudburst along the eastern slopes of the Black Hills of South Dakota produced as much as 14 inches of rain resulting in the Rapid City flash flood disaster. The rains, which fell in about four hours time, caused the Canyon Lake Dam to collapse. A wall of water swept through the city drowning 237 persons, and causing more than 100 million dollars property damage. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Lightning struck Tire Mountain near Denver CO, destroying two million tires out of a huge pile of six million tires. Thunderstorms spawned three tornadoes around Denver, and a man was killed at Conifer CO when strong thunderstorm winds lifted up a porch and dropped it on him. A thunderstorm near Compton MD produced two inch hail, and high winds which destroyed twenty barns and ten houses injuring five persons. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from North Carolina to the Central Gulf Coast Region. Hail in North Carolina caused more than five million dollars damage to property, and more than sixty million dollars damage to crops. Hail three and a half inches in diameter was reported at New Bern NC. Thunderstorms in the Central High Plains produced eighteen inches of hail at Fountain CO. The temperature at Del Rio TX soared to an all-time record high of 112 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Severe weather abated for a date, however, showers and thunderstorms continued to drench the eastern U.S. with torrential rains. Milton, FL, was deluged with 15.47 inches in 24 hours. Record heat and prolonged drought in south central Texas left salt deposits on power lines and insulators near the coast, and when nighttime dew caused arcing, the city of Brownsville was plunged into darkness. (The National Weather Summary)

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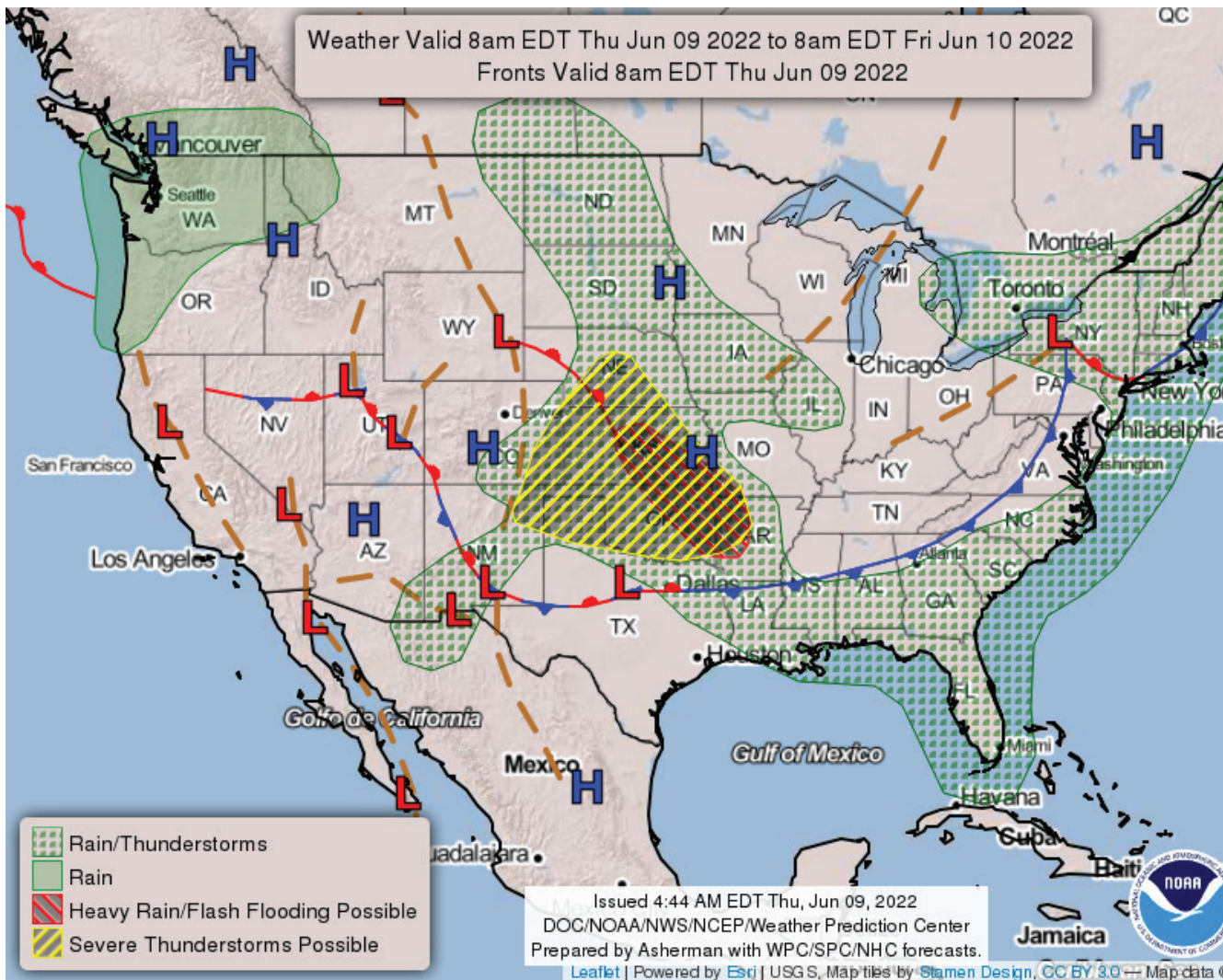
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 75 °F at 3:55 PM**  
**Low Temp: 54 °F at 6:39 AM**  
**Wind: 14 mph at 1:53 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 39 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 2016  
Record Low: 33 in 1915  
Average High: 79°F  
Average Low: 54°F  
Average Precip in June.: 1.02  
Precip to date in June.: 0.02  
Average Precip to date: 8.27  
Precip Year to Date: 11.18  
Sunset Tonight: 9:21:19 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:53 AM





## The Ways Of The Wind

An army brigade was on a field training exercise in Texas near the Davis Mountains. Without warning, the skies turned dark, and the winds began to blow. Then, a swirling tornado began to travel across the training area. As it passed through the command area, a mangled mass of canvas with a soldier wrapped in the middle of it, dropped right in front of the colonel leading the exercise.

"Soldier," barked the officer, "what nerve you have. Coming into my area without permission or cause. Have you no respect for your leader?"

"Sir," said the soldier, trying to free himself from the ropes and canvas, "I had nothing to do with this. I was simply trying to put my tent up when the wind came through and picked me and my tent up, and away we went. And here I am, Sir."

"But, I didn't see the wind, soldier," said the officer.

"Neither did I, Sir, but I sure felt it," came the reply.

In the Bible, "wind" is an emblem of the Holy Spirit. And in Psalm 147:18 we read, "He sends the winds, and the ice thaws."

On one occasion, Jesus said, "The wind blows where it wants to. You can hear the sound of the wind, but you have no idea where it came from nor where it is going. So you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

Nor can we explain the work of the Spirit. He is not predictable, nor do we understand Him. He is a gift of God who works in our lives to save us and empower us to serve.

Prayer: We thank You, Father, for Your Spirit who gives us eternal life and strengthens us in our daily walk. Though You are unseen, we sense Your power. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: He sends the winds, and the ice thaws. Psalm 147:18b

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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

- Black & White ..... \$48.99/year
- Colored ..... \$79.88/year
- Colored ..... \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly\* ..... \$31.95/year

\* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to [paperpaul@grotonsd.net](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)

## Groton Daily Independent

[www.397news.com](http://www.397news.com)

### Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month ..... \$15.98
- 3 Months ..... \$26.63
- 6 Months ..... \$31.95
- 9 Months ..... \$42.60
- 12 Months ..... \$53.25

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Password \_\_\_\_\_

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

[paypal.me/paperpaul](https://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 Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

02-08-17-23-32

(two, eight, seventeen, twenty-three, thirty-two)

Estimated jackpot: \$65,000

Lotto America

02-15-29-39-42, Star Ball: 1, ASB: 2

(two, fifteen, twenty-nine, thirty-nine, forty-two; Star Ball: one; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$14,920,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 226,000,000

Powerball

22-39-43-62-64, Powerball: 7, Power Play: 4

(twenty-two, thirty-nine, forty-three, sixty-two, sixty-four; Powerball: seven; Power Play: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$229,000,000

### Brookings places retired general on leave amid FBI probe

By ALAN SUDERMAN and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

The prestigious Brookings Institution placed its president, retired four-star Marine Gen. John Allen, on administrative leave Wednesday amid a federal investigation into his role in an illegal lobbying campaign on behalf of the wealthy Persian Gulf nation of Qatar.

Brookings' announcement came a day after The Associated Press reported on new court filings that show the FBI recently seized Allen's electronic data as part of the probe and detailed his behind-the-scenes efforts to help Qatar influence U.S. policy in 2017 when a diplomatic crisis erupted between the gas-rich monarchy and its neighbors.

Allen, who led U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan before being tapped to lead Brookings in late 2017, has not been charged with any crimes. His spokesman, Beau Phillips, said Wednesday that Allen had done nothing improper or unlawful.

"Through decades of public service in combat and diplomacy, General Allen has earned an unmatched, sterling reputation for honor and integrity," Phillips said in a statement. "We look forward to correcting the falsehoods about General Allen that have been improperly publicized in this matter."

Brookings told staffers in an email Wednesday that the institute itself is not under investigation and that the think tank's executive vice president, Ted Gayer, will serve as acting president.

"We have every confidence in the Brookings team's ability to remain focused on delivering quality, independence, and impact," the email said.

Brookings pays Allen more than \$1 million a year, according to its most recently available tax records. The email to staff did not say whether Allen would continue to be paid while on leave.

The federal investigation involving Allen has already ensnared Richard G. Olson, a former ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan who pleaded guilty to federal charges last week, and Imaad Zuberi, a prolific political donor now serving a 12-year prison sentence on corruption charges. Several members of Congress have also been interviewed.

An FBI agent said in an affidavit in support of a search warrant there was "substantial evidence" that Allen had knowingly broken a foreign lobbying law, and had made false statements and withheld "incriminating" documents.

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Allen's behind-the-scenes work involved traveling to Qatar and meeting with the country's top officials to offer them advice on how to influence U.S. policy, as well as promoting Qatar's point of view to top White House officials and Congress, according to the FBI affidavit.

The Qatar Embassy did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Brookings is one of the most influential think tanks in the U.S. and has long had strong ties to Qatar. In 2007, the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to fund a Brookings-backed offshoot in Qatar called the Brookings Doha Center.

The Qatari government said in a 2012 news release that the center's role included "reflecting the bright image of Qatar in the international media, especially the American ones," according to a New York Times report that showed Qatar had given Brookings \$14.4 million in donations over a four-year span.

As a nonprofit, Brookings does not have to disclose its donations but it voluntarily discloses some data. Its annual reports show Qatar giving at least \$2 million a year from 2016 to 2021.

Brookings said in a statement that Allen decided in 2019 to stop taking any new donations from Qatar and to close the Brookings Doha Center.

"Brookings has strong policies in place to prohibit donors from directing research activities," said the email to staffers Wednesday.

## Republican South Dakota House candidate withdraws from race

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Republican candidate for the South Dakota House announced Wednesday he is withdrawing his candidacy amid a challenge from his Democratic rival over his eligibility for the race.

Logan Manhart, who was running as a Republican for a District 1 House seat, said in a statement released on Twitter that he had received legal advice and "at the end of the day I must abide by all rules and laws that have been set forth for this position."

Former Democratic state lawmaker Steve McCleerey, who is running for a House seat in November, had filed a civil complaint against Manhart alleging he had lived in Wisconsin as recently as 2021 and was ineligible to hold the office because state law requires legislative candidates to have lived in South Dakota for two years.

"He was clearly legally ineligible, as defined in the South Dakota Constitution, to seek this seat," South Dakota Democratic Party chair Randy Seiler said in a statement.

The District 1 race, which will decide two House seats, now pits a pair of Democrats, McCleerey and Rep. Jennifer Healy Keintz, against Republican Rep. Tamara St. John.

## Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined  
Yankton Press & Dakotan. June 7, 2022.

Editorial: Summer Travel: The Biggest Problem We Face

Two immutable facts are upon us: Summer is here and Americans will be hitting the road.

Even with inflation and gas prices soaring, U.S. motorists will do a lot of traveling in the months ahead. They may be taking shorter trips in some cases, but they'll be on the move all the same.

And therein, danger lurks.

That's the worry of the AAA, which has labeled summertime as the "Deadliest 100 Days" of driver safety in this country.

A story in Tuesday's Press & Dakotan examined the concerns — heightened by the fact that national traffic fatalities last year hit a 16-year high, increasing more than 10% over 2020, according to federal statistics.

That's why AAA officials are urging even more caution out on the roadways this summer ...

But many motorists never really think much about that as they go about their daily rituals of getting in a car or truck and either taking a long trip or driving down to a store to pick up some items. Even short trips in town can lead to issues. And rural areas have problems just like congested urban areas.

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All these dangers are heightened in the summer, when more drivers are on the road.

In addition, young drivers are out of school and hitting the road. Shawn Steward of AAA South Dakota noted that teen drivers are relatively inexperienced and bring different risk factors to the roadways.

But it isn't just youth and inexperience that are the problems, as the national fatality rate is up across the board in all age groups. There are issues with distracted driving, which has become one of the top risks on the roads. Drivers who are impaired by alcohol or drugs also present issues. Meanwhile, motorists (including passengers) who don't use seatbelts can contribute to the problem, too.

Defensive driving is a must. You can do everything right when you are behind the wheel, but you could still wind up in harm's way because of the actions of other drivers. In this age of ever-increasing distractions, this is particularly true. (Back in the 1970s, there was a safety campaign that featured the slogan, "Watch out for the other guy." That sage advice still applies now.)

"You really have to drive defensively because so many people just don't seem to be paying attention to the road when they're driving," Steward said. "That's a scary thing when you're driving a vehicle that weighs a ton or a couple of tons. Those are dangerous weapons if you're striking another vehicle and not aware of what's going on around you."

But the biggest problem you face is the fact that you know all this already. You know you need to keep your eyes on the road and stay alert and aware. Keeping it all in mind when you get behind the wheel and hit the road may be the most challenging hurdle each of us faces. And summer only heightens the need — and the demand — for caution.

## US House races in California could shape future of Congress

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AP Political Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — U.S. House battles took shape in heavily Democratic California that could tip the balance of power in Congress, while former Trump administration Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke was in a tight match to claim the Republican nomination for a new House seat in Montana.

In Mississippi, two Republican congressmen were forced into runoffs to keep their seats. Rep. Steven Palazzo had been dogged by ethics questions over his campaign spending, while Rep. Michael Guest faced a challenger who criticized his vote on a proposal to create an outside commission to investigate the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

Primary elections across seven states Tuesday set up November contests in dozens of races, as Democrats look to protect the party's fragile majority in the House.

In a diverse district anchored in California's Orange County, Republican U.S. Rep. Michelle Steel, a South Korean immigrant, will face Democrat Jay Chen. The district, which includes the nation's largest Vietnamese American community, is widely considered a toss-up.

In other districts in the nation's most populous state, two Republican House members were trying to surmount challenges tied to former President Donald Trump: One voted to support Trump's impeachment after the U.S. Capitol insurrection, while the other fought against it.

A look at results in key U.S. House races Tuesday:

### BATTLEGROUND CALIFORNIA: TRUMP HISTORY LOOMS IN KEY DISTRICTS

In 2020, Republican U.S. Rep. Mike Garcia won a narrow victory in a Democratic-leaning district north of Los Angeles. The former Navy fighter pilot was endorsed by Trump that year, then joined House Republicans who rejected electoral votes from Arizona and Pennsylvania and opposed Trump's impeachment after the Capitol insurrection. That record will be a focus for Democrat Christy Smith, who earned a chance for a rematch with Garcia, after losing two years ago.

In a Democratic-tilting district in the state's Central Valley farm belt, Republican Rep. David Valadao is highlighting an independent streak while contending with GOP fallout for his vote to impeach Trump over the Jan. 6 insurrection. Early returns showed him holding an edge over Republican Chris Mathys, who made Valadao's vote a centerpiece in his campaign to oust him. The winner will face Democrat Rudy Salas, a state legislator.



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California uses a top-two election format in which only the two leading vote-getters advance to the November general election, regardless of party.

In the Central Valley, Republican Connie Conway won a special election to complete the term of former Rep. Devin Nunes, who resigned to head Trump's media company.

## TWO MISSISSIPPI CONGRESSMEN FORCED INTO RUNOFFS

A pair of GOP congressmen in Mississippi are headed to June 28 runoffs.

U.S. Rep. Steven Palazzo, first elected in 2010, will face Jackson County Sheriff Mike Ezell after failing to win the GOP nomination outright on Tuesday, earning less than 50% of the vote.

A 2021 report by the Office of Congressional Ethics found "substantial reason to believe" Palazzo, a military veteran who serves on the Appropriations and Homeland Security committees, abused his office by misspending campaign funds, doing favors for his brother and enlisting staff for political and personal errands. His then-spokesperson, Colleen Kennedy, said the probe was based on politically motivated "false allegations."

In another Mississippi district, U.S. Rep. Michael Guest will face former Navy pilot Michael Cassidy in a district that cuts through parts of central Mississippi.

Cassidy criticized Guest for being in the minority of Republicans who voted to create an outside commission to investigate the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol — a group that would have been separate from the congressional committee now conducting the investigation. Cassidy also says on his website that President Joe Biden should be impeached.

## FORMER TRUMP CABINET MEMBER SEEKS RETURN TRIP TO WASHINGTON

Montana gained a second congressional district this year thanks to its growing population, and Zinke, an Interior Department secretary under Trump, is one of five Republicans on the primary ballot for the open seat.

Zinke's rivals have been drawing attention to his troubled tenure at the agency, which was marked by multiple ethics investigations. One investigation determined Zinke lied to an agency ethics official about his continued involvement in a commercial real estate deal in his hometown. He's faced a smear campaign over his military service from the extreme right wing of his party and questions about his residency following revelations that his wife declared a house in California as her primary residence.

Zinke, a former Navy SEAL and former Montana congressman, was in a tight race Wednesday against former state Sen. Al "Doc" Olszewski, an orthopedic surgeon and hard-line conservative who has tried to paint Zinke as a "liberal insider." The results of the race were being delayed because of ballot printing errors that forced officials in one county to count votes by hand.

The winner will face Olympic rower and attorney Monica Tranel, a Democrat, in the general election.

## IOWA'S SOLE DEMOCRATIC HOUSE MEMBER FACES A TOUGH FIGHT

A Republican state senator has captured the slot to take on Democratic Rep. Cindy Axne this fall in a newly drawn district that appears more favorable for the GOP.

Axne is the only Democrat in Iowa's House delegation.

State Sen. Zach Nunn easily outdistanced rivals Nicole Hasso, a financial services worker, and Gary Leffler, who works in the construction industry, to claim the GOP spot. Nunn, an Air Force pilot who has served in the Legislature since 2014 and has worked to cut taxes, was the best known among the GOP contenders.

In previous elections, Axne was elevated by her strong support in the Des Moines area, even as she struggled in rural counties that typically lean Republican. The new district includes several counties in southern Iowa known to turn out strongly for Republicans, increasing the pressure on Axne to drive up her numbers in Democrat-friendly Des Moines and its suburbs.

## REMATCH COMING IN NEW JERSEY HOUSE BATTLEGROUND

In what could be New Jersey's most closely watched contest in the fall, Democratic U.S. Rep. Tom Malinowski and Republican Tom Kean Jr. won their primaries, setting up a rematch of their closely contested 2020 race.

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Malinowski, a State Department official in the Obama administration, is seeking a third term as his party faces headwinds heading into the general election. His district added more Republican-leaning towns during redistricting, making his reelection bid potentially more difficult.

Another complicating factor is an ethics investigation he's facing over stock transactions in medical and tech companies that had a stake in the pandemic response. A report from the Office of Congressional Ethics said the board found "substantial reason to believe" he failed to properly disclose or report his stock transactions.

Malinowski said his failure to initially disclose the transactions was "a mistake that I own 100%." He said he didn't direct or even ask questions about trades made by his brokerage firm.

Kean, a former state Senate minority leader and the son of the former two-term Republican governor, said in a tweet that he was humbled by his victory and looks forward to seizing the seat in November.

## SOUTH DAKOTA REPUBLICAN BEATS BACK CHALLENGE FROM POLITICAL RIGHT

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson of South Dakota won his state's GOP primary contest as he runs for a third term.

Johnson defeated state lawmaker Taffy Howard, who tried to run to his right. He is set for reelection in November because no other candidate has entered the race.

Howard repeated Trump's lies that there was widespread fraud in the 2020 election and attacked Johnson for certifying the electoral college vote. While Johnson touted his conservative voting record during the primary contest, the congressman has also worked with a bipartisan group of lawmakers called the Problem Solvers Caucus.

Johnson drew attacks from a pro-Trump political action committee called Drain the DC Swamp, which spent \$500,000 trying to knock him from the House.

## Ducks Unlimited, feds to restore South Dakota grasslands

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Ducks Unlimited and federal officials are teaming up to restore native vegetation in eastern South Dakota.

The Argus Leader reported Tuesday that Ducks Unlimited will work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service on a five-year project to improve soil health, restore grasslands and improve grazing.

The work calls for planting cover crops and grains and providing assistance for fencing and water development. Ducks Unlimited will offer financial and technical assistance to agriculture producers.

The program is part of a larger partnership between 20 conservation groups in South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana.

## What we know about Trump's actions as insurrection unfolded

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of the House committee investigating the events of Jan. 6 will hold their first prime-time hearing Thursday to share what they have uncovered about then-President Donald Trump's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, which culminated in the deadly storming of the U.S. Capitol. Part of their mission: determining Trump's actions that day.

Much is already known about where Trump was, what he said, and how he reacted. But large gaps remain. What we know:

### 'WE FIGHT LIKE HELL'

The day began, as they often did, with calls and angry tweets. As Vice President Mike Pence prepared to preside over a joint session of Congress to count the electoral votes that would formalize Democrat Joe Biden's win, Trump continued to apply public pressure. He demanded that Pence reject the results by invoking powers that Pence had made clear to the president he did not possess.

"States want to correct their votes, which they now know were based on irregularities and fraud, plus corrupt process never received legislative approval," Trump falsely claimed at 8:17 a.m. "All Mike Pence

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has to do is send them back to the States, AND WE WIN," he added. "Do it Mike, this is a time for extreme courage!"

Trump continued to repeat his unfounded claims of widespread voter fraud as thousands of his supporters gathered for a "Save America March" rally on the Ellipse outside the White House organized to pressure Republicans in Congress to reject the democratic vote — a move that would have thrown the country into an unprecedented constitutional crisis.

"The States want to redo their votes. They found out they voted on a FRAUD. Legislatures never approved. Let them do it. BE STRONG!" he urged.

By then, the rally was already underway.

Rep. Mo Brooks, R-Ala., proclaimed that, "Today is the day American patriots start taking down names and kicking ass."

"Let's have trial by combat," declared Rudy Giuliani, who was leading Trump's losing legal effort.

Before leaving the White House, Trump placed a call to Pence from the Oval Office and again berated his once-loyal soldier. "You don't have the courage to make a hard decision," a seething Trump said, according to an account described in a committee letter.

Trump then went to the rally, arriving around 11:42 a.m. as his campaign soundtrack blasted through the frigid air. Just before noon, he took the stage to his usual "God Bless the USA" and launched a fiery speech in which he complained of a "rigged" election and insisted he would "never concede."

"If Mike Pence does the right thing we win the election," he falsely declared from behind a wall of protective glass, telling his supporters, "We fight like hell, and if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore." He told them he planned to join them on their planned march to the Capitol, adding that "you'll never take back our country with weakness."

By that point, reams of his supporters — many carrying large "Trump" flags — were already streaming across the Mall to the Capitol, where the congressional proceedings were getting underway.

As Trump spoke, Pence released a public letter formally laying out his position in defiance of the president. "It is my considered judgment that my oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from claiming unilateral authority to determine which electoral votes should be counted and which should not," he wrote.

By 1:12 p.m., Trump had wrapped up his speech and was dancing on stage to "YMCA," pumping his fist and clapping his hands as protesters clashed with police just 1.5 miles away on the Capitol steps. As the presidential entourage piled into the waiting motorcade, questions flew about whether he would head to the Capitol, as he had told the crowd. Instead, after a delay, the president's limousine headed toward the White House. Trump later told The Washington Post in an interview that the Secret Service had barred him from making the trip.

'THIS IS WRONG AND NOT WHO WE ARE'

As Trump was returning to the White House, the situation at the Capitol was deteriorating. Rioters in the pro-Trump mob burst through police barricades, assaulted officers, smashed through windows and rammed through doors. At 1:49 p.m., D.C. police officially declared a riot. And by 2:15 p.m. Pence and members of Congress were rushed into hiding as the rioters breached the building.

"This is wrong and not who we are," tweeted the president's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., who had spoken at the rally, at 2:17 p.m. "Be peaceful and use your 1st Amendment rights, but don't start acting like the other side. We have a country to save and this doesn't help anyone."

His father, however, took a different tone.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify," Trump tweeted at 2:24 p.m. "USA demands the truth!"

The tweet came around the time that Trump accidentally called Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, while trying to reach Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala. Lee reportedly passed the phone to Tuberville, who told Politico that he informed Trump that Pence had just been evacuated from the Senate chamber.

Finally, around 2:40 p.m., as images of protesters marching through the building's gilded hallways

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flooded TV screens throughout the West Wing, Trump sent a tweet urging the rioters to stay peaceful.

"Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement. They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay peaceful!" At 2:43 p.m., Ashli Babbitt, a pro-Trump protester, was shot trying to force her way into the House chamber.

'CONDEMN THIS NOW'

It remains unclear exactly when it happened, but at some point after returning from the rally, Trump sequestered himself in the dining room off the Oval Office to watch the violence play out on TV.

"All I know about that day was that he was in the dining room, gleefully watching on his TV as he often did — 'Look at all of the people fighting for me,' hitting rewind, watching it again — that's what I know," his former press secretary Stephanie Grisham, who also served as chief of staff to first lady Melania Trump, told CNN.

Supporters frantically tried to reach the White House to urge Trump to make an appearance and ask the rioters to leave. They included his eldest son, several Fox News hosts, multiple members of Congress and former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who had worked with Trump on debate preparations.

Unable to reach him directly, allies scrambled to get his attention any way they could. Some resorted to tweeting. Others appeared on TV, trying to get through.

"Call it off, Mr. President," Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Wis., said on CNN.

"Condemn this now, @realDonaldTrump- you are the only one they will listen to. For our country!" tweeted his former communications director, Alyssa Farah Griffin, at 2:54 p.m.

"The President's tweet is not enough. He can stop this now and needs to do exactly that. Tell these folks to go home," his former chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, wrote at 3:01 p.m.

Former counselor Kellyanne Conway, who had by then had left the White House, said she called an aide whom she knew would be next to Trump with an urgent message.

"Urge the president to tell the people at the Capitol to stop. Just stop. Get out of there," she wrote in her recent memoir. "Maybe there are loudspeakers. Someone could livestream him. They need to hear his voice." She also made her plea on TV and on Twitter where she wrote, "STOP. Just STOP. Peace. Law and Order. Safety for All" at 3:21 p.m.

Republican House leader Kevin McCarthy told a California radio station that he, too, had spoken to the president.

"I was the first person to call him," McCarthy said. "I told him to go on national TV, tell these people to stop it. He said he didn't know what was happening."

Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, R-Wash., said McCarthy relayed that conversation to her. By her account, when McCarthy told Trump it was his own supporters breaking into the building, Trump responded: "Well, Kevin, I guess these people are more upset about the election than you are."

Others texted Trump's chief of staff, Mark Meadows, begging Trump to say something and trying to convey the severity of the situation.

"We are under siege," wrote one reporter. "We are all helpless."

"He's got to condemn this shit ASAP," Trump Jr. texted Meadows.

"I'm pushing it hard. I agree," Meadows responded.

Trump Jr. texted again and again, urging that his father act.

"We need an Oval address. He has to lead now. It has gone too far and gotten out of hand."

Fox News hosts agreed.

"Mark, president needs to tell people in the Capitol to go home. This is hurting all of us. He is destroying his legacy," texted Ingraham.

"Can he make a statement? Ask people to leave the Capitol," texted Sean Hannity.

At 3:13 p.m. Trump finally issued a tweet asking his supporters to remain peaceful, but not asking them to leave.

"I am asking for everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful. No violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order – respect the Law and our great men and women in Blue. Thank you!" he wrote.

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'IT'S COMPLETELY INSANE'

Congressional testimony released so far paints a picture of a chaotic scene inside the White House, with staff just as desperate as those outside the building for Trump to act. Keith Kellogg, Pence's national security adviser, who had been in the Oval Office during Trump's morning phone call to the vice president, testified that staff wanted Trump to take immediate action to address the violence, but that Trump had refused.

The committee has identified an almost eight-hour gap in the official White House record of Trump's phone calls, from a little after 11 a.m. to about 7 p.m. — a time when Trump is known to have spoken with several GOP members of the House and Senate, including Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, Tuberville and McCarthy.

White House staff repeatedly asked his daughter, Ivanka Trump's assistance, the committee has said.

"Is someone getting to potus? He has to tell protestors to dissipate. Someone is going to get killed," Griffin texted Ben Williamson, an aide to White House chief of staff Mark Meadows.

"I've been trying for the last 30 minutes. Literally stormed in outer oval to get him to put out the first one. It's completely insane," Williamson wrote back.

The White House was already a ghost town amid staff departures. Nonessential staff had been told they could work from home due to the potential security threat.

Finally, at 4:17 p.m., 187 minutes after the insurrection began, Trump released a video, recorded in the Rose Garden, in which he praised the rioters as "very special," but asked them to disperse.

"I know your pain. I know your hurt. We had an election that was stolen from us," he said. "But you have to go home now. We have to have peace."

"So go home. We love you. You're very special," he went on. "I know how you feel. But go home and go home in peace."

Multiple takes had been filmed, but, the committee said, Trump had apparently in earlier versions failed to ask rioters to leave.

The Capitol was finally secured at 5:34 p.m. and Trump was soon back to tweeting.

"These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long. Go home with love & in peace," he wrote at 6:01 p.m. "Remember this day forever!"

Soon after, Twitter announced that it had locked the president's account and demanded he delete tweets praising the Capitol assailants. Facebook soon followed.

Congress resumed counting the electoral votes at 8 p.m. and at 3:40 a.m., lawmakers certified Biden as the rightful winner. Minutes later, Trump's social media director, Dan Scavino, posted a statement from Trump, who had been locked out of his own accounts, officially conceding following the vote.

"Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th," it read.

## Charging decision due in police shooting of Patrick Lyoya

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — A prosecutor said he will announce Thursday whether charges will be filed in the death of Patrick Lyoya, a Black man who was on the ground when he was shot in the back of the head by a Michigan police officer.

Kent County prosecutor Chris Becker gave no hints Wednesday, saying only that he would disclose his "charging decision" at an afternoon news conference in Grand Rapids.

Lyoya, 26, a refugee from Congo, was killed by Grand Rapids Officer Christopher Schurr after a traffic stop on April 4.

Schurr, who is white, told Lyoya that he stopped him because the license plate didn't match the vehicle, according to video.

Lyoya began to run after he was asked for a driver's license. Schurr quickly caught him, but the pair physically struggled across a front lawn in a residential neighborhood while Lyoya's passenger recorded

the scene on a phone.

Lyoya was on the ground when Schurr shot him. He had demanded that Lyoya take his hand off the officer's Taser, video showed.

Schurr, who has been on leave since the shooting, has not talked publicly about what happened. Lyoya's parents have demanded that he be charged with crimes and fired.

## Thailand makes marijuana legal, but smoking discouraged

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA and GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Thailand made it legal to cultivate and possess marijuana as of Thursday, like a dream come true for an aging generation of pot smokers who recall the kick delivered by the legendary Thai Stick variety.

The public health minister's plan to distribute 1 million marijuana seedlings, beginning Friday, has added to the impression that Thailand is turning into a weed wonderland.

The decision by the Food and Drug Administration to remove all of the plant from the category of narcotic drugs makes Thailand the first nation in Asia to decriminalize marijuana for medical and industrial use. But it is not following the examples of Uruguay and Canada, the only two countries so far that have legalized recreational marijuana on a national basis.

So far, it appears there will be no effort to police what people can grow and smoke at home, aside from registering to do so and declaring it is for medical purposes.

Some Thai advocates celebrated on Thursday by buying marijuana at a café that had previously been limited to selling products made from the parts of the plant that do not get people high. The dozen or so people who turned up early at the Highland Café were able to choose from a variety of buds with names such as Sugarcane, Bubblegum, Purple Afghani and UFO.

"I can say it out loud, that I am a cannabis smoker. I don't need to hide like in the past when it was branded as a illegal drug," said 24-year-old Rittipong Bachkul, the day's first customer. Marijuana is also known as cannabis or ganja in Thailand.

"As far as the government is concerned, it's their job to promote medical use only. But it is pretty clear that we have come very far and finally are legalizing its use. The government understands that it's more pros than cons," said Rattapon Sanrak, the café's co-owner and a longtime legalization activist.

The country is known for its Thai Stick variety, which is named after the way its potent flowers are dried and tied into sticks and is the origin of many strains now grown overseas.

Thailand's government has warned that those eager to light up for fun that smoking in public could still be considered a nuisance, subject to a potential 3-month jail sentence and 25,000 baht (\$780) fine. And marijuana extracts, such as oil, remain illegal if they contain more than 0.2% of tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the chemical that makes people high.

Tourists should proceed cautiously until the rules become clearer after a new cannabis law is passed, said Prof. Sarana Sommano of Chiang Mai University's Department of Plant and Soil Sciences.

"There are still risks. The problem is that cannabis is no longer considered a narcotic but there are no ministry regulations and rules governing the use of it," she said. "There is no mention of limits on use, drug-impaired driving laws. This could be a mistake by the government in trying to rush out its policy to please voters without really planning the details and explaining to the public what's going on,"

Thailand mainly wants to make a splash in the market for medical marijuana. It already has a well-developed medical tourism industry and its tropical climate is ideal for growing cannabis.

"We should know how to use cannabis," Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, a marijuana booster, said recently. "If we have the right awareness, cannabis is like gold, something valuable, and should be promoted."

Some immediate beneficiaries of the change are people who have been locked up for breaking the old law.

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"From our perspective, a major positive outcome of the legal changes is that at least 4,000 people imprisoned for offenses relating to cannabis will be released," Gloria Lai, Asia regional director of the International Drug Policy Consortium, said in an email interview.

"People facing cannabis-related charges will see them dropped, and money and cannabis seized from people charged with cannabis-related offenses will be returned to their owners," she said. Her organization is a network of civic groups worldwide advocating drug policies that incorporate human rights, health and development.

Predicted economic benefits are at the heart of Thailand's marijuana reforms, projected to boost everything from national income to small farmers' livelihoods. But there is concern whether the benefits will be distributed equitably.

One fear is that large corporations could unfairly benefit from proposed regulations involving complicated licensing processes and expensive fees for commercial use that would handicap small producers.

Taophipop Limjitrakorn, a lawmaker in the opposition Move Forward party, said that under some proposed regulations, the cannabis industry could end up being controlled by a few big companies, as is the case with alcoholic beverages. His party wants the laws now being drafted to tackle the problem.

Small operators are eager to move into the marijuana business.

On a recent hot Sunday afternoon in eastern Thailand's Sri Racha district, Ittisug Hanjichan, owner of the Goldenleaf Hemp cannabis farm, led his fifth training course for 40 entrepreneurs, farmers, and retirees. They paid about \$150 each to learn tips on nicking seed coats and tending the plants to get quality yields.

One of the attendees was 18-year-old Chanadech Sonboon, who said his parents used to scold him for trying to secretly grow marijuana plants.

He said his father has changed his mind and now sees marijuana as a medication rather than something to be abused. The family runs a small homestay and café and hopes to one day provide cannabis to its guests.

## **New vaccine may be option for troops with religious concerns**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A COVID-19 vaccine that could soon win federal approval may offer a boost for the U.S. military: an opportunity to get shots into some of the thousands of service members who have refused other coronavirus vaccines for religious reasons.

At least 175 active duty and reserve service members have already received the Novavax vaccine, some even traveling overseas at their own expense to get it. The vaccine meets Defense Department requirements because it has the World Health Organization's emergency use approval and is used in Europe and other regions. The Food and Drug Administration is considering giving it emergency use authorization in the U.S.

The Novavax vaccine may be an acceptable option for some of the 27,000 service members who have sought religious exemptions from the mandatory vaccine. Military officials say many troops who refuse the shots cite certain COVID-19 vaccines' remote connection to abortions.

Laboratory-grown cell lines descended from fetuses that were aborted decades ago were used in some early-stage testing of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and to grow viruses used to manufacture the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The vaccines do not contain fetal cells. Novavax, however, says that "no human fetal-derived cell lines or tissue" were used in the development, manufacture or production of its vaccine.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory last year, saying the shots were critical to maintaining military readiness and the health of the force. Military leaders have argued that troops for decades have been required to get as many as 17 vaccines, particularly for those who are deploying overseas.

One group involved in lawsuits targeting the military's vaccine requirement said it's possible some shot opponents may see Novavax as an amenable option.

"I definitely think it is for some, but certainly not for all," said Mike Berry, director of military affairs for

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First Liberty Institute. "There are some for whom abortion is really the ultimate issue, and once that issue is resolved for them spiritually, then they're willing."

Berry added, however, that for others, abortion is "just a tangential issue," and they have broader opposition to vaccines as a whole. "A rudimentary way of looking at it is that they've asked for God's will, and they believe that it would be wrong for them to get the vaccine," Berry said. "In other words, they believe that God has told them no."

Novavax also may appeal to people who are uncomfortable with the new genetic-based technology used in Pfizer and Moderna's so-called mRNA vaccines. They deliver genetic instructions for the body to make copies of the coronavirus' outer coating, the spike protein.

The Novavax vaccine is made with a more familiar technology, like those used for years to prevent hepatitis B and shingles. It trains the body to fight the coronavirus by delivering copies of the outer coating which are grown in insect cells, then are purified and packaged into nanoparticles that to the immune system resemble a virus, according to Novavax research chief Dr. Gregory Glenn.

While some religious groups oppose the shots, when COVID-19 vaccines first started rolling out the Vatican's doctrine office called the options "morally acceptable" and Pope Francis, who has received Pfizer shots, has strongly encouraged widespread vaccination.

Berry said he doesn't know how many would consider Novavax acceptable, but guessed it may be a small percentage. First Liberty Institute and the law firm Schaerr Jaffe LLP are representing a number of Navy sailors in one lawsuit, and nine airmen in another.

Military officials declined to publicly detail the nature of any service members' religious exemption requests, but spoke on condition of anonymity to provide some descriptions. They said that the most predominant issue mentioned in waiver requests is the remote link to fetal cell lines, while others argue that their body is a temple that must remain pure. Others, officials said, describe reasons that appear to have less connection to faith.

Berry said his firm carefully screens individuals for the lawsuits, to make sure their objections are based on sincerely held religious beliefs, rather than political or other opposition masquerading as faith-based views.

The military can't administer the Novavax shot now, and won't pay for anyone's travel overseas to get it. But tens of thousands of American forces are based in Europe, where Novavax is available.

Earlier this week, advisers to the FDA backed the Novavax vaccine. Next, the FDA must decide whether to authorize it. A final FDA decision isn't expected immediately, as the agency finishes combing through the data.

Across the military, more than 5,000 service members have been discharged for refusing the vaccine, according to the latest statistics provided by the services. Of those who requested religious exemptions, only slightly more than 100 have been approved.

In the lawsuit against the Navy, a federal judge in Texas agreed the case can go forward as a class-action lawsuit and issued a preliminary injunction barring the service from taking action against sailors who objected to the vaccine on religious grounds. Berry said the Justice Department has said it will appeal the ruling to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

In the Air Force lawsuit, Berry said, lawyers have asked that it also be a class action, and they are seeking a temporary restraining order preventing the Air Force from taking any adverse actions. The court has not yet ruled.

## Europe's 1st rate hike in 11 years looms amid high inflation

AMSTERDAM (AP) — The European Central Bank is expected Thursday to end a key economic stimulus program and map out its plan to raise interest rates for the first time in more than a decade as it seeks to join the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks in tackling high inflation. But it's a delicate balance to not further slow economic growth.

Markets will parse remarks from President Christine Lagarde for clues about how far the bank will go in



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making credit more expensive in the 19 countries using the euro currency. That is because the meeting likely also will lay out a sharp downgrade to the bank's forecasts for economic growth as Russia's war in Ukraine sends shock waves through the global economy.

Some bank officials have called for more drastic rate hikes of a half-percentage point instead of the more usual quarter-point, as the Federal Reserve did last month. Lagarde has stressed that bringing interest rates to more normal levels after the recession from the COVID-19 pandemic must be done gradually, with Europe more exposed to the fallout from the war in Ukraine.

Lagarde and other top officials have been unusually explicit about the bank's plans. They have indicated in blog posts and interviews that Thursday's meeting in Amsterdam will put an end to the bank's remaining bond purchases, which propped up the economy during the pandemic and aimed to raise years of abnormally low inflation, as well as set up the bank's first rate increases in 11 years at its July and September meetings.

Carsten Brzeski, global head of Macro at ING bank, called those remarks a "de facto pre-announcement."

A rate increase as soon as Thursday isn't impossible but would upend the bank's promise that it would first end bond purchases, which drive down the cost of longer-term government borrowing, and only then turn to raising interest rates.

The ECB trails other central banks worldwide that have used rate hikes to target surging consumer prices following the rebound from the pandemic and worsened as Russia's invasion of Ukraine drove up food and energy prices. The Fed raised rates in May for the first time since 2000, and the Bank of England has approved hikes four times since December.

Higher rates are the usual tool to combat inflation, which hit 8.1% in the eurozone in May, the highest since statistics started in 1997. By raising its benchmarks, the central bank can influence what financial institutions, companies, consumers and governments have to pay to borrow the money they need. So higher rates can help cool off an overheating economy.

But higher rates can also weigh on growth. That makes the ECB's job a delicate balance between snuffing out inflation and blunting economic activity. The bank's goal is to keep inflation at 2%, the rate considered best for the economy.

The World Bank on Tuesday cut its outlook for global economic growth this year to 2.9% from 4.1% predicted in January. For the eurozone, it downgraded expected growth to 2.5% from 4.2%.

Low interest rates were aimed at raising protracted low rates of inflation that bank officials attributed to multiple factors such as aging populations, the pressure on wages from company's ability to move jobs to cheaper countries and even online shopping that enables more price comparison. Those concerns seem like ancient history as high oil and natural gas prices fed by Russia's invasion have sent inflation rates drastically higher.

An ECB move to attack on inflation has raised concerns about the impact of higher interest rates on heavily indebted governments, most notably Italy. Market watchers have speculated that the bank may announce a new bond purchase program that it could hold in reserve to prevent borrowing costs from spiking in any one EU country.

A rate hike in July would be the first in 11 years and signal the end of an extended period of extremely low rates that started during the global financial crisis in 2009.

The bank's expected increases would start from record lows of zero for its lending rate to banks and minus 0.5% on overnight deposits from banks.

The European Central Bank is headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany, but holds occasional meetings in other EU capitals to underline its status as a pan-European institution.

## Jan. 6 Capitol attack committee goes prime time with probe

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With never-seen video, new audio and a "mountain of evidence," the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol will attempt to show not only the deadly

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violence that erupted that day but also the chilling backstory as the defeated president, Donald Trump, tried to overturn Joe Biden's election victory.

Thursday's prime-time hearing will open with eyewitness testimony from the first police officer pummeled in the mob riot and from a documentary filmmaker who recorded the melee, and it will feature the committee's accounts from Trump's aides and family members of the deadly siege that put U.S. democracy at risk.

"When you hear and understand the wide-reaching conspiracy and the effort to try to corrupt every lever and agency of government involved in this, you know, the hair on the back of your neck should stand up," Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., a member of the 1/6 committee, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"Putting it all together in one place and one coherent narrative, I think, will help the American people understand better what happened on January 6th — and the threats that that could potentially pose in the future."

The 1/6 panel's yearlong investigation into the Capitol attack will begin to show how America's tradition of a peaceful transfer of presidential power came close to slipping away. It will reconstruct how Trump refused to concede the 2020 election, spread false claims of voter fraud and orchestrated an unprecedented public and private campaign to overturn Biden's victory.

The result of the coming weeks of public hearings may not change hearts or minds in politically polarized America. But the committee's investigation with 1,000 interviews is intended to stand as a public record for history. A final report aims to provide an accounting of the most violent attack on the Capitol since the British set fire to it in 1814 and to ensure such an attack never happens again.

Emotions are still raw at the Capitol, and security will be tight for the hearings. Law enforcement officials are reporting a spike in violent threats against members of Congress.

Against this backdrop, the committee will try to speak to a divided America, ahead of the fall midterm elections, when voters decide which party controls Congress. Most TV networks will carry the hearings live, but Fox News Channel will not.

The committee chairman, civil rights leader Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., and vice chair Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., the daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney, will set the tone with opening remarks.

The two congressional leaders will outline what the committee has learned about the events leading up to that brisk January day in 2021 when Trump sent his supporters to Congress to "fight like hell" for his presidency as lawmakers undertook the typically routine job of certifying the previous November's results.

"People are going to have to follow two intersecting streams of events — one will be the attempt to overturn the presidential election, that's a harrowing story in itself," Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a member of the committee, told the AP.

"The other will be the sequence of events leading up to a violent mob attack on the Capitol to stop the counting of Electoral College votes and block the peaceful balance of power," he said.

First up will be wrenching accounts from police who engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the mob, with testimony from U.S. Capitol Police Officer Caroline Edwards, who was seriously injured in the attack. Also appearing Thursday will be documentary maker Nick Quested, who filmed the extremist Proud Boys storming the Capitol. Some of that group's members have since been indicted, as have some from the Oath Keepers, on rare sedition charges over the military-style attack.

Along with the live eyewitness testimony, the panel will unveil multimedia presentations, including unreleased video and audio, and a "mountain of evidence," said a committee aide who insisted on anonymity to preview the hearing. There will be recorded accounts from Trump's senior aides at the White House, the administration and the campaign, as well as members of Trump's family, the aide said.

In the weeks ahead, the panel is expected to detail Trump's public campaign to "Stop the Steal" and the private pressure he put on the Justice Department to reverse his election loss — despite dozens of failed court cases and his own attorney general attesting there was no fraud on a scale that could have tipped the results in his favor.

The panel, made up of nine lawmakers, faced obstacles from its start. Republicans blocked the forma-

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tion of an independent body that could have investigated the Jan. 6 assault the way the 9/11 Commission probed the 2001 terror attack.

Instead, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ushered the creation of the 1/6 panel through Congress over the objections of Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell. She rejected Republican-appointed lawmakers who had voted Jan. 6 against certifying the election results, choosing her own preferred members to serve.

Trump has dismissed the investigation as illegitimate, and many Republicans are poised to defend him. Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York said at a GOP leadership news conference that the committee's "shameless prime-time show" is nothing but a smear campaign against the former president, his party and his supporters.

But by many measures, the attack was set in motion shortly after Election Day, when Trump falsely claimed the voting was rigged and refused to concede once Biden was declared the winner.

The proceedings are expected to introduce Americans to a cast of characters, some well known, others elusive, and to what they said and did as Trump and his allies tried to reverse the election outcome.

The public will learn about the actions of Mark Meadows, the president's chief of staff, whose 2,000-plus text messages provided the committee with a snapshot of the real-time scramble to keep Trump in office. Of John Eastman, the conservative law professor who was the architect of the unsuccessful scheme to convince Vice President Mike Pence to halt the certification on Jan. 6. Of the Justice Department officials who threatened to resign rather than go along with Trump's startling proposals.

Lawmakers have also been caught up in the probe, including House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy, who defied the committee's subpoena requests for testimony. Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump, who urged her father to call off the rioters, appeared privately before the committee.

The Justice Department has arrested and charged more than 800 people for the violence that day, the biggest dragnet in its history.

## Virus testing the new normal as China sticks to 'zero-COVID'

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Thousands of COVID-19 testing sites have popped up on sidewalks across Beijing and other Chinese cities in the latest twist to the country's "zero-COVID" strategy.

Lines form every day, rain or shine, even when the spread of the virus has largely stopped. Some people need to go to work. Others want to shop. All are effectively compelled to get tested by a requirement to show a negative test result to enter office buildings, malls and other public places.

Liu Lele, who works for a live-streaming company, has no problem getting tested regularly but said the daytime operating hours don't always fit his schedule.

"Sometimes I get held up at work," he said after finishing a test Thursday near Beijing's historic Bell and Drum towers. "I wish there were sites open 24 hours or not closing until 7 or 8 p.m."

Regular testing of residents is becoming the new normal in many parts of China as the ruling Communist Party sticks steadfastly to a "zero-COVID" approach that is increasingly at odds with the rest of the world.

Major cities have been told to set up testing stations within a 15-minute walk for all residents. Beijing and Shanghai alone have put up 10,000 or more each. Some are made up of folding tables and chairs under a temporary canopy. Others are enclosed square booths from which gloved workers reach out through openings to take a quick throat swab from the next person in line.

Many cities including Beijing are requiring a negative test result within the last three days to enter a public place or take the bus or subway. Some have made it a week or 10 days. The tests are free, with the result reflected on the person's smartphone health app roughly 12 hours later.

"This is something we should do," said Beijing retiree Wang Shiyuan, who gets tested every three days in case he needs to go to the supermarket or take a bus. "Only when everyone obeys the requirements can we reduce the risk of transmission."

The move follows a recent outbreak in Shanghai that spread so widely that authorities locked down the entire city for two months to end it, trapping millions of people and dealing a blow to the national economy.

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China kept the virus largely at bay for a year and a half by locking down buildings and neighborhoods and quarantining infected people, but the rapidly spreading omicron variant proved more difficult to stop. More than 580 people died in Shanghai — a large number in a country that had reported only a handful of deaths after an initial deadly outbreak in Wuhan in early 2020.

Guo Yanhong, an official with the National Health Commission, said that testing has become more important because omicron is both more contagious and spread by people without symptoms.

"We must adhere to the strategy of expanding prevention centered on nucleic acid testing, so as to control the epidemic earlier and faster," she said Thursday at a news conference.

Andy Chen, a senior analyst with the Trivium China consultancy, said the proliferation of testing sites is a reaction to the failure of existing measures to control omicron in Shanghai, though officials have not explicitly said so.

Authorities have decided that early detection is needed to control omicron outbreaks without extreme measures that cause major economic disruption.

"The regular testing requirements are meant to improve the zero-COVID strategy," Chen said in an email response. "The end goal is to keep the virus under control while avoiding another Shanghai-like lockdown."

Many other countries, their populations weary of pandemic restrictions and eager to move on, are betting that rising vaccination rates and the development of treatments for COVID-19 mean they can avoid lockdowns and other disruptive steps and live with the virus instead.

China's leaders have repeatedly signaled that they believe the "zero-COVID" approach remains the right one for China, even as they try to boost a flagging economy with business tax refunds, easier credit and spending on infrastructure projects.

Entry to the country remains restricted, with visas difficult to get and few international flights, making it costly and hard to get a seat. Anyone who does enter must quarantine in a hotel, usually for two weeks. Chinese generally can't leave the country unless it is for work or study.

Most analysts expect the zero-COVID policies to remain in place at least until after a major Communist Party congress this fall at which leader Xi Jinping is expected to get a third five-year term. The party touted its approach as a success when COVID-19 was ravaging other countries, and it doesn't want a major outbreak in the run-up to its meeting.

## Officials: Millions of COVID-19 shots ordered for youngest

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses have been ordered for small children in anticipation of possible federal authorization next week, White House officials say.

The government allowed pharmacies and states to start placing orders last week, with 5 million doses initially available — half of them shots made by Pfizer and the other half the vaccine produced by Moderna, senior administration officials said.

As of this week, about 1.45 million of the 2.5 million available doses of Pfizer have been ordered, and about 850,000 of available Moderna shots have been ordered, officials said. More orders are expected in the coming days.

Young children are the last group of Americans who have not been recommended to get COVID-19 vaccinations. Up to about 20 million U.S. children under 5 would become eligible for vaccination if the government authorizes one or both shots.

It's not clear how popular the shots will be. A recent survey suggests only 1 in 5 parents of young children would get their kids vaccinated right away.

And public health officials have been disappointed at how many older U.S. children, who have been eligible for shots for months, have yet to be vaccinated: Less than one-third of kids ages 5 to 11 have gotten the two recommended doses, according to government figures.

"As we go down in the age groups, we see lower and lower uptake" of vaccines, said Dr. Lucia Abascal of the California Department of Public Health.

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Pfizer has asked FDA to authorize three doses of its COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 6 months to 4 years. Each dose is one-tenth of the amount adults receive.

Moderna has asked FDA to authorize two shots for kids ages 6 months to 5 years, each containing a quarter of the dose given to adults.

The Food and Drug Administration authorizes the use of vaccines, while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issues recommendations to doctors and the public about using them.

An FDA advisory committee is scheduled to meet Tuesday and Wednesday to review data from the two companies. Officials say they expect a FDA decision shortly after that meeting.

A CDC advisory committee is scheduled for next Friday and Saturday, with a CDC decision expected soon after.

Vaccinations should begin in earnest as early as June 21, White House COVID-19 coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha told reporters last week.

## No way out as Iraq's dangerous post-election impasse deepens

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Eight months after national elections, Iraq still doesn't have a government and there seems to be no clear way out of the dangerous deadlock.

Political elites are embroiled in cutthroat competition for power, even as the country faces growing challenges, including an impending food crisis resulting from severe drought and the war in Ukraine.

For ordinary Iraqis, everything is delayed. The caretaker government is unable to make crucial electricity payments or draft plans for badly needed investment ahead of the critical summer months. Investments to upgrade water infrastructure have been paused while unemployment, water shortages and concerns over food security are drawing public anger.

The election was held several months earlier than expected, in response to mass protests that broke out in late 2019 and saw tens of thousands rally against endemic corruption, poor services and unemployment.

The vote brought victory for powerful Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and was a blow for his Iran-backed Shiite rivals, who lost about two-thirds of their seats and have rejected the results.

Personal vendettas spanning decades underpin the Shiite rivalry, pitting al-Sadr and his Kurdish and Sunni allies on one side against the Coordination Framework, a coalition led by Iran-backed Shiite parties, and their allies on the other. In the middle are the independents, themselves divided amid attempts by rival factions to lure them to either side.

"It's not about power; it's about survival," said Sajad Jiyad, an Iraq-based fellow with The Century Foundation.

Meanwhile, anger among the Iraqi public is growing as food prices soar and electricity cuts worsen.

Last month, caretaker Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi was forced to leave the Baghdad funeral of a celebrated poet after some mourners began chanting anti-government slogans and pelting the convoys of other government officials.

"Political obstruction impacts the work of the government and the state, and lowers the morale of citizens," al-Kadhimi told reporters on Tuesday, blaming the impasse for obstructing his reform plans.

The U.N. envoy for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, warned Iraqi political leaders last month that "the streets are about to boil over" and said national interests were "taking a backseat to short-sighted considerations of control over resources."

Al-Sadr, whose party garnered the most seats in the election, has not been able to corral enough lawmakers to parliament to get the two-thirds majority needed to elect Iraq's next president — a necessary step ahead of naming the next prime minister and selecting a Cabinet.

Al-Sadr's tripartite alliance includes Taqadum, a Sunni party led by Mohammed Halbousi who was elected parliament speaker in January, and the Kurdish Democratic Party led by Masoud Barzani. The bloc is intent on forming a majority government, which would be a first since a consensus-based power-sharing system was introduced following the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq to oust dictator Saddam Hussein.

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The government would exclude Iran-backed Shiite rivals of the Coordination Framework, which includes former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law and the Kurdish Patriotic Union of Kurdistan party.

Both al-Sadr and al-Maliki, longtime bitter political adversaries, have built up loyalists throughout ministries to advance their political agendas and fear that if in power, the other will use state resources — including the judiciary, anti-corruption committees — to purge institutions of rivals.

Also, al-Sadr and Qais al-Khazali, whose powerful Iranian-backed militia is part of the Framework alliance, are engaged in a deadly feud, with assassination campaigns targeting members of their militias across Iraq's Shiite southern heartland.

Paradoxically, the current stalemate is in part a consequence of parties moving away from sectarian-oriented groups. In the past, Shiite alliances would form a united front to negotiate with Sunni and Kurdish blocs. But this time, alliances have crossed sectarian lines, inflaming tensions within each sect.

In the absence of an agreement, many fear violent protests by al-Sadr's large grassroots following and potential clashes with Iran-backed militias.

In a May 16 speech, a visibly frustrated al-Sadr pledged never to strike a deal with his rivals. He also alluded to the capabilities of his own militia, Saraya Salam, which recently opened the doors for recruits in Babylon and Diyala provinces.

Al-Sadr was also angered by a recent Iraqi Supreme Court decision prohibiting the caretaker government from drafting and passing laws. This effectively struck down an emergency food bill needed for the caretaker government to use public funds to pay for food items and buy energy from Iran in the absence of a budget.

Al-Sadr, who had pushed the bill, saw the court's decision as a move leaning toward the Framework. However, in a small win for al-Sadr, Parliament convened late Wednesday and passed the food security bill.

Iraqi militia leaders speak privately of concerns that the stalemate could ignite street protests by supporters of al-Sadr and dissolve into violence between them and rival armed Shiite militias.

Iraq has in the past seen protracted political wrangling among rival groups on choosing a new president and prime minister, though the current stalemate in electing a president is the longest yet.

This time, Iran has not been able to mend rifts between Shiite rivals — a role that used to fall to the top Iranian general, Qassem Soleimani, who was killed in a U.S. drone strike in January 2020. At least three trips to Iraq by Soleimani's successor to mediate among Shiites failed to produce a breakthrough.

Recently, Tehran cut 5 million cubic meters of gas exports to Baghdad, citing non-payment issues. Iraq's Electricity Minister Adel Karim told The Associated Press last month he had no idea how Iraq would pay the nearly \$1.7 billion in arrears before the scorching summer months.

Meanwhile, the independents — parties drawn from the 2019 protest movement who ran under the so-called Imtidad list and won nine seats in the 329-seat legislature — seem to have lost their way. They had sworn to become a formidable opposition force to represent the protesters' demands in parliament.

The head of the movement, Alaa Rikabi, recently froze his position after members resigned over his vote in favor of electing Halbousi as parliament speaker. The protesters see Halbousi as complicit in the killings of activists during the protests.

A spokesman for Imtidad, Rasoul Al-Saray, said the two Shiite blocs want to use the independents "to cover their failure to form a government."

Some independents have said they faced threats and fear for their lives; one said he was offered tens of thousands of dollars in way of bribes to side with the anti-Sadr group. The independents spoke anonymously, fearing for their safety.

With prospects for a consensus government dwindling, some have floated the option of new elections. But Jiyad, the Century fellow, disagrees.

"It's starting from zero and a risk to everyone," he said.

## Celtics beat Warriors 116-100, take 2-1 lead in NBA Finals

By KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writer

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BOSTON (AP) — Throughout the postseason, the Boston Celtics had played their best basketball away from home.

Not anymore.

Jaylen Brown scored 27 points, Jayson Tatum added 26 and the Celtics rode the energy of a raucous TD Garden crowd to beat back another third-quarter onslaught by Golden State in a 116-100 victory Wednesday night that gave them a 2-1 lead in the NBA Finals.

Marcus Smart added 24 points and helped fuel a defensive effort that held the Warriors to 11 points in the fourth quarter — third-fewest in a finals game in the shot clock era.

“Game 2, they brought the heat to us,” Smart said. “For us, that left a bad taste in our mouth because what we hang our hat on is effort on the defensive end and being a physical team. It definitely woke us up a little bit.”

Tatum said the fact the Celtics didn’t hang their heads after the Warriors’ third-quarter flourish is something they didn’t always do in the regular season.

“I think that’s when we are at our best when we respond to tough situations. We respond to teams going on runs and things like that,” he said. “I think we did that several times tonight.”

Boston improved to 6-4 at home, compared to 8-3 on the road this postseason. The Celtics haven’t lost two straight games since the end of March.

Stephen Curry led Golden State with 31 points and six 3-pointers. He had 15 points in a 33-25 third quarter by the Warriors but was hurt late in the fourth after Al Horford rolled into his leg on a loose ball. Curry said it was similar to a play during the regular season in which Smart dove into Curry’s legs while chasing a loose ball but “not as bad.”

“I got caught -- obviously in some pain, but I’ll be all right,” Curry said. “See how it feels tomorrow and get ready for Friday.”

Klay Thompson broke out of a finals slump and finished with 25 points and five 3s. But the Warriors’ shooting couldn’t save them on a night the more athletic Celtics outmuscled them for a 47-31 rebounding advantage.

“When you allow a team to get comfortable, especially in their home -- in front the home crowd, then it’s tough,” Warriors forward Draymond Green said.

Robert Williams III, who has been working his way back from knee surgery, finished with eight points, 10 rebounds and four blocks.

“We talked about it quite a bit, our group being resilient and being able to fight through a lot of things and at times when it’s most needed being able to lock down on defense,” Celtics coach Ime Udoka said. “We did in the fourth quarter,”

Game 4 is Friday in Boston.

Despite Curry’s noticeable limp after the play with Horford, Warriors coach Steve Kerr said it was not why he pulled him from the game in the closing minutes.

“The injury didn’t force him out of the game, but I took him out down 14 with two minutes left because we weren’t going to catch up,” Kerr said.

The previous 39 times teams have split the first two games of the finals, the winner of Game 3 went on to win the series 82% of the time.

Feeding off the energy of a Garden crowd that jeered Green throughout his miserable night in the first NBA Finals game in Boston since 2010, the Celtics started fast and led by as many as 18 points in the first half.

Coming off a Game 2 loss in which Boston turned the ball over 19 times, the Celtics’ ball movement was much crisper in the half court, which led to open perimeter shots, favorable 1-on-1 matchups and driving lanes..

It left the Warriors scrambling at times, which contributed to three foul calls on Curry in the opening 24 minutes.

But as well as Boston played, it had its early lead erased in the third quarter by a Warriors seven-point possession that included a four-point play by Curry when he drew a flagrant 1 foul on Horford and 3-pointer

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by Otto Porter Jr to put Golden State in front 83-82.

Boston recovered to take a 93-89 edge into the fourth, then outscored Golden State 23-11 in the quarter.

The Celtics led 56-39 before an 8-0 spurt in just 37 seconds by the Warriors trimmed the lead to 56-49 on a layup by Curry with 3:32 left in half. Boston flurried at the end of the half to take a 68-56 lead into halftime.

## TIP-INS

Warriors: Shot 8 of 23 in the first period. ... Were outscored 52-26 in the paint.

Celtics: Shot 57% in the first half (27 of 47. Including 8 of 18 from 3. ... With two 3-pointers by Brown in the first quarter, he and Tatum became the first pair of teammates in Celtics history to each make 50 3-pointers in a single postseason.

## SHOVING MATCH

Green was involved in tussles with Brown and Grant Williams in Game 2 – one that ended in a technical foul call on Green.

He had another brief run-in with Williams in the second quarter Wednesday when Williams knocked Green to the ground at midcourt.

A foul was called on Williams, but he and Green had a short face-off before being quickly separated by officials.

In third quarter, Green wound up on the ground fighting for a loose ball with Brown. This time Green was called for the foul.

## FAST START

The Celtics hit three of their first four shots and scored 10 straight points to jump out to 10-2 lead.

Boston's lead grew to 18-9 when a fast break ended with Curry picking up his second foul trying to contest Smart's layup with 5:44 left in the quarter.

Curry stayed in the game and Golden State switched to zone, but it did little to slow Boston, which widened its advantage as high as 15 points. The Celtics took a 33-22 lead into the second period.

## Hearings guide: What to know as the Jan. 6 panel goes public

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House committee investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol will hold the first in a series of hearings laying out its initial findings Thursday night, a highly anticipated look at evidence the panel has been gathering for the last year.

With the televised hearings, the seven Democrats and two Republicans on the nine-member panel hope to grab the attention of the American public and drive home the sheer violence of that day in 2021, as some have attempted to downplay the attack. And they plan to use the more than 1,000 interviews they have conducted to spotlight people who played pivotal roles in the siege — and to show that it was a deliberate, unprecedented attempt to block the certification of Joe Biden's victory.

The committee will sort through the mountain of information it has collected into different hearing topics, from domestic extremism to security failures to what former President Donald Trump was doing in the White House that day as hundreds of his supporters brutally pushed past police and forced their way into the Capitol.

Thursday's prime-time hearing will be both an overview of the investigation and a preview of the hearings to come. It will also look at domestic extremism, with testimony from British filmmaker Nick Quested, who recorded members of the far-right Proud Boys as they stormed the building, and Caroline Edwards, a U.S. Capitol Police officer who was one of the first people injured in the riot as the Proud Boys and others pushed past police.

What to know about the House's investigation ahead of the hearings:

## HOW WE GOT HERE

The House panel was formed last summer after Senate Republicans blocked the formation of an independent Jan. 6 commission that would have had an even number of Republicans and Democrats and



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operated outside of Congress. When that proposal failed, Speaker Nancy Pelosi created a Democratic-led panel to investigate the attack. The House approved the formation of the committee in June 2021, and the panel started its work within weeks.

The Jan. 6 panel's two Republicans — Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney and Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, both frequent critics of Trump — joined the committee at Pelosi's invitation. House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy pulled all of his members from the panel after Pelosi rejected some the members he selected.

Cheney, the panel's vice chairwoman, and Kinzinger have firmly aligned themselves with the Democrats on the probe, saying their duty to investigate rises above partisanship. Other Republicans decry the investigation as another partisan effort to go after Trump.

## FOR HISTORY

The hearings could be politically risky for Democrats, who face significant headwinds from the GOP in this November's midterm elections. While many voters are most concerned about inflation, education or other household issues, the Democrats on the committee — including some who face tough reelection bids this fall — say they hope people don't lose sight of what happened on Jan. 6.

The attempt to subvert democracy isn't over, they argue, as many Americans still incorrectly believe that Trump won the election and some states around the country have moved to replace election officials and politicians who certified Biden's win.

And Trump, who told his supporters to "fight like hell" at the rally the morning of the insurrection, is considering another White House bid.

Democratic Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, a member of the panel, said Tuesday the measure of success would be "whether we are able to preserve American democracy and our institutions — it's a long-term test."

## WHO WILL BE THERE — AND WHO WON'T

The committee hasn't yet announced the focus of each hearing, or who all of the witnesses will be. But they are expected to seek public testimony from witnesses who were revelatory when interviewed behind closed doors. They are expected to include former Trump White House aides who have been cooperative and others who have detailed Trump's pressure on state and federal authorities to overturn the election.

The committee has reached out to a group of Trump-era Justice Department officials, including Jeffrey Rosen, the acting attorney general at the time of the riot, about having them as witnesses, according to a person familiar with the matter who insisted on anonymity to discuss private conversations.

While the panel has talked to dozens of Trump aides and allies, they have not heard from some of the most prominent figures who were closest to Trump that day — notably former chief of staff Mark Meadows, who declined to talk to the panel after negotiations broke down, and McCarthy, who also declined to cooperate.

The committee subpoenaed McCarthy and four other House Republicans who interacted with Trump and the White House before and during the attack, but they have so far refused to comply.

## MULTIPLE SUBJECT AREAS

The committee divided the investigation into different subject teams that are expected to provide structure to the hearings.

One team has looked into the government's response, including the slow deployment of the National Guard and the struggles of Capitol Police, who were overwhelmed as the rioters descended. Another team has been looking into donors who helped finance the events of the day. Other subjects of the investigation include those who organized the rally on Jan. 6, the actions of the Justice Department, the role of domestic extremism and the spread of misinformation on social media.

One of the investigative teams has focused on Trump and those who tried to help him overturn the election.

The nine members of the committee have divided themselves up, as well, and each will lead different parts of the hearings. "The public will hear from each of us," said Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-Calif., a member of the panel.

## GOP RESPONSE

Republicans are pushing back on the hearings before they even begin, calling the committee partisan and arguing that Democrats are focused on the wrong priorities.

"They are scrambling to change the headlines, praying that the nation will focus on their partisan witch hunt instead of our pocketbooks," House GOP Conference Chair Elise Stefanik of New York told reporters Wednesday.

Republican Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio said Democrats' goal is "to end the Electoral College and their goal is to stop President Trump from running in 2024, plain and simple."

## IT'S NOT CRIMINAL

Congress doesn't have the power to press charges, so the hearings aren't intended to be a prosecution. But members of the panel have encouraged the Justice Department to aggressively investigate the attack, as well.

Lawmakers have also talked about the possibility of sending a criminal referral to the Justice Department recommending that certain individuals — perhaps even Trump — should be prosecuted. Such a referral would put Attorney General Merrick Garland and his prosecutors on the spot.

Though the scope of the department's investigation remains unclear, it recently issued a subpoena to former Trump adviser Peter Navarro that could signal Justice is widening its probe to examine the activities and records of people who worked directly for the Republican president. The department previously issued subpoenas to people connected to the Jan. 6 attack and the rallies in Washington that preceded the violence.

## Jan. 6 panel's 1,000 witnesses: From Trump aides to rioters

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Jan. 6 committee has interviewed more than 1,000 people who were directly or indirectly involved in the U.S. Capitol insurrection as it probes the violent attack and former President Donald Trump's unprecedented efforts to overturn his election defeat.

Several will return for a series of public hearings starting Thursday as the committee begins to present its findings to the public. The panel is expected to bring in some of its most informative and revelatory witnesses as it recounts Trump's efforts to pressure state officials, members of Congress and his own vice president to reject President Joe Biden's victory.

On Thursday evening, they will interview British filmmaker Nick Quested, who recorded members of the far-right Proud Boys as they stormed the building, and Caroline Edwards, a U.S. Capitol Police officer who was seriously injured in last year's attack.

Some of the interviews conducted by the panel were with well-known figures, among them members of Trump's family and top White House aides. Others were with lower-level staffers or government officials who attended key meetings or had knowledge of specific developments. The committee has talked to police officers, campaign aides and some of the rioters themselves.

Most of the witnesses sat for voluntary interviews, but the panel has issued more than 100 subpoenas. The House voted to pursue contempt charges against four people who refused to comply, and the Justice Department is prosecuting two of them — former Trump aides Steve Bannon and Peter Navarro. The department declined to prosecute former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and Trump aide Dan Scavino.

A look at some of the committee's witnesses — and some who refused to cooperate — as the panel holds hearings this month:

## TRUMP'S INNER CIRCLE

The committee met with several key members of Trump's family, including children Ivanka Trump and Donald Trump Jr., and Ivanka's husband, Jared Kushner. Former White House press secretaries Kayleigh McEnany and Stephanie Grisham have also appeared, as has former senior policy adviser Stephen Miller.

The panel also interviewed Kashyap Patel, a White House national security aide who moved to the

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Pentagon in the weeks after Trump lost the election and was in communication with the White House as Trump's supporters pushed into the Capitol. The panel's probe has attempted to dissect what the Trump was doing as the rioters stormed in.

And while Meadows eventually declined to sit for an interview, he did provide the panel with thousands of his text messages as part of negotiations over his testimony. Those text messages show the White House chaos that day as aides and allies pressed Trump to intervene and stop the violence.

One of Meadows' former aides, Cassidy Hutchinson, told the committee that Meadows had received potential warnings of violence on Jan. 6. She also described how the White House counsel's office cautioned against Trump's plans to enlist fake electors in swing states, including in meetings attended by Meadows and Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani.

## PENCE'S ORBIT

The committee has also delved deeply into Trump's pressure on Vice President Mike Pence, who was presiding over the election certification in Congress. The panel didn't publicly call Pence to testify, but the lawmakers talked to several of Pence's aides, many of whom were frustrated at how the vice president was treated as Trump publicly urged him to try to overturn the election count — a power he did not legally have. Some of the rioters chanted Pence's name as they broke into the Capitol and called for his hanging.

The aides who testified included Pence's chief of staff, Marc Short, his national security adviser, Keith Kellogg, and former communications aide Alyssa Farah.

Greg Jacob, who served as Pence's chief counsel in the vice president's office, also spoke to the panel. As part of a court filing, the committee released emails between Jacob and lawyer John Eastman, who was working with Trump, in which Jacob said that Pence could not intervene in his ceremonial role and halt the certification of the electoral votes. Jacob told Eastman the legal framework he was putting forward to do just that was "essentially entirely made up."

Eastman has fought the committee's requests for his records, but a court has ordered him to release some of them to the panel.

## MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

The panel last month subpoenaed five Republican lawmakers, including House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy, but none has so far complied.

McCarthy has acknowledged he spoke with Trump on Jan. 6 as Trump's supporters were beating police outside the Capitol and forcing their way into the building. But he has not shared many details. The committee requested information about his conversations with Trump "before, during and after" the riot.

Subpoenas were also issued to Reps. Jim Jordan of Ohio, Scott Perry of Pennsylvania, Andy Biggs of Arizona and Mo Brooks of Alabama. All four met with Trump and White House officials as the former president focused on the Jan. 6 congressional electoral count as his last opportunity to overturn his defeat.

In a letter to the panel, an attorney for McCarthy argued that the select committee does not have the authority to issue subpoenas to the lawmakers under House rules and demanded answers to a series of questions and documents if his client were to comply.

## JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

The panel has also spoken to Justice Department officials, including former Attorney General Bill Barr, former acting Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen and his deputy, Richard Donoghue.

Barr resigned from office in December 2020 after announcing that the department had found no widespread fraud in the election. After he left, Rosen and Donoghue defended the department against intense pressure from Trump and his allies, who wanted them to declare that there had been fraud and go after states that had certified Biden's win.

The committee also interviewed Jeffrey Clark, a former Justice Department official who was sympathetic to Trump as he tried to overturn the vote. Clark had drafted a letter for key swing states — never sent — that falsely claimed the department had discovered troubling irregularities in the election. A White House lawyer at the time, Pat Cipollone, told Trump the letter was a "murder-suicide pact."

Yet Trump still came close to installing Clark as attorney general, only to back down when confronted with the likelihood of mass resignations at the Justice Department.

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The panel has reached out to Rosen to testify at one of the June hearings, according to a person familiar with the matter who insisted on anonymity to discuss private conversations.

## RIOTERS, AND THOSE THEY ATTACKED

The panel has spoken to some of the rioters who were charged after the insurrection.

Stewart Rhodes, the founder and leader of the far-right Oath Keepers militia group, appeared remotely before the panel in February from a federal jail where he has been awaiting trial on sedition charges. Rhodes and 10 others were the first to be charged with seditious conspiracy for their roles in the violent insurrection.

Lawmakers also interviewed some of the law enforcement officers who were attacked and security officials who oversaw them. Four police officers testified at the panel's first hearing last July, telling of the lasting mental and physical injuries they suffered when they were overwhelmed and viciously beaten by the mob.

## RALLY ORGANIZERS

Another focus of the panel has been the massive Trump rally on the National Mall that was held that morning and went on even after the Capitol breach began.

Included on a list of 11 subpoenas in September were Amy and Kylie Kremer, founders of Women for America First, a group that helped organize the rally; Cynthia Chafian, an organizer who submitted the first permit for the rally; Caroline Wren, who the committee says was listed on permit paperwork for the Jan. 6 rally as a "VIP Advisor"; and Maggie Mulvaney, who the panel says was listed on the permit as "VIP Lead."

Most of those subpoenaed cooperated.

## Smashed buildings in Mariupol produce 'caravan of death'

By BERNAT ARMANGUÉ and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

BAKHMUT, Ukraine (AP) — The human cost of the war in Ukraine mounted as workers pulled up to 100 bodies from each smashed building in the devastated city of Mariupol — a gruesome effort that one official described as an "endless caravan of death."

Meanwhile, fears of a global food crisis escalated over Ukraine's inability to export millions of tons of grain through its blockaded ports.

At the same time, Ukrainian and Russian forces battled fiercely Wednesday for control of Sievierodoneck, a city that has emerged as central to Moscow's grinding campaign to capture Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, known as the Donbas.

Many buildings in Mariupol contain 50 to 100 bodies each, according to a mayoral aide in the Russian-held port city in the south.

Petro Andryushchenko said on the Telegram app that the bodies are being taken in an "endless caravan of death" to a morgue, landfills and other places. At least 21,000 Mariupol civilians were killed during the weeks-long Russian siege, Ukrainian authorities have estimated.

The consequences of the war are being felt far beyond Eastern Europe because shipments of Ukrainian grain are bottled up inside the country, driving up the price of food.

Ukraine, long known as the "bread basket of Europe," is one of the world's biggest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, but much of that flow has been halted by the war and a Russian blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea coast. An estimated 22 million tons of grain remains in Ukraine. The failure to ship it out is endangering the food supply in many developing countries, especially in Africa.

Russia expressed support Wednesday for a U.N. plan to create a safe corridor at sea that would allow Ukraine to resume grain shipments. The plan, among other things, calls for Ukraine to remove mines from the waters near the Black Sea port of Odesa.

But Russia is insisting that it be allowed to check incoming vessels for weapons. And Ukraine has expressed fear that clearing the mines could enable Russia to attack the coast. Ukrainian officials said the Kremlin's assurances that it wouldn't do that cannot be trusted.

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European Council President Charles Michel on Wednesday accused the Kremlin of “weaponizing food supplies and surrounding their actions with a web of lies, Soviet-style.”

While Russia, which is also a major supplier of grain to the rest of the world, has blamed the looming food crisis on Western sanctions against Moscow, the European Union heatedly denied that and said the blame rests with Russia itself for waging war against Ukraine.

“These are Russian ships and Russian missiles that are blocking the export of crops and grain,” Michel said. “Russian tanks, bombs and mines are preventing Ukraine from planting and harvesting.”

The West has exempted grain and other food from its sanctions against Russia, but the U.S. and the EU have imposed sweeping punitive measures against Russian ships. Moscow argues that those restrictions make it impossible to use its ships to export grain, and also make other shipping companies reluctant to carry its product.

Turkey has sought to play a role in negotiating an end to the war and in brokering the resumption of grain shipments. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu met Wednesday with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov. Ukraine was not invited to the talks.

Moscow’s troops continued their painstaking, inch-by-inch campaign for the Donbas region with heavy fighting in and around Sievierodonetsk, which had a prewar population of 100,000. It is one of the last cities yet to be taken by the Russians in Luhansk, one of the two provinces that make up the Donbas.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called Sievierodonetsk the “epicenter” of the battle for the Donbas and perhaps one of the most difficult battles of the war.

He said the Ukrainian army is defending its positions and inflicting real losses on the Russian forces.

“In many ways, it is there that the fate of our Donbas is being decided,” Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address, which was recorded in the street outside his office in Kyiv.

An adviser to Zelenskyy’s office said Russian forces have changed their tactics in the battle, retreating from the city while pounding it with artillery and airstrikes.

As a result, Oleksiy Arestovych said, the city center is deserted, and the artillery hits an empty place.

“They are hitting hard without any particular success,” he said in his daily online interview.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai acknowledged the difficulties of battling Russian forces, saying, “Maybe we will have to retreat, but right now battles are ongoing in the city.”

“Everything the Russian army has — artillery, mortars, tanks, aviation — all of that, they’re using in Sievierodonetsk in order to wipe the city off the face of the Earth and capture it completely,” he said.

The city of Lysychansk, like Sievierodonetsk, is also wedged between Russian forces in Luhansk province. Valentyna Tsonkan, an elderly resident of Lysychansk, described the moment when her house came under attack.

“I was lying on my bed. The shrapnel hit the wall and went through my shoulder,” she said as she received treatment for her wounds.

Russia’s continuing encroachment could open up the possibility of a negotiated settlement between the two nations more than three months into the war, analysts said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin “has the option of declaring his objectives met at more or less any time in order to consolidate Russia’s territorial gains,” said Keir Giles, a Russia expert at the London think tank Chatham House. At that point, Giles said, Western leaders may “pressure Ukraine to accept their losses in order to bring an end to the fighting.”

Zelenskyy said Russia is unwilling to negotiate because it still feels strong.

Speaking by video link to U.S. corporate leaders, he called for even tougher sanctions to weaken Russia economically, including getting it “off the global financial system completely.”

Zelenskyy said Ukraine is willing to negotiate “to find a way out.” But a settlement cannot come “at the expense of our independence.”

## China and Russia defend North Korea vetoes in first at UN

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — China and Russia defended their vetoes of a strongly backed U.S. resolution

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that would have imposed tough new sanctions on North Korea, speaking at a first of its kind General Assembly meeting Wednesday.

The debate was held under new rules requiring the General Assembly to examine any veto wielded in the Security Council by one of its five permanent members.

Close allies China and Russia reiterated their opposition to more sanctions, blaming the United States for rising tensions on the Korean peninsula and insisting that what's needed now is dialogue between North Korea and the Biden administration.

Nearly 70 countries signed up to speak at the open meeting which General Assembly President Abdalla Shahid hailed as making the U.N. more efficient and accountable. "It is with good reason that it has been coined as 'revolutionary' by several world leaders I have recently met," he said.

Denmark's U.N. Ambassador Martin Bille Hermann told the 193-member world body as he started his address on behalf of the Nordic countries: "History is being made today."

The Security Council is entrusted with ensuring international peace and security, he said, and the use of a veto to prevent the council from discharging its duties "is a matter of great concern."

The General Assembly's adoption of a resolution on April 26 requiring a debate on the issue not only gives the country or countries casting a veto to explain their reason but it gives all U.N. member nations "a welcome opportunity to share our views on the matter at hand," Hermann said.

A united Security Council imposed sanctions after North Korea's first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and tightened them over the years in a total of 10 resolutions seeking — so far unsuccessfully — to rein in its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and cut off funding.

The 13-2 Security Council vote on May 26 marked a first serious division among its five veto-wielding permanent members — China, Russia, United States, Britain and France — on a North Korea sanctions resolution.

On Sunday, North Korea fired eight short-range missiles in what appeared to be a single-day record for the country's ballistic launches. It was the reclusive north Asian country's 18th round of missile tests in 2022 that included its first launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles in nearly five years.

U.S. deputy ambassador Jeffrey DeLaurentis told the assembly the record number of launches have taken place as North Korea "is finalizing preparations for a potential seventh nuclear test."

He called the actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or DPRK — the country's official name — "unprovoked."

De Laurentis stressed that U.S. President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken "have repeatedly and publicly said that we seek a dialogue with Pyongyang, without preconditions," and that message has been passed through private channels, including China.

"The United States is more than prepared to discuss easing sanctions to achieve the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula," he said.

Unfortunately, DeLaurentis said, the DPRK has only responded with "destabilizing launches that threaten not only the region but the world."

Under the General Assembly resolution that required Wednesday's meeting, the permanent member or members casting a veto are given precedence on the speakers list.

China's U.N. Ambassador Zhang Jun addressed diplomats first, accusing the United States of ignoring positive steps taken by the DPRK and returning to its "old path" of "chanting empty slogans for dialogue and increasing sanctions against the DPRK."

This has intensified "the DPRK distrust of the U.S." and brought talks "to a complete deadlock," he said.

Zhang blamed "the flip-flop of U.S. policies," its failure to implement results of the DPRK-U.S. dialogue during the Trump administration, and its disregard for the North's "reasonable concerns" for tensions on the peninsula today.

"Where the situation goes from here will depend to a large extent on the actions of the U.S.," he said, "and the key lies in whether the U.S. can face up to the crux of the problem, demonstrate a reasonable attitude, and take meaningful concrete actions."

Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador Anna Evstigneeva said new sanctions against the DPRK "would be

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a dead end," stressing that current U.N. sanctions have failed to guarantee security in the region "nor moved us any further toward settling the nuclear missile non-proliferation issues."

"Anyone who is seriously addressing the North Korean problem has long understood that it's futile to expect Pyongyang to unconditionally disarm under the threat of a spiral of sanctions," she said. "The creation of new military blocs in the regions such as the formation of the U.S.-Great Britain and Australia casts serious doubt on the good intentions of these countries," including in Pyongyang.

North Korea's U.N. Ambassador Kim Song denounced all U.N. sanctions and the proposed U.S. resolution as "illegal," saying they violate the U.N. Charter and his country's right to self-defense to prepare for any potential security crisis on the Korean peninsula and in the region.

Modernizing the DPRK's armaments is essential, he said, to safeguard North Korea's interests "from direct threat of the United States," which he insisted has made no move "to abandon its hostile policy."

## More bodies found in Mariupol as global food crisis looms

By BERNAT ARMANGUÉ and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

BAKHMUT, Ukraine (AP) — Workers pulled scores of bodies from smashed buildings in an "endless caravan of death" inside the devastated city of Mariupol, authorities said Wednesday, while fears of a global food crisis escalated over Ukraine's inability to export millions of tons of grain through its blockaded ports.

At the same time, Ukrainian and Russian forces battled fiercely for control of Sievierodonetsk, a city that has emerged as central to Moscow's grinding campaign to capture Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, known as the Donbas.

As the fighting dragged on, the human cost of the war continued to mount. In many of Mariupol's buildings, workers are finding 50 to 100 bodies each, according to a mayoral aide in the Russian-held port city in the south.

Petro Andryushchenko said on the Telegram app that the bodies are being taken in an "endless caravan of death" to a morgue, landfills and other places. At least 21,000 Mariupol civilians were killed during the weeks-long Russian siege, Ukrainian authorities have estimated.

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Zelenskyy said Ukraine is willing to negotiate "to find a way out." But a settlement cannot come "at the expense of our independence."

Meanwhile, to the north, Russian shelling of the Kharkiv region killed five people and wounded 12 over the past 24 hours, Ukrainian authorities said.

The Russian military said it used high-precision missiles to hit an armor repair plant near Kharkiv. There was no confirmation from Ukraine of such a plant being hit.

## Simone Biles, other women seek \$1B-plus from FBI over Nassar

By ED WHITE Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles and dozens of other women who say they were sexually assaulted by Larry Nassar are seeking more than \$1 billion from the FBI for failing to stop the sports doctor when the agency first received allegations against him, lawyers said Wednesday.

There's no dispute that FBI agents in 2015 knew that Nassar was accused of assaulting gymnasts, but they failed to act, leaving him free to continue to target young women and girls for more than a year. He pleaded guilty in 2017 and is serving decades in prison.



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"It is time for the FBI to be held accountable," said Maggie Nichols, a national champion gymnast at Oklahoma in 2017-19.

Under federal law, a government agency has six months to respond to the tort claims filed Wednesday. Lawsuits could follow, depending on the FBI's response.

The approximately 90 claimants include Biles, Aly Raisman and McKayla Maroney, all Olympic gold medalists, according to Manly, Stewart & Finaldi, a California law firm. Separately, 13 claims were filed by others in April.

"If the FBI had simply done its job, Nassar would have been stopped before he ever had the chance to abuse hundreds of girls, including me," said former University of Michigan gymnast Samantha Roy.

Indianapolis-based USA Gymnastics told local agents in 2015 that three gymnasts said they were assaulted by Nassar, a team doctor. But the FBI did not open a formal investigation or inform federal or state authorities in Michigan, according to the Justice Department's inspector general, an internal watchdog.

Los Angeles agents in 2016 began a sexual tourism investigation against Nassar and interviewed several victims but also didn't alert Michigan authorities, the inspector general said.

Nassar wasn't arrested until the fall of 2016 during an investigation by police at Michigan State University, where he was a doctor.

The Michigan attorney general's office ultimately handled the assault charges against Nassar, while federal prosecutors in Grand Rapids, Michigan, filed a child pornography case.

The FBI declined to comment Wednesday on the former gymnasts' financial claims, referring instead to remarks last year by FBI Director Christopher Wray, who acknowledged major mistakes.

"I'm especially sorry that there were people at the FBI who had their own chance to stop this monster back in 2015 and failed. And that's inexcusable," Wray told victims at a Senate hearing.

At that same hearing, Biles, widely considered to be the greatest gymnast of all time, said an "entire system" enabled the abuse. Maroney recalled "dead silence" when she talked to FBI agents about Nassar.

The Justice Department in May said that it would not pursue criminal charges against former agents who were accused of giving inaccurate or incomplete responses during the inspector general's investigation.

Failures by federal law enforcers have led to major settlements, including \$127.5 million for families of those killed or injured in 2018 at Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The FBI received a tip about five weeks before 17 people were killed, but the tip was never forwarded to the South Florida office.

Matthew Schneider, a former U.S. attorney in Detroit, believes "it's practically a certainty" that the government will settle the claims by Nassar victims.

"When FBI Director Wray admitted the FBI completely failed in their duties to protect these survivors, he essentially closed the door to a court fight," Schneider said. "A settlement makes legal sense, but it also makes good moral sense."

Paul Figley, a professor at American University's law school and a former Justice Department litigator, said the government would have defenses.

"The Tort Claims Act has worked very well for what it was intended to do: Help people hurt by run-of-the-mill accidents" involving federal employees, Figley said. "The bad act here is what the doctor did."

Michigan State University, which was also accused of missing chances over many years to stop Nassar, agreed to pay \$500 million to more than 300 women and girls who were assaulted by him. USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee made a \$380 million settlement.

## 4th grade Uvalde survivor: 'I don't want it to happen again'

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An 11-year-old girl who survived the mass shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, recounted in video testimony to Congress on Wednesday how she covered herself with a dead classmate's blood to avoid being shot and "just stayed quiet."

Miah Cerrillo, a fourth-grader at Robb Elementary School, told lawmakers in a prerecorded video that she watched a teacher get shot in the head before looking for a place to hide.

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"I thought he would come back so I covered myself with blood," Miah told the House panel. "I put it all over me and I just stayed quiet." She called 911 using the deceased teacher's phone and pleaded for help.

Nineteen children and two teachers died when an 18-year-old gunman opened fire with an AR-15-style rifle inside Robb Elementary School on May 24.

It was the second day lawmakers heard wrenching testimony on the nation's gun violence. On Tuesday, a Senate panel heard from the son of an 86-year-old woman killed when a gunman opened fire in a racist attack on Black shoppers in Buffalo, New York, on May 14. Ten people died.

In the video Wednesday, Miah's father, Miguel Cerrillo, asked his daughter if she feels safe at school anymore. She shook her head no.

"Why?" he asks. "I don't want it to happen again," she responds.

The testimony at the House Oversight Committee came as lawmakers work to strike a bipartisan agreement on gun safety measures in the aftermath of back-to-back mass shootings.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., the panel's chairwoman, called the hearing to focus on the human impact of gun violence and the urgency for gun control legislation.

"I am asking every member of this committee to listen with an open heart to the brave witnesses who have come forward to tell their stories about how gun violence has impacted their lives," Maloney said. "Our witnesses today have endured pain and loss. Yet they are displaying incredible courage by coming here to ask us to do our jobs."

But even as some lawmakers shed tears alongside the witnesses, the hearing displayed the contentious debate over gun control Congress has faced repeatedly after mass shootings. Several Republicans turned the conversation to the individuals who abuse guns and how "hardening schools" could help protect students.

Rep. Andrew Clyde, R-Ga., who owns a gun store, said that one of the things he learned in his military service was that "the harder the target you are, the less likely you will be engaged by the enemy." He called on schools to keep doors locked, provide a single point of entry and "a volunteer force of well-trained and armed staff, in addition to a school resource officer."

The parents of victims and survivors implored lawmakers not to let their children's deaths and pain be in vain. After Miah spoke, her father told lawmakers that he testified because "I could have lost my baby girl."

"But she is not the same little girl that I use to play with," Cerrillo said. "Schools are not safe anymore. Something needs to really change."

Also testifying was Zeneta Everhart, whose 20-year-old son Zaire was wounded in the Buffalo mass shooting.

Everhart told lawmakers it was their duty to draft legislation that protects Zaire and other Americans. She said that if they did not find the testimony moving enough to act on gun laws, they had an invitation to go to her home to help her clean her son's wounds.

"My son Zaire has a hole in the right side of his neck, two on his back, and another on his left leg," she said, then paused to compose herself. "As I clean his wounds, I can feel pieces of that bullet in his back. Shrapnel will be left inside of his body for the rest of his life. Now I want you to picture that exact scenario for one of your children."

The parents of Lexi Rubio, who died in her classroom in Uvalde, also testified. Felix and Kimberly Rubio recounted finding out about their daughter's death hours after leaving Lexi's school awards ceremony where she had been recognized as an A-student. To celebrate, they had promised to get her ice cream.

To get to the elementary school after the shooting, Kimberly Rubio said she ran barefoot for a mile with her sandals in her hand and with her husband by her side. A firefighter eventually gave them a ride back to the civic center.

"Soon after we received the news that our daughter was among the 19 students and two teachers that died as a result of gun violence," she said, fighting through tears.

She said that Lexi would have made a positive change in the world if she had been given the chance.

"Somewhere out there, there's a mom listening to our testimony, thinking I can't even imagine their

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pain, not knowing that our reality will one day be hers unless we act now," Kimberly Rubio said.

Dr. Roy Guerrero described in stark terms the carnage he witnessed at the local hospital as he tried to treat the injured. He went to the area of the hospital where two dead children had been taken. The bodies were so pulverized, he said, "that the only clue to their identities was the blood-splattered cartoon clothes still clinging to them, clinging for life and finding none."

After the hearing was over, the Democratic-led House passed legislation that would raise the age limit for purchasing a semi-automatic rifle and prohibit the sale of ammunition magazines with a capacity of more than 10 rounds.

But the legislation has almost no chance of becoming law as the Senate pursues negotiations focused on improving mental health programs, bolstering school security and enhancing background checks. The House bill does allow Democratic lawmakers a chance to frame for voters in November where they stand on policies that polls show appeal to a majority.

Majorities of U.S. adults think mass shootings would occur less often if guns were harder to get, and that schools and other public places have become less safe than they were two decades ago.

Chairwoman Maloney ended the lengthy hearing Wednesday telling the loved ones of the victims and survivors that the committee's work on this topic will continue. Days after the Uvalde shooting the committee launched an investigation into five leading manufacturers of the semi-automatic weapons used in both the recent shootings.

"Over the last few days, the committee has received information from these companies that is very troubling," Maloney said. "I also intend to hold a second hearing to hear directly from the gun industry, so they can explain to the American people why they continue to sell the weapons of choice for mass murderers."

## Brookings places retired general on leave amid FBI probe

By ALAN SUDERMAN and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

The prestigious Brookings Institution placed its president, retired four-star Marine Gen. John Allen, on administrative leave Wednesday amid a federal investigation into his role in an illegal lobbying campaign on behalf of the wealthy Persian Gulf nation of Qatar.

Brookings' announcement came a day after The Associated Press reported on new court filings that show the FBI recently seized Allen's electronic data as part of the probe and detailed his behind-the-scenes efforts to help Qatar influence U.S. policy in 2017 when a diplomatic crisis erupted between the gas-rich monarchy and its neighbors.

Allen, who led U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan before being tapped to lead Brookings in late 2017, has not been charged with any crimes. His spokesman, Beau Phillips, said Wednesday that Allen had done nothing improper or unlawful.

"Through decades of public service in combat and diplomacy, General Allen has earned an unmatched, sterling reputation for honor and integrity," Phillips said in a statement. "We look forward to correcting the falsehoods about General Allen that have been improperly publicized in this matter."

Brookings told staffers in an email Wednesday that the institute itself is not under investigation and that the think tank's executive vice president, Ted Gayer, will serve as acting president.

"We have every confidence in the Brookings team's ability to remain focused on delivering quality, independence, and impact," the email said.

Brookings pays Allen more than \$1 million a year, according to its most recently available tax records. The email to staff did not say whether Allen would continue to be paid while on leave.

The federal investigation involving Allen has already ensnared Richard G. Olson, a former ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan who pleaded guilty to federal charges last week, and Imaad Zuberi, a prolific political donor now serving a 12-year prison sentence on corruption charges. Several members of Congress have also been interviewed.

An FBI agent said in an affidavit in support of a search warrant there was "substantial evidence" that

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Allen had knowingly broken a foreign lobbying law, and had made false statements and withheld "incriminating" documents.

Allen's behind-the-scenes work involved traveling to Qatar and meeting with the country's top officials to offer them advice on how to influence U.S. policy, as well as promoting Qatar's point of view to top White House officials and Congress, according to the FBI affidavit.

The Qatar Embassy did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Brookings is one of the most influential think tanks in the U.S. and has long had strong ties to Qatar. In 2007, the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to fund a Brookings-backed offshoot in Qatar called the Brookings Doha Center.

The Qatari government said in a 2012 news release that the center's role included "reflecting the bright image of Qatar in the international media, especially the American ones," according to a New York Times report that showed Qatar had given Brookings \$14.4 million in donations over a four-year span.

As a nonprofit, Brookings does not have to disclose its donations but it voluntarily discloses some data. Its annual reports show Qatar giving at least \$2 million a year from 2016 to 2021.

Brookings said in a statement that Allen decided in 2019 to stop taking any new donations from Qatar and to close the Brookings Doha Center.

"Brookings has strong policies in place to prohibit donors from directing research activities," said the email to staffers Wednesday.

## **Biden sidelines Venezuela's pro-democracy leader from summit**

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A little more than two years ago, Juan Guaidó was showered with bipartisan applause when President Donald Trump during his State of the Union speech praised the Venezuelan opposition leader as a "very brave man" who carries on his shoulders the democratic hopes of an entire nation.

But in a sign of how far his political fate has fallen, and how quickly U.S. geopolitical calculations can shift, the 38-year-old wasn't even invited to this week's Summit of the Americas — despite the Biden administration's persistent promotion of democracy and insistence it recognizes Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president.

Meanwhile, the man Guaidó has been trying to unseat, Nicolás Maduro, is taking something of a victory lap. On a rare foreign trip to Turkey this week, Maduro, who is the target of U.S. sanctions and a federal narcotics indictment, denounced the decision to exclude him and leftist allies from Cuba and Nicaragua from the gathering as a "stab" in the back of regional cooperation.

"This is a clear win for Maduro," Eric Farnsworth, vice president of the Council of Americas, said from Los Angeles, where he was attending the summit. "He's seen allies take up his cause at the summit while preventing his primary rival, whom Washington recognizes as president, from attending."

In what may be an attempt at damage control, Biden on Wednesday spoke with Guaidó. It was the first time the two leaders have spoken and during the call, which lasted around 17 minutes, Biden reiterated his support for Guaidó, whose claim to the presidency stems from his role as head of the National Assembly elected in 2015.

"President Biden expressed his support for Venezuelan-led negotiations as the best path toward a peaceful restoration of democratic institutions, free and fair elections, and respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Venezuelans," according to a White House readout of the call. "They discussed the role the United States and other international partners can play to support a negotiated solution to Venezuela's crisis. President Biden reaffirmed the United States is willing to calibrate sanctions policy as informed by the outcomes of negotiations that empower the Venezuelan people to determine the future of their country."

But coming on the heels of weeks of silence from the White House about whether Guaidó would be invited or not, the call provided little comfort to Venezuela's pro-democracy movement.

"We don't want to be seen as party crashers going where we aren't wanted," said one Guaidó envoy

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on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive diplomatic dealings.

National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan downplayed suggestions the U.S. was snubbing a staunch ally. Speaking aboard Air Force One on its way to Los Angeles, Sullivan insisted the decision to not invite anyone from the Guaidó camp, and instead involve civil society activists from Venezuela, was a tactical one to encourage negotiations between Maduro and his opponents that leads to "ultimately a better future for the Venezuelan people."

Guaidó's possible presence at the summit also appears to have irritated many of the Venezuelan government's allies, including Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who decided to skip the summit over the exclusion of Maduro and the leaders of Cuba and Nicaragua.

A Mexican official confirmed that his government asked the U.S. to exclude Guaidó as part of its back-and-forth with the Biden administration on the guest list, an effort that ultimately failed to persuade López Obrador to partake in the summit. The official, who requested anonymity to discuss diplomatic dealings, said that other countries had done the same.

Joining the Mexican leader's boycott were fellow leftist leaders of Bolivia, Grenada, Honduras, St. Kitts & Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Also staying home in protest, although not in solidarity with Maduro, were the leaders of El Salvador and Guatemala, as well as the president Uruguay, who was exposed to COVID.

But it's not just foreign pressure that has Biden wary of inviting Guaidó.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered a spike in energy prices, the U.S. has started to re-evaluate its policy on Venezuela, a country that sits atop the world's largest petroleum reserves but whose decades-long decline in oil production has been made worse by U.S. sanctions.

In March, U.S. officials led by Juan Gonzalez, the National Security Council's senior director for the western hemisphere, traveled to Caracas to meet with Maduro. Then, as now, Guaidó was kept on the sidelines, with U.S. officials not meeting with him during the several day trip. The goal of the talks was to dangle before Maduro the possibility of sanctions relief in exchange for a return to negotiations in Mexico with his opponents, something that so far hasn't happened.

Meanwhile, Guaidó continues to fight for change, although his street appearances are less frequent, and crowds greatly diminished from when he launched his challenge to Maduro in 2019.

On Saturday, his supporters were met in the western city of Maracaibo, a short distance from Colombia and a flight onward to the U.S., with a barrage of flying plastic chairs and fisticuffs from allies of Maduro.

"The violent ones were left empty handed," Guaidó told a small group of supporters to shouts of "Freedom, Freedom, Freedom" after the raucous brawl. "Let's be clear: we are not going to take a single step backward."

## **Biden seeks consensus at fractured Americas summit**

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden plunged into this week's Summit of the Americas aiming to push for regional progress in addressing economic development, climate change and migration despite the absence of some notable counterparts from Latin America.

With the U.S. playing host to the gathering for the first time since 1994, Biden and his team set about strengthening relationships and moving past the considerable drama over which world leaders would participate.

"At this summit," Biden said in his opening remarks Wednesday night, "we have an opportunity for us to come together around some bold ideas, ambitious actions and to demonstrate to our people the incredible power of democracies to deliver concrete benefits and make life better for everyone. Everyone."

The U.S. president was expected to spend Thursday sitting down with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, as well as deliver a speech to the broader group of attendees. Vice President Kamala Harris was to meet with Caribbean leaders to talk about clean energy, and first lady Jill Biden was hosting a brunch to build relationships with fellow spouses.

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The day is expected to end with a dinner at the Getty Villa, an art museum with views of the Pacific Ocean.

A range of activists from the United States and dissidents from the region have been gathering around the Los Angeles convention center, where most of the meetings are taking place, to promote their causes.

There could be tension when Biden meets for the first time with Bolsonaro, an ally of former President Donald Trump. Bolsonaro is running for a second term and has been casting doubt on the credibility of his country's elections, something that has alarmed officials in Washington.

When Bolsonaro accepted an invitation to the summit, he asked that Biden not confront him over his election attacks, according to three of the Brazilian leader's Cabinet ministers who requested anonymity to discuss the issue.

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, rejected the idea that Biden had agreed to any conditions for the meeting with Bolsonaro.

"There are no topics off limits in any bilateral the president does, including with President Bolsonaro," Sullivan told reporters. He added, "I do anticipate that the president will discuss open, free, fair and transparent democratic elections."

Biden began emphasizing the theme on Wednesday as he welcomed leaders to the summit.

"Democracy is a hallmark of our region," he said.

It also became a sticking point when planning the guest list for the event. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador wanted the leaders of Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua to be invited, but the U.S. resisted because it considers them authoritarians.

Ultimately an agreement could not be reached, and López Obrador decided not to attend. Neither did the presidents of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

Honduras Foreign Relations Secretary Eduardo Enrique Reina spoke about President Xiomara Castro's decision to stay away.

"The president was very clear that this should be a summit without exclusions," Reina said. Still, he said the Honduran government was ready to work on common problems, saying, "The political will to work with all countries in the Americas is there."

It's a reminder that relations with Latin America have proved tricky for the administration even as it solidifies ties in Europe, where Russia's invasion of Ukraine has prompted closer cooperation, and in Asia, where China's rising influence has rattled some countries in the region.

One challenge is the unmistakable power imbalance in the hemisphere. World Bank data shows that the U.S. economy is more than 14 times the size of Brazil, the next-largest economy at the summit. The sanctions the U.S. and its allies levied against Russia are much harder in Brazil, which imports fertilizer from Russia. And trade data indicate that the region has deepening ties with China, which has also invested in the region.

This leaves the U.S. in a position of showing Latin America why a tighter relationship with Washington would be more beneficial at a time when economies are still struggling to emerge from the pandemic and inflation has worsened conditions.

Sullivan pledged that the U.S. "will be putting specific dollars into producing tangible results" in the region, with worker training and money for food security, among other things.

"When you tally all that up and look at the practical impact of what the summit deliverables from the United States will mean for the public sphere, it is significantly more impactful on the actual lives and livelihoods of the people of this region than the kinds of extractive projects that China has been invested in," he said.

Suzanne Clark, CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said in a blog post that her organization is partnering with the U.S. State Department to host a related CEO summit. The chamber's top listed priorities are increasing rule of law and trade with Latin America countries.

"The pandemic's impact has been exacerbated by stagnant economic growth and longstanding ills such as poverty, inequality, insecurity, corruption, and inadequate health care," Clark said. "As the hemisphere

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emerges from the cloud of COVID, new challenges such as rising inflation, especially in the food and energy sectors, threaten to further expose the region's fragility."

Harris has been emphasizing private sector investment to address the region's challenges, particularly when it comes to reducing migration by offering more economic opportunity in people's home countries.

"One of the things that is without question, when we are able to improve the prosperity and stability of our neighbors, we as a nation benefit," she told reporters Wednesday. "So the work that we have been doing in the summit has been to bring CEOs together, heads of state of a number of the countries in the Western Hemisphere are going to be here to talk about how we can continue to collaborate."

## Oz wins Pa. Senate primary ahead of showdown with Fetterman

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Dr. Mehmet Oz, the celebrity heart surgeon endorsed by former President Donald Trump, won Pennsylvania's Republican U.S. Senate primary on Wednesday, narrowly defeating former hedge fund CEO David McCormick after a dayslong statewide recount buffeted by litigation that reached the nation's highest court.

The recount determined that Oz had eked out victory over McCormick by 951 votes out of more than 1.3 million cast in the May 17 primary election. It came several days after McCormick conceded the race, acknowledging that he was not getting the boost he needed to close the gap.

In November's general election, Oz will face Democratic Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, who is off the campaign trail while he recovers from a stroke and a serious heart condition. The race could help determine control of the closely divided Senate, and Democrats view it as perhaps their best opportunity to pick up a seat in the race to replace retiring two-term Republican Sen. Pat Toomey.

"With the statewide recount officially concluded, it's time to focus on how high the stakes are in November," Oz said in a statement.

The national parties and Fetterman have begun testing general election campaign strategies and airing TV ads in Pennsylvania, a presidential battleground state still roiled by Trump's baseless claims that the 2020 election was stolen from him.

Trump endorsed Oz about five weeks before the primary, saying his decision was "all about winning elections." The former president also had a long personal history with Oz, who is best known as the host of daytime TV's "The Dr. Oz Show."

Trump said his wife, Melania, was a big fan of the show. Still, Oz barely won despite Trump's boost. In the closing days of the campaign, Trump held a rally for Oz and viciously attacked Oz's closest rivals, including McCormick and conservative activist Kathy Barnette, who finished third.

Oz, who has dual citizenship in Turkey, would be the nation's first Muslim senator if elected. He has remained relatively quiet and off the campaign trail during the recount.

Fetterman, meanwhile, is recovering from a stroke he suffered just days before his own primary, which he easily won. He said last week that he "almost died" from the stroke, acknowledging that he had ignored warning signs for years and a doctor's advice to take blood thinners.

His cardiologist also disclosed that Fetterman is being treated for a heart condition that can be fatal. He has remained out of public view and has given no date to return to campaigning.

While Fetterman convalesces, his campaign has launched two TV ads in which Fetterman casts himself as a regular guy who will "take on Washington" — perhaps a nod to political headwinds for President Joe Biden and fellow Democrats as Americans report being skeptical about the economic outlook and Biden's record.

In one ad, Fetterman rails against outsourced jobs, closed factories, rising costs and low wages, saying "those decisions were made for us by people that don't know us."

National Republicans, meanwhile, are trying to tie Fetterman to his party's most liberal members and to the Biden administration. In a statement Wednesday evening, Oz said Pennsylvanians "want someone who will stand up to the liberal Biden-Fetterman agenda leading to higher gas prices, record inflation,

and unprecedented levels of violent crime.”

## Dems confront criticism on crime after San Francisco defeat

By STEVE PEOPLES and JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Democrats on Wednesday braced for renewed Republican attacks on their management of crime across the U.S. after residents in San Francisco voted overwhelmingly to recall the city’s progressive district attorney, suggesting that even the party’s most loyal supporters are frustrated with the way in which violence and social problems are being addressed.

Chesa Boudin was swept into the district attorney’s office pledging to seek alternatives to incarceration, end the racist war on drugs and hold police officers to account. But the city’s longstanding problems with vandalism, open drug use and robberies proved too much for voters, who blamed him for making the situation worse.

While a single city race is hardly a barometer of the national mood, the rejection of Boudin by residents in the nation’s progressive epicenter carried symbolic significance for members of both parties. Republicans were emboldened by the vote, planning to highlight crime in several critical Senate races. At the White House, meanwhile, President Joe Biden acknowledged that the vote sent a “clear message” about public safety.

“Both parties have to step up and do something about crime as well as gun violence,” Biden said ahead of a trip to California, noting he sent “billions of dollars and encouraged them to use it to hire police officers and reforming police departments.”

“It’s time to move,” Biden continued. “It’s time that states and the localities spend the money they have to deal with crime as well as retrain police officers.”

The Democratic president’s tough-on-crime comments come as his party continues to face pointed attacks from Republicans about its commitment to public safety two years after progressive activists responded to the police murder of George Floyd by championing calls to “defund the police.” Biden has rejected such calls, as have the overwhelming majority of Democrats in Congress, yet polling suggests that voters have become increasingly likely to trust Republicans more than Democrats on public safety.

Republicans, pointing to the San Francisco election, signaled that they would continue to hammer vulnerable Democratic candidates in states like North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin for their record on crime or associations with the Black Lives Matter movement. While the economy is widely considered the central issue of this midterm season, Republicans believe a focus on crime will help them this fall, especially among suburban voters.

“The very first thing that I talk about everywhere we go is ending the war on our police, ending the war on cops,” said Andrew Giuliani, a Republican candidate for New York governor.

Public safety remains a potent political issue, even as the numbers suggest a more complicated reality.

Crime statistics for the first quarter of 2022, released by the FBI on Monday, suggest that a rise in violent crime is not the fault of either party’s criminal justice policies. Democratic-led cities such as Detroit, Fort Wayne and South Bend, Indiana, as well as Wichita, Kansas and Portland, Ore., listed fewer murders for the first quarter of 2022 than 2021. The same could be said for several cities with Republican mayors at the helm. The reverse also was true in a number of Democratic and Republican-led cities with several showing rises in violent crime rates and murders.

Still, Republicans have effectively convinced voters, in some cases, that Democrats are more to blame.

In June 2021, a Washington Post-ABC News poll showed that roughly the same number of U.S. adults trusted Democrats and Republicans to handle crime. But in April 2022, the same poll found that 47% trusted the Republican Party to do a better job handling crime, compared with 35% preferring the Democratic Party.

Republican pollster Gene Ulm said the perception that Democrats are weak on crime is pushing swing suburban voters toward the GOP in midterm elections across the country, even if crime is not a defining issue in the campaign.



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"The Democrats have basically tattooed themselves with defund the police," Ulm said. "It's too late to change it."

Republicans point to key Senate races in North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, where they have already begun to attack Democrats on crime, sometimes relying on false charges.

In North Carolina, the Senate Republican campaign arm already launched two ads against Democratic nominee Cheri Beasley, a former state Supreme Court justice, for failing to protect victims of violent crime. The ads were removed by some local television stations for being inaccurate.

"Sheriffs from across North Carolina condemned these dishonest and despicable attacks because they know Cheri's record: as a judge and chief justice, she partnered with law enforcement to keep North Carolina communities safe and hold violent offenders accountable," campaign spokesperson Dory MacMillan said. "Washington Republicans are lying."

Still, the GOP rhetoric is likely to persist. Republicans are also telegraphing weak-on-crime attacks against Wisconsin Democrat Mandela Barnes, a Senate candidate photographed holding a shirt critical of immigration officers; and Pennsylvania Senate nominee John Fetterman, who used his powers as lieutenant governor to help increase the number of pardons.

Campaign spokesman Joe Calvello noted that Fetterman has a history of confronting crime as the chief law enforcement officer of Braddock, Pa., where he served as mayor.

"Under John's leadership, Braddock went five and a half years without a gun death," Calvello said. "John not only has worked hand-in-hand with the police, but he knows what challenges our police force face and how to support them."

Back in San Francisco, Boudin blamed his loss on "right-wing billionaires" who exploited understandable frustration over a pandemic and city government that has failed to deliver on basics.

Former Mayor Willie Brown also warned against reading too much into the recall, given that Boudin won election in 2019 with 36% of first-place votes in San Francisco's ranked-choice system. On the same night as the recall, voters statewide overwhelmingly supported progressive state Attorney General Rob Bonta, who earned more than 50% of the vote and now advances to a runoff in November under California's top-two primary system.

No candidate – Republican or Democrat -- can ignore the public's need to feel safe, Brown said.

"There is an absolute need for people to feel safer, and if they, the public, voter interprets your advocacy as not being sensitive to that component ... they will probably not vote for you," Brown said. "They will vote for somebody that does give them some level of comfort, that safety is as important as all the other factors."

Beyond San Francisco on Tuesday night, a reform-minded progressive in Contra Costa County was keeping her seat while in Alameda County, which includes Oakland, the progressive favorite heads to a runoff against a long-time prosecutor in November for an open seat being vacated by a more traditional law-and-order district attorney.

Ludovic Blain, executive director of the California Donor Table, which seeks to elect progressive candidates, pointed out that the population of Contra Costa and Alameda counties dwarfs the size of San Francisco, which is under 900,000.

"If we were to look at one election to decide whether Democrats are vulnerable or not, it wouldn't be the San Francisco one," he said.

## Reports: Twitter to provide Musk with raw daily tweet data

Associated Press undefined

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Twitter plans to offer Elon Musk access to its "firehose" of raw data on hundreds of millions of daily tweets in an effort to push forward the Tesla billionaire's agreed-to \$44 billion acquisition of the social media platform, according to multiple news reports.

Lawyers involved in the deal would not confirm the data sharing agreement. Musk made no comment on Twitter, although he has previously been vocal about various aspects of the deal. Twitter declined to

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confirm the reports and pointed to a Monday statement in which the company said it is continuing to “cooperatively” share information with Musk.

Musk, who struck a legally binding agreement to buy Twitter in April, contends that the deal can’t proceed unless the company provides more information about the prevalence of fake accounts on its platform. He has argued, without presenting evidence, that Twitter has significantly underestimated the number of these “spam bots” -- automated accounts that typically promote scams and misinformation — on its service.

On Monday, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton also announced an investigation into Twitter for allegedly failing to disclose the extent of its spam bot and fake accounts, saying his office would look into “potential false reporting” of bots on Twitter.

The Washington Post first reported Twitter’s plan to provide Musk with full access to the firehose, citing a person familiar with the matter. Other reports suggested the billionaire might only receive partial access.

Twitter’s reported offer could blunt Musk’s attempts to use the spam bot issue to cast doubt on the deal’s future. This week, lawyers for Musk accused the company of refusing to surrender information about the true number of bot accounts on Twitter. Mike Ringler, the Palo Alto, California, attorney who signed that Monday letter, told the AP he was not at liberty to speak about the matter when reached Wednesday afternoon.

Fake social media accounts have been problematic for years. Advertisers rely on the number of users provided by social media platforms to determine where they will spend money. Spam bots are also used to amplify messages and spread disinformation.

The problem of fake accounts is well-known to Twitter and its investors. The company has disclosed its bot estimates to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission for years, while also cautioning that its estimate might be too low.

Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal has said that Twitter has consistently estimated that fewer than 5% of its accounts are spam. But Musk has disputed that figure, contending in a May tweet — without evidence — that 20% or more of Twitter’s accounts are bogus.

## Jan. 6 insurrection hearings: How to watch and what to know

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly a year since its inception, the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol will go public with its findings starting this week as lawmakers hope to show the American public how democracy came to the brink of disaster.

The series of hearings that will take place over the next several weeks begin with a prime-time session Thursday night in which the nine-member panel plans to give an overview of its 11-month investigation. More than 1,000 people have been interviewed by the panel, and only snippets of that testimony have been revealed to the public, mostly through court filings.

What you need to know ahead of the hearing:

**WHEN WILL THE HEARING TAKE PLACE?**

The first of six hearings is set to go live at 8 p.m. EDT on Thursday. It will take place in a large House office building in the U.S. Capitol complex. Lawmakers plan to have witnesses testify and to display a series of never-before-seen images and exhibits relating to the lead-up to the insurrection and the attack itself.

**HOW TO WATCH THE HEARING**

Several major networks and cable news programs are expected to carry the first hearing live in its prime-time slot.

**WHO IS EXPECTED TO TESTIFY?**

British filmmaker Nick Quested, who recorded members of the far-right Proud Boys extremist group as they stormed the building, and Caroline Edwards, a U.S. Capitol Police officer who was seriously injured in the attack, will be among the witnesses.

The public hearing, unlike other committee hearings, will be a mixture of traditional testimony as well as a multimedia presentation.

In subsequent hearings, the committee has reached out to a group of Trump-era Justice Department

officials, including Jeffrey Rosen, the acting attorney general at the time of the riot, about having them as witnesses, according to a person familiar with the matter who insisted on anonymity to discuss private conversations.

## WHAT WILL THE HEARING ENTAIL?

The first hearing is expected to be a table-setter for the rest of the subsequent hearings. The committee, comprised of seven Democrats and two Republicans, plans to lay out several areas of information it has gathered throughout its investigation. Lawmakers are also expected to focus part of the first hearing on far-right extremists who broke into the building that day.

The panel's probe has so far been divided into a series of focus areas, including the efforts by former President Trump and his allies to cast doubt on the election and halt the certification of President Joe Biden's victory; the financing and organizing of rallies in Washington that took place before the attack; security failures by Capitol Police and federal agencies; and the actions of the rioters themselves.

## WILL THERE BE NEW DETAILS ABOUT THE INSURRECTION?

Several members of the committee have promised new and explosive information to arise from the public hearings, but it remains unclear what that will entail.

The hearings are expected to be exhaustive but not the final word from the committee. It plans to release subsequent reports on its findings, including recommendations on legislative reforms, ahead of the midterm elections.

## Armed man arrested for threat to kill Justice Kavanaugh

By MARK SHERMAN, MICHAEL BALSAMO and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A man carrying a gun, a knife and zip ties was arrested Wednesday near Justice Brett Kavanaugh's house in Maryland after threatening to kill the justice.

Nicholas John Roske, 26, of Simi Valley, California, was charged with the attempted murder of a Supreme Court justice. During a court hearing, he consented to remain in federal custody for now.

Roske was dressed in black when he arrived by taxi just after 1 a.m. outside Kavanaugh's home in a Washington suburb. He had a Glock 17 pistol, ammunition, a knife, zip ties, pepper spray, duct tape and other items that he told police he would use to break into Kavanaugh's house and kill him, according to a criminal complaint and an affidavit filed in federal court in Maryland. Roske said he purchased the gun to kill Kavanaugh and that he also would kill himself, the affidavit said.

Roske told police he was upset by a leaked draft opinion suggesting the Supreme Court is about to overrule *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark abortion case. He also said he was upset over the school massacre in Uvalde, Texas, and believed Kavanaugh would vote to loosen gun control laws, the affidavit said.

The court currently is weighing a challenge to New York's requirements for getting a permit to carry a gun in public, a case that could make it easier to be armed on the streets of New York and other large cities.

When he got out of the taxi, Roske was spotted by two U.S. Marshals who are part of round-the-clock security provided to the justices following the leak of the draft opinion last month. But Roske was only apprehended after he called 911 in Montgomery County, Maryland, and said he was having suicidal thoughts and planned to kill Kavanaugh, having found the justice's address online. Roske was still on the phone when Montgomery County police arrived on the scene, according to the affidavit.

At his initial appearance in federal court in Greenbelt, Maryland, Roske paused several times before responding to routine inquiries from U.S. Magistrate Judge Timothy J. Sullivan during the 10-minute hearing.

Asked if he understood what was happening and whether he was thinking clearly, Roske paused, then said, "I think I have a reasonable understanding, but I wouldn't say I'm thinking clearly."

Roske said he is taking medication, but did not say what it is or why he is on it. He also said he is a college graduate.

Andrew Szekely, a federal public defender who is representing Roske, declined to comment on the case after the hearing. Roske's next court date was tentatively set for June 22. The attempted murder charge carries a maximum term of 20 years in prison.

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Earlier Wednesday, Attorney General Merrick Garland told reporters, "This kind of behavior is obviously behavior we will not tolerate. Threats of violence and actual violence against the justices of course strike at the heart of our democracy and we will do everything we can to prevent them and to hold people who do them accountable."

President Joe Biden praised authorities for quickly apprehending the man, deputy White House press secretary Andrew Bates said in an email.

There have been protests at the homes of Kavanaugh and other justices, as well as demonstrations at the court, where a security fence rings the building and nearby streets have been closed.

A Homeland Security Department report said the draft opinion, leaked in early May, has unleashed a wave of threats against officials and others and increased the likelihood of extremist violence.

## Capitol attack's full story: Jan. 6 panel probes US risks

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol played out for the world to see, but the House committee investigating the attack believes a more chilling story has yet to be told -- about the president and the people whose actions put American democracy at risk.

With personal accounts and gruesome videos the 1/6 committee expects Thursday's prime-time hearing to begin to show that America's tradition of a peaceful transfer of presidential power came close to slipping away. It will reconstruct how the president, Donald Trump, refused to concede the 2020 election, spread false claims of voter fraud and orchestrated an unprecedented public and private campaign to overturn Joe Biden's victory.

The result of the coming weeks of public hearings may not change hearts or minds in politically polarized America. But the committee's year-long investigation with 1,000 interviews is intended to stand as a public record for history. A final report aims to provide an accounting of the most violent attack on the Capitol since the British set fire in 1814, and ensure it never happens again.

"This is not a game," said Steven Levitsky, a Harvard professor and co-author of "How Democracies Die," who has written extensively on the world's democratic governments.

"We suffered an assault on our democracy the likes of which none of us have seen in our lifetime."

Emotions are still raw at the Capitol 17 months after Trump sent his supporters to Congress to "fight like hell" for his presidency. That was on a Wednesday, two months after the election, a traditionally celebratory if ho-hum day when Congress is tasked with certifying the November results.

Security will be tight for the hearings. Law enforcement officials are reporting a spike in violent threats against members of Congress.

Against this backdrop, the committee will try to speak to a divided America, ahead of the fall midterm elections when voters will decide which party controls the Congress. Most TV networks will carry the hearings live, Fox News will not.

"We're going to tell the story of a conspiracy to overturn the 2020 presidential election," says Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a member of the committee.

"You really have to go back to the Civil War to understand anything like it."

First up will be wrenching accounts from police who engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the mob, with testimony from U.S. Capitol Police officer Caroline Edwards, who was seriously injured in the melee. Also appearing Thursday will be documentary maker Nick Quested who filmed the extremist Proud Boys storming the Capitol. Some of that group's members have since been indicted as have some from the Oath Keepers on rare sedition charges over the military-style attack.

In the weeks ahead, the panel is expected to detail Trump's public campaign to "Stop the Steal" and the private pressure he put on the Department of Justice to reverse his election loss — despite dozens of failed court cases and his own attorney general attesting there was no fraud on a scale that that could have tipped the results in his favor.

"It's going to be there for the permanent record, and I think that's important for history," said Barbara

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Comstock, a former Republican congresswoman from Virginia.

The panel, made up of nine lawmakers, faced obstacles from its start. Republicans blocked the formation of an independent body that could have investigated the Jan. 6 assault the way the 9/11 Commission probed the 2001 terror attack.

Instead, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ushered the creation of the 1/6 panel through Congress over the objections of Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell. She rejected Republican-appointed lawmakers who had voted Jan. 6 against certifying the election results, choosing her own preferred members to serve and naming civil rights advocate Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., as chairman.

The Jan. 6 committee's lopsided composition includes seven Democrats and two Republicans, Liz Cheney of Wyoming and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, both outspoken Trump critics now risking their political futures on this work.

After a year-long investigation, the story the committee aims to tell is still unfolding.

By many measures, the attack was set in motion months earlier, soon after Election Day, when Trump falsely claimed the voting was rigged and refused to concede once Biden was declared the winner.

The proceedings are expected to introduce Americans to a cast of characters, some well known, others elusive, and to what they said and did as Trump and his allies tried to reverse the election outcome.

The public will learn about the actions of Mark Meadows, the president's chief of staff, whose 2,000-plus text messages provided the committee with a snapshot of the real-time scramble to keep Trump in office. Of John Eastman, the conservative law professor, who was the architect of the unsuccessful scheme to convince Vice President Mike Pence to halt the certification on Jan. 6. Of the Justice Department officials who threatened to resign rather than go along with Trump's startling proposals.

Lawmakers have also been caught up in the probe, including House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy, who defied the committee's subpoena requests for testimony. Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump, who urged her father to call off the rioters, appeared privately before the committee.

The Justice Department has arrested and charged more than 800 people for the violence that day, the biggest dragnet in its history.

Trump has dismissed the entire investigation as illegitimate. The committee cannot charge him or anyone else. It's jurisdiction allows it only to refer its findings to the department, which is investigating.

Many Republicans are poised to defend Trump. Rep. Elise Stefanik of N.Y. said at a GOP leadership press conference Wednesday the committee's "shameless prime-time show" is nothing but a smear campaign against the former president, his party and his supporters.

As Trump weighs another run for the White House, other Republicans wonder quietly if the committee hearings will have an impact on the public — or if Jan. 6 will simply be forgotten.

Levitsky, the professor, said Americans have not had much experience watching their democracy at risk. "One weakness that Americans have in in defending our democracy, is that we take it for granted," he said. "We're not aware of the warning signs," he said.

He said the committee's report should be taught in U.S. civics and history textbooks for years to come to inform Americans and bring them together. "That's how democracy gets saved," he said.

## Climate-driven flooding poses well water contamination risks

By MICHAEL PHILLIS and JOHN FLESHER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — After a record-setting Midwestern rainstorm that damaged thousands of homes and businesses, Stefanie Johnson's farmhouse in Blandinsville, Illinois, didn't have safe drinking water for nearly two months.

Flood water poured into her well, turning the water a muddy brown and forcing Johnson, her husband and their two young children to use store-bought supplies. Even after sediment cleared, testing found bacteria — including E. coli, which can cause diarrhea. The family boiled water for drinking and cooking. The YMCA was a refuge for showers.

"I was pretty strict with the kids," said Johnson, who works with a private well protection program at

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the local health department. "I'd pour bottled water on their toothbrushes."

Though estimates vary, roughly 53 million U.S. residents — about 17% of the population — rely on private wells, according to a study conducted in part by Environmental Protection Agency researchers. Most live in rural areas. But others are in subdivisions near fast-growing metro regions or otherwise beyond the reach of public water pipes.

While many private wells provide safe water, the absence of regulation and treatment afforded by larger municipal systems may expose some users to health risks, from bacteria and viruses to chemicals and lead, studies have found.

Risks are elevated after flooding or heavy rainfall, when animal and human feces, dirt, nutrients such as nitrogen and other contaminants can seep into wells. And experts say the threat is growing as the warming climate fuels more intense rainstorms and stronger and wetter hurricanes.

"Areas that hadn't been impacted are now. New areas are getting flooded," said Kelsey Pieper, a Northeastern University professor of environmental engineering. "We know the environment is shifting and we're playing catch-up, trying to increase awareness."

Pieper is among scientists conducting well testing and education programs in storm-prone areas. After Hurricane Harvey caused widespread flooding along the Texas coast in 2017, sampling of more than 8,800 wells in 44 counties found average *E. coli* levels nearly three times higher than normal, she said.

Sampling of 108 wells in Mississippi following Hurricane Ida in 2021 produced a similar bump in *E. coli* readings. Other studies turned up higher levels in North Carolina after Hurricane Florence in 2018.

The following year, above-average snowfall and a March storm unleashed flooding in Nebraska. Levees and dams were breached. Fremont, a city of more than 25,000, turned into an island when the nearby Platte and Elkhorn rivers overflowed.

The municipal system continued to supply drinking water but some nearby private wells were damaged or contaminated. Julie Hindmarsh's farm was flooded for three days, and it took months to make the well water drinkable again. At times, the cleanup crew wore protective suits.

"They didn't know what was in that floodwater," she said.

## CONTAMINATION RISK

Groundwater is often a cleaner source than surface supplies because soil can provide a protective buffer, said Heather Murphy, an epidemiologist at the University of Guelph in Canada. But she said that can give well owners a false sense of security, leading them to forgo testing, maintenance and treatment.

"There's a big misconception that it's underground, therefore it's safe," said Murphy, who estimates 1.3 million cases of acute gastrointestinal illness in the U.S. are caused annually by drinking untreated water from private wells.

Old, poorly maintained wells are especially vulnerable to floodwaters entering through openings at the top. "It just runs right in and it's full of bacteria," said Steven Wilson, a well expert at the University of Illinois.

It doesn't always take a flood or hurricane to pollute wells. Industrial contamination can reach them by seeping into groundwater.

Around 1,000 residential wells in Michigan's Kent County were tainted for decades with toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, in landfill sludge from footwear company Wolverine World Wide. The pollution, discovered in 2017, spurred lawsuits and a \$69.5 million settlement with the state that extended city water lines to affected houses.

"We thought we were getting this pristine, straight-from-nature water and it would be much better for us," said Sandy Wynn-Stelt, who has lived across from one of the dump sites since the early 1990s.

She said tests detected high levels of PFAS chemicals in her water and blood, leaving her fearful to drink or even brush her teeth with well water. In a suit later settled, she blamed the contamination for her husband's 2016 death from liver cancer. She was diagnosed with thyroid cancer four years later.

## LITTLE REGULATION FOR WELL OWNERS

While many well owners don't have the option of hooking up to a public water system, others are happy with well water. They might favor the taste or want to avoid monthly bills and government regulation.

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"What I hear from people is freedom," said Jesse Campbell, private well coordinator for the Midwest Assistance Program Inc., which addresses rural water needs.

Private well owners are responsible for them. While public water systems must meet federal safety standards, those rules don't apply to wells that have fewer than 15 connections or serve fewer than 25 people.

State and local standards usually involve only construction and design, although some states set tougher rules.

New Jersey requires water quality testing before sales of property with private wells. Rhode Island requires testing when new wells are built and when property with a well is sold.

But many states rely on public outreach and voluntary action to protect private well users.

"There's an overall lack of education," Campbell said. He meets with well owners from Montana to Missouri, providing free inspections and advice.

A lot of harm can be prevented if owners make sure the well's top keeps out debris and that the pump is turned off before a storm to keep out floodwaters. Experts recommend testing after a flood and decontaminating wells with chlorine if a problem is found.

"People aren't regularly testing," said Riley Mulhern, an environmental engineer at the research group RTI International.

Indiana's health department offers testing for bacteria, lead, copper, fluoride and other contaminants. Some land-grant universities and private labs provide similar services.

While many owners know how to maintain their wells, others ignore problems even if the water isn't sanitary. Water that tastes fine can still be contaminated.

"I wish I had a nickel for everyone who's walked into a workshop and said, 'I've been drinking this water forever and it's fine,'" said Jason Barrett, who directs a Mississippi State University program that educates well owners.

It provides free testing. But where such assistance isn't available, costs can run to a few hundred dollars, according to experts. Some owners avoid testing because they are concerned it will reveal an expensive problem.

Johnson, the Illinois resident whose well was fouled by the 2013 downpour that killed four people and caused \$465 million in flood damage, paid about \$3,500 for repairs and upgrades.

"Luckily, none of us became ill," she said.

Even ordinary rainstorms can carry diseases into groundwater, said Mark Borchardt, a microbiologist formerly with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"A lot of times people say, 'Well, no one got sick,'" Borchardt said. "It's hard to see when people get sick unless it is a huge outbreak."

Bea and Neil Jobe live in Primm Springs, Tennessee, an hour's drive from Nashville. Several times a year, when there is heavy rain and a nearby creek floods, their well water turns "dingy," Bea Jobe said.

The discoloration disappears after a few days but Jobe takes precautions such as keeping bottled water available.

"I guess I'm used to it," she said.

## No, you're not imagining it — package sizes are shrinking

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

It's the inflation you're not supposed to see.

From toilet paper to yogurt and coffee to corn chips, manufacturers are quietly shrinking package sizes without lowering prices. It's dubbed "shrinkflation," and it's accelerating worldwide.

In the U.S., a small box of Kleenex now has 60 tissues; a few months ago, it had 65. Chobani Flips yogurts have shrunk from 5.3 ounces to 4.5 ounces. In the U.K., Nestle slimmed down its Nescafe Azera Americano coffee tins from 100 grams to 90 grams. In India, a bar of Vim dish soap has shrunk from 155 grams to 135 grams.

Shrinkflation isn't new. But it proliferates in times of high inflation as companies grapple with rising costs

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for ingredients, packaging, labor and transportation. Global consumer price inflation was up an estimated 7% in May, a pace that will likely continue through September, according to S&P Global.

"It comes in waves. We happen to be in a tidal wave at the moment because of inflation," said Edgar Dworsky, a consumer advocate and former assistant attorney general in Massachusetts who has documented shrinkflation on his Consumer World website for decades.

Dworsky began noticing smaller boxes in the cereal aisle last fall, and shrinkflation has ballooned from there. He can cite dozens of examples, from Cottonelle Ultra Clean Care toilet paper, which has shrunk from 340 sheets per roll to 312, to Folgers coffee, which downsized its 51-ounce container to 43.5 ounces but still says it will make up to 400 cups. (Folgers says it's using a new technology that results in lighter-weight beans.)

Dworsky said shrinkflation appeals to manufacturers because they know customers will notice price increases but won't keep track of net weights or small details, like the number of sheets on a roll of toilet paper. Companies can also employ tricks to draw attention away from downsizing, like marking smaller packages with bright new labels that draw shoppers' eyes.

That's what Fritos did. Bags of Fritos Scoops marked "Party Size" used to be 18 ounces; some are still on sale at a grocery chain in Texas. But almost every other big chain is now advertising "Party Size" Fritos Scoops that are 15.5 ounces — and more expensive.

PepsiCo didn't respond when asked about Fritos. But it did acknowledge the shrinking of Gatorade bottles. The company recently began phasing out 32-ounce bottles in favor of 28-ounce ones, which are tapered in the middle to make it easier to hold them. The changeover has been in the works for years and isn't related to the current economic climate, PepsiCo said. But it didn't respond when asked why the 28-ounce version is more expensive.

Likewise, Kimberly-Clark — which makes both Cottonelle and Kleenex — didn't respond to requests for comment on the reduced package sizes. Procter & Gamble Co. didn't respond when asked about Pantene Pro-V Curl Perfection conditioner, which downsized from 12 fluid ounces to 10.4 fluid ounces but still costs \$3.99.

Earth's Best Organic Sunny Day Snack Bars went from eight bars per box to seven, but the price listed at multiple stores remains \$3.69. Hain Celestial Group, the brand's owner, didn't respond to an email seeking comment.

Some companies are straightforward about the changes. In Japan, snack maker Calbee Inc. announced 10% weight reductions — and 10% price increases — for many of its products in May, including veggie chips and crispy edamame. The company blamed a sharp rise in the cost of raw materials.

Domino's Pizza announced in January it was shrinking the size of its 10-piece chicken wings to eight pieces for the same \$7.99 carryout price. Domino's cited the rising cost of chicken.

In India, "down-switching" — another term for shrinkflation — is mostly done in rural areas, where people are poorer and more price sensitive, said Byas Anand, head of corporate communications for Dabur India, a consumer care and food business. In cities, companies simply jack up prices.

"My company has been doing it openly for ages," Anand said.

Some customers who have noticed the downsizing are sharing examples on social media. Others say shrinkflation is causing them to change their shopping habits.

Alex Aspacher does a lot of the grocery shopping and meal planning for his family of four in Haskins, Ohio. He noticed when the one-pound package of sliced Swiss cheese he used to buy shrank to 12 ounces but kept its \$9.99 price tag. Now, he hunts for deals or buys a block of cheese and slices it himself.

Aspacher said he knew prices would rise when he started reading about higher wages for grocery workers. But the speed of the change — and the shrinking packages — have surprised him.

"I was prepared for it to a degree, but there hasn't been a limit to it so far," Aspacher said. "I hope we find that ceiling pretty soon."

Sometimes the trend can reverse. As inflation eases, competition might force manufacturers to lower their prices or reintroduce larger packages. But Dworsky says once a product has gotten smaller, it often stays that way.



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"Upsizing is kind of rare," he said.

Hitendra Chaturvedi, a professor of supply chain management at Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business, said he has no doubt many companies are struggling with labor shortages and higher raw material costs.

But in some cases, companies' profits — or sales minus the cost of doing business — are also increasing exponentially, and Chaturvedi finds that troubling.

He points to Mondelez International, which took some heat this spring for shrinking the size of its Cadbury Dairy Milk bar in the U.K. without lowering the price. The company's operating income climbed 21% in 2021, but fell 15% in the first quarter as cost pressures grew. By comparison, PepsiCo's operating profit climbed 11% in 2021 and 128% in the first quarter.

"I'm not saying they're profiteering, but it smells like it," Chaturvedi said. "Are we using supply constraints as a weapon to make more money?"

## US House races in California could shape future of Congress

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AP Political Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — U.S. House battles took shape in heavily Democratic California that could tip the balance of power in Congress, while former Trump administration Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke was in a tight match to claim the Republican nomination for a new House seat in Montana.

In Mississippi, two Republican congressmen were forced into runoffs to keep their seats. Rep. Steven Palazzo had been dogged by ethics questions over his campaign spending, while Rep. Michael Guest faced a challenger who criticized his vote on a proposal to create an outside commission to investigate the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

Primary elections across seven states Tuesday set up November contests in dozens of races, as Democrats look to protect the party's fragile majority in the House.

In a diverse district anchored in California's Orange County, Republican U.S. Rep. Michelle Steel, a South Korean immigrant, will face Democrat Jay Chen. The district, which includes the nation's largest Vietnamese American community, is widely considered a toss-up.

In other districts in the nation's most populous state, two Republican House members were trying to surmount challenges tied to former President Donald Trump: One voted to support Trump's impeachment after the U.S. Capitol insurrection, while the other fought against it.

A look at results in key U.S. House races Tuesday:

### BATTLEGROUND CALIFORNIA: TRUMP HISTORY LOOMS IN KEY DISTRICTS

In 2020, Republican U.S. Rep. Mike Garcia won a narrow victory in a Democratic-leaning district north of Los Angeles. The former Navy fighter pilot was endorsed by Trump that year, then joined House Republicans who rejected electoral votes from Arizona and Pennsylvania and opposed Trump's impeachment after the Capitol insurrection. That record will be a focus for Democrat Christy Smith, who earned a chance for a rematch with Garcia, after losing two years ago.

In a Democratic-tilting district in the state's Central Valley farm belt, Republican Rep. David Valadao is highlighting an independent streak while contending with GOP fallout for his vote to impeach Trump over the Jan. 6 insurrection. Early returns showed him holding an edge over Republican Chris Mathys, who made Valadao's vote a centerpiece in his campaign to oust him. The winner will face Democrat Rudy Salas, a state legislator.

California uses a top-two election format in which only the two leading vote-getters advance to the November general election, regardless of party.

In the Central Valley, Republican Connie Conway won a special election to complete the term of former Rep. Devin Nunes, who resigned to head Trump's media company.

### TWO MISSISSIPPI CONGRESSMEN FORCED INTO RUNOFFS

A pair of GOP congressmen in Mississippi are headed to June 28 runoffs.

U.S. Rep. Steven Palazzo, first elected in 2010, will face Jackson County Sheriff Mike Ezell after failing

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to win the GOP nomination outright on Tuesday, earning less than 50% of the vote.

A 2021 report by the Office of Congressional Ethics found "substantial reason to believe" Palazzo, a military veteran who serves on the Appropriations and Homeland Security committees, abused his office by misspending campaign funds, doing favors for his brother and enlisting staff for political and personal errands. His then-spokesperson, Colleen Kennedy, said the probe was based on politically motivated "false allegations."

In another Mississippi district, U.S. Rep. Michael Guest will face former Navy pilot Michael Cassidy in a district that cuts through parts of central Mississippi.

Cassidy criticized Guest for being in the minority of Republicans who voted to create an outside commission to investigate the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol — a group that would have been separate from the congressional committee now conducting the investigation. Cassidy also says on his website that President Joe Biden should be impeached.

## FORMER TRUMP CABINET MEMBER SEEKS RETURN TRIP TO WASHINGTON

Montana gained a second congressional district this year thanks to its growing population, and Zinke, an Interior Department secretary under Trump, is one of five Republicans on the primary ballot for the open seat.

Zinke's rivals have been drawing attention to his troubled tenure at the agency, which was marked by multiple ethics investigations. One investigation determined Zinke lied to an agency ethics official about his continued involvement in a commercial real estate deal in his hometown. He's faced a smear campaign over his military service from the extreme right wing of his party and questions about his residency following revelations that his wife declared a house in California as her primary residence.

Zinke, a former Navy SEAL and former Montana congressman, was in a tight race Wednesday against former state Sen. Al "Doc" Olszewski, an orthopedic surgeon and hard-line conservative who has tried to paint Zinke as a "liberal insider." The results of the race were being delayed because of ballot printing errors that forced officials in one county to count votes by hand.

The winner will face Olympic rower and attorney Monica Tranel, a Democrat, in the general election.

## IOWA'S SOLE DEMOCRATIC HOUSE MEMBER FACES A TOUGH FIGHT

A Republican state senator has captured the slot to take on Democratic Rep. Cindy Axne this fall in a newly drawn district that appears more favorable for the GOP.

Axne is the only Democrat in Iowa's House delegation.

State Sen. Zach Nunn easily outdistanced rivals Nicole Hasso, a financial services worker, and Gary Leffler, who works in the construction industry, to claim the GOP spot. Nunn, an Air Force pilot who has served in the Legislature since 2014 and has worked to cut taxes, was the best known among the GOP contenders.

In previous elections, Axne was elevated by her strong support in the Des Moines area, even as she struggled in rural counties that typically lean Republican. The new district includes several counties in southern Iowa known to turn out strongly for Republicans, increasing the pressure on Axne to drive up her numbers in Democrat-friendly Des Moines and its suburbs.

## REMATCH COMING IN NEW JERSEY HOUSE BATTLEGROUND

In what could be New Jersey's most closely watched contest in the fall, Democratic U.S. Rep. Tom Malinowski and Republican Tom Kean Jr. won their primaries, setting up a rematch of their closely contested 2020 race.

Malinowski, a State Department official in the Obama administration, is seeking a third term as his party faces headwinds heading into the general election. His district added more Republican-leaning towns during redistricting, making his reelection bid potentially more difficult.

Another complicating factor is an ethics investigation he's facing over stock transactions in medical and tech companies that had a stake in the pandemic response. A report from the Office of Congressional Ethics said the board found "substantial reason to believe" he failed to properly disclose or report his stock transactions.

Malinowski said his failure to initially disclose the transactions was "a mistake that I own 100%." He

said he didn't direct or even ask questions about trades made by his brokerage firm.

Kean, a former state Senate minority leader and the son of the former two-term Republican governor, said in a tweet that he was humbled by his victory and looks forward to seizing the seat in November.

## SOUTH DAKOTA REPUBLICAN BEATS BACK CHALLENGE FROM POLITICAL RIGHT

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson of South Dakota won his state's GOP primary contest as he runs for a third term.

Johnson defeated state lawmaker Taffy Howard, who tried to run to his right. He is set for reelection in November because no other candidate has entered the race.

Howard repeated Trump's lies that there was widespread fraud in the 2020 election and attacked Johnson for certifying the electoral college vote. While Johnson touted his conservative voting record during the primary contest, the congressman has also worked with a bipartisan group of lawmakers called the Problem Solvers Caucus.

Johnson drew attacks from a pro-Trump political action committee called Drain the DC Swamp, which spent \$500,000 trying to knock him from the House.

## Justice Dept. names 9 to aid in review of Uvalde shooting

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department has named a team of nine people, including an FBI official and former police chiefs, to aid in a review of the law enforcement response to the Uvalde, Texas, elementary school shooting that left 19 children and two teachers dead.

Attorney General Merrick Garland announced the team during a meeting in his office in Washington on Wednesday. The critical incident review is being led by the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

The review will include an examination of police policies, training and communication, along with the deployment of officers and tactics, the Justice Department said. It will also examine who was in command of the incident and how police prepared for potential active-shooter incidents.

The team gathered for its first meeting Wednesday around a conference table in Garland's office, with a few of the members appearing virtually on a large television screen.

Garland said the review would be comprehensive, transparent and independent.

"We will be assessing what happened that day," he said. "We will be doing site visits to the school, we will be conducting interviews of an extremely wide variety of stakeholders, witnesses, families, law enforcement, government officials, school officials, and we will be reviewing the resources that were made available in the aftermath."

The findings and recommendations will be detailed in a report, which will be made public, he said.

Garland said the team has already begun its work, though the department didn't provide specific information on whether any members of the team have been to Uvalde, a town of about 15,000 residents.

The Justice Department said it would move as expeditiously as possible in developing the report.

The review was requested by Uvalde's mayor. Such a review is somewhat rare, and most after-action reports that come after a mass shooting are generally compiled by local law enforcement agencies or outside groups. The Justice Department conducted similar reviews after 14 people were killed in a terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, in 2015 and after the mass shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, the deadliest attack on the LGBTQ community in U.S. history, which left 49 people dead and 53 people wounded in 2016.

The Justice Department said the nine officials on the team in the Uvalde case had been selected for their expertise in law enforcement, emergency management, active shooter response, school safety and other areas. The team includes the former chief of the Sacramento, California, police department, a deputy chief who worked at Virginia Tech, the sheriff in Orange County, Florida, an FBI unit chief and other officials.

Two weeks ago, the 19 students and two teachers were killed at Robb Elementary School. Law enforcement and state officials have struggled to present an accurate timeline and details, and they have

stopped releasing information about the police response.

The gunman, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos, spent roughly 80 minutes inside Robb Elementary, and more than an hour passed from when the first officers followed him into the building to when he was killed, according to an official timeline. In the meantime, parents outside begged police to rush in, and panicked children called 911 from inside.

The review comes as state officials have already been examining the circumstances surrounding the shooting.

A spokesman for the Texas Department of Public Safety has said the school district police chief who served as on-site commander — and who officials have said made the decision not to breach a classroom sooner, believing it had shifted from an active shooting to a hostage situation — had stopped speaking with state investigators.

But the chief, Pete Arredondo, later told CNN that he was speaking regularly with Texas Department of Public Safety investigators. Texas officials have stopped answering questions about the response and haven't said whether Arredondo is now cooperating with them.

When asked what the Justice Department would do if someone refused to cooperate in the federal review, Garland said Justice officials "expect voluntary cooperation from everybody at every level, and we have been promised that cooperation."

Uvalde's mayor, Don McLaughlin, praised Garland for the "swift action" beginning the review and vowed the city would fully cooperate.

"This assessment and the findings are of the utmost importance to the victims and their families, the community of Uvalde, and the Country," McLaughlin said in a statement. "The city will fully cooperate with the Department of Justice and will assist with coordinating as necessary with other local entities as needed for this review."

The team includes: Rick Braziel, the former police chief in Sacramento; Gene Deisinger, who was a deputy chief at Virginia Tech; Frank Fernandez, who served as the director of public safety in Coral Gables, Florida; Albert Guarnieri, a unit chief at the FBI; Mark Lomax, who worked as a major with the Pennsylvania State Police; Laura McElroy, the CEO of McElroy Media Group; John Mina, the sheriff in Orange County, Florida; April Naturale, an assistant vice president at Vibrant Emotional Health; and Kristen Ziman, the former police chief in Aurora, Illinois.

## **Saudi-funded golf series puts new scrutiny on Mickelson**

By ROB HARRIS AP Sports Writer

ST. ALBANS, England (AP) — Out of public view for four months, Phil Mickelson returns to golf under severe scrutiny because of where he's playing and who is paying him.

Mickelson is a six-time major champion, the most popular golfer this side of Tiger Woods. And now he is being referred to as a "stooge" by a human rights group for being among 48 players who have signed up for a rebel golf league backed by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund.

"I don't condone human rights violations," Mickelson responded hesitatingly, choosing his words carefully at a terse news conference Wednesday.

Mickelson, who last year made history as the oldest major champion in golf's 161-year history, and Dustin Johnson are the leading faces of the LIV Golf Invitational series, the greatest threat to the PGA Tour since it was formed in 1969.

Along with disrupting the royal and ancient game, it has forced Mickelson and others to weigh the value of taking more money than they have earned in their careers against the kingdom's notorious record on human rights.

The cash being offered by LIV Golf is irresistible, especially for players like the 51-year-old Mickelson in the twilight of their careers. Signing bonus have been reported as high as \$150 million for Johnson, even higher for Mickelson.

The Washington Post quoted Greg Norman, who oversees the circuit, as saying that Woods turned down an offer described as "high nine digits."

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There is \$25 million in prize money at each event — more than the \$20 million for the PGA Tour's flagship event — with the winner banking \$4 million and the last-place player earning \$120,000. The circuit's first event begins Thursday at the Centurion Golf Club near London.

It just requires players to potentially jeopardize their future participation in majors like the Masters, and in the Ryder Cup, while overlooking the riches flow from the Public Investment Fund and facing a torrent of questions about accepting cash from Saudi Arabia, which has faced a global outcry over the 2018 killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi and other human rights violations. The kingdom has denied involvement in Khashoggi's death.

It was Mickelson who called the Saudis "scary mother-(expletives)" in comments reported in February, citing Khashoggi's murder in the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul.

"I've made, said and done a lot of things that I regret, and I'm sorry for that and for the hurt that it's caused a lot of people," he said. "I'm certainly aware of what has happened with Jamal Khashoggi, and I think it's terrible. I've also seen the good that the game of golf has done throughout history."

What is not clear is how LIV Golf can help to improve Saudi Arabia beyond burnishing its image, although there is little evidence of the country's backing for the series around the Centurion Club in St. Albans.

"I understand people have very strong opinions and may disagree with my decision," Mickelson said when asked to expand on his apology, "and I can empathize with that."

Human rights activists see the players as engaging in the process they call "sportswashing" — helping a country improve its image through staging events with renowned athletes.

"Saudi Arabia has become more repressive in recent years, not less," said Sacha Deshmukh, chief executive of Amnesty International UK. "Human rights defenders and peaceful critics have been locked up, torture in jails is rife, and mass executions have shocked the world. Rather than acting as the willing stooges of Saudi sportswashing, we'd like to see golfers at the LIV Golf Invitational speaking out about human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia."

The 16 golfers to face the media outside London -- shepherded by news conference co-host and former White House press secretary Ari Fleischer -- have faced few questions about the competition itself. The 54-hole tournament has no cut and a shotgun start, meaning everyone starts at the same time on a different hole. No other tournament in the world does that.

The series name LIV — which rhymes with "give" — takes its name from the Roman numerals for 54.

Former top-ranked Lee Westwood had no qualms about acknowledging the cash incentives to join the series.

"This is my 29th season," the 49-year-old Englishman said. "If there's a pay increase, then at my age, I'd have to be stupid not to take it, or certainly have a good look at it and then not take it."

It was also taken by 46-year-old compatriot, Ian Poulter, who stands to improve rapidly on the \$28 million earned in career prize money.

"It is a vast sum of money," Poulter said of LIV, "but it's a great platform to be able to build the game of golf and give back at the same time."

Only one of the eight events is in Saudi Arabia, in Jeddah in October. Five tournaments are scheduled for the United States, starting July 1-3 near Portland, Oregon. Two are on courses owned by former President Donald Trump. It poses a direct challenge to the PGA Tour because its regulations do not allow for any releases for tournaments held in North America.

Mickelson has resisted quitting the PGA Tour, unlike two-time major winner Dustin Johnson who has resigned his membership.

Graeme McDowell, the 2010 U.S. Open champion who sunk the winning putt in the Ryder Cup in the same year, is aware of the potential disciplinary consequences by going off to compete on the LIV circuit while not severing ties with the PGA.

"Why as a player, would I want to get involved in some sort of legal situation with one of the greatest tours in the world?" McDowell said.

The PGA Tour has said a member who plays in the LIV series would face discipline because it did not grant releases. It has not said what that would be, though Commissioner Jay Monahan said in a player

meeting earlier this year they would be disbarred.

The players joining LIV hope the PGA Tour, along with the European tour, allows players to compete where they want and that LIV becomes just another circuit that counts for ranking points feeding into the majors.

## Off-grid living beckons more than just hardy pioneer types

By KATHERINE ROTH Associated Press

Living off-grid conjures images of survivalists in remote places and a rustic, "Little House on the Prairie" lifestyle with chores from morning to night. Yet only a tiny fraction of people living off-grid do it like that, and fewer still live more than an hour from any town.

"Living off-grid doesn't mean you don't buy your groceries at a store or take your waste to the local dump. It just means you are not connected to utility grids," says Gary Collins, who has lived off-grid, or mostly off-grid, for a decade. He has published books on the subject, and leads online classes.

Although precise numbers of off-grid households are hard to come by, Collins estimates that only 1 percent of those living off-grid are in truly remote areas.

Overall, the off-grid movement remains small. But it got a boost after the COVID pandemic hit: City dwellers began to explore different ways of living, facilitated by improvements in alternative energy sources like solar power, and batteries for storing that power.

More frequent power outages and utility grids' struggles to handle the severe weather events brought on by climate change have added to interest in disconnecting from the grid. So have utility bill hikes.

"There's a lot more interest in living off the grid now because energy is costing so much and there are so many problems with grids," says author Sheri Koones, whose books about sustainable houses include "Prefabulous and Almost Off the Grid" (Abrams, 2012).

There are also those who remain connected to the grid but try to power their homes independent of it. Koones cites the rise in "net metering," when your property's renewable energy source — usually solar -- is producing more energy than you use, and your local utility pays you for the excess.

Today, off-grid living encompasses everything from "dry camping" in RVs (with no electrical or water hookups) to swank Santa Barbara estates, from modest dwellings tucked just outside of towns to — yes -- remote rustic cabins.

"Everyone does it differently and everyone does it their own way, because it's their own adventure," says Collins.

For him, off-grid living is part of finding a simpler, less cluttered life more in sync with nature.

The Anacapa Architecture firm, in Santa Barbara, California, and Portland, Oregon, has built several upscale off-grid homes in recent years, and has several more off-grid projects in the works.

"There's definitely an increase in traction for this kind of lifestyle, especially in the last two years. There's a desire to get more in tune with nature," says Jon Bang, marketing and PR coordinator for Anacapa Architecture.

The lifestyle that Anacapa homes aim for is one of modernist elegance, not roughing it. Bang says new technologies can ensure comfortable self-sufficiency.

One reason for the high cost of homes like this is that it's expensive to haul equipment to a remote site. In addition, they might be outfitted with things like solar power, an onsite battery bank, a septic system that treats sewage onsite, a water well, and a dry well to treat and reuse water, not to mention a plumbing system designed to use as little water as possible.

Such homes also are carefully designed to take advantage of the site's landscape features with an eye to sustainability. For example, one of the firm's homes is built into a hillside and has a green roof (with plantings). Strategic landscaping can minimize the need for watering.

"For those with means, it opens up building sites that cannot be connected to local grids, and allows for a quieter kind of life, grounded in nature without neighbors nearby," Bang says.

For those without the means to hire architects, there are numerous recent books, blogs, YouTube videos

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and more dedicated to the subject.

"A lot of people are interested in it now. They contact me after watching something on TV or on YouTube and I tell them, 'If you learned everything you know on YouTube, you are never going to survive,'" says Collins.

Growing up poor in a rural area, he says, helped him succeed at off-grid living, first in Washington state and now in Arizona. He makes regular grocery runs, but also grows some of his own food and hunts wild game. He has his own septic system and well. While his previous home was entirely off-grid, with solar panels and a wind turbine for power, his current home is hooked up to an electrical grid, mainly, he says, because the bills are too low to warrant the cost of solar panels.

If you want to be totally self-sufficient, he says, it takes a lot of time and physical effort. You won't have time to hold down a job. If you're living in a remote location, you need to consider access to medical care, and whether you are mentally prepared for that much isolation.

"People confuse homesteading with off-grid living. You can be homesteading but still be connected to a grid. But if you live off-grid and do that, that's your life," says Collins. "Your wood won't cut itself. You'll have to haul water. The more successful people tend to be those who grew up on ranches, people who grew up doing demanding chores."

He warns, "People die off-grid all the time, because of things like chainsaw accidents. You have to be very careful and think everything through. No EMS will get to you in time."

Anyone interested in living off-grid should try dry camping in an RV or living in a remote area first to see if the lifestyle fits, he says.

And depending on how it's done, he says, off-grid living is not necessarily environmentally sustainable — not if you're driving a fuel-guzzling truck and relying on a gas-powered generator, for example.

Still, improved alternative energy sources and construction techniques are making off-grid living more thinkable for more people, including those who don't want to haul buckets of water from a well or live by candlelight.

## Then and now: GOP lawmakers' evolution on the Capitol riot

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most every Republican lawmaker expressed outrage in the days after the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Some even blamed then-President Donald Trump.

But the larger GOP narrative shifted in the weeks and months that followed. Republican House leader Kevin McCarthy, who had said in the hours after the attack that it had been "the saddest day I have ever had serving as a member of this institution," went on to visit Trump at his Florida home only weeks after the riot.

Others went further, with some Republican lawmakers defending the rioters or playing down the violence of the mob that beat police officers and smashed its way into the Capitol. The rioters, echoing Trump's falsehoods about widespread fraud in the election, temporarily stopped the certification of Joe Biden's presidential victory.

A few Republicans have consistently criticized Trump, putting their own political future in peril.

A look at comments from key Republicans in the year-and-a half since the attack as the House committee investigating the riot prepares to begin public hearings Thursday night.

HOUSE GOP LEADER KEVIN MCCARTHY, R-CALIF.

On Jan. 13, 2021, just before the Democratic-led House voted to impeach Trump over the insurrection, McCarthy said that "the president bears responsibility for Wednesday's attack on Congress by mob rioters."

McCarthy said Trump should have immediately denounced the mob when he saw the violence unfolding.

"These facts require immediate action by President Trump: accept his share of responsibility, quell the brewing unrest, and ensure President-elect Biden is able to successfully begin his term," McCarthy said. "And the president's immediate action also deserves congressional action, which is why I think a fact finding commission and a censure resolution would be prudent."

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Just a week later, McCarthy told reporters, "I don't believe he provoked it, if you listen to what he said at the rally," referring to Trump's speech to his supporters in front of the White House shortly before the assault on the Capitol. Trump had said to march peacefully to the Capitol, but he also told people in the crowd to "fight like hell" or "you're not going to have a country anymore."

McCarthy later voted against forming a bipartisan commission to investigate the attack and has called the Democratic-led Jan. 6 committee a partisan sham. He is now appearing with Trump and praising the former president at fundraisers.

Trump never accepted responsibility for the insurrection and has defended the rioters.

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL, R-KY.

McConnell spoke of the "failed insurrection" the night of the attack and said Congress "will not be kept out of this chamber by thugs, mobs, or threats."

He voted weeks later to acquit Trump for inciting the insurrection. But he delivered a scorching rebuke of Trump after that vote, saying that "there is no question that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of that day. The people who stormed this building believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their president."

McConnell continued: "Their having that belief was a foreseeable consequence of the growing crescendo of false statements, conspiracy theories, and reckless hyperbole which the defeated president kept shouting into the largest megaphone on planet Earth."

That same month, McConnell said he would "absolutely" vote for Trump if he were the GOP nominee in 2024.

FORMER VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE

Pence was under more pressure than any other Republican on Jan. 6, 2021 because Trump was calling on him to object to Biden's certification even though the vice president had no legal authority to do so in his ceremonial role presiding over the count.

Pence refused Trump's entreaties. As he hid in the Capitol during the insurrection, rioters breaking in were chanting "hang Mike Pence."

Bringing the Senate back to session in the hours after the insurrection, Pence said he condemned the violence "in the strongest possible terms."

"To those who wreaked havoc in our Capitol today, you did not win," Pence said. "Violence never wins. Freedom wins. And this is still the People's House."

Two weeks later, Pence attended Biden's inauguration. Trump refused to go.

Since then, Pence has repeatedly defended his decision to abide by his constitutional role. He has called for the GOP to move on from 2020 as he lays the groundwork for a potential presidential run that could put him in direct competition with his former boss.

He reinforced his stance in a speech this year, saying that "President Trump is wrong. I had no right to overturn the election."

Still, he has walked a careful line, praising the Trump-Pence administration's policy accomplishments as he courts support from the party's base.

SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM, R-S.C.

Graham spoke emotionally and forcefully the night of the insurrection, suggesting that he would permanently break ties with Trump after the two had forged a close relationship during Trump's presidency.

"Trump and I have had a hell of a journey," Graham said on the Senate floor in the hours after the attack. "I hate it being this way. Oh my God, I hate it. From my point of view, he has been a consequential president. But today, the first thing you will see, all I can say is, count me out. Enough is enough. I tried to be helpful."

Graham voted to certify Biden's victory and praised Pence for resisting the pressure to object.



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In the months afterward, Graham softened his stance, and he and the former president continued to talk. "Can we move forward without President Trump? The answer is no," Graham told Fox News host Sean Hannity in the spring of 2021. "I've determined we can't grow without him."

REP. MO BROOKS, R-ALA.

Brooks is the rare House Republican to have stepped up his criticism of Trump since the insurrection. The Alabama Republican was one of Trump's most forceful allies on Jan. 6, 2021, telling the crowd at the rally near the White House before the riot, "Today is the day American patriots start taking down names and kicking ass."

Brooks was one of several GOP lawmakers who tried to help Trump overturn his election defeat. Brooks said on the House floor after the violence that in his judgment, "if only lawful votes cast by eligible American citizens are counted, Joe Biden lost and President Trump won the Electoral College."

In August, though, as he was running in a GOP primary for the Senate, Brooks told a crowd that it was time to move on from the 2020 election. Trump didn't like that and withdrew his Senate endorsement.

Brooks claimed that Trump rescinded his support after the two had a conversation in which he told Trump there was no legal way to rescind the results or hold a "do-over" of the 2020 election.

Brooks is now in a runoff for the GOP Senate nomination, having risen in the polls after Trump dropped him. And Brooks is asking the former president to back him again.

REP. LIZ CHENEY, R-WYO.

Cheney has been the most prominent and consistent GOP critic of Trump — and she's staked her political career on it.

A week after the attack, Cheney was one of only 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump. In a statement, Cheney said that "the president of the United States summoned this mob, assembled the mob, and lit the flame of this attack. Everything that followed was his doing."

She said Trump should have intervened, but did not. "There has never been a greater betrayal by a president of the United States of his office and his oath to the Constitution," Cheney said. "I will vote to impeach the president."

Cheney, who was then a member of House leadership, faced immediate backlash from her party for the impeachment vote and for her forceful remarks. But she has not wavered in the year since, and accepted an invitation from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., to sit on the committee that is investigating the insurrection.

House Republicans booted Cheney from leadership and the party censured her and Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, the only other Republican on the Jan. 6 committee. And she faces a strong challenge in the Wyoming primary from a Trump-backed candidate.

"When I know something is wrong, I will say so," Cheney said in a campaign video announcing that she had filed for reelection. "I won't waver or back down."

## Moderna says updated COVID shot boosts omicron protection

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

Moderna's experimental COVID-19 vaccine that combines its original shot with protection against the omicron variant appears to work, the company announced Wednesday.

COVID-19 vaccine makers are studying updated boosters that might be offered in the fall to better protect people against future coronavirus surges.

Moderna's preliminary study results show people given the combination shot experienced a higher boost in omicron-fighting antibodies than if they just got a fourth dose of the original vaccine.

"We believe strongly that this data supports an update of the vaccine," Dr. Stephen Hoge, Moderna's president, said Wednesday.

Today's COVID-19 vaccines all are based on the original version of the coronavirus. They're still provid-

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ing strong protection against severe disease, hospitalization and death even after the appearance of the super-contagious omicron variant -- especially if people have had an initial booster dose.

But the virus continues to mutate rapidly in ways that let it evade some of the vaccines' protections and cause milder infections.

So U.S. regulators, and the World Health Organization, are considering whether to order a change in the vaccine recipe for a new round of booster shots in the fall -- when cold weather and kids returning to school are expected to drive yet another surge.

Key questions: How to make that change without losing the continued strong protection against COVID-19's worst outcomes? And what's the right variant to target? After the huge winter omicron surge, that mutant's genetically distinct relatives now are the main threats, including one that's fueling the current U.S. wave of infections.

The Food and Drug Administration has set a meeting in late June for its scientific advisers to debate those questions and evaluate data from vaccine makers' tests of potential new formulas. Pfizer also is studying a combination shot, what scientists call a bivalent vaccine, with some data expected later this month.

Moderna's new study tested people who'd had three prior vaccinations, giving 377 of them a fourth dose of the original vaccine and another 437 the combo shot.

The study wasn't designed to track how well the updated booster prevented COVID-19 cases and it was tested only against omicron, not the variants dominant now. But the bivalent vaccine sparked a nearly eight-fold rise in levels of antibodies capable of fighting omicron. Importantly, that was 1.75 times better than the antibody jump from simply giving a fourth dose of the original vaccine, Moderna said.

The data hasn't undergone scientific review, and these initial measurements were taken a month after booster shots. Antibodies naturally wane so it's not clear how long that protection could last. Moderna plans to track the levels at three and six months but already is manufacturing doses to be ready if regulators in the U.S. or elsewhere order a change for fall shots.

## Political foes revel in Boris Johnson's woes in Parliament

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A defiant British Prime Minister Boris Johnson insisted Wednesday that he is getting on with his job, as he faced Parliament for the first time since 41% of his own party's lawmakers called for him to quit.

Johnson has been left teetering after surviving a no-confidence vote by Conservative Party legislators by a narrower-than-expected margin. A total of 148 of the 359 Tory lawmakers voted against him in Monday's ballot.

Johnson says he plans to move on and focus on bread-and-butter issues such as clearing national health care backlogs, tackling crime, easing a cost-of-living crisis and creating high-skilled jobs in a country that has left the European Union.

"As for jobs, I'm going to get on with mine," he told lawmakers during the weekly Prime Minister's Questions session in the House of Commons.

But Johnson's party opponents say they have not given up on pushing him out. They fear that Johnson, his reputation tarnished by revelations of boozy government parties that breached COVID-19 regulations, will doom the party to defeat in the next national election, which is due to be held by 2024.

Still, Conservative lawmakers dutifully cheered Johnson during a noisy Prime Minister's Questions, while opponents relished the prime minister's problems.

Opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer said any Conservatives inclined to give Johnson another chance would be disappointed.

"They want him to change — but he can't," Starmer said.

Scottish National Party leader Ian Blackford called Johnson "a lame duck prime minister presiding over a divided party in a disunited kingdom."

Blackford compared Johnson to comedy troupe Monty Python's character the Black Knight, who has

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his limbs lopped off in battle, all the while proclaiming "It's only a flesh wound!"

And Labour lawmaker Angela Eagle asked: "If 148 of his own backbenchers don't trust him, why on Earth should the country?"

Johnson replied that "in a long political career so far, I have of course picked up political opponents all over the place."

But he said "absolutely nothing and no one ... is going to stop us getting on and delivering for the British people."

While Conservative Party rules bar another no-confidence vote for 12 months, those rules can be changed by a handful of lawmakers who run a key Conservative committee. Johnson also faces a parliamentary ethics probe that could conclude he deliberately misled Parliament over "partygate" — which is traditionally a resigning offense.

With opinion polls giving Labour a lead nationally, Johnson will face more pressure if the Conservatives lose special elections later this month for two parliamentary districts where incumbent Tory lawmakers were forced out by sex scandals.

## Today in History: June 9, Burger confirmed as chief justice

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, June 9, the 160th day of 2022. There are 205 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 9, 2004, the body of Ronald Reagan arrived in Washington to lie in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda before the 40th president's funeral.

On this date:

In 1732, James Oglethorpe received a charter from Britain's King George II to found the colony of Georgia.

In 1870, author Charles Dickens died in Gad's Hill Place, England.

In 1915, guitarist, songwriter and inventor Les Paul was born in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

In 1940, during World War II, Norway decided to surrender to the Nazis, effective at midnight.

In 1954, during the Senate Army-McCarthy hearings, Army special counsel Joseph N. Welch berated Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., asking: "Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?"

In 1969, the Senate confirmed Warren Burger to be the new chief justice of the United States, succeeding Earl Warren.

In 1972, heavy rains triggered record flooding in the Black Hills of South Dakota; the resulting disaster left at least 238 people dead and \$164 million in damage.

In 1978, leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints struck down a 148-year-old policy of excluding black men from the Mormon priesthood.

In 1983, Britain's Conservatives, led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, won a decisive election victory.

In 1986, the Rogers Commission released its report on the Challenger disaster, criticizing NASA and rocket-builder Morton Thiokol for management problems leading to the explosion that claimed the lives of seven astronauts.

In 1993, the science-fiction film "Jurassic Park," directed by Steven Spielberg, had its world premiere in Washington, D.C.

In 2020, hundreds of mourners packed a Houston church for the funeral of George Floyd, a Black man whose death during a Minneapolis arrest inspired a worldwide reckoning over racial injustice.

Ten years ago: Spain became the fourth and largest country to ask Europe to rescue its failing banks (however, the bailout was averted). Maria Sharapova (shah-rah-POH'-vah) won the French Open, defeating Sara Errani 6-3, 6-2 to complete the career Grand Slam.

Five years ago: Punching back a day after his fired FBI director's damaging testimony, President Donald Trump accused James Comey of lying to Congress and said he was "100 percent" willing to testify under

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oath about their conversations. Actor Adam West, TV's "Batman," died in Los Angeles at age 88.

One year ago: The sponsor of the Keystone XL crude oil pipeline said it was pulling the plug on the contentious project after Canadian officials failed to persuade the Biden administration to reverse its cancellation of the company's permit; the partially built line was intended to transport crude from the oil sand fields of western Canada to Nebraska. The White House dropped executive orders from the Trump era that were intended to ban the popular apps TikTok and WeChat; officials said there would be a new review aimed at identifying national security risks with software applications tied to China.

Today's Birthdays: Media analyst Marvin Kalb is 92. Sports commentator Dick Vitale is 83. Author Letty Cottin Pogrebin is 83. Rock musician Mick Box (Uriah Heep) is 75. Retired MLB All-Star Dave Parker is 71. Film composer James Newton Howard is 71. Mystery author Patricia Cornwell is 66. Actor Michael J. Fox is 61. Writer-producer Aaron Sorkin is 61. Actor Johnny Depp is 59. Actor Gloria Reuben is 58. Gospel singer-actress Tamela Mann is 56. Rock musician Dean Felber (Hootie & the Blowfish) is 55. Rock musician Dean Dinning is 55. Musician Ed Simons is 52. Actor Keesha Sharp is 49. Bluegrass singer-musician Jamie Dailey (Dailey & Vincent) is 47. Actor Michaela Conlin is 44. Actor Natalie Portman is 41. Actor Mae Whitman is 34. Actor Lucien Laviscount is 30.