

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday, June 16

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

4-7 p.m.: Groton Transit Fundraiser at Groton Community Center

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

5:30 p.m.: U120 vs. Rattlers in Watertown, Foundation Fields, (R/W), DH

6 p.m.: U8 SB hosts Mellette, 1 game

7 p.m.: U10 SB hosts Mellette, 1 game

8 p.m.: U12 SB hosts Mellette, 1 game

## Friday, June 17

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

SDSU Alumni Golf Tournament

5:30 p.m.: Jr. Legion at Selby, DH

5:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Doland, 1 game

## Saturday, June 18

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

10 a.m.: Firemen's Triathlon (Trap shoot, golf, bowling)

U12 at Webster

At 10:30 Clark vs Groton

At 12 Groton vs Webster

**Cancelled:** Jr. Legion at Milbank Tourney

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



Jr. Teeners at Milbank Tourney

9:00. Webster v Milbank

10:45. Webster v Groton

12:30 Groton v Britton

2:15 Webster v Britton

4:00. Milbank v Groton

5:45. Milbank v Britton

June 19 - FATHER'S DAY

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.

June 20 - JUNETEENTH HOLIDAY

Senior Menu: Goulash, green beans, apple crisp, whole wheat bread.

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center

Ladies Invitational Golf Tourney at Olive Grove

5:30 p.m.: Legion at Northville, 1 game

7 p.m.: Jr. Legion at Northville, 1 game

5:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Britton, Nelson Field, DH

5:30 p.m.: U10 at Britton, DH (B/W)

**OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton**

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

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## Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Drops Game to Selby 14 After Late Score

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U stayed in it until the end, but Selby 14 pulled away late in a 4-2 victory on Wednesday. The game was tied at two with Selby 14 batting in the top of the sixth when Selby 14 scored one run on a stolen base.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U got things started in the first inning when Karsten Flihs grounded out, scoring one run.

Selby 14 knotted the game up at two in the top of the fifth inning. Mason Jores drove in one when Jores singled.

Xavier Ritter led the Selby 14 to victory on the mound. The fireballer surrendered two runs on five hits over four innings, striking out two and walking one. Xavier Hobert threw three innings in relief out of the bullpen.

Jarrett Erdmann took the loss for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Erdmann lasted three innings, allowing six hits and four runs while striking out three.



**Nick Groeblichhoff fields the ground ball in the Selby game played Wednesday in Groton.**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Nicholas Morris started the game for Groton Jr. Teeners. Morris went four innings, allowing zero runs on six hits, striking out eight and walking none.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



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Nicholas Morris started the game for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Morris went four innings, allowing zero runs on six hits, striking out eight and walking zero

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U collected nine hits on the day. Carter Simon, Tristin McGannon, and Nick Groeblichhoff each managed multiple hits for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groeblichhoff, McGannon, and Simon each collected two hits to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U didn't commit a single error in the field. Flihs had the most chances in the field with 11.

Selby 14 tallied 12 hits. Jores, R L., Hobert, and Gavin H. each collected multiple hits for Selby 14. Selby 14 was sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Keegan R. had the most chances in the field with six. Selby 14 tore up the base paths, as two players stole at least two bases. Hobert led the way with four.

**Above: Lincoln Krause tries to make the play at second base.**

**Right: Karsten Flihs catches for the Groton Jr. Teeners.** (Photos

by Paul Kosel)



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## Selby 14 4 - 2 Groton Jr. Teeners 14U

📍 Home 📅 Wednesday June 15, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
SLBY	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	4	12	0
GRTN	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	0

### BATTING

Selby 14	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
G H. (1B)	5	1	2	0	0	1
L Fiealler (2B, SS)	4	0	1	0	0	1
X Hobert (SS, P)	3	1	2	0	1	0
K R. (C)	4	0	0	0	0	2
M Jores (3B)	4	0	3	1	0	0
X Ritter (P)	2	0	0	0	0	2
K F. (2B)	0	1	0	0	1	0
R L. (RF)	4	0	3	0	0	1
P Lutz (LF)	3	0	1	1	0	1
H H. (CF)	3	1	0	0	1	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>

**2B:** M Jores, P Lutz, L Fiealler, **TB:** R L. 3, X Hobert 2, G H. 2, M Jores 4, P Lutz 2, L Fiealler 2, **HBP:** X Ritter, P Lutz, **SB:** H H., X Hobert 4, G H. 3, **LOB:** 12

### PITCHING

Selby 14	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
X Ritter	4.0	5	2	2	1	2	0
X Hobert	3.0	4	0	0	0	4	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** X Ritter, **P-S:** X Hobert 47-33, X Ritter 52-35, **BF:** X Hobert 13, X Ritter 17

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (CF)	4	1	2	0	0	0
K Flihs (C)	4	0	0	1	0	1
J Erdmann (LF, P)	3	0	1	0	1	1
N Morris (P, SS)	3	0	0	0	0	1
C Simon (3B)	3	1	2	0	0	1
G Englund (1B)	3	0	1	0	0	0
N Groeblinghoff (...)	3	0	2	0	0	0
L Krause (2B)	3	0	1	1	0	0
R Jangula (RF)	3	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

**2B:** T McGannon, **TB:** N Groeblinghoff 2, J Erdmann, G Englund, C Simon 2, L Krause, T McGannon 3, **SB:** N Groeblinghoff, J Erdmann 3, C Simon, T McGannon, **LOB:** 7

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
N Morris	4.0	6	0	0	0	8	0
J Erdmann	3.0	6	4	4	3	3	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>

**L:** J Erdmann, **P-S:** J Erdmann 67-41, N Morris 67-41, **HBP:** J Erdmann, N Morris, **BF:** J Erdmann 19, N Morris 18

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## High Score Not Enough to Secure Win for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Over Selby 14

Bats were blistered on Thursday, but Groton Jr. Teeners 14U couldn't quite get the job done against Selby 14 and lost 12-7.

Selby 14 fired up the offense in the first inning, when Xavier Hobert drew a walk, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U knotted the game up at three in the bottom of the first inning, when Nicholas Morris singled on a 1-1 count, scoring two runs.

After Selby 14 scored three runs in the top of the fourth, Groton Jr. Teeners 14U answered with three of their own. Selby 14 scored when Peyton Lutz singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run, Houston H. was struck by a pitch, driving in a run, and Gavin H. drew a walk, scoring one run. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U then answered when Karsten Flihs drew a walk, scoring one run, Morris drew a walk, scoring one run, and Gavin Englund drew a walk, scoring one run.

Selby 14 pulled away for good with five runs in the second inning. In the second Lutz doubled on a 0-2 count, scoring one run, H. tripled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run, H. grounded out, scoring one run, and Selby 14 scored two runs on a stolen base.

Cole Z. led the Selby 14 to victory on the pitcher's mound. The bulldog surrendered seven runs on five hits over four innings, striking out three.

Flihs took the loss for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The pitcher surrendered nine runs on nine hits over three innings.

Tristin McGannon started the game for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The righthander went one-third of an inning, allowing three runs on zero hits

Lincoln Krause went 2-for-2 at the plate to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U in hits. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U didn't commit a single error in the field. Krause had five chances in the field, the most on the team. Carter Simon led Groton Jr. Teeners 14U with five stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with 15 stolen bases.

Selby 14 racked up ten hits. Lutz and Hobert each had multiple hits for Selby 14. Lutz led Selby 14 with three hits in three at bats. Selby 14 stole 19 bases during the game as four players stole more than one. Hobert led the way with six.

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## Selby 14 12 - 7 Groton Jr. Teeners 14U

📍 Home 📅 Wednesday June 15, 2022

	1	2	3	4	R	H	E
SLBY	3	5	1	3	12	10	1
GRTN	3	1	0	3	7	5	0

### BATTING

Selby 14	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
G H. (1B)	2	0	0	2	2	0
C Z. (P)	3	1	1	1	1	0
L Fiealler (2B)	2	2	1	0	1	0
X Hobert (SS)	2	3	2	0	1	0
K R. (C)	1	0	0	0	2	0
M Jones (RF)	2	1	1	0	1	0
X Ritter (3B)	1	3	1	0	2	0
P Lutz (LF)	3	1	3	2	0	0
H H. (CF)	2	1	1	2	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**2B:** P Lutz, **3B:** H H., **TB:** C Z., M Jones, P Lutz 4, X Ritter, X Hobert 2, H H. 3, L Fiealler, **HBP:** H H., **SB:** C Z. 4, M Jones, K R. 3, X Hobert 6, L Fiealler 5, **LOB:** 5

### PITCHING

Selby 14	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
C Z.	4.0	5	7	7	8	3	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** C Z., **P-S:** C Z. 99-41, **HBP:** C Z., **BF:** C Z. 25

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (P, LF)	3	0	1	1	0	2
J Erdmann (CF)	1	2	0	0	2	0
C Simon (SS)	1	2	1	0	1	0
K Flihs (LF, P, 2B)	1	1	0	0	2	0
N Morris (3B)	2	0	1	3	1	1
G Englund (1B)	1	0	0	1	2	0
N Groeblichhoff (C)	3	0	0	0	0	0
R Jangula (RF)	1	0	0	0	0	0
L Krause (2B, P)	2	2	2	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>

**2B:** T McGannon, **TB:** L Krause 2, C Simon, N Morris, T McGannon 2, **HBP:** R Jangula, **SB:** L Krause 4, J Erdmann 4, C Simon 5, K Flihs, T McGannon, **LOB:** 6

Groton Jr. Teeners	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
T McGannon	0.1	0	3	3	4	0	0
K Flihs	3.0	9	9	9	5	0	0
L Krause	0.2	1	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**L:** K Flihs, **P-S:** L Krause 14-6, K Flihs 62-31, T McGannon 21-4, **HBP:** L Krause, **BF:** L Krause 4, K Flihs 20, T McGannon 5





## Wet weather forcing South Dakota farmers to delay or cut back on planting of crops

Kylie Carlson

South Dakota News Watch

Recent rains and flooding have forced many farmers in the eastern half of South Dakota to delay getting crops into the ground, and some are now well behind the typical planting schedule or have had to cut back the acreage they are able to plant.

The heavy rains during a long-range drought have left farm fields soaked and inaccessible to farm equipment. Some recent storms have damaged critical planting equipment. The resulting delay in planting has some farmers scrambling to maintain crop production and, consequently, their anticipated income.

As a result, some farmers who suffer crop or revenue losses will have to lean heavily on crop insurance and federal relief funding to make it through the 2022 planting season.

The recent storms in the southeast and the excess moisture in the northeast have backed producers into a corner in regard to deciding when, or even if, to plant a summer 2022 crop. If they wait too long, the growing season will be cut back and producing a fall crop may become out of the question.

Farmers suffered a big setback on May 12 when a high-intensity storm known as a derecho not only dropped excessive moisture but damaged machinery needed to plant a good crop.

"That really threw a wrench in a lot of people's plans because we were already late planting," said Scott VanderWal, a Volga farmer who is president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau. "That storm came and destroyed a lot of grain bins, center-pivot irrigators, buildings, livestock facilities, a tremendous amount of damage. We had to spend a couple of nice days cleaning up messes instead of planting."

Despite the late start and intermittent rains that kept him out of the fields, VanderWal was able to get his soybeans in the ground on time.

Many northeastern South Dakota farmers weren't so lucky. VanderWal said. Because of the flooding and excess moisture that the region has received, crop farmers will most likely rely on a portion of their insurance policies known as "prevent-planting" options.

Prevented-planting provisions are found in crop insurance policies and allow planters to collect payments for their crops that they weren't able to plant as planned due to an insured cause. In South Dakota this year, flooding, excess moisture, drought, and natural disasters are insured causes.

"In 2019, there was an awful lot of us in eastern South Dakota that used that and it literally kept some people in business," said VanderWal. "It's not something you want to take because you don't make any money on it, but it'll keep you alive."



**The impact of recent storms can be seen in the water level on this Campbell County farm property just east of Herreid on June 8.** Photo:

Stu Whitney, South Dakota News Watch

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Taylor Dinger, who helps farm a plot of land near Hecla, has seen dramatic reductions in the crops they were able to plant due to excess moisture.

Unlike many planters in the region, Dinger was able to get a corn crop in the ground just before the heavier rains hit, but was only able to plant about half of normal.

"We lucked out that since we planted, everything kind of dried out versus filling up," Dinger said. "We got that rain after we planted but it didn't flood anything out. We got out early enough that it wasn't an issue."

Due to delays in accessing fields, he and many others in the region have switched to a faster-maturing seed for their crops, allowing them to stay on schedule.

Dinger is working on planting soybeans, and is expecting around 60 percent of the normal yield. Fortunately, there are ways for him and other planters to put the land to profitable use.

Cover crops are another option available to planters. In 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture implemented changes to the prevented-planting provisions to allow farmers to plant a cover crop after the final planting date. Cover crops can be hayed, grazed, or chopped at any point and still receive the full prevented-planting payment. This allows farmers to keep the land in good condition by boosting overall soil health and maintain a revenue stream, according to USDA.

"The [excess] land that we can get to ... it'll be prevent-plant, but they have it set up where you can plant it to a cover crop. I'm hoping if it dries out enough we can get it into a cover crop system of some type."

After watching farmers suffer losses due to natural disasters in 2020 and 2021, Congress put into place emergency relief funding that is available through an application process. The Emergency Livestock Relief Program and the Emergency Relief Program are two-phase programs designed to help farmers regain financial stability even if they lost the ability to produce livestock or crops in the previous two years.

Those impacted by the events of 2020 and 2021 are still able to apply for assistance with these programs. According to the Farm Service Agency, pre-filled applications were scheduled to be mailed in late May 2022 to those who received prevented-planting payments during this time period. Planters interested in the assistance can contact a local FSA agents for details.

In contrast to these wetter-than-normal conditions in the northeast, most of the state is experiencing a lingering drought. The western side of the state has been hit the hardest, experiencing drought conditions ranging from "abnormally dry" to "extreme drought."

National Weather Service Hydrologist Melissa Smith said that drier conditions in the west are to be expected, but the current conditions are dramatic compared to past years.

The dry conditions are partly due to a "La Niña", a weather event at the Equator where ocean temperatures are colder than average, pushing cooler air throughout the northwest. This pattern typically lasts 9 to 12 months but can sometimes last years.

"Typically, when [La Niña] happens, we tend to see drier, cooler conditions over western South Dakota during the springtime. It's mainly where the track of the jet



**Water from recent storms encroaches onto cropland just east of Aberdeen on June 9.** Photo: Stu Whitney, South Dakota

News Watch



**Scott VanderWal**



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stream is, how far south it's been diving, or where it sets up," said Smith. "A lot of the locations in western South Dakota have just missed out on a lot of precipitation that the eastern side of the state has seen."

According to Smith, South Dakota is predicted to see above average temperatures with below average precipitation through June, July, and August. These warmer conditions should help with crop growth, but the lack of precipitation will make irrigation or changing up farming practices more important this season.

## Groton Transit Fundraiser



When: Thursday, June 16, 2022

Time: 4:00 pm-7:00 pm

Where: Groton Community Center

\*\*\* Groton Transit Fundraiser will be held at the Groton Community Center-  
109 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street- One block East of Groton Transit\*\*\*

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

FREE WILL OFFERING

Please join us & Help support Groton Transit!

**Serving State Fair Mini Donuts!!!!**



## **Deans to celebrate 70th Anniversary**

**Please join us, the children of Carroll and Pearl Dean, as we honor our parents on their 70th anniversary.**

**They have many family and friends who aren't nearby, so we invite you to celebrate the special day with them by sending a card or note to include a memory or simply express your good wishes.**

**Please mail your card to: Carroll and Pearl Dean, 1324 12th Ave SE #32, Aberdeen, SD 57401**

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## Scam Alert

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 20, 2022



### Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Warn of Impersonation Scam Involving Credentials and Badges

*It is illegal to reproduce Federal law enforcement credentials and badges*

New reports show that scammers are reviving an old tactic to gain trust. Scammers are emailing and texting pictures of real and doctored law enforcement credentials and badges to prove they are legitimate and scam people out of money. Scammers may change the picture or use a different name, agency, or badge number, but the basic scam is the same.



Federal law enforcement agencies are warning the public to be skeptical of email and text messages claiming to be someone from a government or law enforcement agency. No one in federal law enforcement will send photographs of credentials or badges to demand any kind of payment, and neither will government employees.

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Labor OIG, NASA OIG, the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) joined forces to issue this scam alert.



## HOW A GOVERNMENT IMPOSTER SCAM WORKS

These scams primarily use telephone to contact you, but scammers may also use email, text message, social media, or U.S. mail. Scammers **pretend** to be from an agency or organization you know to gain your trust. Scammers say there is a **problem or a prize**. Scammers **pressure** you to act immediately. Scammers tell you to **pay** in a specific way.

## TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

1. **Do not take immediate action.** If you receive a communication that causes a strong emotional response, take a deep breath. Hang up or ignore the message. Talk to someone you trust.
2. **Do not transfer your money! Do not buy that gift card!** Never pay someone who insists that you pay with a gift card, prepaid debit card, Internet currency or cryptocurrency, wire transfer, money transfer, or by mailing cash. Scammers use these forms of payment because they are hard to trace.
3. **Be skeptical.** If you think a real law enforcement officer is trying to reach you, call your local law enforcement using a non-emergency number to verify. Do not believe scammers who “transfer” your call to an official or who feed you a number as proof. Scammers can create fake numbers and identities. Do not trust your caller ID.
4. **Be cautious** of any contact claiming to be from a government agency or law enforcement, telling you about a problem you don’t recognize. Do not provide your personal information, even if the caller has some of your information.
5. **Do not click on links or attachments.** Block unwanted calls and text messages.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SCAMS

Visit the [ftc.gov/scam](https://ftc.gov/scam) to read about common scams.

## IF YOU ARE A VICTIM

Stop talking to the scammer. Notify financial institutions and safeguard accounts. Contact local law enforcement and file a police report. File a complaint with the FBI IC3 at [www.ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov) and with the Federal Trade Commission at [ReportFraud.FTC.gov](https://ReportFraud.FTC.gov).

Keep financial transaction information and the record of all communications with the scammer.

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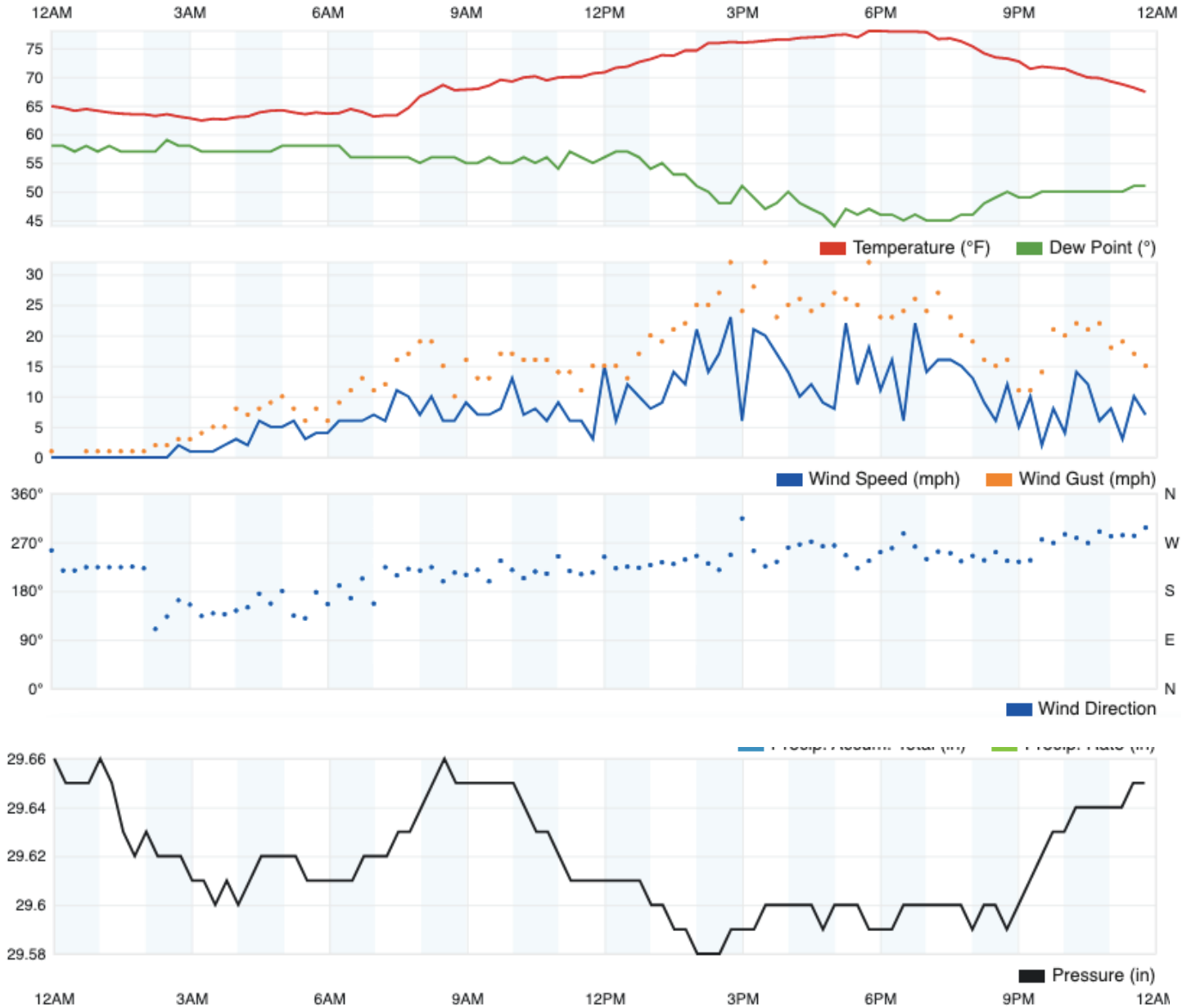


**There was a line of swimmers waiting in line as the pool opened Wednesday afternoon.**

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs





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Today



Sunny and  
Breezy

High: 81 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 51 °F

Friday



Sunny

High: 87 °F

Friday  
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 67 °F

Saturday



Hot and  
Breezy

High: 98 °F

## Warm Today, Hot this Weekend

June 16, 2022  
2:44 AM



*Mostly dry through  
the weekend*



**Today:** Breezy with Highs 75-86°

**Friday:** Highs 80-94°



**Saturday:** Hot, Highs 90-105°

**Sunday:** Hot, Highs 92-105°

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Dry conditions and a warming trend are forecast for the region through the upcoming weekend! Saturday and Sunday will be HOT! #sdwx #mnwx

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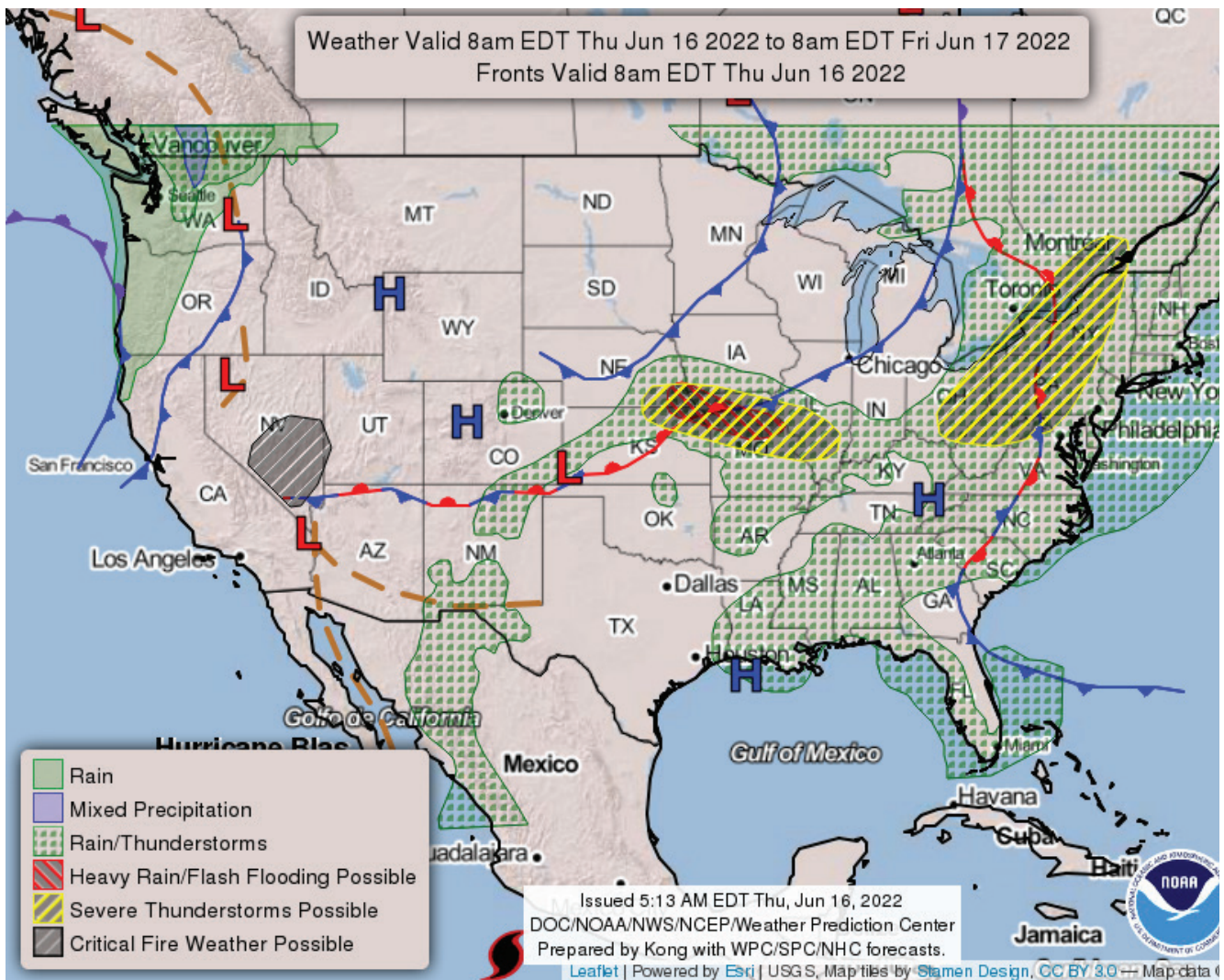
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 78 °F at 6:35 PM**  
**Low Temp: 62 °F at 3:20 AM**  
**Wind: 32 mph at 2:37 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 43 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 109 in 1933  
Record Low: 34 in 1903  
Average High: 81°F  
Average Low: 56°F  
Average Precip in June.: 1.90  
Precip to date in June.: 0.10  
Average Precip to date: 9.15  
Precip Year to Date: 11.26  
Sunset Tonight: 9:24:55 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:29 AM





## Today in Weather History

June 16, 1915: A tornado swept over a narrow path in Hughes, Hyde, and Hand counties during the afternoon hours. This tornado caused several thousands of dollars in property damage and seriously injured many people. Luckily there were no fatalities reported.

June 16, 1992: An F3 tornado caused significant destruction as it moved northeast across the northwestern side of Ft. Thompson. The tornado virtually destroyed the Lake Sharpe Visitor Center. In Ft. Thompson, the tornado destroyed at least four homes, and 15 mobile homes were damaged, leaving about 55 persons homeless. Eight people were injured, two of them seriously. The storm also destroyed other buildings, six 50,000 bushel grain bins, and four high voltage towers from Big Bend Dam. At the Shady Bend Campground, 19 campers and several boats were destroyed.

Also, heavy rains fell over three days beginning on the 15th. The hardest-hit area was in Clear Lake, where the three-day total was 11.53 inches. As a result, a wall of water up to 15 feet high swept down creeks in the Clear Lake area. The resultant flash flooding went through the first floors of many houses and even filled basements of homes on hills. In addition, all roads into Clear Lake were cut off as the town became surrounded by water. Officials in Deuel County estimated at least 37 bridges and culverts were destroyed. Other three-day rainfall totals include; 6.35 inches in Conde; 5.99 in Castlewood; 4.91 inches 2NW of Big Stone City; 4.90 in Redfield; and 4.65 inches at Artichoke Lake.

June 16, 2009: An upper low-pressure area brought several supercell thunderstorms, which produced severe weather across parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Large hail up to 2 inches in diameter, several tornadoes, and flash flooding occurred with these storms. Slow-moving thunderstorms brought heavy rains of 2 to 4 inches in and around Aberdeen, causing extensive road flooding. Dozens of basements were flooded and damaged, along with some sewer backups. Many vehicles became stalled with the police sent out to direct traffic. There were also some power outages. A tornado touched down briefly northwest of Lebanon in Potter County with no damage occurring. A tornado touched down southeast of Polo in Hand County in an open field. No damage occurred. Heavy rains of 3 to over 5 inches caused flash flooding of several roads and crops in north-central and northeast Spink County. Torrential rains from 3 to 6 inches fell across southeast Brown County, bringing flash flooding. Many roads were flooded and damaged, along with many acres of cropland. A tornado touched down in southeastern Hand County and remained on the ground for nearly 15 minutes before lifting. No damage occurred with this tornado as it stayed in the open country.

June 16, 2010: Very strong winds were observed during the evening hours in Dewey County, South Dakota. Three weather stations near Lantry observed winds from 101 to 142 mph. One station had recorded a 101 mph wind before it was destroyed. The other two stations recorded 131 mph and 142 mph winds. The winds destroyed an airplane hangar and severely damaged another one. Several semi-trailers were also tipped over and damaged by the very high winds.

June 16, 1806: The great American total solar eclipse occurred from California to Massachusetts, nearly five minutes in duration.

June 16, 1895: Heavy rain fell in portions of central Arkansas, damaging several roads and bridges. At Madding, east of Pine Bluff, 6.12 inches of rain fell in six hours.

June 16, 1896: A tsunami ravages the coast of Japan, killing between 22,000 and 27,000 people.

June 16, 1957: A violent F4 tornado struck the communities of Robecco Pavese and Valle Scurpasso in Pavia, Italy, flattening many large stone buildings. The tornado killed seven people and injured 80. Images of the damage indicate that tornado may have reached T10 (low-end F5) intensity.

June 16-23, 1972: Agnes was first named by the National Hurricane Center on June 16, 1972: It would go on to make landfall between Panama City and Apalachicola, Florida, on the afternoon of June 19. Hurricane Agnes would later cause catastrophic flooding in the mid-Atlantic states, especially Pennsylvania. Agnes caused over 100 fatalities.



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## A Reason To Sing

Robert Lowry, a pastor in New York City, was going through a difficult time during an epidemic. Many who were suffering would die in a matter of hours. Day after day he stood beside the graves of those who had died and tried to give hope to their loved ones. On one occasion, however, his faith was deeply challenged, and he cried out to God, "Shall we meet again? Really? Can a gracious God do this to good people? We are parting at the river of death. Will we ever meet again at the river of life?" He took his doubt seriously and began to read his Bible on his knees. Finally, he found God's answer, went to his organ, sat down and wrote the words and music to the great old hymn, "Yes, we'll gather at the river that flows by the throne of God."

The Steds were enjoying a beautiful day of sun and sand on the Long Island Sound. Suddenly, they heard a cry for help. With no thought for his safety, Mr. Sted ran into the water to rescue the boy - but failed. Mrs. Sted's heart was broken when she returned to her empty home.

She fell on her knees and began to pray. God heard and helped her and gave her hope. She sat at her piano and wrote the beautiful hymn, "Tis so Sweet to Trust in Jesus."

Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Bicker, missionaries to Peru, were waiting to board a ship that would take them home for a vacation. Just before boarding the ship, Mr. Bicker was killed in an accident. To comfort his wife and now fatherless children, Dr. Oswald Smith wrote the poem, "God Understands and Cares."

Said the Psalmist, "Sing for joy on beds of pain." He understands and cares!

Prayer: How grateful we are Lord for the assurance of Your presence and peace, even when life seems senseless. And thank You for the voices of those through whom you send comfort. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: Sing for joy on beds of pain. Psalm 149:5b

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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  
-6/20/2022 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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## 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

10-11-13-18-29

(ten, eleven, thirteen, eighteen, twenty-nine)

Estimated jackpot: \$70,000

Lotto America

12-19-35-38-48, Star Ball: 4, ASB: 2

(twelve, nineteen, thirty-five, thirty-eight, forty-eight; Star Ball: four; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$15,460,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 273,000,000

Powerball

19-28-41-42-51, Powerball: 7, Power Play: 2

(nineteen, twenty-eight, forty-one, forty-two, fifty-one; Powerball: seven; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$279,000,000

### Cyclist on fundraising trek killed in South Dakota crash

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a Canadian bicyclist who was raising money for his granddaughter's kidney transplant with a long-distance ride died from injuries suffered when he was struck by a truck driver in South Dakota.

Jean-Pierre "JP" Petit, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, was hit from behind by the cargo truck Thursday while riding on the shoulder of Interstate 29 about 17 miles (27 kilometers) north of Brookings, police said. Petit was riding on the solid white line, also known as the fog line.

He died Monday at a hospital in Sioux Falls, according to the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Petit, 53, was planning to cycle 838 miles (1,349 kilometers) from Winnipeg to Hot Springs in the Black Hills of South Dakota, where there's a fountain of natural spring water called the Kidney Springs. Petit carried a sign along the route that said, "Let's make anything possible."

The 65-year-old truck driver, from Brandon, South Dakota, was not hurt. The patrol is investigating whether to file charges against him.

### Owner flees after pit bulls maul woman in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A woman required stitches after she was mauled by four pit bulls in a south-east South Dakota town and police believe the dogs' owner fled with the animals to escape punishment.

Authorities say the 55-year-old victim suffered 17 bite wounds when the dogs attacked her Monday morning as she walked in Freeman, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Sioux Falls. She was treated at a hospital for serious injuries that required nine stitches, police said.

The dogs were inside the owner's house when police arrived. The man refused to "surrender the animals," said Jay Slevin, a Freeman police officer.

Slevin said that while he was waiting for backup, the owner escaped out the back door with the dogs. Police believe he took them to a friend's house in Sioux Falls.

The Freeman police have had previous issues with the animals but "nothing like this," Slevin said. Police believe the dogs initially escaped by pushing out the back door.

The owner is facing four counts of keeping and maintaining of vicious animals, letting dogs run at large,

and disturbing the peace.

## Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined  
Yankton Press & Dakotan. June 14, 2022.  
Editorial: The AG Bows Out: What's Still At Stake

Perhaps the decision by South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg not to seek reelection this year wasn't too surprising — although, given his resolute stand on the matter in the face of public scrutiny and gubernatorial pressure tactics the last 21 months, it may have caught some people off-guard. It certainly didn't come with a definitive public declaration. Hints of Ravnsborg's decision had been swirling around for days until a television reporter emailed the AG late Friday to get a firm response, and Ravnsborg confirmed he had decided not to seek renomination at the Republican Party's state convention at the end of the month.

That was the latest twist in this long, tragic, painful, frustrating tale that began in September 2020 when a vehicle driven by Ravnsborg struck and killed a pedestrian, Joe Boever, along a dark highway in Hyde County.

The incident and its aftermath have been well chronicled, and it will all be spotlighted again next week when Ravnsborg, who became the first South Dakota elected official to be impeached, stands trial in the Senate for his actions after the crash.

One certainty is that Ravnsborg's decision not to seek reelection removes a considerable amount of political drama from the summer air. The Senate trial is scheduled to wrap up just two days before the GOP state convention, at which the party will choose its nominee for attorney general, among other state offices. If Ravnsborg had remained a candidate and had been acquitted by the Senate, party delegates may have faced an intriguing situation. Now, that potentially uncomfortable intrigue is gone.

Some may also conclude that Ravnsborg's decision not to seek reelection makes the Senate trial mostly anticlimactic. And perhaps for sheer drama, it has been rendered so.

But the stakes remain important. The trial will assess the attorney general's actions in dealing with a legal situation in which he was the focus. While a House committee recommended last winter (on a party-line vote) that charges not be filed, the House impeached Ravnsborg anyway by the slimmest of margins. Now, the Senate is tasked to determine the merits of the matter amid the mixed signals coming from the lower chamber. Since convictions require a two-thirds majority of Senate votes, how that body weighs the evidence and Ravnsborg's actions will be something many South Dakotans will be watching. It also figures to establish some precedent for the future.

The trial will probably mark one of the last acts in the public portion of this matter (although civil proceedings and professional penalties may await). As such, it will likely provide — fairly or unfairly — a lasting image that people will carry forward about the system of justice for elected officials in this state. And, after all we've witnessed throughout this ordeal, what happens next week could say a lot on that front.

## Fed's aggressive rate hikes raise likelihood of a recession

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer  
WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has pledged to do whatever it takes to curb inflation, now raging at a four-decade high and defying the Fed's efforts so far to tame it.

Increasingly, it seems, doing so might require the one painful thing the Fed has sought to avoid: A recession.

A worse-than-expected inflation report for May — consumer prices rocketed up 8.6% from a year earlier, the biggest jump since 1981 — helped spur the Fed to raise its benchmark interest rate by three-quarters of point Wednesday.

Not since 1994 has the central bank raised its key rate by that much all at once. And until Friday's nasty inflation report, traders and economists had expected a rate hike of just half a percentage point Wednes-

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day. What's more, several more hikes are coming.

The "soft landing" the Fed has hoped to achieve — slowing inflation to its 2% goal without derailing the economy — is becoming both trickier and riskier than Powell had bargained for. Each rate hike means higher borrowing costs for consumers and businesses. And each time would-be borrowers find loan rates prohibitively expensive, the resulting drop in spending weakens confidence, job growth and overall economic vigor.

"There's a path for us to get there," Powell said Wednesday, referring to a soft landing. "It's not getting easier. It's getting more challenging"

It was always going to be tough: The Fed hasn't managed to engineer a soft landing since the mid-1990s. And Powell's Fed, which was slow to recognize the depth of the inflation threat, is now having to play catch-up with an aggressive series of rate increases.

"They are telling you: 'We will do whatever it takes to bring inflation to 2%,'" said Simona Mocuta, chief economist at State Street Global Advisors. "I hope the (inflation) data won't require them to do whatever they're willing to do. There will be a cost."

In Mocuta's view, the risk of a recession is now probably 50-50.

"It's not like there's no way you can avoid it," she said. "But it's going to be hard to avoid it."

The Fed itself acknowledges that higher rates will inflict some damage, though it doesn't foresee a recession: On Wednesday, the Fed predicted that the economy will grow about 1.7% this year, a sharp downgrade from the 2.8% growth it had forecast in March. And it expects unemployment to average a still-low 3.7% at year's end.

But speaking at a news conference Wednesday, Powell rejected any notion that the Fed must inevitably cause a recession as the price of taming inflation.

"We're not trying to induce a recession," he said. "Let's be clear about that."

Economic history suggests, though, that aggressive, growth-killing rate hikes could be necessary to finally control inflation. And typically, that is a prescription for a recession.

Indeed, since 1955 every time inflation ran hotter than 4% and unemployment fell below 5%, the economy has tumbled into recession within two years, according to a paper published this year by former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and his Harvard University colleague Alex Domash. The U.S. jobless rate is now 3.6%, and inflation has topped 8% every month since March.

Inflation in the United States, which had been under control since the early 1980s, resurged with a vengeance just over a year ago, largely a consequence of the economy's unexpectedly robust recovery from the pandemic recession. The rebound caught businesses by surprise and led to shortages, delayed shipments — and higher prices.

President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion stimulus program added heat in March 2021 to an economy that was already warmed up. So did the Fed's decision to continue the easy-money policies — keeping short-term rates at zero and pumping money into the economy by buying bonds — it had adopted two years ago to guide the economy through the pandemic.

Only three months ago did the Fed start raising rates. By May, Powell was promising to keep raising rates until the Fed sees "clear and convincing evidence that inflation is coming down."

Some of the factors that drove the economy's recovery have meanwhile vanished. Federal relief payments are long gone. Americans' savings, swelled by government stimulus checks, are back below pre-pandemic levels.

And inflation itself has been devouring Americans' purchasing power, leaving them less to spend in shops and online: After adjusting for higher prices, average hourly wages fell 3% last month from a year earlier, the 14th straight drop. On Wednesday, the government reported that retail sales fell 0.3% in May, the first drop since December.

Now, rising rates will squeeze the economy even harder. Buyers of homes and autos will absorb higher borrowing costs, and some will delay or scale back their purchases. Businesses will pay more to borrow, too.

And there's another byproduct of Fed rate hikes: The dollar will likely rise as investors buy U.S. Treasuries



to capitalize on higher yields. A rising dollar hurts U.S. companies and the economy by making American products costlier and harder to sell overseas. On the other hand, it makes imports cheaper in the United States, thereby helping ease some inflationary pressures.

The U.S. economy still has strength. The job market is booming. Employers have added an average 545,000 jobs a month over the past year. Unemployment is near a 50-year low. And there are now roughly two job openings for every jobless American.

Families aren't buried in debts as they were before the Great Recession of 2007-2009. Nor have banks and other lenders piled up risky loans as they had back then.

Still, Robert Tipp, chief investment strategist at PGIM Fixed Income, said that recession risks are rising, and not only because of the Fed's rate hikes. The growing fear is that inflation is so intractable that it might be conquered only through aggressive rate hikes that imperil the economy.

"The risk is up," Tipp said, "because the inflation numbers came in so high, so strong."

All of which makes the Fed's inflation-taming, recession-avoiding act even more treacherous.

"It's going to be a tightrope walk," said Thomas Garretson, senior portfolio strategist at RBC Wealth Management. "It's not going to be easy."

## **Kevin Spacey 'strenuously' denies sex charges, granted bail**

LONDON (AP) — Kevin Spacey "strenuously denies" allegations of sexual assault, his lawyer said Thursday, as the Oscar-winning actor appeared in a London court to face five charges of offenses against three men.

Photographers and television camera crews thronged Spacey, 62, as he arrived at London's Westminster Magistrates Court for the preliminary hearing.

Spacey sat in the glass-fronted dock during the half-hour hearing, standing to give his full name — Kevin Spacey Fowler — as well as his birthdate and a London address.

He was not asked to enter a formal plea, but his lawyer, Patrick Gibbs, said: "Mr. Spacey strenuously denies any and all criminality in this case."

Deputy Chief Magistrate Tan Ikram granted Spacey unconditional bail until his next appearance, a plea hearing scheduled for July 14.

The former "House of Cards" star is accused of four counts of sexual assault and one count of causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity without consent.

The alleged incidents took place in London between March 2005 and August 2008, and one in western England in April 2013. The victims are now in their 30s and 40s.

In a statement issued last month, Spacey said he would travel to Britain to face the charges and was confident he would "prove my innocence."

Spacey was questioned by British police in 2019 about claims by several men that he had assaulted them. The two-time Academy Award winner ran London's Old Vic theater between 2004 and 2015.

Spacey won a best supporting actor Academy Award for the 1995 film "The Usual Suspects" and a lead actor Oscar for the 1999 movie "American Beauty."

But his celebrated career came to an abrupt halt in 2017 when actor Anthony Rapp accused the star of assaulting him at a party in the 1980s, when Rapp was a teenager. Spacey denies the allegations.

## **Police: Amazon fisherman confesses to killing missing pair**

By FABIANNO MAISONNAVE, EDMAR BARROS and MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

MANAUS, Brazil (AP) — A fisherman confessed to killing a British journalist and an Indigenous expert in Brazil's remote Amazon and took police to a site where human remains were recovered, a federal investigator said, after a grim 10-day search for the missing pair.

Authorities said Wednesday night without giving any details that they expected more arrests would be made soon in the case of freelance reporter Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira of Brazil, who disappeared June 5.

At a news conference in the Amazon city of Manaus, a federal police investigator said the man who

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had been the prime suspect confessed Tuesday night and detailed what happened to Phillips and Pereira. Investigator Eduardo Alexandre Fontes said Amarildo da Costa de Oliveira, 41, nicknamed Pelado, told officers he used a firearm to kill the men.

"We would have no way of getting to that spot quickly without the confession," Torres said of the place where police recovered human remains Wednesday after being led there by Pelado.

Torres said the remains were expected to be identified within days, and if confirmed as the missing men, "will be returned to the families of the two."

"We found the bodies three kilometers (nearly two miles) into the woods," the investigator said, adding that officers traveled about one hour and forty minutes by boat on a river and 25 more into the woods to reach the burial spot.

Pelado's family had said previously that he denied any wrongdoing and claimed police tortured him to try to get a confession.

Another officer, Guilherme Torres of the Amazonas state police, said the missing men's boat had not been found yet but police knew the area where it purportedly was hidden by those involved in the crime.

"They put bags of dirt on the boat so it would sink," he said. The engine of the boat was removed, according to investigators.

The news conference at Brazil's federal police headquarters in Manaus also included military leaders, who joined the effort to find Phillips and Pereira a few days after their disappearance was reported.

President Jair Bolsonaro, a frequent critic of journalists and Indigenous experts, has drawn criticism that the government didn't get involved fast enough. Earlier on Wednesday, he condemned Phillips in an interview, saying without evidence that locals in the area where he went missing didn't like him and that he should have been more careful in the region.

The efforts to find the two were started by Indigenous peoples in the region. UNIVAJA, an association of Indigenous peoples of the Javari Valley, mourned the loss of "two partners" in a statement Wednesday, adding they only had help and protection from local police.

As federal police announced they would hold a news conference, colleagues of Pereira called a vigil outside the headquarters of the Brazilian government's Indigenous affairs agency in Brasilia. Pereira was on leave from the agency.

Pereira, 41, and Phillips, 57, were last seen on their boat in a river near the entrance of the Javari Valley Indigenous Territory, which borders Peru and Colombia. That area has seen violent conflicts between fishermen, poachers and government agents.

Developments began moving Wednesday when federal police officers took a suspect they didn't identify at the time out on the river toward search parties looking for Phillips and Pereira.

An Associated Press photographer in Atalaia do Norte, the city closest to the search zone, witnessed police taking the suspect, who was in a hood.

On Tuesday, police said they had arrested a second suspect in connection with the disappearance. He was identified as Oseney da Costa de Oliveira, 41, a fisherman and a brother of Pelado, who police already had characterized as their main suspect.

Police investigators said Wednesday that de Oliveira had not confessed to any participation in the crime, but added they had evidence against him.

Indigenous people who were with Pereira and Phillips have said that Pelado brandished a rifle at them on the day before the pair disappeared.

Official search teams concentrated their efforts around a spot in the Itaquai river where a tarp from the boat used by the missing men was found Saturday by volunteers from the Matis Indigenous group.

Authorities began scouring the area and discovered a backpack, laptop and other personal belongings submerged underwater Sunday. Police said that evening that they had identified the items as the belongings of both missing men, including a health card and clothes of Pereira. The backpack was said to belong to Phillips.

Police previously reported finding traces of blood in Pelado's boat. Officers also found organic matter of

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apparent human origin in the river that was sent for analysis.

Authorities have said a main line of the police investigation into the disappearance has pointed to an international network that pays poor fishermen to fish illegally in the Javari Valley reserve, which is Brazil's second-largest Indigenous territory.

Pereira, who previously led the local bureau of the federal Indigenous agency, known as FUNAI, took part in several operations against illegal fishing. In such operations, as a rule the fishing gear is seized or destroyed, while the fishermen are fined and briefly detained. Only the Indigenous can legally fish in their territories.

"The crime's motive is some personal feud over fishing inspection," Atalaia do Norte's Mayor Denis Paiva speculated to reporters without providing more details.

While some police, the mayor and others in the region link the pair's disappearances to the "fish mafia," federal police have not ruled out other lines of investigation, such as narco trafficking.

Torres, the federal police officer, reiterated that point Wednesday night, saying he could not discuss specifics of the investigation.

"We are working with several lines of investigation," he said.

After the news of the recovery of human remains, Phillips' wife, Alessandra Sampaio, said the find "puts an end to the anguish of not knowing Dom and Bruno's whereabouts."

"Now we can bring them home and say goodbye with love," Sampaio said in a statement. "Today, we also begin our quest for justice."

## French president visits Kyiv suburb, decries 'massacre'

By DAVID KEYTON, JOHN LEICESTER and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

IRPIN, Ukraine (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron said Thursday that there are signs of war crimes in a Kyiv suburb following "massacres" by Russian forces.

He spoke in the town of Irpin while on a visit with the German, Italian and Romanian leaders to show support for Ukraine. He denounced the "barbarism" of the attacks that devastated the town, and praised the courage of residents of Irpin and other Kyiv region towns who held back Russian forces from attacking the capital.

The four European leaders arrived earlier in Kyiv to the sound of air raid sirens as they made a high-profile show of collective European support for the Ukrainian people as they resist Russia's invasion.

The visit, which includes a planned meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, carries heavy symbolic weight given that the three Western European powers have faced criticism for not providing Ukraine with the scale of weaponry that Zelenskyy has been asking for.

They have also been criticized for not visiting Kyiv sooner. In past weeks and months a number of other European leaders had already made the long trip overland to show solidarity with a nation under attack, even in times when the fighting raged closer to the capital than it does now.

The French president's office said that Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Italian Premier Mario Draghi, representing the three largest economies in Europe, traveled to Kyiv together on a special overnight train provided by the Ukrainian authorities.

President Klaus Iohannis of Romania — which borders Ukraine and has been a key destination for Ukrainian refugees — arrived on a separate train, tweeting on arrival: "This illegal Russian aggression must stop!"

"It's a message of European unity for the Ukrainian people, support now and in the future, because the weeks to come will be very difficult," Macron said.

The Russian forces are pressing their offensive in the eastern Donbas region, slowly but steadily gaining ground on the badly outmanned and outgunned Ukrainian forces, who are pleading for more arms from Western allies.

Several air raid sirens rang out while the European leaders were in their hotel preparing for the rest of their visit, and Kyiv authorities urged people to seek shelter. Such alerts are a frequent occurrence.

As he left the hotel, Macron, putting his hand on his heart, said in English: "I want to show my admira-



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tion for the Ukrainian people.”

German news agency dpa quoted Scholz as saying that the leaders are seeking to show not only solidarity but also their intent to keep up financial and humanitarian help for Ukraine, and a supply of weapons.

Scholz added that this support would continue “for as long as is necessary for Ukraine’s fight for independence.”

Scholz said that the sanctions against Russia were also significant and could lead to Moscow withdrawing its troops, according to dpa.

Scholz, Macron and Draghi have been criticized not only for helping too little but for speaking to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Many leaders and regular people in the Baltic and Central European nations, which were controlled by Moscow during the Cold War, believe that Putin only understands force, and have viewed the efforts by Macron and others to keep speaking to Putin following his invasion as unacceptable.

Hopes were high among Ukrainians that the visit could mark a turning point by opening the way to significant new arms supplies.

Tamara Malko, a resident of Pokrovsk, in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine, said Macron and Olaf had been “very cold” toward Ukrainians so far, and hoped for a change.

“We want peace very much, vey much and have high hopes for Macron and Scholz,” she said. “We want them to see and understand our pain.”

Luhansk regional governor Serhiy Haidai said the visit will not bring anything if the leaders ask Ukraine to conclude a peace treaty with Russia that involves giving up territory. He said that is something Ukrainians would never accept.

“I am sure that our president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, is not going to make concessions and trade our territories. If someone wants to stop Russia by giving them the territories, Germany has Bavaria, Italy has Tuscany, the French can concede Provence, for instance,” he said.

“Listen, this is Russia. These are wild people. Today it will be one territory, tomorrow another one, the day after tomorrow another. And another thing: Many heroes of Ukraine died protecting the country as a whole. Nobody will forgive us if people die but we make concessions to the aggressor.”

The visit comes as EU leaders prepare to make a decision June 23-24 on Ukraine’s request to become a candidate for EU membership, and ahead of an important NATO summit June 29-30 in Madrid.

Also Thursday, NATO defense ministers are meeting in Brussels to weigh more military aid for Ukraine. On Wednesday, the U.S. and Germany announced more aid, as America and its allies provide longer-range weapons they say can make a difference in a fight where Ukrainian forces are outnumbered and outgunned by their Russian invaders.

On Tuesday, during a trip to Ukraine’s neighbors Romania and Moldova, Macron said a “message of support” must be sent to Ukraine before EU heads of state and government “have to make important decisions” at their Brussels meeting.

“We are in a moment where we need to send clear political signals — we, Europeans, we the European Union — toward Ukraine and the Ukrainian people,” he said.

Macron is deeply involved in diplomatic efforts to push for a cease-fire in Ukraine that would allow future peace negotiations. He has frequent discussions with Zelenskyy and has spoken on the phone several times with Russian President Vladimir Putin since Putin launched the invasion in late February.

Scholz had long resisted traveling to Kyiv, saying he didn’t want to “join the queue of people who do a quick in-out for a photo opportunity.” Instead, Scholz said a trip should focus on doing “concrete things.”

Germany on Wednesday announced that it will provide Ukraine with three multiple launch rocket systems of the kind that Kyiv has said it urgently needs to defend itself against Russia’s invasion.

## World shares mostly lower as US rate hike relief rally fades

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global shares were mostly lower Thursday after the Federal Reserve raised its key inter-

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est rate by three-quarters of a point and signaled more rate hikes were coming to fight inflation.

European benchmarks and U.S. futures slipped after Tokyo and some other markets tracked Wall Street's gains of the day before.

Shares in New York rallied after the Fed's hike, the biggest since 1994, as investors initially took heart from Chair Jerome Powell's comments suggesting future rate increases may be more modest.

But analysts warned the gains might be short-lived given the extent that high inflation has seeped into the world economy.

France's CAC 40 sank 2.1% to 5,906.32. Germany's DAX dropped 2.6% to 13,130.64. Britain's FTSE 100 shed 2.1% to 7,118.55.

The future for the S&P 500 was 2.3% lower at 3,707.00, while the future for the Dow industrials gave up 1.8% to 30,105.00. On Wednesday, the the S&P 500 climbed 1.5% in its first gain in six sessions, after it tumbled into bear market territory earlier in the week. The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished 1% higher, while the Nasdaq composite jumped 2.5%.

The Bank of England was expected to raise interest rates later Thursday. Economists said the increase was already expected and factored in, but it marks another step in the dismantling of supports for markets put in place during the pandemic.

The Swiss National Bank raised rates by half a percentage point, to a still low minus 0.25%. Taiwan's central bank raised its key rate by 0.125 basis points to 1.5%.

"The clear read-through here is the FOMC (Fed) has unleashed the central bank Hawkish Genie from the bottle, and we should expect more aggressive follow-through from other central banks except those who are economically challenged," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

In Asian trading, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 0.4% to finish at 26,431.20. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gave up earlier gains, falling nearly 0.2% to 6,591.10. South Korea's Kospi edged 0.2% higher to 2,451.41. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 2.2% to 20,845.43, while the Shanghai Composite fell 0.6% to 3,285.38.

The Bank of Japan started a two-day policy meeting that will end on Friday. The Japanese central bank is under pressure to act given downward pressures on the yen from U.S. rate hikes and super-low rates in Japan. But its aim has been to foster sustainable inflation after years of fending off deflation, or falling prices.

Investors have been selling yen and buying dollars in anticipation of higher yields from dollar-denominated holdings. Japanese politicians and the central bank chief have expressed worries about the declining yen, but no dramatic policy changes are expected.

By late Thursday afternoon, the U.S. dollar had edged up to 134.07 Japanese yen from 133.82 yen. It recently topped 135 yen, the highest level in 20 years. The euro cost \$1.0397, down from \$1.0447.

Japan recorded a nearly 2.4 trillion yen (\$17.9 billion) trade deficit last month, its 10th straight month of a red ink, the Finance Ministry reported. Japan racked up its highest imports for the month of May since 1979, as surging energy prices and a weak yen sent the value of imports soaring. Japan imports almost all its energy.

All kinds of investments, from bonds to bitcoin, have tumbled this year as high inflation forces central banks to try to slow inflation that has flared as economies recover from disruptions of the pandemic. The war in Ukraine has added to those price pressures.

Powell said Wednesday the Fed is moving "expeditiously" to get rates closer to normal levels after last week's stunning report that showed inflation at the consumer level unexpectedly accelerated last month, dashing hopes that inflation may have already peaked.

However, Powell, also hinted that rate increases later this year may be smaller. That appeared to assuage fears the central bank might overshoot its goal of cooling inflation and tip the economy into a downturn.

The Fed is "not trying to induce a recession now, let's be clear about that," Powell said. He called Wednesday's big increase "front-end loading."

Even without recession, higher interest rates hurt prices for investments. The hardest-hit have been those that soared the most in the easy-money era of ultralow interest rates, including high-growth technology stocks and cryptocurrencies.

The war in Ukraine has helped send prices for oil soaring because the region is a major producer of energy.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude dropped 83 cents to \$114.48 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It shed \$3.62 on Wednesday to \$115.31 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gave up \$1.01 to \$117.50 a barrel.

## Election deniers quiet on fraud claims after primary wins

By STEVE PEOPLES and SAM METZ Associated Press

Nevada Republican Jim Marchant insisted there hadn't been a legitimate election in his state in more than a decade. All of Nevada's election winners since 2006, he said on a recent podcast, were "installed by the deep-state cabal."

But when Marchant won the Republican nomination for Nevada secretary of state this week, he immediately celebrated the victory as legitimate.

"I am beyond humbled by the overwhelming support of our campaign. Nevadans made their voices heard," Marchant declared on social media.

Such inconsistency has become a hallmark of election deniers in Republican primary contests across the U.S. in this year's midterms. Dozens of GOP candidates who sought former President Donald Trump's backing in Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and elsewhere have spent months parroting his baseless claims of 2020 election fraud but then declared victory without raising such concerns in their own elections.

Amid such seeming hypocrisy, many Republican candidates are still vowing to pursue a series of election reforms that could make it more difficult to vote — particularly for those who traditionally support Democrats — in the name of election integrity.

Democratic National Committee Chair Jamie Harrison warned that "MAGA Republicans will do anything in their desperate chase for power."

"From undermining our democracy by spreading Trump's Big Lie, to laying the groundwork to try to cancel votes when they don't agree with the outcome, but falling silent if they win, this is today's Republican Party," Harrison told The Associated Press.

In Nevada on Tuesday, Marchant was among a slate of election deniers who secured their places on the November ballot without questioning the legitimacy of the results. The group included candidates for Senate, state treasurer and a Las Vegas-area congressional seat. That's even as the majority of counties relied upon Dominion voting machines, which continue to be the target of conspiracy theories by Trump and his allies.

The phenomenon extends well beyond Nevada.

In Pennsylvania, Republican nominee for governor Doug Mastriano spearheaded a state Senate hearing in which witnesses — including former Trump campaign attorneys Jenna Ellis and Rudy Giuliani — aired false claims about mass voter fraud. Mastriano also was outside the U.S. Capitol when a mob of Trump supporters stormed the building during the deadly 2021 insurrection. And he later tried to bring a partisan election audit to Pennsylvania before he was stripped of his committee chairmanship by his own party.

Mastriano made no mention of voter fraud as he declared victory in Pennsylvania's Republican primary for governor last month.

"God is good," a smiling Mastriano told cheering supporters.

The Mastriano campaign declined to respond to a question about the apparent double standard.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton also ignored questions about his contradictory positions on voter fraud.

Paxton won his fiercely contested primary last month after spending much of the last year championing Trump's bogus claims of election fraud. In the aftermath of Joe Biden's presidential win, Paxton filed a legal challenge to the election results in four battleground states. He asked the U.S. Supreme Court to set them aside and allow the Republican-controlled state legislatures to determine the winner.

Seventeen other Republican state attorneys general supported the effort.



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The high court rejected the challenge three days after the lawsuit was filed, finding Texas did not have standing to sue other states over how they conduct their elections. And the state bar moved to discipline Paxton just days after his primary win, claiming his leading role in petitioning the Supreme Court to block Biden's victory was "dishonest."

State and federal election officials across the country and Trump's own attorney general have said there is no credible evidence the election was tainted. The former president's allegations of fraud also were roundly rejected by courts, including by judges he appointed.

But after nearly two years of Trump's constant claims that the election was "stolen," which have been embraced by hundreds of Republican candidates across the U.S. seeking his support, an extraordinary number of Americans have lost faith in the U.S. election system.

Only 45% of U.S. adults said they have significant confidence that votes in the 2022 midterm election will be counted accurately, and 30% have some confidence, according to a February AP-NORC poll. Democrats were much more likely than Republicans to be very confident, 66% vs. 24%.

Polling continues to show most Republicans have doubts about the 2020 presidential election. In July 2021, 68% of adults -- but only 33% of Republicans -- said Biden was legitimately elected president, according to an AP-NORC poll. Sixty-six percent of Republicans said he was not legitimately elected.

In addition to key state officials, several Trump-backed Senate candidates promoted the specter of election fraud over and over — except when delivering their primary victory speeches in recent weeks.

Georgia Republican Senate nominee Herschel Walker repeatedly claimed Biden's victory was tainted by fraud over the last year and even called for seven swing states Trump lost to vote again. Ohio GOP Senate candidate J.D. Vance claimed the 2020 election was "rigged" or "stolen." North Carolina Senate nominee Ted Budd, a Republican congressman, refused on the day of his May primary victory to say that Biden won the 2020 presidential election. And Pennsylvania Republican nominee for Senate Mehmet Oz said there was "definitely" widespread fraud in his state, even as the evidence says otherwise.

None raised similar claims about their own primary victories.

In Nevada, state GOP Chair Michael McDonald said Marchant acknowledging his primary win wasn't hypocritical because he continued to have questions about vote-counting in the Las Vegas area.

"He was questioning the results last night, even though he was winning, which I found admirable," McDonald said, recounting a 1:30 a.m. phone call with Marchant.

Marchant did not respond to requests for comment, but his campaign consultant Rory McShane said he continued to have questions about voting in Clark County, which leans Democratic and is where the vast majority of the state's population lives, despite the race being called for him.

There may be no more vocal proponent of Trump's baseless claims of election fraud falsehoods than Marchant, a 66-year-old former failed congressional candidate.

Marchant was present in Carson City when the party sent a dueling slate of electoral votes to Congress in December 2020. Throughout the primary, he was a fixture at rural county commission meetings during discussions about Dominion voting machines and potentially switching to hand-counting ballots. And he has toured the country with other 2020 election denialists, using phrases and terminology associated with QAnon conspiracy theorists.

Cisco Aguilar, the Democrat running against Marchant, described the Republican's statements about the 2020 election, voting machines and mail-in ballots as out of touch with reality.

In an interview, Aguilar said he feels immense responsibility after Marchant's victory and said he's now weighing questions he hadn't anticipated when he entered the race, such as whether agreeing to a debate would be giving a conspiracy theorist a platform.

"He's created a massive fear among a subgroup of individuals here in Nevada," Aguilar said. "I don't even know if you can have a debate with someone who is unwilling to listen."

## Harris to launch task force on online harassment, abuse

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris will launch a new task force dedicated to fighting online harassment and abuse, according to senior Biden administration officials.

Although the problem isn't new, it has taken on new urgency following shooting massacres in Texas and New York that were predated by misogynist and racist commentary on social media and message boards.

The National Security Council is working with the White House Gender Policy Council on the initiative, and Attorney General Merrick Garland and Surgeon General Vivek Murthy were scheduled to attend the first meeting Thursday.

Also present will be Sloane Stephens, a Black U.S. tennis player who has faced a torrent of racist abuse after losing matches.

The task force is intended to develop, over the next 180 days, recommendations for next steps the federal government can take to combat the problem, said the administration officials, who insisted on anonymity to speak before the launch announcement.

## Russian sanctions hurting small Italian fashion producers

By COLLEEN BARRY AP Business Writer

MILAN (AP) — Fine Italian knitwear packed in boxes addressed to retailers in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kursk sit stacked in a Lombardy warehouse awaiting dispatch. Although not subject to sanctions to punish Russia for invading Ukraine, the garments are not likely to ship any time soon.

Missing payments from the Russian retailers who ordered the garments are piling up due to restrictions tied to the banking sector, putting pressure on small fashion producers like D. Exterior, a high-end knitwear company with 50 workers in the northern city of Brescia.

"This is very painful. I have 2 million euros worth of merchandise in the warehouse, and if they cannot pay for it, I will be on my knees," said D. Exterior owner Nadia Zanola, surveying the warehouse for the brand she founded in 1997 from the knitwear company created by her parents in 1952.

Italy is the largest producer of global luxury goods in the world, making 40% of high-end apparel, footwear and accessories. While Russia generates just about 3% of Italian luxury's 97 billion euros (\$101 billion) in annual revenue, it is a significant slice of business for some of the 80,000 small and medium companies that make up the backbone of Italian fashion, according to industry officials.

"We are talking about eliminating 80% to 100% of revenues for these companies," said Fabio Pietrella, president of the Confartigianato fashion craftsman federation.

Districts producing footwear in the Marche and Veneto regions, and knitwear makers in Umbria and Emilia-Romagna have grown particularly reliant on Russia.

"These are districts that connect the supply chain, and if it is interrupted, not only is the company that closes harmed, but an entire system that help make this country an economic powerhouse," Pietrella said.

The Italian fashion world is best known for luxury houses like Gucci, Versace and Armani, which unveil their menswear collections in Milan this week. And some of the biggest names appear on a list compiled by Yale University professor Jeffrey Sonnenberg of major companies doing business in Russia since the war in Ukraine began.

"There are companies that kept selling to Nazi Germany after the outbreak of World War II — we don't celebrate them for that," Sonnenberg said, labeling as "greedy" any enterprise that continues to do business in Russia today.

He also underlined that fashion companies don't have the grounds to make humanitarian appeals to bypass sanctions, voluntary or otherwise, as has been the case with agricultural firms and pharmaceutical companies.

Among those receiving a failing grade from Sonnenberg is Italy's Benetton, which in a statement condemned the war but said it would continue its commercial activities in Russia, including longstanding commercial and logistic partnerships and a network of stores that sustain 600 families.

French conglomerate LVMH, meanwhile, has temporarily closed 124 stores in Russia, while continuing to pay its 3,500 employees in Russia. The Spanish group Inditex, which owns the fast-fashion chain Zara,

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also temporarily closed 502 stores in Russia as well as its online sales, accounting for 8.5% of group pre-tax earnings.

Pietrella fears a sort of Russia-phobia is taking hold that is demonizing business owners for trying to keep up ties with a longer-term vision.

He characterized as a "witch-hunt" criticism of some 40 shoe producers from the Marche region on Italy's Adriatic coast for traveling to Russia for a trade fair during the war.

European Union sanctions against Russia sharpened after the Ukraine invasion, setting a 300-euro wholesale maximum for each item shipped, taking super-luxury items out of circulation but still targeting the upper-middle class or wealthy Russians.

"Without a doubt, we as the fashion federation have expressed our extreme concern over the aggression in Ukraine," Pietrella said. "From an ethical point of view, it is out of discussion. But we have to think of our companies. Ethics are one thing. The market is another. Workers in a company are paid by the market, not by ethics."

He said the 300-euro limit on sales was a gambit by European politicians that on paper allows trade with Russia despite accompanying bureaucratic and financial hurdles, while also shielding governments from having to provide bailout funds to the industry. He also dismissed as overly facile government suggestions to find alternative markets to Russia.

"If there was another market, we would be there already," Pietrella said.

At D. Exterior, exposure to Russia grew gradually over the years to now represent 35% to 40% of revenue that hit 22 million euros before the pandemic, a stream that is also under new pressure from higher energy and raw material costs.

The company was already delivering its summer collection and taking orders for winter when Russia invaded on Feb. 24. By March, Russian retailers were having trouble making payments.

Not only is Zanola stuck with some 4,000 spring and summer garments that she has little hope of shipping to Russian clients, she said she was contractually required to keep producing the winter orders, risking 100,000 euros in labor and materials costs if those are unable to ship.

Over the years, her Russian clients have proven to be ideal customers, Zanola said. Not only do they pay on time, but they are appreciative of the workmanship in D. Exterior's knitwear creations.

After working so hard to build up her Russian customer base, she is loathe to give it up and doesn't see a quick long-term replacement.

"If Russia were Putin, I wouldn't go there. But since Russia is not only Putin, one hopes that the poor Russians manage to raise themselves up," she said.

## For families deeply divided, a summer of hot buttons begins

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Kristia Leyendecker has navigated a range of opposing views from her two siblings and other loved ones since 2016, when Donald Trump's election put a sharp, painful point on their political divisions as she drifted from the Republican Party of today and they didn't.

Then came the pandemic, the chaotic 2020 election and more conflict over masks and vaccinations. Yet she hung in there to keep relationships intact. That all changed in February 2021 during the devastating freeze in the Dallas area where they all live, she with her husband and two of their three children. Leyendecker's middle child began a gender transition, and Leyendecker's brother, his wife and her sister cut off contact with her family. Their mother was caught in the middle.

"I was devastated. If you had told me 10 years ago, even five years ago, that I would now be estranged from my family, I would have told you you were lying. We were a very close family. We did all holidays together. I've been through all of the stages of grief multiple times," says the 49-year-old Leyendecker, a high school teacher.

Since, there have been no family picnics or group vacations. There were no mass gatherings for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Heading into summer, nothing has changed.



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For families fractured along red house-blue house lines, summer's slate of reunions, trips and weddings poses another exhausting round of tension at a time of heavy fatigue. Pandemic restrictions have melted away but gun control, the fight for reproductive rights, the Jan. 6 insurrection hearings, who's to blame for soaring inflation and a range of other issues continue to simmer.

Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers, co-hosts of the popular Pantsuit Politics podcast, have been hosting small group conversations with listeners about family, friendships, church, community, work and partners as they've launched their second book, "Now What? How to Move Forward When We're Divided (About Basically Everything)."

What they've heard is relatively consistent.

"Everyone is still really hurt by some of the fallout in their relationships over COVID," Stewart Holland says. "People are still brokenhearted about some friendships that fell apart, partnerships that are now strained, family relationships that are estranged. As people start to come back together again, that pain is right on the surface, about the last fight or the last disagreement or the last blowup."

She called this moment in a nation still greatly polarized as a "bingo card of political conflict for certain families right now."

Reda Hicks, 41, was born and raised in Odessa, the epicenter of the West Texas oil industry. Her family is large, conservative and deeply evangelical. She's the oldest of four siblings and the senior of 24 first cousins. Her move to Austin for college was an eye-opener. Her move to ultra-progressive Berkeley, California, for law school was an even bigger one.

She's been in Houston since 2005 and has watched friction among friends and family from her two very different worlds devolve on her social media feeds, emboldened by the distance the internet affords.

"There's been a horrific caricaturing on both ends of that spectrum. Like, 'I'm going to talk to you like you are the caricature in my mind of a hippie' or 'I'm going to talk to you like you're the caricature in my mind of a roughneck,' which means you're an idiot either way and you have no idea what you're talking about," says Hicks, a business consultant and the mother of two young children.

"It all feels so personal now."

Immigration and border security pop up regularly. So does abortion and access to health care for women. Religion, particularly the separation of church and state, is a third hot button. And there's gun reform in light of the recent mass school shooting in Uvalde at home in Texas and other massacres. She has relatives — including her retired military and conservative husband — who own and carry guns.

In offline life, Hicks' family interactions can be tense but do remain civil, with regular get-togethers that include a recent group weekend at her second home in the Pineywoods of East Texas.

She has never considered a transition to no contact with conservative loved ones. With a brother living just across the street, that would be difficult to pull off. As a couple, Hicks and her husband have made a conscious decision to openly discuss their opposing views in the presence of their children, ages 11 and 5.

It's a humbling of sorts, making space for them to agree to disagree. "And we disagree a lot. But our ground rules are no name calling. If something gets extra heated, we take a timeout."

No real ground rules are set when it comes to the rest of their families, other than a change of topic when things appear headed for a boil over.

Daryl Van Tongeren, an associate professor of psychology at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, is out with a new book on the quiet power of restraint, "Humble: Free Yourself from the Traps of a Narcissistic World." In his eyes, the Hickses have got it right, though cultural humility is a big ask for some divided families.

"Cultural humility is when we realize that our cultural perspective is not superior, and we demonstrate curiosity to learn from others, seeing the multitude of diverse approaches as a strength," Van Tongeren says. "This humility does not come at the cost of fighting for the oppressed nor does it require that people shy away from upholding their personal values. But how we engage with people with whom we disagree matters."

Van Tongeren is an optimist. "Humility," he says, "has the potential to change our relationships, our

communities and nations. It helps bridge divides, and it centers the humanity of each of us. And it is what we desperately need right now.”

In the humility camp, he’s not alone. Thomas Plante, who teaches psychology at California’s Santa Clara University, a liberal Jesuit school, urges the same.

“Having a heated conversation during a picnic or over the barbecue isn’t going to change anyone’s mind. It only creates tensions and hurt feelings as a rule,” Plante says.

Carla Bevins, an assistant teaching professor of communication at Carnegie Mellon’s Tepper School of Business, focuses on interpersonal communication, etiquette and conflict management. The wells of emotional reserves have fallen even lower at the start of summer’s closeness, she says, compared to the stressful family times of, say, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

“We’re so worn out,” she says. “And so often we’re framing our own response before we really even hear what the other person is trying to say. It needs to be about finding that commonality. Ask yourself, how much energy do I have in a day? And remember, there’s always the option to just not go.”

## **In Yemen, child soldiering continues despite Houthi promise**

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — In the video, a man stands in front of a blackboard in a full classroom, teaching the parts of an AK-47 rifle. He then hands it over to a boy, showing him how to cock it.

Other children crowd around, many who appear to be no older than 10, asking for their turn. The video, leaked online this month, provides a rare window into child soldier indoctrination by Yemen’s Houthi rebels. Local residents confirmed to The Associated Press that it was filmed in recent weeks in Yemen’s rebel-held province of Amran, northwest of the capital, Sanaa.

Despite an agreement with the U.N. in April to halt the practice, the Houthis continue to recruit children into the military ranks to fight in the country’s grinding civil war, Houthi officials, aid workers and residents told the AP.

Two Houthi officials said the rebels recruited several hundred children including as young as 10 over the past two months. Those children have been deployed to front lines, as part of a buildup of forces taking place during a U.N.-brokered truce, which has held for more than two months, one official said.

The officials, both hardliners within the Houthi movement, said they see nothing wrong with the practice, arguing that boys from 10 or 12 are considered men.

“Those are not children. They are true men, who should defend their nation against the Saudi, American aggression, and defend the Islamic nation,” one of them said. The two spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid frictions with others among the Houthis.

The Houthis have used what they call “summer camps” to disseminate their religious ideology and to recruit boys to fight. Such camps take place in schools and mosques around the Houthi-held part of Yemen, which encompasses the north and center of the country and Sanaa.

Yemen’s conflict erupted in 2014 when the Houthis descended from their northern enclave and took over Sanaa, forcing the internationally recognized government to flee to the south. A Saudi-led coalition entered the war in early 2015 to try to restore the government to power, waging a destructive air campaign and arming anti-Houthi forces.

The war has killed more than 150,000 people, including more than 14,500 civilians and has plunged the country into near famine, creating one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.

Child soldiers have been involved for years. Nearly 2,000 Houthi-recruited children were killed on the battlefield between January 2020 and May 2021, according to U.N. experts. Pro-government forces have also used child fighters but to a much lesser degree and have taken greater measures to halt the practice, according to U.N. and aid officials.

Overall, the U.N. says over 10,200 children have been killed or maimed in the war, though it is unclear how many may have been combatants.

In April, the rebels signed what the U.N. children’s agency described as an “action plan” to end and pre-

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vent the practice. U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said the rebels committed to identifying children in their ranks and releasing them within six months.

UNICEF and the Houthis did not respond to requests for comment on the continued recruitment since.

Four aid workers with three international organizations operating in rebel-held areas said they observed intensified Houthi efforts to recruit children in recent weeks. The Houthis' ranks have been thinned because of battlefield losses, especially during a nearly two-year battle for the crucial city of Marib.

The aid workers spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of their safety and that their groups could be barred from working in Houthi-held territory.

They said the rebels have pressured families to send their children to camps where they learn how to handle weapons and plant mines, in return for services including food rations from international organizations.

One aid worker who operates in remote northern areas described watching children as young as 10 manning checkpoints along the road, with AK-47s hanging on their shoulders. Others are sent to the front line. He said children have returned wounded from fighting at Marib.

Thousands of fighters were killed in the battle for government-held Marib. The Houthis' long attempt to capture it was finally stopped in late 2021 when government forces were bolstered by better-equipped fighters backed by the United Arab Emirates.

Abdel-Bari Taher, a Yemeni commentator and former head of the country's Journalists' Union, said that the Houthis are exploiting local customs to the children's and society's detriment. Having or carrying a weapon is a tradition deeply rooted in Yemen, especially in rural and mountainous communities, he said.

"It is a source of pride and kind of manhood for the boys," he said.

The Houthis also condition crucial food aid on children attending the training camps, some say.

Two residents in Amran province said Houthi representatives came to their homes in May and told them to prepare their children for camps at the end of the school year. The residents, who are farmers, spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

They said their five children, aged between 11 and 16, were taken in late May to the school where the video was taken. One father said he was told that if he didn't send his children, his family would no longer receive food rations.

The U.N. panel of experts said earlier this year that the Houthis, a Zaidi-Shiite religious movement turned-rebel militia with ties with Iran, have a system to indoctrinate child soldiers, including using humanitarian aid to pressure families.

Children are taken first to centers for a month or more of religious courses. There, they are told they are joining a holy war against Jews and Christians and Arab countries that have succumbed to Western influence. Seven-year-olds are taught weapons cleaning and how to dodge rockets, the experts found.

The Houthis have in the past officially denied enlisting children to fight.

But they have also provided evidence to the contrary. A high-ranking Houthi, Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, posted a video in early June from a visit he paid to one of the camps in Dhamar province. It shows dozens of children in uniforms standing in a military-like formation and declaring allegiance to rebel movement's top leader, Abdul-Malek al-Houthi.

"Soldiers of God," they shout. "We are coming."

## Yellowstone floodwaters threaten water supplies in Montana

By MATTHEW BROWN and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Damaging floodwaters that tore through Yellowstone National Park menaced communities downstream where residents cleaned up from the mess and kept an eye on rising river levels while others braced for the economic fallout while the park remains closed.

After wiping out miles of roads and untold number of bridges in the park and swamping hundreds of homes in surrounding communities, the roiling waters threatened to cut off fresh drinking water supplies to Montana's largest city.



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Officials asked Billings residents Wednesday to conserve water because it was down to a 24- to 36-hour supply after a combination of heavy rain and rapidly melting mountain snow raised the Yellowstone River to historic levels that forced them to shut down its water treatment plant.

"None of us planned a 500-year flood event on the Yellowstone when we designed these facilities," said Debi Meling, the city's public works director.

While expressing optimism the river would drop quickly enough for the plant to resume operations before tanks were drained, the city of 110,000 stopped watering parks and boulevards, and its fire department filled its trucks with river water.

Cory Mottice, with the National Weather Service in Billings, said the river was expected to crest Wednesday evening and drop below minor flood stage, 13.5 feet (4.1 meters), by mid to late Thursday.

The unprecedented and sudden flooding earlier this week drove all but a dozen of the more than 10,000 visitors out of the nation's oldest park.

Remarkably no one was reported hurt or killed by raging waters that pulled homes off their foundations and pushed a river off course — possibly permanently — and may require damaged roads to be rebuilt a safer distance away.

On Wednesday, residents in Red Lodge, Montana, a gateway town to the park's northern end, used shovels, wheelbarrows and a pump to clear thick mud and debris from a flooded home along the banks of Rock Creek.

"We thought we had it, and then a bridge went out. And it diverted the creek, and the water started rolling in the back, broke out a basement window and started filling up my basement," Pat Ruzich said. "And then I quit. It was like, the water won."

While the Yellowstone flood is rare, it is the type of event that is becoming more common as the planet warms, experts said.

"We certainly know that climate change is causing more natural disasters, more fires, bigger fires and more floods and bigger floods," said Robert Manning, a retired University of Vermont professor of environment and natural resources, "These things are going to happen, and they're going to happen probably a lot more intensely."

Park officials say the northern half of the park is likely to remain closed all summer, a devastating blow to the local economies that rely on tourism.

The rains hit just as area hotels filled up in recent weeks with summer tourists. More than 4 million visitors were tallied by the park last year. The wave of tourists doesn't abate until fall, and June is typically one of Yellowstone's busiest months.

The season had started well for Cara McGary who guides groups through the Lamar Valley to see wolves, bison, elk and bears. She'd seen more 20 grizzlies some days this year.

Now, with the road from Gardiner into northern Yellowstone washed out, the wildlife is still there but it's out of reach to McGary and her guide service, In Our Nature, is suddenly in trouble.

"The summer that we prepared for is not at all similar to the summer that we're going to have," she said. "This is an 80% to 100% loss of business during the high season."

Flying Pig Adventures, a Gardiner-based business that guides rafting trips on the Yellowstone River, will need to rely more on tourists staying in Montana now that roads into the park are impassible, co-owner Patrick Sipp said Wednesday.

It's a blow not unlike how COVID-19 temporarily shut down Yellowstone two years ago, reducing the park's June 2020 tourist visits by about one-third before they rebounded over the rest of that summer.

"We're definitely a resilient company, we've got a very tough crew," Sipp said. "But it's devastating. You just hate seeing stuff like that in the community. We're just hoping that we can get back out there relatively soon."

Meantime, as the waters recede, parks officials are turning their attention to the massive effort of rebuilding many miles of ruined roads and, possibly, hundreds of washed-out bridges, many of them built for backcountry hikers. Yellowstone Superintendent Cam Sholly said assessment teams won't be able to

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tally the damage until next week.

Kelly Goonan, an associate professor at Southern Utah University and an expert in national parks and recreation management, said rebuilding will be a long process.

"This is something we're definitely going to feel the impacts of for the next several years," Goonan said.

## Avalanche beat Lightning in OT to open Stanley Cup Final

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

DENVER (AP) — Facing the two-time defending champion Tampa Bay Lightning put the Colorado Avalanche at a sizeable experience disadvantage going into the Stanley Cup Final.

When the puck dropped, the Avalanche showed they could use their speed to offset Tampa Bay's players who have been here, done that. And it doesn't hurt to have a guy who also hoisted the Cup.

Andre Burakovsky scored 1:23 into overtime to give Colorado a 4-3 victory in Game 1 on Wednesday night and put the Avs up in a series that's shaping up to be a classic. Burakovsky is one of only two Colorado players with Stanley Cup rings, and that came in handy.

"I've been there, and I kind of know the situation," said Burakovsky, who also scored two big goals in Game 7 of the East final against the Lightning in 2018 when he won it all with Washington. "I've been through it, and I kind of know what to expect and the pace and what's at stake here."

The pace? Furious. The stakes? Either Tampa Bay finishing off the first NHL three-peat in almost four decades or this Colorado core's first championship after years of playoff disappointments.

The Avalanche with a fast start how they can use their speed to knock even the most seasoned opponents back on their heels. Backstopped by Darcy Kuemper, the no-doubt after all choice to start in goal now that he's healthy, the penalty kill was aggressive in going a perfect 3 for 3 against the Lightning's potent power play.

"We had a great forecheck and we were pretty good on clearing pucks when we had the chance," forward Artturi Lehkonen said.

An early penalty kill built momentum for Colorado, which opened the scoring on captain Gabriel Landeskog's goal 40 seconds after Josh Manson's penalty expired. Manson — one of general manager Joe Sakic's expensive trade deadline pickups — more than made up for a holding the stick minor with several big hits.

Lehkone, the Avalanche's other deadline acquisition, also kept up his knack for scoring key goals. He had their third goal of the first period after Valeri Nichuskin scored the second as part of a dominant performance all over the ice.

"Huge X-factor," coach Jared Bednar said. "He's been doing that type of thing for us for a couple years now."

Tampa Bay's latest additions also played a major role, with Nick Paul outracing Colorado defenseman Jack Johnson to a loose puck for a goal in the first that limited the damage and kept the defending champs in the game. Brandon Hagel, who has been banged up and was a question mark to play, got beaten to a loose puck by Landeskog, an uncharacteristic goal for reigning playoff MVP Andrei Vasilevskiy to give up by letting the initial shot sneak through under his left arm.

Of course, the Lightning counterpunched.

In another example of what has made the Lightning the NHL's best team over the past three years, they turned the tide in the second period with goals by Ondrej Palat and Mikhail Sergachev 48 seconds apart.

"We're playing a really good team and they're not going to roll over and lay back," Bednar said. "They're going to have push back."

So did his Avalanche, clamping down with another big kill in the third period to finish what Landeskog called a "resilient win."

Colorado outshot Tampa Bay 38-23, and there was no argument from the losing side about the result of the series opener between two evenly matched opponents.

"There's some positive signs for us in this game," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "But the right team won the game, so give them credit for pulling it out."

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The arena was rocking from the start of warmups for the first Stanley Cup Final game in the city in 2001 — also the last year the Avalanche won the Stanley Cup, with Sakic serving as captain. Fans chanted, “We want the Cup!” throughout the leadup and at times during the game, which was a showcase of the high-scoring hockey that has been the standard all season.

Tampa Bay’s most prolific goal-scorer from each of the past two title runs was back, with center Brayden Point returning to play his first game since injuring his right leg a month ago.

Colorado has a series lead despite playing without forwards Nazem Kadri (right thumb) and Andrew Cogliano (right hand), who were injured last series in a sweep of Edmonton in the Western Conference final.

The Avalanche swept Nashville in the first round, as well, and dispatched rival St. Louis in six before taking out Connor McDavid and the Oilers. If anything, Game 1 against the Lightning showed this series won’t be easy for either team.

“I don’t think by a country mile we gave them our best game,” Cooper said. “To beat a team like that, we need to have better in us.”

## What we know about how Pence’s day unfolded on Jan. 6

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mike Pence won’t be testifying at Thursday’s Jan. 6 committee hearing. But he will be in the spotlight as focus turns to former President Donald Trump’s desperate and futile attempts to persuade his vice president to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election and deliver them a second term.

“As you will hear, President Trump engaged in a relentless effort to pressure Pence both in private and in public,” Rep. Liz Cheney, the leading Republican on the committee, said last week. “Vice President Pence demonstrated his loyalty to Donald Trump consistently over four years, but he knew that he had a higher duty to the United States Constitution.”

What we know about Pence’s actions leading up to and during that day:

### UNDER PRESSURE

As Trump’s frantic efforts to stave off defeat were quashed by courts and state officials, he and his allies zeroed in on Jan. 6 — the day a joint session of Congress would convene to formalize President-elect Joe Biden’s victory — as their last chance to remain in power.

The heavy-handed pressure campaign intensified in the days leading up to the 6th as Trump, lawyer John Eastman and others in Trump’s orbit tried to convince Pence that he had the power to overturn the will of voters in a handful of critical battleground states by simply rejecting Electoral College votes or sending the results back to the states — even though the Constitution makes clear the vice president’s role in the proceedings is largely ceremonial.

Pence spent hours huddling with staff, including his general counsel, Greg Jacob. He studied the Electoral Count Act of 1887, which governs the proceedings, and met with the Senate parliamentarian to understand his role. He also received outside counsel, including from former Vice President Dan Quayle.

Some aides appealed to Trump not to put his unflinchingly loyal vice president in such a precarious position. Pence was already widely seen as a potential future presidential candidate and a public fissure with Trump was seen as a potential career ender. But Trump kept pushing, both publicly and behind the scenes.

On Monday, Jan. 4, Eastman and Trump pressed Pence to go along with the scheme in an Oval Office meeting. And at a rally that night in Georgia, Trump said his fate rested in his vice president’s hands. “I hope Mike Pence comes through for us,” he told the crowd.

Trump continued to push in an Oval Office meeting the next day, where he again urged Pence to use powers the vice president did not possess to overturn the will of voters. Pence by then made clear that he was unconvinced.

That day, Jacob sent a memo putting in writing his conclusion that if Pence followed Eastman’s proposal, he would likely lose in court, at best, or spark a constitutional crisis, Politico first reported. The tensions were so high that Pence’s chief of staff, Marc Short, placed a call to Pence’s lead Secret Service agent that



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day, The New York Times first reported, informing him that the vice president's refusal to go along with Trump was about to become public.

'HANG MIKE PENCE'

The pressure continued through the night. "If Vice President @Mike\_Pence comes through for us, we will win the Presidency," Trump tweeted around 1 a.m.

"All Mike Pence has to do is send them back to the States, AND WE WIN," he wrote later that morning. "Do it Mike, this is a time for extreme courage!"

Pence was at his residence at the Naval Observatory the morning of Jan. 6 when he spoke a final time with Trump, who was joined in the Oval Office by his daughter Ivanka and Pence's national security adviser, Keith Kellogg. During the call in the 11 o'clock hour, Trump berated Pence, chastising him for not being tough enough to go along with the scheme, according to Kellogg's testimony to the committee.

Pence then headed to the Capitol to oversee the counting of the Electoral College votes that would formalize Trump's defeat.

But first Pence made official what his aides had already made clear. In a letter addressed to his colleagues in Congress, Pence explained why he couldn't go along with Trump's plan.

"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.

At 1:03 p.m., he officially gavelled the U.S. Senate into session as pro-Trump rioters, who had already breached Capitol barricades, were outside clashing with police.

By that point, Trump was already close to wrapping up his speech on the Ellipse in which he repeatedly targeted Pence and urged his supporters to "fight like hell."

"If Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election," Trump falsely told the crowd. "All Vice President Pence has to do is send it back to the states to recertify and we become president and you are the happiest people."

Outside the Capitol, the scene devolved into violent chaos as rioters, some armed with pipes, bats and bear spray, charged into the Capitol, quickly overwhelming police. One officer was beaten and repeatedly shocked with a stun gun until he had a heart attack. Another was foaming at the mouth and screaming for help as rioters crushed him between two doors and bashed him in the head with his own weapon. At 1:49 p.m., D.C. police officially declared a riot.

At about 2:12 p.m., Pence was rushed off the Senate floor as rioters flooded inside. The Washington Post first reported that Pence, who had been joined that day by his wife and their daughter, was at one point less than 100 feet from a group of protesters.

IN HIDING

Pence spent the next hours in hiding with his staff and family — first in his ceremonial office and then in an underground loading dock inside the Capitol complex. At least twice, he rejected pleas from security staff to leave the building, insisting it was crucial that he remain in place.

But even as the horror played out live on television, Trump, instead of urging his supporters to go home, blasted Pence.

"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!"

Trump's tweet echoed through the angry mob. Footage obtained by the committee shows rioters reading Trump's words aloud and crowds breaking into chants of "Hang Mike Pence!" A makeshift gallows was photographed outside.

The committee alleges Trump was made aware of the chants and "responded with this sentiment: 'Maybe our supporters have the right idea.' Mike Pence 'deserves' it,'" Cheney charged.

"LET'S GET BACK TO WORK"

At 8 p.m., after hours of fear and carnage, the Capitol was finally deemed secure and Pence reconvened

the Senate with a message.

"Today was a dark day in the history of the United States Capitol. But thanks to the swift efforts of U.S. Capitol Police, federal, state and local law enforcement, the violence was quelled. The Capitol is secured. And the people's work continues," he told the nation. "Let's get back to work," he said to applause.

Just after 3:40 a.m. Pence officially declared Trump's election defeat — as well as his own.

## 1/6 panel probes Trump pressure on Pence to reject election

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The 1/6 committee is set to plunge into Donald Trump's last-ditch effort to salvage the 2020 election by pressuring Vice President Mike Pence to reject the electoral count — a highly unusual and potentially illegal strategy that was set in motion in the run-up to the U.S. Capitol riot.

With two live witnesses Thursday, the House panel intends to show how Trump's false claims of a fraudulent election left him grasping for alternatives as courts turned back dozens of lawsuits challenging the vote.

Trump latched onto conservative law professor John Eastman's obscure plan and launched a public and private pressure campaign on Pence days before the vice president was to preside over the Jan. 6 joint session of Congress to certify Joe Biden's election victory. A federal judge has said it is "more likely than not" Trump committed crimes over the scheme.

"The illegality of the plan was obvious," the Jan. 6 panel said in a court filing against Eastman.

The committee will hear from Greg Jacob, the vice president's counsel who fended off Eastman's ideas for Pence to carry out the plan; and retired federal judge Michael Luttig, who called the plan from Eastman, his former law clerk, "incorrect at every turn."

Thursday's session is also expected to divulge new evidence about the danger Pence faced that day as the mob stormed the Capitol shouting "hang Mike Pence!" with a gallows on the Capitol grounds as the vice president fled with senators into hiding. Nine people died in the riot and its aftermath.

The session is expected to show how Trump's pressure on Pence "directly contributed" to the attack on the Capitol and how the Eastman strategy posed a "grave, grave threat" to democracy, according to a committee aide who insisted on anonymity to discuss the upcoming hearing.

Ahead of the hearing, Pence's former chief of staff, Marc Short, said his boss was determined to stay at the Capitol that night and finish the job, despite the threats.

"He knew his job was to stay at his post," Short said on CNN on Wednesday.

Short said Pence didn't want the world seeing the vice president leaving the Capitol when "a hallmark of democracy" was under siege.

"He thought it was important that he stay there and make sure the work of the American people was completed that night," said Short, who testified under subpoena to the committee for eight hours, but has not yet appeared as a live witness.

The panel is reconvening for a third hearing this month after a blockbuster prime-time start last week, followed by logistical setbacks in recent days. Monday's key witness, former Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien, abruptly declined to appear in person because his wife was in labor with their child. Wednesday's scheduled hearing with witnesses from the Justice Department who tried to convince Trump that his claims of voter fraud were just not true was postponed.

Nevertheless, the panel's yearlong investigation is portraying a publicly gripping account of Trump's final weeks in office as the defeated president clung to "the big lie" of a rigged election even as those around him — his family, his top aides, officials at the highest levels of government — were telling him he simply lost the election.

Former Attorney General William Barr, who resigned at the end of 2020 rather than be part of Trump's plans, testified earlier that the president was becoming "detached from reality" if he believed the lies. He said he told the president his claims of voter fraud were "bull—."

With 1,000 interviews and reams of 140,000 documents, the committee is connecting the dots, showing

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how Trump's false claims of election fraud became a battle cry as he summoned thousands of Americans to Washington for a Jan. 6 rally and then sent them to Capitol Hill to "fight like hell" for his presidency.

More than 800 people have been arrested in the Capitol siege, and the panel is considering whether to send a referral for criminal charges against Trump to the Justice Department. No president or former president has ever been indicted by the Justice Department, and Attorney General Merrick Garland has said he and his team are following the proceedings in Congress.

For now, the panel is pressing ahead with its hearings, with more scheduled for next week.

Thursday's will unpack the Eastman plan to have the states send alternative slates of electors from the five or seven states Trump was disputing, including Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. With competing slates for Trump or Biden, Pence would be forced to reject them, returning them to the states to sort it out, under the plan.

Pence refused the plan, believing the founding fathers would not have left it to one person, the vice president, to decide the outcome, Jacob told the panel in previous testimony. Jacob said the idea was utterly against some 130 years of precedent in American history, "entirely made up."

The committee in hearings ahead will be delving into the roles of extremist groups and others who heeded Trump's call to Washington. Leaders and others from the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys face rare sedition charges over their roles in the Capitol attack.

Several members of Congress are also under scrutiny, including Rep. Barry Loudermilk, R-Ga., whom the committee has asked for an interview to discuss a Capitol tour he gave that included basement tunnels to a group of people the day before the attack.

The panel is also probing several candidates for elected office, including the Republican nominee for governor in Pennsylvania, who were among the rioters.

The panel, which is expected to deliver a final report on its findings later this year, intends for its work to be a record for history of the most violent attack on the Capitol since the War of 1812. Unlike other national traumas that have pulled the country together, the Jan. 6 Capitol attack appears to have left many Americans divided. Congress splintered over forming the committee, which most Republicans opposed.

The panel's two Republicans, Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming and Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, have been shunned by the GOP for their work with Democrats leading the investigation into Trump and his role in the Capitol attack.

## Detroit honors Vincent Chin, Asian American killed in 1982

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Decades before Chinese immigrant Yao Pan Ma was attacked while collecting cans in New York and Thai American Vicha Ratanapakdee was fatally assaulted in San Francisco, Vincent Chin was beaten to death with a baseball bat in Detroit by two white men who never served jail time.

Forty years later — and amid a rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans — Detroit has partnered with The Vincent Chin 40th Remembrance & Rededication Coalition on a four-day commemoration to honor civil rights efforts that began with Chin's death and declare the city's commitment against such violence.

"Although hate crimes existed, Vincent Chin did bring out a flash point for Asian Americans," Stanley Mark, senior staff attorney at the New York-based Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, said, calling Chin's death "a seminal moment among Asian Americans."

Chin, a 27-year-old Chinese immigrant, was at the Fancy Pants Tavern strip club in the Detroit enclave of Highland Park for his bachelor party on June 19, 1982, when a fight erupted. Federal authorities said two autoworkers blamed Chin for layoffs at car factories due to Japanese imports. After Chin left the club, the two men tracked him down at a fast food eatery and attacked him, authorities said. Chin later died at a hospital.

The Vincent Chin 40th Remembrance & Rededication commemoration starts Thursday.

It comes as crimes against people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent have increased, fueled in part by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some in the U.S. say bigots have been emboldened by then-President Donald



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Trump, who often disparagingly referred to the virus as the “Chinese virus.”

“This recent spike of anti-Asian violence because of COVID and anti-China rhetoric deals with geopolitical things,” Mark said. “The rhetoric is: China is the boogeyman.”

From March 19, 2020, through the end of last year, people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent reported 10,905 incidents — from taunting to outright assaults, according to Stop AAPI Hate, a national coalition based in California.

The Justice Department said that in 2020, more than 8,000 single-bias incidents involved 11,126 victims — up from 7,103 incidents the previous year. Bias over race, ethnicity and ancestry was behind nearly 62% of the incidents.

Ratanapakdee was among the Asian Americans who have been attacked in recent years. He was on a morning walk when he was shoved to the ground and his head hit the pavement. The 84-year-old died two days later.

Ma, 61, was knocked down and repeatedly kicked in the head in an attack last year. He died Dec. 31.

Last month, three women of Asian descent were shot in a hair salon in Dallas’ Koreatown. The suspect’s girlfriend later told investigators he has delusions that Asian Americans are trying to harm him.

President Joe Biden last year signed the bipartisan COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which expedited Justice Department reviews of anti-Asian hate crimes. His administration has spent recent weeks in meetings with Asian American leaders to discuss the violence. K-pop sensation BTS visited the White House last month to speak with Biden about combating the rise in hate crimes targeting Asian Americans.

Helen Zia, an activist in Detroit at the time Chin was slain and now executor of an estate named after Chin and his mother, Lilly, said anti-Asian racism that was going on in the 1980s is similar to what is happening today.

“This is a common thread for the history of Asians in America whether it’s an economic crisis or somebody to blame for the World Trade Center being destroyed: It’s Asians, yellow and brown people that have historically been scapegoated and blamed for these things,” she said.

“It goes to a threat that is more than a couple of hundred years old — blaming a group that is seen as the forever-enemy alien.”

To the horror of Zia and many others, neither of the two men accused of beating Chin received any jail time. Ronald Ebens pleaded guilty to manslaughter, while his stepson, Michael Nitz, pleaded no contest.

Each was sentenced to three years’ probation and fined \$3,700.

“These men are not going to go out and harm somebody else,” Wayne County Circuit Judge Charles Kaufman, who has since died, explained at the time. “You don’t make the punishment fit the crime; you make the punishment fit the criminal.”

The declaration shocked many.

“The sentence put a target on every Asian American’s head,” said Zia, who is now an author living in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Ebens and Nitz also were later acquitted of federal civil rights charges.

Federal prosecutors had said Ebens blamed people of Asian descent for problems in the U.S. auto industry, and killed Chin because of his race. The defense admitted Ebens killed Chin, but said he was drunk and had been provoked.

The Associated Press was unable to reach Nitz for comment this week. A voicemail message was left Wednesday at a telephone number listed for Ebens.

“There was a full expectation (Ebens and Nitz) would receive the full wrath of the criminal justice system,” Zia said. “I think the family — people — thought the justice system was going to work.”

## In Louisiana, Native Americans struggle to recover from Ida

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

ALONG BAYOU POINTE-AU-CHIEN, La. (AP) — Driving through her village along a southeastern Louisiana bayou, tribal official Cherie Matherne points out the remnants of house after house — including her own —

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wrecked nine months ago when Hurricane Ida roared through the Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe community.

Beige trailers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and travel campers sit next to pilings that elevated homes 14 feet (4.3 meters) off the ground to protect them from flooding. But it was the wind that got them this time. For hours, the Category 4 hurricane tore off roofs and siding, ripped out insulation and scattered treasured belongings. It destroyed shrimp boats and tossed crab traps.

"It's going to take years before people can get back to their lives. The majority of people are still at a standstill," said Matherne, the tribe's cultural heritage and resiliency coordinator.

When Hurricane Ida barreled through southeast Louisiana on Aug. 29, it slammed into an area home to many Native American tribes, battering people already struggling to overcome decades of coastal erosion, the long shadow of discrimination and a more recent catastrophe — the pandemic.

As a new hurricane season begins, the sounds of recovery — the pop of nail guns and whine of circular saws — are largely absent. And tribal officials worry an equally bad season could put their people in the crosshairs again.

"Ida was the worst storm we've ever had in our area," said August Creppel, chief of the United Houma Nation. The tribe's roughly 19,000 members are spread across coastal Louisiana, about 11,000 of whom experienced some sort of damage from Ida, according to Creppel.

"Some of our people don't even have a house to go back to," he said.

Other tribes in southeastern Louisiana also were hammered. Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe member Theresa Dardar said only about 12 homes in the lower part of the Pointe-Au-Chien community where many tribal members live actually survived the storm. Farther west, where many members of the Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw live, Chief Shirell Parfait-Dardar said everyone had some sort of damage, with about 20% of homes a total loss, even her own.

Native Americans have lived in the southeastern Louisiana bayou regions that stretch toward the Gulf of Mexico since long before French explorer Rene-Robert Cavelier reached the mouth of the Mississippi River in 1682 and claimed it for France — launching waves of colonization that would drastically alter the landscape and Native peoples' way of life.

After colonization, the bayous became a place of refuge to Native people pushed out of their homelands by violence or disease, said Liz Ellis, assistant professor of history at New York University. That trend accelerated after the American Revolution as more settlers moved into the region, she said.

Historically, the Native American people in these areas are intimately tied to the land and water. Many make their living shrimping or crabbing in the marshes and estuaries; their parents and grandparents before them also trapped muskrats or nutria.

But decades of development have eroded that land from under them. Levees built to prevent the Mississippi River from flooding have starved coastal Louisiana of the fresh sediment it needs to rebuild land; canals dug to facilitate oil and gas development or shipping have allowed saltwater to encroach farther inland.

That means the buffers of land, trees and marsh grass that once protected Native American communities from storms in the Gulf have dwindled even as climate change portends a future of stronger, wetter hurricanes that pack more storm surge and intensify more quickly.

Lester Naquin's father, a trapper, used to take his son crabbing and shrimping. Naquin remembers when there was so much land that his family raised cattle behind his house in Pointe-au-Chien. Now, he said, if you go past the levee to fish from a pirogue — a type of canoe traditionally used by many Native Americans in this region — you'll be catching speckled trout, a saltwater fish.

The 70-year-old Naquin loves the bayou. That's why he decided to come back even after Ida destroyed the home he used to share with his extended family. With FEMA money and materials and contractors paid for by a charity, he's been one of the few to rebuild in the region, although the home is significantly smaller than before. He's still living in a FEMA-supplied trailer while the interior of the house is finished.

But for a man who used to live with multiple generations, it's lonely in the trailer. And he's not sure how many of his family will move back. The shell of his nephew's home still stands next door. But this is where

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Naquin grew up, where his memories are. There are people, he said, who move from place to place. He's not one of them.

"As long as I can stay down here, I will," he said.

Decades of discrimination against Native people in southeast Louisiana reverberate today in ways that affect their ability to prepare for and recover from hurricanes, tribal officials say.

Discrimination restricted where they could go to school, and when they were allowed to go to school, many faced harassment. Louise Billiot, a tribal official with the United Houma Nation who helps people get job training, said she can see the ripple effects of that lack of education among tribal elders who have difficulty using computers or cellphones to file hurricane claims or track their appeals.

The tribes most affected by Ida did not have federal recognition, although they're engaged in a lengthy, decadeslong process seeking it. Tribal officials say federal recognition would give them better access ahead of storms to funding for stronger, more hurricane-resistant homes and other programs to help improve their members lives.

After storms, federal recognition would allow them to negotiate directly with the federal government, tribal officials say. When the Seminole Tribe of Florida was hit by Hurricane Irma in 2017, the federally recognized tribe requested and received an emergency declaration from then-President Donald Trump to help address their needs.

In the aftermath of Ida, there was even confusion about whether some tribes were state recognized. A resolution that failed to make it out of the Legislature this session sought to reaffirm their state recognition, saying the lack of clarity "inhibited the delivery of life-saving aid during Hurricane Ida."

As it is, tribal members are essentially acting on their own, applying for FEMA or other types of aid.

Parfait-Dardar said the Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw is looking at ways residents can rebuild homes stronger than before. "We're an adapting people, always have been," she said.

But that takes more money than most people have, and she worries that tribal members who cannot afford to rebuild will be forced to move, with high housing prices pushing them farther and farther away. The tribe is exploring the possibility of resettling to another area, but that is also costly. And this is their home.

Rebuilding also can be an exhausting process, especially for older tribal members who might not be physically able to do the back-breaking work of gutting their house or who struggle to afford repairs on a fixed income. Tribal officials worry about the stress many of their members are experiencing.

Irene Verdin, a 67-year-old member of the United Houma Nation who lives in the Pointe-au-Chien area, is living in a FEMA trailer next to the remains of her house, where mementos and pieces of water-logged furniture still lie on the floor. Her roof is long gone — somewhere in the marshes behind her house. Showing the house to a reporter, she repeatedly apologizes for the mess.

She is the main caretaker for her bed-bound sister-in-law, who has had two strokes. And Verdin's 73-year-old husband, who used to work on boats, had a heart attack this year. In his younger years, when they needed money for something like a car or repairs to their house, he'd work a bit extra to cover it. But his health now makes that impossible. Since the storm, her own blood pressure is climbing.

Deciding what to do is almost paralyzing. She'd like to rebuild, but just getting an estimate from a contractor is difficult — let alone finding a way to pay for construction. Verdin said she sometimes feels like those living down the bayou are forgotten.

"It's still up in the air in my head. It's still up in the air as to what we're going to do," she said. "It's hard."

## In energy-strapped Europe, coal gets an encore

By DEREK GATOPOULOS Associated Press

KOZANI, Greece (AP) — At Greece's largest coal mine, controlled explosions and the roar of giant excavators scooping up blasted rock have once again become routine. Coal production has been ramped up at the site near the northern Greek city of Kozani as the war in Ukraine forced many European nations to rethink their energy supplies.

Coal, long treated as a legacy fuel in Europe, is now helping the continent safeguard its power supply and cope with the dramatic rise in natural gas prices caused by the war.

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Electricity generated by coal in the European Union jumped by 19% in the fourth quarter of 2021 from a year earlier, according to the EU's energy directorate, faster than any other source of power, as tension spiked between Russia and Ukraine and ahead of the invasion in late February.

Russian gas made up more than 40% of the total gas consumption in the EU last year, leaving the bloc scrambling for alternatives as prices rose and the supply was cut off to several nations. Russia also provided 27% of the EU's oil imports and 46% of its coal imports.

The crisis caught Greece at a difficult moment in its own transition.

For decades, the country relied on the domestic mining of lignite, a low-quality and high-emission type of coal, but recently accelerated plans to close down older power plants, promising to make renewables the main source of Greece's energy by 2030. Currently, renewables account for about a third of the country's energy mix.

A newly-completed solar park, one of Europe's largest, is just a half-hour drive from the country's biggest open-face lignite mine, near the northern city of Kozani.

While inaugurating the new solar facility, Greece's prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, announced a 50% hike in lignite production through 2024 to build up reserves. Plans to retire more coal-fired power stations were paused.

"Not only Greece but all European countries are making minor amendments to their energy transition programs with short-term – and I stress short-term – measures," Mitsotakis said at the April 6 event.

Officials in Greece say the country is naturally suited to developing solar and wind energy. It's testing EU-sponsored battery technology to try and wean its islands off costly and polluting diesel-power local electricity plants.

The Kozani mine covers an area nearly nine times the size of JFK Airport in New York: A black basin sunk into land surrounded by forests and poppy fields. Excavators use clawed wheels taller than the side of a house to load coal into long lanes of belt conveyers.

"This was the heart of Greece's energy production," mine director Antonis Nikou said, speaking at the plant and standing near the Orthodox Christian church of Saint Barbara, the traditional protector of miners, firefighters and others who face danger at work.

Nikou views the end of Greece's coal era as inevitable, a belief shared for the rest of the EU by its own policymakers and many experts who argue that coal's brief return will serve only as a backstop while countries ramp up renewables and update their power grids.

"Attempting to feel secure in terms of not getting cold next winter, that's understandable but this is a very short-term arrangement," said Elif Gunduzyeli, a senior energy policy coordinator at Climate Action Network Europe, a Brussels-based coalition of environmental campaigning groups.

Money needed to modernize the coal industry and find new deposits, she argues, is no longer attracting investors.

Western Europe's postwar integration was largely driven by coal – the European Coal and Steel Community formed in 1951 eventually evolved into the European Union – but EU consumption has long been eclipsed by other nations. China uses more coal than the rest of the world combined.

EU coal consumption plummeted by more than 60% in the last 30 years, the drop accelerating since 2018.

Regulation in Europe and how it reaches international climate goals are closely watched by other industrial powers, along with how it manages to rescue local economies in vanishing coal-mining communities.

Officially named the West Macedonia Lignite Center, the mine at Kozani now employs 1,500 workers, down from as many as 6,000 in 1990s. The 400-hectare (1,000-acre) solar park nearby hires just 20.

Greece's power workers' union is pressing the government to give coal a longer lease of life, instead of using gas imports that are now more expensive.

"It is clear that this transition did not take place on fair terms but in a way that supported the interests of natural gas," union leader George Adamidis told the AP in an interview. "We have made a decision to move away from Russian natural gas, but the import of liquified natural gas from the United States and elsewhere also involves a process that is polluting so it doesn't serve our climate goals."

The union wants to extend the life of modern coal-fired plants by about five years, through 2035, and



even increase its share of electricity generation from currently less than 15% to about 25%.

The government says money from the European Union's Just Transition Fund, set up to help coalmining communities and others hurt by the transition, will be used to help regions like Kozani with multiple schemes including the restoration of mined land.

But Pavlos Deligiannis, a retired mine worker, urged authorities to extend the transition and give alternative industries tax breaks and other financial incentives to invest in the region and create jobs.

"We all know that coal has an expiry date," he said. "Our young people are leaving the city... If you want a smooth transition, you think about the next business before you close the existing one. That's not what happened here – we did the opposite and we are not prepared for the green transition."

## **Brazil: Suspect confesses to killing pair missing in Amazon**

By FABIANNO MAISONNAVE, EDMAR BARROS and MAURÍCIO SAVARESE Associated Press

MANAUS, Brazil (AP) — Brazilian police said Wednesday night a fisherman confessed to killing British journalist Dom Phillips and Indigenous expert Bruno Pereira in the remote Amazon, ending more than a week of searching as he led officers deep into the forest to where he buried their bodies.

After night fell in the Javari Valley, near Brazil's border with Peru and Colombia, search teams brought body bags to the docks at the city of Atalaia do Norte. Officials said an autopsy would be needed to confirm whether the remains are Phillips, 57, and Pereira, 41.

Police said at a news conference in the Amazon city of Manaus that the prime suspect in the case confessed Tuesday night and detailed what happened to the pair who went missing June 5. They said other arrests would be made soon in the case, but gave no details.

The federal investigator, Eduardo Alexandre Fontes, said Amarildo da Costa de Oliveira, 41, nicknamed Pelado, told officers he used a firearm to kill Pereira and Phillips.

"We would have no way of getting to that spot quickly without the confession," Torres said of the place where police recovered human remains Wednesday after being led there by Pelado.

Torres said the remains are expected to be identified within days, and if confirmed as the missing men, "will be returned to the families of the two."

"We found the bodies three kilometers (nearly two miles) into the woods," the investigator said, adding that rescue teams traveled about one hour and forty minutes on the river and 25 more into the woods to reach the burial spot.

Pelado's family had said previously that he denied any wrongdoing and claimed police tortured him to try to get a confession.

Another officer, Guilherme Torres of the Amazonas state police, said the missing men's boat had not been found yet but police knew the area where it purportedly was hidden by those involved in the crime.

"They put bags of dirt on the boat so it would sink," he said. The engine of the boat was removed, according to investigators.

The news conference at Brazil's federal police headquarters in Manaus also included military leaders, who joined the effort to find Phillips and Pereira a few days after their disappearance was reported. Indigenous leaders who sounded the alarm over their disappearance and made searches deep into the forest from the first day were not invited.

President Jair Bolsonaro, a frequent critic of journalists and Indigenous experts, has drawn criticism that the government didn't get involved fast enough. Earlier on Wednesday, he criticized Phillips in an interview, saying without evidence that locals in the area where he went missing didn't like him and that he should have been more careful in the region.

His main adversary in October's election, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, said in a statement that the killings "are directly related to the dismantling of public policies of protection to Indigenous peoples. "It is also related to the current administration's stimulus to violence," said da Silva, who leads in opinion polls.

The efforts to find the two were started by Indigenous peoples in the region. UNIVAJA, an association

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of Indigenous peoples of the Javari Valley, mourned the loss of “two partners” in a statement Wednesday, adding they only had help and protection from local police.

As federal police announced they would hold a news conference, colleagues of Pereira called a vigil outside the headquarters of the Brazilian government’s Indigenous affairs agency in Brasilia. Pereira was on leave from the agency.

Pereira and Phillips were last seen on their boat in a river near the entrance of the Javari Valley Indigenous Territory, which borders Peru and Colombia. That area has seen violent conflicts between fishermen, poachers and government agents.

Developments began moving Wednesday when federal police officers took a suspect they didn’t identify at the time out on the river toward search parties looking for Phillips and Pereira.

An Associated Press photographer in Atalaia do Norte, the city closest to the search zone, witnessed police taking the suspect, who was in a hood.

On Tuesday, police said they had arrested a second suspect in connection with the disappearance. He was identified as Oseney da Costa de Oliveira, 41, a fisherman and a brother of Pelado, who police already had characterized as their main suspect.

Police investigators said Wednesday that de Oliveira had not confessed to any participation in the crime, but added they had evidence against him.

Indigenous people who were with Pereira and Phillips have said that Pelado brandished a rifle at them on the day before the pair disappeared.

Official search teams concentrated their efforts around a spot in the Itaquai river where a tarp from the boat used by the missing men was found Saturday by volunteers from the Matis Indigenous group.

Authorities began scouring the area and discovered a backpack, laptop and other personal belongings submerged underwater Sunday. Police said that evening that they had identified the items as the belongings of both missing men, including a health card and clothes of Pereira. The backpack was said to belong to Phillips.

Police previously reported finding traces of blood in Pelado’s boat. Officers also found organic matter of apparent human origin in the river that was sent for analysis.

Authorities have said a main line of the police investigation into the disappearance has pointed to an international network that pays poor fishermen to fish illegally in the Javari Valley reserve, which is Brazil’s second-largest Indigenous territory.

Pereira, who previously led the local bureau of the federal Indigenous agency, known as FUNAI, took part in several operations against illegal fishing. In such operations, as a rule the fishing gear is seized or destroyed, while the fishermen are fined and briefly detained. Only the Indigenous can legally fish in their territories.

“The crime’s motive is some personal feud over fishing inspection,” Atalaia do Norte’s Mayor Denis Paiva speculated last week to reporters without providing more details.

While some police, the mayor and others in the region link the pair’s disappearances to the “fish mafia,” federal police have not ruled out other lines of investigation, such as narco trafficking.

Torres, the federal police officer, reiterated that point Wednesday night, saying he could not discuss specifics of the investigation.

“We are working with several lines of investigation,” he said.

After the news of the recovery of human remains, Phillips’ wife, Alessandra Sampaio, said the find “puts an end to the anguish of not knowing Dom and Bruno’s whereabouts.”

“Now we can bring them home and say goodbye with love,” Sampaio said in a statement. “Today, we also begin our quest for justice.”

## Australia commits to reducing greenhouse emissions by 43%

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Australia’s new government on Thursday formally committed to a more

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ambitious greenhouse gas reduction target of 43% by the end of the decade in fulfillment of a key election pledge.

The previous conservative government was dumped by voters at the May 21 election after it stuck to a seven-year-old pledge to reduce Australia's emissions by only 26% to 28% below 2005 levels by 2030.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he had written to U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change executive secretary Patricia Espinosa Cantellano to inform her of Australia's new 2030 target.

Albanese said legislation to enshrine the new target in law would be introduced to the new Parliament which will sit for the first time on July 26. However the target did not depend on Parliament's approval.

Investment in Australia's energy sector had been held up during the previous government's nine years in power due to the administration's failure to agree on a climate policy, Albanese said.

"What businesses have been crying out for is investment certainty," Albanese said. "The certainty that they need to invest over a longer time frame than the political cycle of three years."

Australia is one of the world's largest exporters of coal and liquified natural gas which makes reducing dependence on fossil fuels a politically vexed issue. The previous government was widely considered a laggard among wealthy countries in combating climate change.

The United States has committed to reductions of between 50% and 52% below 2005 levels by 2030. Britain has pledged to cut emissions by 68% below 1990 levels.

Albanese's government could face pressure in a new, greener Parliament to adopt an even more ambitious target.

Several seats have yet to be declared as counting continues following the election.

The center-left Labor Party administration will likely hold a narrow majority of 77 seats in the 151-seat House of Representatives where a majority of lawmakers is needed to form government.

A record 16 lawmakers in the House will not be aligned with either the government or opposition.

The minor Greens party is on track to secure four seats, up from a single lawmaker in the last Parliament. The Greens want a 2030 reduction target of 75%. Newly elected independent lawmakers have called for a 60% target or at least 50%.

Greens senators could hold a balance of power in the upper chamber where major parties rarely hold a majority and need support from outside government to pass laws.

The 2030 commitment comes as much of Australia's population faces soaring electricity and gas prices due in part to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Large parts of southeast Australia face the threat of blackouts for a range of reasons including an unusually cold start to the Southern Hemisphere winter and unscheduled outages of aging coal-fired generators that will be shut down within years and are not being adequately maintained.

## FDA advisers endorse 1st COVID-19 shots for kids under 5

By LINDSEY TANNER and MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writers

The first COVID-19 shots for U.S. infants, toddlers and preschoolers moved a step closer Wednesday.

The Food and Drug Administration's vaccine advisers gave a thumbs-up to vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer for the littlest kids.

The outside experts voted unanimously that the benefits of the shots outweigh any risks for children under 5 — that's roughly 18 million youngsters. They are the last age group in the U.S. without access to COVID-19 vaccines and many parents have been anxious to protect their little children.

If all the regulatory steps are cleared, shots should be available next week.

"This is a long-awaited vaccine," said one panel member, Dr. Jay Portnoy of Children's Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. "There are so many parents who are absolutely desperate to get this vaccine and I think we owe it to them to give them a choice to have the vaccine if they want to."

Dr. Peter Marks, FDA's vaccine chief, opened the meeting with data showing a "quite troubling surge" in young children's hospitalizations during the omicron wave, and noted 442 children under 4 have died during the pandemic. That's far fewer than adult deaths, but should not be dismissed in considering the

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need for vaccinating the youngest kids, he said.

"Each child that's lost essentially fractures a family," Marks said.

While endorsing the vaccines, some panel members said they believe chances are minimal for severe illness and death in young children.

"Risks from vaccination are very low, but so are risks from COVID-19 for the youngest kids," said Dr. Cody Meissner of Tufts University.

FDA reviewers said both brands appear to be safe and effective for children as young as 6 months old in analyses posted ahead of the all-day meeting. Side effects, including fever and fatigue, were generally minor in both, and less common than seen in adults.

The two vaccines use the same technology but there are differences. In a call with reporters earlier this week, vaccine experts noted that the shots haven't been tested against each other, so there's no way to tell parents if one is superior.

"You can't compare the vaccines directly," said Dr. Jesse Goodman of Georgetown University, a former FDA vaccine chief.

If the FDA agrees with its advisers and authorizes the shots, there's one more step. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will decide on a formal recommendation after its own advisers vote on Saturday. If the CDC signs off, shots could be available as soon as Monday or Tuesday at doctor's offices, hospitals and pharmacies.

Pfizer's vaccine is for children 6 months through 4 years; Moderna's vaccine is for 6 months through 5 years.

Moderna's shots are one-quarter the dose of the company's adult shots. Two doses appeared strong enough to prevent severe illness but only about 40% to 50% effective at preventing milder infections. Moderna added a booster to its tests and expects to eventually offer one.

Pfizer's shots are just one-tenth its adult dose. Pfizer and partner BioNTech found that two shots didn't provide enough protection in testing, so a third was added during the omicron wave.

Pfizer's submitted data found no safety concerns and suggested that three shots were 80% effective in preventing symptomatic coronavirus infections. But that was based on just 10 COVID-19 cases; the calculation could change as more cases occur in the company's ongoing studies.

Several advisers, noting that protection is low after two Pfizer doses, worried that some parents might end up skipping the third shot, or mistakenly thinking their kids are better protected between shots, leaving them vulnerable.

Educating parents must be done "very very carefully so that they are not misled about what the vaccines actually provide," said Dr. Archana Chatterjee of Rosalind Franklin University.

The same FDA panel on Tuesday backed Moderna's half-sized shots for ages 6 to 11 and full-sized doses for teens. If authorized by the FDA, it would be the second option for those age groups. Currently Pfizer vaccine is their only choice.

The nation's vaccination campaign started in December 2020 with the rollout of adult vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna, with health care workers and nursing home residents first in line. Teens and school-age children were added last year.

Moderna said in April that it is also seeking regulatory approval outside the U.S. for its little kid shots. According to the World Health Organization, 12 countries already vaccinate kids under 5, with other brands.

In the U.S., it remains uncertain how many parents want their youngest vaccinated. By some estimates, three-quarters of all children have already been infected. And only about 29% of children aged 5 to 11 have been vaccinated since Pfizer's shots opened to them last November, a rate far lower than public health authorities consider ideal.

Dr. Nimmi Rajagopal, a family medicine physician at Cook County Health in Chicago, said she's been preparing parents for months.

"We have some that are hesitant, and some that are just raring to go," she said.



## Biden seeks to counter 'legislative attacks' on LGBTQ rights

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden issued an executive order Wednesday to stymie what his administration calls discriminatory legislative attacks on the LGBTQ community by Republican-controlled states, declaring before a signing ceremony packed with activists, "pride is back at the White House."

The order seeks to discourage "conversion therapy" — a discredited practice that aims to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity — while also promoting gender-affirming surgery and expanding foster care protections for gay and transgender parents and children.

Tapping money already allocated to federal agencies rather than requiring new funding, Biden said the order is meant to counter 300-plus anti-LGBTQ laws introduced by state lawmakers over the past year alone. The Department of Health and Human Services will draft new policies to expand care to LGBTQ families and the Education Department will devise rules to better protect LGBTQ students in public schools.

The president, first lady Jill Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris attended a crowded reception in the White House's East Room, where the adjacent hallway was decorated in rainbow colors. Attending were LGBTQ activists, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other members of Congress, and top administration officials, including Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, who adopted twins with his husband, Chasten.

The gathering is part of the Biden administration's recognition of Pride Month.

"All of you in this room know better than anyone that these attacks are real and consequential for real families," the president said before sitting to sign the order. He pointed specifically to the arrest last week-end of 31 members of the white supremacist group Patriot Front near an Idaho pride event.

Actions listed within the order attempt to bolster programs better addressing the issue of suicide among LGBTQ children and seek to make adoptions easier for LGBTQ parents and children.

"It shouldn't take courage to be yourself," said Jill Biden, who noted that it was a little too hot and humid in summer sun-drenched Washington to hold the event on the South Lawn. "We know that, in places across the country like Florida or Texas or Alabama, rights are under attack. And we know that in small towns and big cities, prejudice, and discrimination still lurk."

Among the state laws the White House has opposed is the so-called "Don't Say Gay" measure in Florida, which was signed by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis in March. It bars instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade. Critics say it marginalizes LGBTQ people, and the law sparked a public battle between the state and the Walt Disney Co.

Biden's action creates a federal working group to help combat LGBTQ homeless and one promoting educational policies for states and school districts that encourage inclusive learning environments for LGBTQ children. His order also establish new rules to discourage conversion therapy, though efforts to enforce bans against it in places where state law allows the practice will rely on legal challenges from outside the White House.

While some Republican-led legislatures have championed conversion therapy, other states and communities have banned it. The American Psychological Association says conversion therapy is not based on science and is harmful to a participant's mental health.

The order further directs health officials to spell out that federally funded programs cannot be used to fund conversion therapy. And it seeks to ease barriers to health care and certain types of treatment for the LGBTQ community, including gender affirming surgery.

That follows Republican Gov. Greg Abbott's February order directing Texas' child welfare agency to investigate reports of gender-confirming care for kids as abuse. A judge has since issued a restraining order that halted investigations into three families, and prevented others.

"We have a lot more work to do," Biden said. "In Texas, knocking on front doors to harass and investigate parents who are raising transgender children. In Florida, going after Mickey Mouse for God's sake."

In earlier orders, Biden has sought to direct that gay and transgender people are protecting from discrimination in schools, health care, housing and at work. He ordered federal agencies to update and expand regulations prohibiting sexual discrimination to include sexual orientation and gender identity, and

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reversed a ban on transgender people serving in the military.

Biden on Wednesday also renewed his calls for Congress to pass the Equality Act, which would amend existing civil rights law to explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identification as protected characteristics. The measure has been stalled on Capitol Hill but the president said it's necessary to "enshrine the long overdue civil rights protections of all Americans, every American."

## Fed attacks inflation with its largest rate hike since 1994

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve intensified its fight against high inflation on Wednesday, raising its key interest rate by three-quarters of a point — the largest bump since 1994 — and signaling more rate hikes ahead as it tries to cool off the U.S. economy without causing a recession.

The unusually large rate hike came after data released Friday showed U.S. inflation rose last month to a four-decade high of 8.6% — a surprise jump that made financial markets uneasy about how the Fed would respond. The Fed's benchmark short-term rate, which affects many consumer and business loans, will now be pegged to a range of 1.5% to 1.75% — and Fed policymakers forecast a doubling of that range by year's end.

"We thought strong action was warranted at this meeting, and we delivered that," Fed Chair Jerome Powell said at a news conference in which he stressed the central bank's commitment to do what it takes to bring inflation down to the Fed's target rate of 2%. Getting to that point, he said, might result in a slightly higher unemployment rate as economic growth slows.

Powell said it was imperative to go bigger than the half-point increase the Fed had earlier signaled because inflation was running hotter than anticipated — causing particular hardship on low-income Americans. Another concern is that the public is increasingly expecting higher inflation in the future, which can become a self-fulfilling prophecy by accelerating spending among consumers seeking to avoid rising prices for certain goods.

The central bank revised its policy statement to acknowledge that its efforts to quell inflation won't be painless, removing previous language that had said Fed officials expect "the labor market to remain strong."

"It's going to be a far bumpier ride to get inflation down than what they had anticipated previously," said Matthew Luzzetti, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank.

Fed officials forecast unemployment ticking up this year and next, reaching 4.1% in 2024 — a level that some economists said would risk a recession.

Yet Powell largely stuck to his previous reassurances that — with unemployment near a five-decade low, wages rising, and consumers' finances mostly solid — the economy can withstand higher interest rates and avoid a recession.

"We're not trying to induce a recession now," he said. "Let's be clear about that. We're trying to achieve 2% inflation."

Powell said that another three-quarter-point hike is possible at the Fed's next meeting in late July if inflation pressures remain high, although he said such increases would not be common.

Some financial analysts suggested Powell struck the right balance to reassure markets, which rallied on Wednesday. "He hit it hard that 'we want to get inflation down' but also hit hard that 'we want a soft landing,'" said Robert Tipp, chief investment strategist at PGIM Fixed Income.

Still, the Fed's action on Wednesday was an acknowledgment that it's struggling to curb the pace and persistence of inflation, which is being fueled by a strong consumer spending, pandemic-related supply disruptions and soaring energy prices that have been aggravated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Inflation has shot to the top of voter concerns in the months before Congress' midterm elections, souring the public's view of the economy, weakening President Joe Biden's approval ratings and raising the likelihood of Democratic losses in November.

Biden has sought to show he recognizes the pain that inflation is causing American households but has struggled to find policy actions that might make a real difference. The president has stressed his belief

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that the power to curb inflation rests mainly with the Fed.

Yet the Fed's rate hikes are blunt tools for trying to lower inflation while also sustaining growth. Shortages of oil, gasoline and food are contributing to higher prices. Powell said several times during the news conference that such factors are out of the Fed's control and may force it to push rates even higher to ultimately bring down inflation.

Borrowing costs have already risen sharply across much of the U.S. economy in response to the Fed's moves, with the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate topping 5%, its highest level since before the 2008 financial crisis, up from just 3% at the start of the year.

In their updated forecasts Wednesday, the Fed's policymakers indicated that after this year's rate increases, they foresee two more rate hikes by the end of 2023, at which point they expect inflation to finally fall below 3%, close to their target level. But they expect inflation to still be 5.2% at the end of this year, much higher than they'd estimated in March.

Over the next two years, the officials are forecasting a much weaker economy than was envisioned in March. They forecast growth will be 1.7% this year and next. That's below their outlook in March but better than some economists' expectation for a recession next year.

Even if the Fed manages the delicate trick of curbing inflation without causing a downturn, higher rates will nevertheless inflict pressure on stocks. The S&P 500 has already sunk more than 20% this year, meeting the definition of a bear market.

On Wednesday, the S&P 500 rose 1.5%. The two-year Treasury yield fell to 3.23% from 3.45% late Tuesday, with the biggest move happening after Powell said not to expect three-quarter percentage point rate hikes to be common.

Other central banks are also acting to try to quell inflation, even with their nations at greater risk of recession than the U.S.

The European Central Bank is expected to raise rates by a quarter-point in July, its first increase in 11 years. It could announce a larger hike in September if record-high levels of inflation persist. On Wednesday, the ECB vowed to create a market backstop that could buffer member countries against financial turmoil of the kind that erupted during a debt crisis more than a decade ago.

The Bank of England has raised rates four times since December to a 13-year high, despite predictions that economic growth will be unchanged in the second quarter. The BOE will hold an interest rate meeting on Thursday.

## Buffalo supermarket gunman charged with federal hate crimes

By CAROLYN THOMPSON and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The white gunman who killed 10 Black people in a racist attack at a Buffalo supermarket was charged Wednesday with federal hate crimes that could potentially carry a death penalty.

The criminal complaint filed Wednesday against Payton Gendron coincided with a visit to Buffalo by Attorney General Merrick Garland. He met with the families of the people who were killed and placed a bouquet of white flowers at a memorial outside the Tops Friendly Market, which has been closed since the May 14 attack.

"No one in this country should have to live in fear that they will go to work or shop at a grocery store and will be attacked by someone who hates them because of the color of their skin," Garland said at a news conference.

Garland, who halted federal executions last year, did not rule out seeking the death penalty against Gendron, 18. He said "families and the survivors will be consulted" as the Justice Department weighs whether to seek capital punishment.

The federal hate crimes case is based partly on documents in which Gendron laid out his radical, racist worldview and extensive preparation for the attack, some of which he posted online and shared with a small group of people shortly before he started shooting.

FBI agents executing a search warrant at Gendron's home found a note in which he apologized to his

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family and wrote he "had to commit this attack" because he cares "for the future of the White race," according to an affidavit filed with the criminal complaint.

Three children of 86-year-old victim Ruth Whitfield said they told Garland at their private meeting that they wanted to make sure he didn't view the Buffalo shooting "as a singular case."

"This is a problem throughout America," said one son, former Buffalo Fire Commissioner Garnell Whitfield Jr.

"It doesn't stop with justice for our mother and the other nine victims. It's how do we prevent these horrific crimes from happening, from breaking the hearts of other families," said another son, Raymond Whitfield.

Gendron's attorney, Brian Parker, declined to comment.

So far, the evidence made public against Gendron suggests he acted alone, but Garland and Deputy FBI Director Paul Abbate said investigators were examining the gunman's communications with others prior to the shooting.

About 30 minutes before he opened fire, Gendron invited a small group of people to see his plans for the attack, which he then broadcast live on social media. It wasn't clear if any of the people who accessed Gendron's diary or saw his livestream did anything to alert authorities.

In his writings, Gendron embraced a baseless conspiracy theory about a plot to diminish white Americans' power and "replace" them with people of color, through immigration and other means.

The posts detail months of reconnaissance, demographic research and shooting practice for an attack aimed at scaring everyone who isn't white and Christian into leaving the country.

Gendron drove more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) from his home in a nearly all-white town near the New York-Pennsylvania border to a predominantly Black part of Buffalo. There, authorities say, he fired approximately 60 shots at shoppers and workers with a semiautomatic rifle.

Three wounded people — one Black, two white — survived. Video of the assault showed Gendron momentarily holding his fire to apologize to a white store employee after shooting him in the leg. Gendron surrendered to police as he exited the supermarket.

Gendron wrote racial slurs and statements including, "Here's your reparations!" on his rifle, the affidavit said.

Gendron was already facing a mandatory life sentence without parole if convicted on previously filed state charges. He pleaded not guilty to a domestic terrorism charge, including hate-motivated domestic terrorism and murder.

The federal case is likely to present a quandary for Garland, who has vowed to aggressively prosecute civil rights cases but also instituted a moratorium on federal executions last year after an unprecedented run of capital punishment at the end of the Trump administration.

The moratorium halts the Bureau of Prisons from carrying out any executions as the Justice Department conducts a policy review. But the memo does not prohibit federal prosecutors from seeking the death penalty, a decision that ultimately will fall to Garland.

President Joe Biden has said he opposes the death penalty and his team vowed he would take action to stop its use while in office.

In the aftermath of the Buffalo attack, and another deadly mass shooting committed by an 18-year-old at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, New York lawmakers banned the sale of semiautomatic rifles to anyone under age 21.

The U.S. Senate followed on June 12 with a bipartisan agreement on more modest federal gun curbs and stepped-up efforts to improve school safety and mental health programs.

Garland on Wednesday endorsed changing federal law to raise the age for purchasing some types of rifles.

"The Justice Department agrees with the president that 18-year-olds should not be able to purchase a gun like this," Garland said.

Gendron was scheduled to appear in court Thursday morning on the federal charges.

"This process may not be as fast as some would hope, but it will be thorough, it will be fair, it will be comprehensive and it will reflect what is best about our community and about democracy," said U.S. At-



torney Trini Ross, a Buffalo native.

## John Hinckley Jr. freed from court oversight after decades

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — John Hinckley Jr., who shot and wounded President Ronald Reagan in 1981, was freed from court oversight Wednesday, officially concluding decades of supervision by legal and mental health professionals.

"After 41 years 2 months and 15 days, FREEDOM AT LAST!!!," he wrote on Twitter shortly after 12 p.m.

The lifting of all restrictions had been expected since late September. U.S. District Court Judge Paul L. Friedman in Washington had said he would free Hinckley on June 15 if he continued to remain mentally stable in the community in Virginia where he has lived since 2016.

Hinckley, who was acquitted by reason of insanity, spent the decades before that in a Washington mental hospital.

Freedom for Hinckley will include giving a concert — he plays guitar and sings — in Brooklyn, New York, that's scheduled for July. He's already gained nearly 30,000 followers on Twitter and YouTube in recent months as the judge loosened Hinckley's restrictions before fully lifting all of them.

But the graying 67-year-old is far from being the household name that he became after shooting and wounding the 40th U.S. president — and several others — outside a Washington hotel. Today, historians say Hinckley is at best a question on a quiz show and someone who unintentionally helped build the Reagan legend and inspire a push for stricter gun control.

"If Hinckley had succeeded in killing Reagan, then he would have been a pivotal historical figure," H.W. Brands, a historian and Reagan biographer, wrote in an email to The Associated Press. "As it is, he is a misguided soul whom history has already forgotten."

Barbara A. Perry, a professor and director of presidential studies at the University of Virginia's Miller Center, said that Hinckley "would be maybe a Jeopardy question."

But his impact remains tangible in Reagan's legacy.

"For the president himself to have been so seriously wounded, and to come back from that — that actually made Ronald Reagan the legend that he became ... like the movie hero that he was," Perry said.

Reagan showed grace and humor in the face of death, Perry said. After being shot, the president told emergency room doctors that he hoped they were all Republicans. He later joked to his wife Nancy that he was sorry he "forgot to duck."

When the president first spoke to Congress after the shooting, he looked "just a little bit thinner, but he's still the robust cowboy that is Ronald Reagan," Perry said.

The assassination attempt paralyzed Reagan press secretary James Brady, who died in 2014.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed into law the Brady Bill, which required a five-day waiting period for handgun purchases and background checks of prospective buyers. The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence and The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence are named after Brady and his wife Sarah.

The shooting also injured Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy and Washington police officer Thomas Delahanty.

McCarthy told the AP last year that he didn't "have a lot of good Christian thoughts" about Hinckley.

"But in any case, I hope they're right," McCarthy, then 72, said of Hinckley's impending release from supervision. "Because the actions of this man could have changed the course of history."

Hinckley was 25 and suffering from acute psychosis when he shot Reagan and the others. When jurors found him not guilty by reason of insanity, they said he needed treatment and not a lifetime in confinement. He was ordered to live at St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington.

In the 2000s, Hinckley began making visits to his parents' home in a gated Williamsburg community. A 2016 court order granted him permission to live with his mom full time, albeit under various restrictions, after experts said his mental illness had been in remission for decades.

Hinckley's mother died in July. He signed a lease on a one-bedroom apartment in the area last year and

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began living there with his cat, Theo, according to court filings.

Over the years, the court restricted Hinckley from owning a gun or using drugs or alcohol. He also couldn't contact the actor Jodie Foster, with whom he was obsessed at the time of the shooting, or any of his victims or their families.

One of Reagan's daughters, Patti Davis, considered the possibility of contact in a Washington Post opinion piece last year.

"There is no manual for how to deal with something like this. ... You just have to live with the fear, and the anger, and the darkness that one person keeps bringing into your life," she wrote.

Stephen J. Morse, a University of Pennsylvania professor of law and psychiatry, told the AP last year that Hinckley's acquittal by reason of insanity means he is not to blame for what happened and he cannot be punished.

"If he hadn't attempted to kill President Reagan, this guy would have been released ages ago," Morse said.

Barry Levine, Hinckley's attorney, said in court last year that Hinckley wanted to express his "heartfelt" apologies and "profound regret" to the people he shot and their families as well as to Foster and the American people.

Friedman, the federal judge overseeing Hinckley's case, said on June 1 that Hinckley has shown no signs of active mental illness since the mid-1980s and has exhibited no violent behavior or interest in weapons.

"This is the time to let John Hinckley move on with his life, so we will," the judge said.

## County's refusal to certify the vote hints at election chaos

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The conspiracy theories about Dominion voting machines that erupted during the 2020 presidential contest flared this week in a remote New Mexico county in what could be just a preview of the kind of chaos election experts fear is coming in the fall midterms and in 2024.

The governing commission in Otero County refused to certify the local results of the state's June 7 primary because of the equipment, in what was seen as another instance of how the falsehoods spread by former President Donald Trump and his allies have infected elections and threaten the democratic process.

"We are in scary territory," said Jennifer Morrell, a former election official in Colorado and Utah who now advises federal, state and local officials. "If this can happen here, where next? It's like a cancer, a virus. It's metastasizing and growing."

There is no evidence of widespread fraud or manipulation of voting equipment in the 2020 election, which Trump lost to Joe Biden. But that hasn't stopped the false claims, particularly those about Dominion machines.

"I have huge concerns with these voting machines," Otero County Commissioner Vickie Marquardt said Monday as she and her two fellow commissioners — all Republicans — voted unanimously. "When I certify stuff that I don't know is right, I feel like I'm being dishonest because in my heart I don't know if it is right."

The commissioners in the conservative, pro-Trump county could point to no actual problems with the Dominion equipment.

New Mexico's secretary of state asked the state Supreme Court to step in and order the county to certify the votes, and the high court did so on Wednesday. That would ensure that the nearly 7,400 ballots that were cast in Otero County are recorded as legal votes. The deadline for county certification is Friday.

In the weeks and months following the election, various Trump allies claimed that Dominion voting systems had somehow been manipulated as part of an elaborate scheme to steal the election.

On Monday, the House panel investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol presented testimony that Trump was told repeatedly that his claims of a stolen election and rigged voting systems were false and dangerous. That included pushback from his inner circle to the claims about Dominion voting systems, which are used by jurisdictions in 27 states.

Former Attorney General William Barr, in a videotaped interview with House investigators, said he spoke with Trump about the "idiotic claims" surrounding Dominion.

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Barr said he found them to be “among the most disturbing allegations” because they were “made in such a sensational way that they obviously were influencing a lot of people.” He added that the claims were doing a “grave disservice to the country.”

Trump ignored that, and his allies persisted in attacking Dominion. According to the House panel, the day after Barr spoke with Trump, the president released a video in which he claimed without proof that “with the turn of a dial or the change of a chip, you can press a button for Trump and the vote goes to Biden.”

Dominion has filed defamation lawsuits against various Trump associates and conservative media organizations, including Fox News.

The company said in a statement Wednesday that the action by the Otero County commissioners was “yet another example of how lies about Dominion have damaged our company and diminished the public’s faith in elections.”

Otero County, with a population of about 67,000, went for Trump by nearly 62% in 2020. One of the commissioners is Cowboys for Trump co-founder Couy Griffin, who was convicted of entering restricted U.S. Capitol grounds — though not the building — during the Jan. 6 uprising.

New Mexico Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver said the commissioners were violating the law and their oaths of office in refusing to certify the vote. She said that there is a process to deal with any problems that arise with an election but that the commissioners did not specify any.

“Unfortunately, when one county decides to act completely outside the law, it gives credence to others who may want to do the same thing,” she said. “We have the potential to see this spread and have a domino effect.”

Numerous procedures are in place, including pre- and post-testing of voting equipment and post-election audits that ensure machines are working properly. In New Mexico, voters mark their paper ballots by hand. The ballots are then fed into a scanner to tally the results.

Vulnerabilities do exist, as with any technology, but election officials work to identify and fix them. A recent advisory issued by the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency highlighted certain vulnerabilities discovered in Dominion voting systems and provided recommendations to election officials.

But those pushing false claims about voting systems want more than just paper ballots cast by hand -- they also want ballots to be counted entirely by hand. Experts say this is unreliable, time-consuming, labor-intensive and entirely unnecessary given the various safeguards.

Among the most prominent advocates for this is Jim Marchant, a former state lawmaker who on Tuesday was selected as the Republican nominee for secretary of state in Nevada. Marchant is among a group of “America First” candidates seeking to oversee elections while denying the outcome of the last one.

Election experts say the Otero County case is a warning of what could happen if candidates who repeat electoral falsehoods and misinformation gain responsibility for overseeing voting.

“This is just a taste of what we could see in the future, as election deniers are running for positions with control over elections all over the country,” said David Becker, a former U.S. Justice Department attorney who leads the Center for Election Innovation and Research.

## Michigan cop charged with murder in Lyoya’s death is fired

By ED WHITE Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — A Michigan police officer charged with murder after shooting Patrick Lyoya in the back of the head has been fired, officials said Wednesday.

Christopher Schurr, a Grand Rapids officer for seven years, waived his right to a hearing and was dismissed, effective last Friday, said City Manager Mark Washington.

Schurr’s dismissal was recommended by police Chief Eric Winstrom after a second-degree murder charge was filed Thursday.

Washington declined further comment, noting the criminal case and a likely lawsuit over Lyoya’s death.

Schurr’s attorney, Matt Borgula, said he wasn’t representing the officer in the labor matter and had no comment.

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Lyoya, a Black man, was killed at the end of a traffic stop on April 4. He ran and physically resisted Schurr after failing to produce a driver's license.

Schurr, who is white, claimed Lyoya had control of his Taser when he shot him. Defense lawyers said the officer feared for his safety.

The confrontation and shooting were recorded on video. Schurr, 31, had been on leave while state police investigated the shooting and prosecutor Chris Becker decided whether to pursue charges.

Lyoya's parents had long called for Schurr to be fired.

"Two words: about time. What took so long?" the family's attorney, Ven Johnson, said. "They knew this was excessive force and they put him on paid leave while the family buried their son in the middle of the rain."

Schurr's personnel file shows no complaints of excessive force but much praise for traffic stops and foot chases that led to arrests and the seizure of guns and drugs.

He spent a night in jail before being released on \$100,000 bond Friday.

Grand Rapids, population about 200,000, is 160 miles (260 kilometers) west of Detroit.

## Confederate flag-toting man, son convicted in Capitol riot

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge on Wednesday convicted a Confederate flag-toting man and his son of charges that they stormed the U.S. Capitol together during the riot on Jan. 6, 2021, to obstruct Congress from certifying Joe Biden's presidential victory.

U.S. District Judge Trevor McFadden delivered the verdict from the bench after hearing two days of testimony without a jury for the trial of Kevin Seefried and his adult son, Hunter.

McFadden convicted both Delaware men of a felony count: obstruction of an official proceeding, the joint session of Congress for certifying the Electoral College that day.

The judge also convicted the Seefrieds of misdemeanor charges that they engaged in disorderly conduct and illegally demonstrated inside the building. But he acquitted Hunter Seefried of other misdemeanor charges for clearing a shard of glass from a broken window at the Capitol.

They will remain free pending separate sentencing hearings in September.

McFadden, whom President Donald Trump nominated for the court in 2017, presided over two previous bench trials for Capitol riot defendants. He acquitted one of all charges and partially acquitted another.

Widely published photographs showed Kevin Seefried carrying a Confederate battle flag inside the Capitol after he and Hunter Seefried, then 22, entered the building through a broken window.

McFadden rejected the defense argument that Kevin Seefried never intended to interfere with the congressional proceedings.

"I find that he knew what he was doing," McFadden said.

The judge described Kevin Seefried as the "prime mover" in their decision to go to Washington on Jan. 6. McFadden said Hunter Seefried's guilt on the obstruction charge was a "closer question," but the judge ultimately concluded that the son engaged in "aggravated conduct" that supported a conviction.

"Hunter Seefried showed a pattern of deception and minimization of his actions" when an FBI agent interviewed him after the riot, McFadden said.

FBI agents said they did not find any evidence linking Kevin Seefried or his son to any far-right extremist groups. Kevin Seefried told an agent that he did not view the Confederate flag as a symbol of racist hate.

The trial included the first public testimony of Capitol Police officer Eugene Goodman, who has been lauded for his bravery during the Jan. 6 attack by a mob of Trump supporters. Goodman led a group of rioters away from the Senate chamber as senators and then-Vice President Mike Pence were being evacuated. He also directed Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, to turn around and head away from the mob.

Goodman encountered Kevin Seefried before the mob chased the officer up a set of stairs, a harrowing episode captured on video. The officer said the elder Seefried cursed at him and jabbed at him with the base end of his flagpole three or four times without making contact with him.

Another Capitol police officer who confronted the mob near the Senate chamber recalled that Kevin



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Seefried asked, "Why are you protecting them?"

"I assumed he was talking about Congress," Officer Brian Morgan testified.

The Seefrieds were not charged with assaulting any officers.

Neither defendant testified at their trial.

The father and son traveled to Washington from their home in Laurel, Delaware, to hear Trump's speech at the "Stop the Steal" rally on Jan. 6. They were among the first rioters to approach the building near the Senate Wing Door, according to prosecutors.

After watching other rioters use a police shield and a wooden plank to break a window, Hunter Seefried used a gloved fist to clear a shard of glass in one of the broken windowpanes, prosecutors said. But the judge found that two other rioters had destroyed the window before Seefried cleared the shard.

McFadden convicted the Seefrieds of four misdemeanor charges: entering or remaining in a restricted building or grounds, disorderly or disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds, disorderly or disruptive conduct in a Capitol building or grounds, and parading, demonstrating or picketing in a Capitol building.

The judge acquitted Hunter Seefried of three other misdemeanor counts: destruction of government property, entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds with physical violence against property, and acts of physical violence in the Capitol grounds or building.

The Seefrieds, who waived their right to jury trial, were the first Capitol riot defendants to get a bench trial on a felony charge.

In April, McFadden acquitted New Mexico resident Matthew Martin of misdemeanor charges that he illegally entered the Capitol and engaged in disorderly conduct after he walked into the building.

In March, McFadden acquitted a New Mexico elected official, Couy Griffin, of engaging in disorderly conduct but convicted him of illegally entering restricted Capitol grounds. McFadden is scheduled to sentence Griffin on Friday.

Also on Wednesday, a bench trial concluded for Jesus Rivera, a Pensacola, Florida, man charged with four riot-related misdemeanors. U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly said she intends to issue a written verdict later this week, according to Guy Womack, an attorney for Rivera.

McFadden has criticized prosecutors' handling of Capitol riot cases. He suggested that the Justice Department has been unjustly tougher on Capitol riot defendants compared with people arrested at protests against police brutality and racial injustice after George Floyd's 2020 murder by a Minneapolis police officer.

More than 800 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the Jan. 6 attack. Juries have unanimously convicted five Capitol riot defendants of all charges. More than 300 other defendants have pleaded guilty to riot offenses, mostly misdemeanors. Approximately 100 others have trial dates in 2022 or 2023.

## Despite push, states slow to make Juneteenth a paid holiday

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI and CHEYANNE MUMPHREY Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Recognition of Juneteenth, the effective end of slavery in the U.S., gained traction after the police killing of George Floyd in 2020. But after an initial burst of action, the movement to have it recognized as an official holiday in the states has largely stalled.

Although almost every state recognizes Juneteenth in some fashion, many have been slow to do more than issue a proclamation or resolution, even as some continue to commemorate the Confederacy.

Lawmakers in Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and other states failed to advance proposals this year that would have closed state offices and given most of their public employees paid time off for the June 19 holiday.

That trend infuriates Black leaders and community organizers who view making Juneteenth a paid holiday the bare minimum state officials can do to help honor an often overlooked and ignored piece of American history.

"Juneteenth marks the date of major significance in American history. It represents the ways in which freedom for Black people have been delayed," said Democratic Rep. Anthony Nolan, who is Black, while

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arguing in favor of making Juneteenth a paid holiday in Connecticut on the House floor. "And if we delay this, it's a smack in the face to Black folks."

Juneteenth commemorates when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to enslaved Black people in Galveston, Texas, in 1865, two months after the Confederacy had surrendered in the Civil War and about 2 1/2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in Southern states.

Last year, Congress and President Joe Biden moved swiftly to make Juneteenth a national holiday. It was the first time the federal government had designated a new national holiday since approving Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1983. Yet the move didn't result in an automatic adoption from most states.

In Alabama, Republican Gov. Kay Ivey issued another proclamation marking Juneteenth a state holiday earlier this week after state lawmakers refused to take action on a bill during their legislative session even after she voiced strong support for making it a permanent holiday back in 2021. The state closes down for Confederate Memorial Days in April.

Similarly, Wyoming's Republican Gov. Mark Gordon issued a statement last June saying he would work with lawmakers to make it a state holiday but no legislation was filed during the 2022 session.

In Tennessee, Republican Gov. Bill Lee quietly tucked enough funding — roughly \$700,000 — to make Juneteenth a state paid holiday in his initial spending plan for the upcoming year.

Despite the bill gaining traction in the state Senate, GOP legislative leaders maintained there wasn't enough support for the idea even as Tennessee law currently designates special observances for Robert E. Lee Day, Confederate Decoration Day and Nathan Bedford Forrest Day.

"I asked many people in my district over the last few days, well over 100 people, if they knew what Juneteenth was and only two of them knew," said Republican Sen. Joey Hensley, who is white and voted against the proposal. "I just think we're putting the cart before the horse making a holiday that people don't know about."

In South Carolina, instead of working to approve Juneteenth as a holiday, Senate lawmakers unanimously advanced a bill that would allow state employees to choose any day they want to take off instead of the Confederate Memorial Day currently enshrined as a paid holiday in state law. However, the House sent the bill to a committee where it died without a hearing when the Legislature adjourned for the session.

At the same time, many of these Republican-led areas have advanced bills limiting what can be taught about systematic racism in classrooms, while also spiking proposals aimed at expanding voting rights and police reform.

This year, nearly 20 states are expected to close state offices and give most of their public employees time off. At least six states officially adopted the holiday over the past few months, including Connecticut, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, South Dakota, Utah and Washington. A bill introduced in California passed the Assembly and moved to the Senate this month, and individual cities such as Los Angeles have already signed proclamations making Juneteenth official.

"Becoming a state holiday will not merely give employees a day off, it will also give residents a day to think about the future that we want, while remembering the inequities of the past," said Democratic Del. Andrea Harrison, who sponsored the Juneteenth legislation in Maryland this year. "It will help us to reflect how far we've come as a nation, how much more we need to do as humankind."

Attempts to give Juneteenth the same deference as Memorial Day or July Fourth didn't begin to gain traction until 2020, when protests sparked a nationwide push to address race after the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the deaths of other Black people by police officers.

"George Floyd protests against police brutality brought awareness to Juneteenth because there were people of all races learning about its significance for the first time following a public push to self-educate and learn more about Black history, culture and injustices," said Tremaine Jasper, a resident and business owner in Phoenix who has attended Juneteenth celebrations across Arizona with his family.

Some cities in Arizona, including Phoenix, have declared Juneteenth an official holiday, paying city employees and closing municipal buildings. However, lawmakers are not currently considering statewide recognition.

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"There are so many other important issues that we need to tackle — education, political issues, reparations — before we prioritize making Juneteenth a statewide holiday," Jasper said, noting that those looking to celebrate know where to go.

Jasper, who was born and raised in Arizona, said it is going to be an "uphill battle" to get the state to recognize Juneteenth because there is not a large enough Black population outside of its largest cities to make the push.

Arizona was also slow in recognizing Martin Luther King Jr. Day, not doing so until 1992. It was one of the last states to officially recognize the civil rights leader.

## Fauci tests positive for virus, has mild COVID-19 symptoms

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the face of America's pandemic response through two White House administrations, has tested positive for the coronavirus.

The 81-year-old Fauci, who is fully vaccinated and has received two booster shots, was experiencing mild COVID-19 symptoms, according to a statement Wednesday from the National Institutes of Health.

Fauci has not recently been in close contact with President Joe Biden or other senior government officials. He tested positive on a rapid antigen test. He is following public health guidelines and his doctor's advice, and will return to work at the NIH when he tests negative, according to the statement.

Fauci is Biden's chief medical adviser and director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. He was a leading member of the White House coronavirus task force under former President Donald Trump.

Earlier this week, U.S. Health Secretary Xavier Becerra tested positive for the virus. It was the second time Becerra had come down with symptoms and tested positive.

## US sending \$1 billion more military aid to outgunned Ukraine

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. announced it will send an additional \$1 billion in military aid to Ukraine, as America and its allies provide longer-range weapons they say can make a difference in a fight where Ukrainian forces are outnumbered and outgunned by their Russian invaders.

President Joe Biden and his top national security leaders said Wednesday the U.S. is moving as fast as possible to get critical weapons to the fight, even as Ukrainian officials protest that they need more, faster, in order to survive.

The latest package, the U.S. said, includes anti-ship missile launchers, howitzers and more rounds for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) that U.S. forces are training Ukrainian troops on now. All are key weapons systems that Ukrainian leaders have urgently requested as they battle to stall Russia's slow but steady march to conquer the eastern Donbas region.

"Gen. Milley and I have been in a number of fights. And when you're in a fight, you can never get enough," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said at a press conference in Brussels, referring to Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"I certainly understand where the Ukrainians are coming from, and we're gonna fight hard to give them everything they need."

The HIMARS and anti-ship systems are the kinds of longer range capabilities that over time can make a difference in the fight, Milley said. He said Ukraine will have trained HIMARS crews in the fight in a few weeks.

"If they use the weapon properly and it's employed properly, they ought to be able to take out a significant amount of targets and that will make a difference," he said. But he also noted that the numbers clearly favor the Russians.

"In terms of artillery, they do outnumber, they out-gun and out-range" the Ukrainian forces.

The aid is the largest single tranche of weapons and equipment since the war began. Biden, who spoke

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by phone with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for about 40 minutes Wednesday, also said the U.S. will send \$225 million more in humanitarian assistance to provide safe drinking water, medical supplies, food, health care, shelter and money for families to buy essential items.

The U.S. remains committed, Biden said in a statement, "to supporting the Ukrainian people whose lives have been ripped apart by this war."

The aid comes as Austin convened a meeting in Brussels of more than 45 nations to discuss support for Ukraine. At the start of the meeting, he warned that the West must step up weapons deliveries to Ukraine and prove its commitment to helping the country's military fight along a 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line in a grinding war of attrition with Russia.

He told the participating nations, "We can't afford to let up and we can't lose steam. The stakes are too high."

Overall, since the war began in late February, the U.S. has committed about \$5.6 billion in security assistance to Ukraine, including this latest package. Officials said that about one-third of the latest \$1 billion will be from presidential drawdown authority, which means the Pentagon will take weapons and equipment from its own stock and ship them to Ukraine. The remaining two-thirds would be equipment and weapons purchased from industry by the U.S. and then transferred to Ukraine.

Austin's meeting, also attended by Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov, came on the opening day of a two-day gathering of NATO defense ministers at the alliance headquarters.

Increased arms supplies can't come too soon for the Ukrainian forces battling to keep Russia from taking control of their country's industrial east after more than 3½ months of war. In his nightly address to the nation, President Zelenskyy pleaded Tuesday for more and faster deliveries of Western arms, specifically asking for anti-missile defense systems.

"Allies are committed to continue providing the military equipment that Ukraine needs to prevail, including heavy weapons and long-range systems," said Jens Stoltenberg, NATO secretary-general.

Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar said Tuesday that without help from the West, "we will not be able to win this war." She said Ukraine uses 5,000 to 6,000 artillery rounds a day, while Russia uses 10 times that many.

The defense ministers also planned to discuss moves to beef up forces along NATO's own eastern flank and elsewhere, which have gathered strength since Russia invaded Ukraine.

"This will mean more presence, more capabilities and higher readiness, with more NATO forward deployed combat formations to strengthen our battlegroups in the East, more air, sea and cyber defenses, pre-positioned equipment and weapon stockpiles," Stoltenberg said.

On a separate but related subject, he wouldn't commit to a timeframe for Sweden and Finland joining NATO. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is blocking the membership bids, accusing the Nordic nations of supporting Kurdish militants deemed by Turkey to be terrorists.

"My aim is to solve this issue as soon as possible, but since we are several nations involved in this process, there is no way to tell you exactly when we will solve it," Stoltenberg said.

Because of Turkey's concerns, "this will take some more time than we originally expected," he said.

Erdogan signaled Wednesday he won't back down.

"We will most definitely not change our stance until Sweden and Finland take clear, concrete and determined steps in the fight against terrorism," Erdogan said in an address to his ruling party's legislators.

All 30 NATO members must agree to admit new members.

## Biden tells oil refiners: Produce more gas, fewer profits

By JOSH BOAK and CATHY BUSSEWITZ Associated Press

President Joe Biden on Wednesday called on U.S. oil refiners to produce more gasoline and diesel, saying their profits have tripled during a time of war between Russia and Ukraine as Americans struggle with record high prices at the pump.

"The crunch that families are facing deserves immediate action," Biden wrote in a letter to seven oil



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refiners. "Your companies need to work with my Administration to bring forward concrete, near-term solutions that address the crisis."

Gas prices nationwide are averaging roughly \$5 a gallon, an economic burden for many Americans and a political threat for the president's fellow Democrats going into the midterm elections. Broader inflation began to rise last year as the U.S. economy recovered from the coronavirus pandemic, but it accelerated in recent months as energy and food prices climbed after Russia invaded Ukraine in February and disrupted global commodity markets.

The government reported on Friday that consumer prices had jumped 8.6% from a year ago, the worst increase in more than 40 years.

The letter notes that gas prices were averaging \$4.25 a gallon when oil was last near the current price of \$120 a barrel in March. That 75-cent difference in average gas prices in a matter of just a few months reflects both a shortage of refinery capacity and profits that "are currently at their highest levels ever recorded," the letter states.

The American Petroleum Institute, which represents the industry, said in a statement that capacity has been diminished as the Biden administration has sought to move away from fossil fuels as part of its climate change agenda.

"While we appreciate the opportunity to open increased dialogue with the White House, the administration's misguided policy agenda shifting away from domestic oil and natural gas has compounded inflationary pressures and added headwinds to companies' daily efforts to meet growing energy needs while reducing emissions," API CEO Mike Sommers said in a statement.

Sommers added, "I reinforced in a letter to President Biden and his Cabinet yesterday ten meaningful policy actions to ultimately alleviate pain at the pump and strengthen national security, including approving critical energy infrastructure, increasing access to capital, holding energy lease sales, among other urgent priorities."

The letter is unlikely to start a chain of events that would boost supplies. Refineries have gone through unprecedented, unplanned maintenance globally in the last three months and there is an extreme shortage being felt across the globe, said Claudio Galimberti, senior vice president at Rystad Energy. China's decision to limit its exports of oil products also contributed to the problem, he said.

"U.S. refiners cannot increase capacity beyond current levels," Galimberti said. "If they could, they would have done it already."

As Biden sees it, refineries are capitalizing on the uncertainties caused by "a time of war." His message that corporate greed is contributing to higher prices has been controversial among many economists, yet the claim may have some resonance with voters.

Some liberal lawmakers have proposed cracking down on corporate profits amid the higher inflation. Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent, in March proposed a 95% tax on profits in excess of companies' pre-pandemic averages.

The president has harshly criticized what he views as profiteering amid a global crisis that could potentially push Europe and other parts of the world into a recession, saying after a speech Friday that ExxonMobil "made more money than God this year." ExxonMobil responded by saying it has already informed the administration of its planned investments to increase oil production and refining capacity.

"There is no question that (Russian President) Vladimir Putin is principally responsible for the intense financial pain the American people and their families are bearing," Biden's letter says. "But amid a war that has raised gasoline prices more than \$1.70 per gallon, historically high refinery profit margins are worsening that pain."

The letter says the administration is ready to "use all reasonable and appropriate Federal Government tools and emergency authorities to increase refinery capacity and output in the near term, and to ensure that every region of this country is appropriately supplied." It notes that Biden has already released oil from the U.S. strategic reserve and increased ethanol blending standards, though neither action put a lasting downward pressure on prices.

There's little the government can do to lower prices, other than release oil from the strategic reserve,

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and that's already been done, said Jim Burkhard, vice president at IHS Markit. If Biden had not done that, prices would be even higher today, he added.

"No government can simply conjure up new supply," Burkhard said. "One thing that may help would be to have a more constructive relationship with the U.S. oil industry, because it's been somewhat antagonistic so far."

The president sent the letter to Marathon Petroleum, Valero Energy, ExxonMobil, Phillips 66, Chevron, BP and Shell.

He also has directed Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm to convene an emergency meeting and consult with the National Petroleum Council, a federal advisory group that is drawn from the energy sector.

Biden is asking each company to explain to Granholm any drop in refining capacity since 2020, when the pandemic began. He also wants the companies to provide "any concrete ideas that would address the immediate inventory, price, and refining capacity issues in the coming months -- including transportation measures to get refined product to market."

There may be limits on how much more capacity can be added. The U.S. Energy Information Administration on Friday released estimates that "refinery utilization will reach a monthly average level of 96% twice this summer, near the upper limits of what refiners can consistently maintain."

The letter says that roughly 3 million barrels a day of refining capacity around the world have gone offline since the pandemic began. In the U.S., refining capacity fell by more than 800,000 barrels a day in 2020.

## Israeli court finds Gaza aid worker guilty on terror charges

By EMILY ROSE and JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

BEERSHEBA, Israel (AP) — An Israeli court on Wednesday found a Gaza aid worker guilty of several terrorism charges in a high-profile case in which his employer, independent auditors and the Australian government say they have found no evidence of wrongdoing.

Mohammed el-Halabi, the Gaza director for the international Christian charity World Vision, was arrested in 2016 and accused of diverting tens of millions of dollars to the Islamic militant group Hamas that rules the territory. The trial, and his prolonged detention, have further strained relations between Israel and humanitarian organizations that provide aid to Palestinians.

Both he and World Vision have denied the allegations and an independent audit in 2017 also found no evidence of support for Hamas. His lawyer, Maher Hanna, has said el-Halabi turned down several plea bargain offers on principle that would have allowed him to walk free.

El-Halabi has not yet been sentenced. World Vision said he would appeal the ruling, which was largely based on classified information that has not been made public but was shared with the defense.

The district court in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba said el-Halabi was guilty of several charges, including membership in a terror organization, providing information to a terror group, taking part in militant exercises and carrying a weapon.

It said he diverted "millions" of dollars every year, as well as equipment, from World Vision and its donors to Hamas. It said Hamas used the funds for militant activities, as well as children's counseling, food aid and Quran memorization contests for its supporters. Pipes and nylon diverted to Hamas were used for military purposes, it said.

The court said it was not convinced by World Vision's testimony that it had firm controls in place that would have prevented the diversion of such aid. The court said the full 254-page decision is "confidential and cannot be made public."

It appeared to rely heavily on a confession by el-Halabi that has not been made public. His lawyer has said the confession was given under duress to an informant and should not have been admitted as evidence.

The court said the confession was "given in various ways," and "is detailed, coherent, truthful and has many unique details," including the names and ranks of Hamas operatives, and descriptions of strategic locations in Gaza.

Speaking to reporters immediately after the verdict, Hanna said he had not yet read the full decision.

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But he accused the judge of siding with Israeli security forces and relying on evidence that has not been made public — and which he has previously described as unreliable.

"All the judge said, if I want to summarize it in one sentence: 'The security forces cannot be wrong, they are probably right,'" he told reporters.

Sharon Marshall, a spokeswoman for World Vision who has closely followed the case, said there had been "irregularities in the trial process and a lack of substantive and publicly available evidence." She said the charity supports el-Halabi's intent to appeal and called for a "fair and transparent" process.

"We strongly condemn any act of terrorism or support of such activities, and reject any attempts to divert humanitarian resources or exploit the work of humanitarian organizations operating anywhere," she said.

The Christian charity operates in nearly 100 countries and annually distributes some \$2.5 billion in aid.

Israeli authorities have repeatedly said they have proof that Hamas had infiltrated the aid group and was diverting funds from needy Gazans. Then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu trumpeted the charges in an online video shortly after el-Halabi's arrest.

Critics say Israel often relies on questionable informants. They allege that Israel smears groups that provide aid or other support to Palestinians in order to shore up its nearly 55-year military occupation of lands the Palestinians want for a future state.

Israel says it supports the work of aid organizations but must prevent donor funds from falling into the hands of armed groups like Hamas that do not recognize it and attack its citizens.

In a statement, the Israeli Foreign Ministry acknowledged the verdict while saying it "continues to support international efforts to provide assistance to the Gazan population."

Israel "remains committed to cooperating with, and facilitating, the continued operations of humanitarian organizations, including World Vision, in a manner consistent with security considerations and applicable standards," it said.

After el-Halabi's arrest, World Vision suspended its activities in Gaza, where over 2 million Palestinians live under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade imposed when Hamas seized power nearly 15 years ago. Israel says the restrictions are needed to contain Hamas, while critics view them as a form of collective punishment.

World Vision worked with several Western donor countries to construct an independent audit of its activities in Gaza. It declined to name the auditors because of a non-disclosure agreement, but last year the Guardian newspaper identified them as the international accounting firm Deloitte and DLA Piper, a global law firm.

A team of around a dozen lawyers, including several former assistant U.S. attorneys, reviewed nearly 300,000 emails and conducted over 180 interviews. Forensic auditors scoured nearly every financial transaction at World Vision from 2010 until 2016.

In July 2017, they submitted an over 400-page report of their findings to World Vision, which shared it with donor governments. World Vision said it offered the report to Israel, but Israeli authorities refused to sign the non-disclosure agreement.

Brett Ingerman, a lawyer with DLA Piper who headed the investigation, confirmed its involvement and told The Associated Press earlier this year that the report found no evidence that el-Halabi was affiliated with Hamas or had diverted any funds. Instead, he said it found that el-Halabi had enforced internal controls and ordered employees to avoid anyone suspected of Hamas ties.

The Australian government conducted its own review, reaching similar conclusions. Australia was the biggest single donor to World Vision's humanitarian work in Gaza, providing some \$4.4 million in the previous three fiscal years before el-Halabi's arrest. There was no immediate comment on the verdict from Australian officials.

## Britain vows more Rwanda deportation flights after setback

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government vowed Wednesday to organize more flights to deport asylum-seekers from around the world to Rwanda, after a last-minute court judgment grounded the first plane

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due to take off under the contentious policy.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said "preparation for the next flight begins now" despite legal rulings that none of the migrants earmarked for deportation could be sent to the East African country.

"We will not be put off by the inevitable legal last-minute challenges," Patel told lawmakers.

Under a deal signed in April, Britain plans to send some migrants from countries including Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria who arrive illegally in Britain as stowaways or in small boats to Rwanda, where their asylum claims will be processed. If successful, they will stay in the African country, rather than returning to Britain.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government says the plan is a legitimate way to protect lives and thwart the criminal gangs that send migrants on risky journeys from France across the English Channel.

Human rights groups argue that the plan rides roughshod over the protections afforded to refugees under rules set up after World War II. They have called the idea inhumane and a waste of money. Britain paid Rwanda 120 million pounds (\$150 million) up front for the deal.

Critics include leaders of the Church of England and, according to British news reports, heir to the throne Prince Charles.

British courts refused last week to ground the first flight, scheduled for Tuesday, but the number due to be aboard was whittled down by appeals and legal challenges, from 37 last week to seven — all men — on Tuesday.

Then the European Court of Human Rights, an international tribunal supported by 46 countries, including Britain, ruled late Tuesday that an Iraqi man due to be on the plane shouldn't fly, saying he faced "a real risk of irreversible harm." That judgment allowed the final few migrants on the plane to win a reprieve from British judges with minutes to spare, and the government canceled the then-empty flight.

British Cabinet minister Therese Coffey said the government was "surprised and disappointed" by the ruling.

"I think the public will be surprised at European judges overruling British judges," she told Sky News — though the European judges did not overrule British courts, which had ruled on the issue of the flight as a whole, not on individual migrants.

Some lawmakers from the governing Conservative Party nonetheless say Britain should withdraw from the Strasbourg-based European human rights court, which Britain helped to set up. A spokesman for the prime minister: "We are keeping all options on the table," including legal reforms.

A full trial of the legality of the Rwanda plan is due to be heard in the British courts by the end of July.

Human rights lawyer Frances Swaine, who represents one of the people due to be sent to Rwanda, urged the government to wait for that decision before organizing any more deportation flights.

"I would be sitting back and thinking: Was it worth it, either from a financial or a legal perspective, to organize one of these very expensive flights again when they've been so unsuccessful this time around on legal grounds?" she said.

The British government says it welcomes refugees who come by approved immigration routes but wants to put the criminal smuggling gangs that operate dangerous cross-Channel voyages out of business.

Migration and refugee groups point out that there are no approved legal routes to Britain for most refugees, with the exception of those fleeing Afghanistan and Ukraine. Britain receives fewer asylum applications than comparably sized European countries such as France and Germany.

There are also concerns about the migrants' treatment in Rwanda, the most densely populated country in Africa. While Rwanda was the site of a genocide that killed hundreds of thousands of people in 1994, the country has built a reputation for stability and economic progress since then, the British government argues.

Critics say that stability comes at the cost of political repression.

More than 28,000 migrants entered Britain last year by crossing the English Channel, up from 8,500 in 2020. About 10,000 have arrived so far this year. Dozens have died while attempting the trip, including 27 people in November when a boat capsized.

Johnson, fighting for his political life amid concerns about his leadership and ethics, has promised to stop the criminal gangs behind the perilous journeys — a "tough on immigration" message that plays well



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with the Conservative grassroots.

Labour Party migration spokeswoman Yvette Cooper said the plan is “unworkable, unethical and won’t stop the criminal gangs.”

“This isn’t a long-term plan; it is a short-term stunt,” she said.

Migration groups say the Rwanda plan is unlikely to deter desperate people making risky journeys to Britain. More than 440 people were brought ashore in southern England from small boats on Tuesday, including a heavily pregnant woman and parents with children. Scores more arrived Wednesday, a day of calm seas and sunshine.

Nando Sigona, a migration expert at the University of Birmingham, said that because most of the people chosen for deportation under the Rwanda plan are single men, the policy could lead to more women, children and families attempting to cross the Channel.

## Men, women split on equity gains since Title IX, poll shows

By COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press

Ask a man about gender equality, and you’re likely to hear the U.S. has made great strides in the 50 years since the landmark anti-discrimination law Title IX was passed. Ask a woman, and the answer probably will be quite different.

According to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the National Women’s History Museum, most U.S. adults believe the country has made at least some progress toward equality for women since 1972. That’s the year Congress passed Title IX, a one-sentence law that forbids discrimination based on sex in education. But there are sharp differences in opinion over just how much headway has been made and in what facets of life.

Some of the widest divisions are, perhaps unsurprisingly, between men and women: 61% of men say the country has made a great deal or a lot of progress toward gender equality, while 37% of women said the same, according to the poll.

Women were more likely to point to only some progress — 50% held that view — while 13% said the country has made just a little or no progress.

“We’ve fought a lot, we’ve gained a little bit, but we haven’t really gained equality,” said Brenda Theiss, 68, a retired optician in Vinemont, Alabama. Progress that started in the ‘70s seems to have stalled, she said, with continued wage gaps and battles over women’s reproductive rights.

Passed in the wake of other seminal civil rights laws, Title IX was intended to expand protections for women into the sphere of education. Today it’s often known for its impact on women’s sports and the fight against sexual harassment and assault.

As the nation approaches the law’s 50th anniversary, most Americans have positive views about it. Sixty-three percent said they approve of the law, including majorities of men and women. Only 5% did not approve of it, while the rest said they were neutral or not sure.

But Americans are split along several faults when it comes to assessing advancements.

Along with men, Republicans are also more likely to see a great deal or a lot of progress, with 65% holding that view. Among Democrats, 39% said the same.

Among women, those 50 and older are more likely than their younger peers to see a great deal or a lot of progress in specific facets of life, such as in leadership, employment and education opportunities.

Milan Ramsey, 29, said it’s “remarkable how far we have come considering how unequal it still feels.”

She says sexism is hard to avoid in today’s society, whether it’s in unequal access to health care or in everyday slights like getting catcalled. But she knows it has been worse. Once, looking at her mom’s childhood photos, her mom pointed out a pair of pants that she said was her first pair ever.

“She remembers that because they weren’t allowed to wear pants until she was like 7 in public school,” said Ramsey, of Santa Monica, California.

As a young girl growing up in the ‘70s, Karen Dunlap says she benefited from Title IX right away. Soccer leagues for girls started springing up for the first time, she said. Her mom rushed to sign her up.

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"I really felt the immediate difference as a kid," said Dunlap, of Vancouver, Washington. "But at the same time, it didn't stay that way."

Dunlap went on to compete in swimming and water polo at Pomona College in California, and she credits Title IX for the opportunity. It also ensured the school gave enough money for racing swimsuits and a team van, she said. But in the classroom, some male professors referred to her as a "coed," and some seemed to look down on female students, she said.

Later, when her daughters went to college, Dunlap was disappointed to see them fighting familiar battles. When one of her daughters applied for a job at a campus dorm, she was told she was too much of a "typical cheery girl" for the position. She ended up leaving the school and graduating elsewhere.

"The push for equality has been around long enough that it should have worked," Dunlap said. "There should be some difference."

According to the poll, Americans think the impact of Title IX has been stronger in some areas than others. More than half said it has had a positive impact on female students' opportunities in sports, and about as many said that about opportunities in education overall.

But just 36% said it had a positive impact on addressing sexual harassment in schools, and 31% said it had a positive impact on protecting LGBTQ students from discrimination.

At the same time, there's evidence that not all Americans clearly understand the law. About a third said they were unsure whether Title IX has had an impact on them personally, and about a quarter or more were unsure of its impact in other areas.

The law is commonly misunderstood in part because its application is so broad, said Shiwali Patel, senior counsel at the National Women's Law Center. In addition to its role in sports, it also has been used to protect against discrimination and harassment in college admissions, financial aid, campus housing and employment, among other areas.

"I don't think people really understand the full breadth and scope of Title IX," she said. "It's only 37 words long, but it's extremely broad. It covers so much."

Patel said it's important to acknowledge Title IX has brought meaningful advancements. More women are getting scholarships, participating in college sports and landing faculty jobs. But there has also been resistance to continued improvement, especially in the fight against sexual harassment and violence, she said.

"We are at a moment of real challenge, and we still haven't gone far enough," Patel said.

The law's anniversary approaches as the Biden administration prepares new rules detailing how schools and colleges must respond to sexual harassment. The regulation, which would serve as an extension of the 1972 law, is expected to roll back a set of Trump-era rules and expand the rights of victims of sexual harassment and assault.

Among other findings, the poll also revealed Americans don't think all women have felt progress equally. About half of respondents said white women have seen a great deal of progress, but only about a third said the same for women of color or LGBTQ women. Only about a quarter said there's been great progress for low-income women.

Still, to 67-year-old David Picatti, it feels like the push for gender equality has largely succeeded. When he was an engineering student in college, he remembers his program "clamoring" to recruit women, who are underrepresented in many science fields. More recently, he has had female cousins receive full scholarships to play college sports.

"I think there have been a lot of strides and it's a fairly equal playing field," said Picatti, of Yakima, Washington.

Sarah Brown says it's far from equal. The 70-year-old in New Orleans acknowledged some progress — her daughter earned a master's in business from Harvard University in the 1980s as the program was recruiting more women — but she still sees discrimination.

A retired accountant, Brown has been discouraged by recent battles over abortion rights, and she has been appalled by sexual assault scandals at Louisiana State University and other colleges across the country. It seems like progress made in the past is being eroded, she said.

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Still, Brown isn't surprised that men see it differently.  
"Of course not," she said. "Women know how it really is to be a woman and men don't. Men think that women have it better than they truly do."

## Takeaways: Big Trump win, election deniers advance in Nevada

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump notched a significant victory in South Carolina, where his preferred candidate easily ousted five-term Rep. Tom Rice, the first Republican to be booted from office after voting to impeach the former president last year. But another high-profile GOP target of Trump in the state, Rep. Nancy Mace, held back a challenger.

Meanwhile, in Nevada on Tuesday, two election deniers who have tirelessly promoted the former president's lies about voter fraud won their primaries for key positions of power in the state.

Takeaways from the latest round of primary elections:

### SPLIT DECISION IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Rice and Mace have been objects of Trump's anger ever since a mob of his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol to stop the certification of Joe Biden's presidential election win.

Their transgressions? Mace stated on national TV that Trump's "entire legacy was wiped out" by the attack, while Rice became an apostate for joining a small group of Republicans who voted with Democrats in favor of Trump's second impeachment.

"He threw a temper tantrum that culminated with the sacking of the United States Capitol," Rice told NBC News on Monday. "It's a direct attack on the Constitution, and he should be held accountable."

Voters ultimately rendered different judgments on the duo, reflecting a split within the GOP about how to move forward from the Trump era. Rice's largely rural district is representative of Trump's America, where crossing the former president carries a steep cost. Even as Trump railed against both lawmakers, he chose to hold a rally in Rice's district earlier this year.

That's because Mace's district, which centers on Charleston, is full of the type of moderate suburban voters who fled the GOP under Trump. It is one of the few districts in an overall red state where Democrats have been even moderately competitive in congressional races.

The results demonstrate that the Trump factor can't be underestimated in solidly Republican territory, a potential warning sign for other Republicans, including Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, who also voted to impeach Trump and has helped lead the House panel investigating the Jan. 6 attack. She's facing a competitive primary in August from a Trump-backed challenger.

Another notable factor in the Mace contest: It amounted to a proxy battle between Trump, who is contemplating a 2024 White House campaign, and former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who is also considering a run.

Trump backed former state Rep. Katie Arrington in the race, while Haley, a former South Carolina governor, effectively challenged Trump by campaigning with Mace.

In Rice's contest, Trump endorsed state Rep. Russell Fry.

### ELECTION DENIERS ADVANCE IN NEVADA

Two Republican candidates who ardently pushed Trump's lies about voter fraud costing him the 2020 presidential election won nominations to top offices in Nevada on Tuesday.

Jim Marchant, a former state lawmaker, won the GOP nomination for secretary of state, the office that oversees elections in the perennial presidential battleground that Trump narrowly lost in both 2016 and 2020.

Marchant has made appearances around the country with other Trump allies, including MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell, to cast doubt on the election results, despite the fact that courts, election officials from both parties and his own attorney general have said the vote was legitimate.

Marchant has also been working to persuade local officials to toss out voting equipment that he baselessly contends is rigged and instead require that all ballots be cast and counted by hand — an arduous

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and unnecessary task since testing is conducted before elections and audits are held afterward to ensure the votes are recorded accurately.

Marchant will face Democrat Cisco Aguilar in November. Aguilar is a lawyer and former chair of the Nevada Athletic Commission who was unopposed in the Democratic primary.

Adam Laxalt, the state's former attorney general, won the GOP nomination for U.S. Senate in Nevada on Tuesday after promoting Trump's lies about fraud in the state in the 2020 election, including spearheading legal challenges to the vote-counting process.

Laxalt, who was backed by the former president, weaved Trump's false claims of voter fraud throughout his campaign. He has already begun raising fears of voter fraud in this year's midterm elections and has talked about preemptively mounting legal challenges "to try to tighten up the election."

He had insisted in 2020 that ineligible and dead voters cast ballots in the presidential election in Nevada, despite the state's Republican secretary of state, Barbara Cegavske, insisting that the results showing Biden's victory were accurate and reliable. Cegavske was prevented by term limit laws from running again.

Laxalt will face Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto in November in what Republicans see as one of their best chances to flip a seat and to win back control of the chamber.

## TRUMP, MCCONNELL ALIGN ON LAXALT IN NEVADA

Trump and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell don't agree on much. One rare exception is Laxalt, who won Nevada's Republican Senate primary.

The two Republican leaders haven't been on speaking terms since December 2020, when McConnell acknowledged that Biden defeated Trump. But they both endorsed Laxalt, who defeated retired Army Capt. Sam Brown, a West Point graduate and Purple Heart recipient who ran an unexpectedly strong campaign as a conservative outsider.

The mutual support, which brought together the Trump and establishment wings of the party, demonstrates the intense focus Republicans have placed on flipping the seat held by first-term Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, who is considered among the most vulnerable senators.

## TEXAS HOUSE SEAT FLIPS

A once solidly Democratic district in South Texas will now be represented by a Republican after Mayra Flores won a special primary election to finish the term of former Democratic Rep. Filemon Vela, who resigned this year to become a lobbyist.

Flores, a GOP organizer who is the daughter of migrant workers, will only hold the seat for several months before the district is redrawn to be more favorable to Democrats. But her victory in the heavily Hispanic Rio Grande Valley is an ominous sign for Democrats.

They are not only losing ground in a region they long dominated, but Flores' success as a candidate also demonstrates that Republicans are making inroads with Hispanic voters.

Her win also has implications for Democrats' ambitions in Congress, denying House Speaker Nancy Pelosi an opportunity to add to her slim two-vote margin to pass legislation.

## FROM SOUTH CAROLINA TO THE WHITE HOUSE?

Also in South Carolina, Republican Tim Scott coasted to an easy and unopposed primary win Tuesday for what he says will be his last term in the Senate. But another state is also on his mind — the presidential proving ground of Iowa.

It's become an article of faith that there are no "accidental" trips to Iowa by ambitious politicians. And Scott, the Senate's sole Black Republican, has made several visits, including one last week.

He certainly has the money to contend. As he campaigned for reelection to the Senate, Scott amassed a jaw-dropping \$42 million. That's more than double the \$15.7 million average cost of a winning Senate campaign in the 2018 midterms. It's also more than enough to launch a Republican presidential campaign in 2024.

Even before his recent appearance at an Iowa Republican Party event, Scott has been raising his profile. He spoke at the 2020 Republican National Convention and delivered the Republican response to President Joe Biden's first joint congressional address. He's also visited New Hampshire, another early-voting presidential state, and delivered a speech at the Reagan Presidential Library, another frequent stop for



Republicans eyeing the White House.

## Trans kids' treatment can start younger, new guidelines say

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

A leading transgender health association has lowered its recommended minimum age for starting gender transition treatment, including sex hormones and surgeries.

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health said hormones could be started at age 14, two years earlier than the group's previous advice, and some surgeries done at age 15 or 17, a year or so earlier than previous guidance. The group acknowledged potential risks but said it is unethical and harmful to withhold early treatment.

The association provided The Associated Press with an advance copy of its update ahead of publication in a medical journal, expected later this year. The international group promotes evidence-based standards of care and includes more than 3,000 doctors, social scientists and others involved in transgender health issues.

The update is based on expert opinion and a review of scientific evidence on the benefits and harms of transgender medical treatment in teens whose gender identity doesn't match the sex they were assigned at birth, the group said. Such evidence is limited but has grown in the last decade, the group said, with studies suggesting the treatments can improve psychological well-being and reduce suicidal behavior.

Starting treatment earlier allows transgender teens to experience physical puberty changes around the same time as other teens, said Dr. Eli Coleman, chair of the group's standards of care and director of the University of Minnesota Medical School's human sexuality program.

But he stressed that age is just one factor to be weighed. Emotional maturity, parents' consent, long-standing gender discomfort and a careful psychological evaluation are among the others.

"Certainly there are adolescents that do not have the emotional or cognitive maturity to make an informed decision," he said. "That is why we recommend a careful multidisciplinary assessment."

The updated guidelines include recommendations for treatment in adults, but the teen guidance is bound to get more attention. It comes amid a surge in kids referred to clinics offering transgender medical treatment, along with new efforts to prevent or restrict the treatment.

Many experts say more kids are seeking such treatment because gender-questioning children are more aware of their medical options and facing less stigma.

Critics, including some from within the transgender treatment community, say some clinics are too quick to offer irreversible treatment to kids who would otherwise outgrow their gender-questioning.

Psychologist Erica Anderson resigned her post as a board member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health last year after voicing concerns about "sloppy" treatment given to kids without adequate counseling.

She is still a group member and supports the updated guidelines, which emphasize comprehensive assessments before treatment. But she says dozens of families have told her that doesn't always happen.

"They tell me horror stories. They tell me, 'Our child had 20 minutes with the doctor'" before being offered hormones, she said. "The parents leave with their hair on fire."

Estimates on the number of transgender youth and adults worldwide vary, partly because of different definitions. The association's new guidelines say data from mostly Western countries suggest a range of between a fraction of a percent in adults to up to 8% in kids.

Anderson said she's heard recent estimates suggesting the rate in kids is as high as 1 in 5 — which she strongly disputes. That number likely reflects gender-questioning kids who aren't good candidates for lifelong medical treatment or permanent physical changes, she said.

Still, Anderson said she condemns politicians who want to punish parents for allowing their kids to receive transgender treatment and those who say treatment should be banned for those under age 18.

"That's just absolutely cruel," she said.

Dr. Marci Bowers, the transgender health group's president-elect, also has raised concerns about hasty

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treatment, but she acknowledged the frustration of people who have been “forced to jump through arbitrary hoops and barriers to treatment by gatekeepers ... and subjected to scrutiny that is not applied to another medical diagnosis.”

Gabe Poulos, 22, had breast removal surgery at age 16 and has been on sex hormones for seven years. The Asheville, North Carolina, resident struggled miserably with gender discomfort before his treatment. Poulos said he’s glad he was able to get treatment at a young age.

“Transitioning under the roof with your parents so they can go through it with you, that’s really beneficial,” he said. “I’m so much happier now.”

In South Carolina, where a proposed law would ban transgender treatments for kids under age 18, Eli Bundy has been waiting to get breast removal surgery since age 15. Now 18, Bundy just graduated from high school and is planning to have surgery before college.

Bundy, who identifies as nonbinary, supports easing limits on transgender medical care for kids.

“Those decisions are best made by patients and patient families and medical professionals,” they said. “It definitely makes sense for there to be fewer restrictions, because then kids and physicians can figure it out together.”

Dr. Julia Mason, an Oregon pediatrician who has raised concerns about the increasing numbers of youngsters who are getting transgender treatment, said too many in the field are jumping the gun. She argues there isn’t strong evidence in favor of transgender medical treatment for kids.

“In medicine ... the treatment has to be proven safe and effective before we can start recommending it,” Mason said.

Experts say the most rigorous research — studies comparing treated kids with outcomes in untreated kids — would be unethical and psychologically harmful to the untreated group.

The new guidelines include starting medication called puberty blockers in the early stages of puberty, which for girls is around ages 8 to 13 and typically two years later for boys. That’s no change from the group’s previous guidance. The drugs delay puberty and give kids time to decide about additional treatment; their effects end when the medication is stopped.

The blockers can weaken bones, and starting them too young in children assigned males at birth might impair sexual function in adulthood, although long-term evidence is lacking.

The update also recommends:

—Sex hormones — estrogen or testosterone — starting at age 14. This is often lifelong treatment. Long-term risks may include infertility and weight gain, along with strokes in trans women and high blood pressure in trans men, the guidelines say.

—Breast removal for trans boys at age 15. Previous guidance suggested this could be done at least a year after hormones, around age 17, although a specific minimum age wasn’t listed.

—Most genital surgeries starting at age 17, including womb and testicle removal, a year earlier than previous guidance.

The Endocrine Society, another group that offers guidance on transgender treatment, generally recommends starting a year or two later, although it recently moved to start updating its own guidelines. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association support allowing kids to seek transgender medical treatment, but they don’t offer age-specific guidance.

Dr. Joel Frader, a Northwestern University pediatrician and medical ethicist who advises a gender treatment program at Chicago’s Lurie Children’s Hospital, said guidelines should rely on psychological readiness, not age.

Frader said brain science shows that kids are able to make logical decisions by around age 14, but they’re prone to risk-taking and they take into account long-term consequences of their actions only when they’re much older.

Coleen Williams, a psychologist at Boston Children’s Hospital’s Gender Multispecialty Service, said treatment decisions there are collaborative and individualized.

“Medical intervention in any realm is not a one-size-fits-all option,” Williams said.

## In Ukraine, mines take lives even after fighting moves on

By JOHN LEICESTER and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

MAKARIV, Ukraine (AP) — The truck driver had the radio on, his daughter's stuffed toy keeping him company, and was bouncing his lumbering vehicle down one of the innumerable dirt tracks in Ukraine that are vital thoroughfares in the country's vast agricultural heartlands.

Then the right rear wheel hit a Soviet-era TM-62 anti-tank mine. The explosion blew Vadym Schvydchenko and his daughter's toy clean out of the cabin. The truck, and his livelihood, went up in flames.

Astoundingly, the 40-year-old escaped with just minor leg and head wounds. Others haven't been so lucky. Russia's war in Ukraine is spreading a deadly litter of mines, bombs and other explosives. They are killing civilians, disrupting planting, complicating the rebuilding of homes and villages, and will continue taking lives and limbs long after the fighting stops.

Often, blast victims are farmers and other rural workers with little choice but to use mined roads and plow mined fields, in a country relied on for grain and other crops that feed the world.

Schvydchenko said he'll steer clear of dirt tracks for the foreseeable future, although they're sometimes the only route to fields and rural settlements. Mushroom-picking in the woods has also lost its appeal to him.

"I'm afraid something like this can happen again," he said.

Ukraine is now one of the most mined countries in Europe. The east of the country, fought over with Russia-backed separatists since 2014, was already contaminated by mines even before the Feb. 24 invasion multiplied the scale and complexity of the dangers both there and elsewhere.

Ukraine's State Emergency Service said last week that 300,000 square kilometers (115,000 square miles) — the size of Arizona or Italy — need to be cleared. The ongoing fighting will only expand the area.

The war's deadly remnants will "continue to be a hidden threat for many years to come," said Mairi Cunningham, who leads clearance efforts in Ukraine for The Halo Trust, a demining NGO that got \$4 million in U.S. government funding in May for its work in the country.

There's no complete government count of mine deaths since the invasion, but every week authorities have reported cases of civilians killed and wounded. Cunningham said her group has counted 52 civilian deaths and 65 injuries since February and "that's likely under-reported." The majority were from anti-tank mines, in agricultural areas, she said.

On a mobile app called "Demining Ukraine" that officials launched last month, people can send photos, video and the geolocation of explosive objects they come across, for subsequent removal. The app got more than 2,000 tip-offs in its first week.

The track where Schvydchenko had his brush with death is still used, despite now being marked with bright red warning signs bearing a white skull and crossbones. It scythes through corn fields on the outskirts of Makariv — a once comely town west of Kyiv that bears the battle scars of Russia's failed assault on the capital in the war's early weeks.

Even with the Russian soldiers gone, danger lurks amid the surrounding poppy meadows, fields and woodlands. Deminers found another explosive charge — undetonated — just meters (feet) away from Schvydchenko's blown-up truck. On another track outside the nearby village of Andriivka, three people were killed in March by a mine that ripped open their minivan, spewing its cargo of food jars and tin cans now rusting in the dirt.

In a field close by, a tractor driver was wounded in May by an anti-tank mine that hurled the wreckage onto another mine, which also detonated. Halo Trust workers are now methodically scouring that site — where Russian troops dug foxholes — for any other devices.

Cunningham said the chaotic way the battle for Kyiv unfolded complicates the task of finding mines. Russian forces thrust toward the capital but were repelled by Ukrainian defenders.

"Often it was Russians held an area, put some anti-vehicle mines nearby — a few in and around their position — and then left," she said. "It's scattered."

Mines are still being laid on the battlefields, now concentrated to the east and south where Russia has

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focused its offensive since its soldiers withdrew from around Kyiv and the north, badly bloodied.

A Ukrainian unit that buried TM-62 mines on a forest track in the eastern Donbas region this week, in holes scooped out with spades, told The Associated Press that the aim was to prevent Russian troops from advancing toward their trenches.

Russian booby-trapping has sometimes had no clear military rhyme or reason, Ukrainian officials say. In towns around Kyiv, explosive experts found devices in unpredictable places.

When Tetiana Kutsenko, 71, got back her home near Makariv that Russian troops had occupied, she found bloodstains and an apparent bullet hole on the bathroom floor and tripwires in her back yard.

The thin strands of copper wire had been rigged to explosive detonators.

"I'm afraid to go to the woods now," she said. "Now, I'm looking down every time I take a step."

## Today in History: June 16, Trump launches campaign

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, June 16, the 167th day of 2022. There are 198 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 16, 1858, accepting the Illinois Republican Party's nomination for the U.S. Senate, Abraham Lincoln said the slavery issue had to be resolved, declaring, "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

On this date:

In 1903, Ford Motor Co. was incorporated.

In 1933, the National Industrial Recovery Act became law with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signature. (The Act was later struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.) The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. was founded as President Roosevelt signed the Banking Act of 1933.

In 1941, National Airport (now Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport) opened for business with a ceremony attended by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1963, the world's first female space traveler, Valentina Tereshkova (teh-ruhsh-KOH'-vuh), 26, was launched into orbit by the Soviet Union aboard Vostok 6; Tereshkova spent 71 hours in flight, circling the Earth 48 times before returning safely.

In 1970, Kenneth A. Gibson of Newark, New Jersey, became the first Black politician elected mayor of a major Northeast city. Chicago Bears running back Brian Piccolo, 26, died at a New York hospital after battling cancer.

In 1977, Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev was named president, becoming the first person to hold both posts simultaneously.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter and Panamanian leader Omar Torrijos (toh-REE'-ohs) signed the instruments of ratification for the Panama Canal treaties during a ceremony in Panama City.

In 1999, Thabo Mbeki (TAH'-boh um-BEH'-kee) took the oath as president of South Africa, succeeding Nelson Mandela.

In 2011, U.S. Rep. Anthony Weiner, D-N.Y., announced his resignation from Congress, bowing to the furor caused by his sexually charged online dalliances with a former porn performer and other women. Osama bin Laden's longtime second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahri (AY'-muhn ahl-ZWAH'-ree), took control of al-Qaida.

In 2015, real estate mogul Donald Trump launched his successful campaign to become president of the United States with a speech at Trump Tower in Manhattan.

In 2016, President Barack Obama traveled to Orlando, Florida, the scene of a deadly nightclub shooting that claimed 49 victims; the president embraced grieving families and cheered on Democrats' push for new gun control measures. Walt Disney Co. opened Shanghai Disneyland, its first theme park in mainland China.

In 2020, federal authorities announced murder and attempted murder charges against an Air Force sergeant, Steven Carrillo, in the fatal shooting of a federal security officer outside a U.S. courthouse in Oakland, California. (Carrillo, who had ties to the far-right, anti-government "boogaloo" movement, pleaded



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guilty to a federal murder charge after prosecutors agreed not to seek the death penalty.) A statue of Christopher Columbus that stood in a St. Louis park for 134 years was removed; park officials said it had symbolized a "historical disregard for indigenous peoples."

Ten years ago: Egyptians began going to the polls for a two-day runoff to choose their first freely elected president; Islamist candidate Mohammed Morsi emerged the winner. China launched its most ambitious space mission to date, carrying its first female astronaut, Liu Yang, and two male colleagues on a 13-day mission to an orbiting module that ended safely.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump acknowledged for the first time that he was under federal investigation as part of the expanding probe into Russia's election meddling as he lashed out at a top Justice Department official overseeing the inquiry. A St. Anthony, Minnesota, police officer was acquitted of manslaughter in the fatal shooting of Philando Castile, a Black motorist who had just informed the officer that he was carrying a gun. Former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl died at his home in Ludwigshafen; he was 87. Actor Stephen Furst, who played naive fraternity pledge Flounder in the hit movie "Animal House," died in Moorpark, California, at age 63.

One year ago: After a three-hour summit in Geneva, President Joe Biden and Russia's Vladimir Putin emerged largely where they started, with deep differences on human rights, cyberattacks, election interference and more. Actor Frank Bonner, best known as salesman Herb Tarlek on the TV series "WKRP in Cincinnati," died at 79.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Eileen Atkins is 88. Actor Bill Cobbs is 88. Author Joyce Carol Oates is 84. Country singer Billy "Crash" Craddock is 84. Songwriter Lamont Dozier is 81. R&B singer Eddie Levert is 80. Actor Joan Van Ark is 79. Actor Geoff Pierson is 73. Boxing Hall of Famer Roberto Duran is 71. Pop singer Gino Vannelli is 70. Actor Laurie Metcalf is 67. Actor Arnold Vosloo is 60. Actor Danny Burstein is 58. Model-actor Jenny Shimizu is 55. Actor James Patrick Stuart is 54. Rapper MC Ren is 53. Actor Clifton Collins Jr. is 52. Golfer Phil Mickelson is 52. Actor John Cho is 50. Actor Eddie Cibrian is 49. Actor Fred Koehler is 47. Actor China (chee-nah) Shavers is 45. Actor Daniel Bruhl is 44. Bluegrass musician Caleb Smith (Balsam Range) is 44. Actor Sibel Kekilli is 42. Actor Missy Peregrym (PEH'-rih-grihm) is 40. Actor Olivia Hack is 39. Singer Diana DeGarmo (TV: "American Idol") is 35. Actor Ali Stroker is 35. Tennis player Bianca Andreescu is 22.