

Groton Daily Independent

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June 28

Elementary Library Open 9-11 (Reading time 10 a.m.)

Senior Menu: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, stewed tomatoes, apricots, whole wheat bread.

5:30 p.m.: Legion at Sisseton, DH

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

6:30 p.m.: U10 hosts Borge, Falk Field, 1 game (R/W)

5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Borge, Falk Field, 1 game (B/W)

6 p.m.: U12 SB at Faulkton, DH

June 29

Senior Menu: Teriyaki chicken, almond rice with peas, pineapple strawberry ambrosia, orange sherbet, dinner roll.

10 a.m.: Little Free Library reading time (south Methodist Church)

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

5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners host Clark, 1 game

7:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Claremont, Falk Field, 1 game

7:30 p.m.: U10 hosts Claremont, Falk Field, 1 game (B/W)

5:30 p.m.: T-Ball Black hosts Claremont

“Give every day the chance to become the most beautiful day of your life.”

- Mark Twain



June 30

Senior Menu: Herbed roast pork, baked potato with sour cream, tomato spoons salad, cinnamon apple sauce, whole wheat bread.

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

5:30 p.m.: Legion at Redfield, DH

5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners at Webster, DH

July 5

5 p.m.: Jr. Legion hosts Watertown, DH

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

5 p.m.: U10 vs. Flash at Foundation Fields, Watertown, DH (B/W)

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

6 p.m.: U10 SB at Britton, DH

6 p.m.: U8 SB at Britton, DH

July 6

5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners at Redfield, DH

7:30 p.m.: U12 at Claremont, 1 game

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

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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GROTON'S UPCOMING EVENTS



July 4 Firecracker
Tourney at Olive
Grove Golf Course

July 10 Summer
Fest/Car Show at
the City Park

July 21 Pro Am Golf
Tourney at Olive
Grove Golf Course

August 5 Wine on
Nine at Olive Grove
Golf Course

September 10
Fall Citywide
Rummage Sale

COME SPEND A WEEKEND IN GROTON!

- 5 camping spots with full-service hookups
- play centers and permanent corn hole boards
- swimming pool with slide and diving board
- 3 diamond baseball complex
- bowling alley
- 9-hole golf course



120 N Main St., Groton, SD 57445

605-397-8422

GrotonChamber.com

Greenfield running for Commissioner of School and Public Lands

Brock Greenfield (R-Clark) has secured the Republican nomination as the GOP candidate for Commissioner of School and Public Lands. Greenfield has served in the SD Senate and House of Representatives the past 22 years. In 2000, he became the youngest Senator ever elected in SD history. He has served 16 total years in the Senate and 6 years in the House.

Greenfield said, "After praying about our next steps in life, my wife Kelli and I felt we were being led to seek this new opportunity. We then visited with our families and they were wholly supportive of us taking on this challenge." Kelli is a nurse practitioner who works for Monument Health in their cardiac care department.

Greenfield announced his candidacy in February of 2021 and has spent the past 17 months crisscrossing South Dakota meeting with delegates and numerous South Dakotans who are affected by the functions of the office. Ultimately, the goal of the office is to return maximum investment dollars to the K-12 and higher education systems who have land interests under the purview of the Office of School and Public Lands. The office is also charged with ensuring responsible utilization of grazing, mineral, gas, and other land leases, while prioritizing optimal stewardship of the public lands and dams under their management. The Commissioner is also a member of the SD Investment Council. Greenfield notes that being a member of the Appropriations Committee for 12 years and the Legislature's Executive Board for 6 years gives him valuable knowledge of both the Office of School and Public Lands and the SD Investment Council. He concluded, "I believe I am uniquely qualified through my business education in college, my private sector management experience, and my legislative service and my strong relationships with people from all walks of life to best serve the people of South Dakota in this important job that affects so many."

The GOP Convention was held in Watertown Thursday-Saturday, at which time the delegates named their slate of candidates. In addition to Greenfield, Larry Rhoden was selected as candidate for Lieutenant Governor; Monae Johnson for Secretary of State; Marty Jackley, Attorney General; Rich Sattgast, Auditor; Josh Haeder, Treasurer; and Chris Nelson, Public Utilities Commissioner. The general election will be held on November 8.

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion Defeats Milbank VFW Teeners On Heels Of Groeblinghoff's No-Hitter

Ryan Groeblinghoff was brilliant on the mound on Monday, as Groeblinghoff threw a no-hitter to lead Groton Post 39 Jr Legion past Milbank VFW Teeners 13-0.

Bradin Althoff led Groton Post 39 Jr Legion to victory by driving in six runs. Althoff went 3-for-4 at the plate. Althoff drove in runs on a single in the first, a single in the second, and a single in the fourth.

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion fired up the offense in the first inning, when Althoff singled on a 0-2 count, scoring one run.

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion tallied six runs in the fourth inning. Groton Post 39 Jr Legion's big inning was driven by singles by Korbin Kucker, Althoff, and Braxton Imrie, an error on a ball put in play by Teylor Diegel, and a double by Logan Ringgenberg.

Groeblinghoff was the winning pitcher for Groton Post 39 Jr Legion. The pitcher went five innings, allowing zero runs on zero hits and striking out 11.

Reese Rabe took the loss for Milbank VFW Teeners. The bulldog lasted four innings, allowing ten hits and ten runs while striking out three.

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion racked up 12 hits in the game. Althoff, Ringgenberg, Diegel, and Brevin Flihs each collected multiple hits for Groton Post 39 Jr Legion. Ringgenberg and Althoff each collected three hits to lead Groton Post 39 Jr Legion. Groton Post 39 Jr Legion stole 14 bases during the game as four players stole more than one. Diegel led the way with five.

Big Second Inning Propels Groton Post 39 Jr Legion to Victory Over Milbank VFW Teeners

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion scored eight runs in the second on its way to a 14-3 victory over Milbank VFW Teeners on Tuesday. Dillon Abeln, Brevin Flihs, Korbin Kucker, and Abeln all moved runners across the plate with RBIs in the inning.

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion got things started in the first inning when Bradin Althoff's sac fly scored one run for Groton Post 39 Jr Legion.

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion put up eight runs in the second inning. Abeln, Flihs, Kucker, and Abeln each drove in runs during the inning.

Teylor Diegel pitched Groton Post 39 Jr Legion to victory. The pitcher lasted three innings, allowing three hits and three runs while striking out six. Flihs threw two innings in relief out of the bullpen.

Tanner Hallquist took the loss for Milbank VFW Teeners. Hallquist lasted one and two-thirds innings, allowing three hits and 13 runs while striking out two.

Abeln led Groton Post 39 Jr Legion with two hits in three at bats. Diegel led Groton Post 39 Jr Legion with two stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with ten stolen bases.

Milbank VFW Teeners stole seven bases during the game as two players stole more than one. Josh Pederson led the way with two.

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Morris's Walk-off Gives Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Victory Over Britton

It came down to the wire on Tuesday, with Groton Jr. Teeners 14U taking victory on a dramatic walk-off single in the late innings that sealed their victory over Britton. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U was down 10-9 in the bottom of the fifth inning when N Morris singled on a 1-2 count, scoring two runs.

Morris led Groton Jr. Teeners 14U to victory by driving in four runs. Morris went 3-for-3 at the plate. Morris drove in runs on a single in the fourth and a single in the fifth.

Britton fired up the offense in the first inning, when D Person singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U scored four runs in the fourth inning. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U batters contributing to the big inning included K Fliehs, Morris, and J Erdmann, all driving in runs in the frame.

Britton scored five runs in the second inning. Britton's big inning was driven by singles by B Hawkinson and W Richter and a double by G Fosness.

Erdmann earned the victory on the hill for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The fireballer surrendered zero runs on zero hits over one and two-thirds innings, striking out five. Lincoln Krause threw two and a third innings in relief out of the bullpen.

J Tisher took the loss for Britton. The bulldog surrendered eight runs on eight hits over four and a third innings, striking out six.

Ryder Jangula started the game for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The ace surrendered eight runs on seven hits over one inning



Karsten Fliehs pitching.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jarrett Erdmann catching.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Carter Simon hits an RBI single.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U saw the ball well today, racking up ten hits in the game. Morris, N Groeblichhoff, and K Antonsen all collected multiple hits for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groeblichhoff and Morris each collected three hits to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U didn't commit a single error in the field. Morris had nine chances in the field, the most on the team. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U stole seven bases during the game as two players stole more than one. Morris led the way with three.

Britton collected nine hits. Richter and J Rein each managed multiple hits for Britton

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Britton 2 - 17 Groton Jr. Teeners 14U

📍 Home 📅 Monday June 27, 2022

	1	2	3	R	H	E
BRTT	2	0	0	2	1	0
GRTN	7	2	8	17	15	0

BATTING

Britton	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Heikamp (CF)	2	1	0	0	0	1
J Rain (1B)	2	0	0	0	0	0
B Hawkinson (P)	1	1	1	0	1	0
M Purkeypile (2B)	0	0	0	0	0	0
D Person (SS)	2	0	0	0	0	1
W Richter (3B, P)	1	0	0	0	1	0
G Fosness (C)	0	0	0	0	1	0
J Tisher (2B)	0	0	0	1	1	0
K Knudson (RF)	1	0	0	0	0	1
P Pierson (LF)	1	0	0	0	0	0
D Redler (3B)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	11	2	1	1	4	4

TB: B Hawkinson, **SB:** B Hawkinson, **LOB:** 4

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (CF)	1	2	1	1	2	0
N Groeblinghoff (...)	2	2	1	1	0	0
R Jangula (RF)	1	0	1	2	0	0
C Simon (3B)	2	3	2	1	1	0
N Morris (SS)	3	3	3	3	0	0
J Erdmann (C)	3	2	2	4	0	1
G Englund (1B, P)	3	1	1	1	0	0
K Antonsen (LF)	2	0	1	2	0	0
K Moody (RF, 1B)	3	1	1	0	0	2
L Krause (2B)	2	3	2	1	1	0
Totals	22	17	15	16	4	3

2B: N Morris, C Simon, **TB:** L Krause 2, R Jangula, G Englund, N Morris 4, N Groeblinghoff, T McGannon, J Erdmann 2, K Moody, K Antonsen, C Simon 3, **SAC:** K Antonsen, **HBP:** N Groeblinghoff, T McGannon, **SB:** L Krause, G Englund, N Groeblinghoff, T McGannon, J Erdmann 3, K Antonsen, C Simon, **LOB:** 2

PITCHING

Britton	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
B Hawkinson	2.0	11	12	12	2	3	0
W Richter	0.2	4	5	5	2	0	0
Totals	2.2	15	17	17	4	3	0

L: B Hawkinson, **P-S:** W Richter 37-16, B Hawkinson 68-41, **WP:** B Hawkinson, **HBP:** W Richter, B Hawkinson, **BF:** W Richter 9, B Hawkinson 20

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
K Flihs	1.1	0	2	2	4	3	0
G Englund	1.2	1	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	3.0	1	2	2	4	4	0

W: G Englund, **P-S:** G Englund 14-11, K Flihs 45-19, **WP:** K Flihs 3, **BF:** G Englund 6, K Flihs 9

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Britton 10 - 11 Groton Jr. Teeners 14U

📍 Home 📅 Monday June 27, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
BRTT	3	5	0	2	0	10	9	4
GRTN	0	3	1	4	3	11	10	0

BATTING

Britton	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Heitkamp (CF)	3	2	1	0	1	1
J Rein (LF)	3	2	2	1	1	1
B Hawkinson (1B)	2	2	1	2	2	1
D Person (SS)	2	1	1	1	1	1
G Fossness (C)	4	0	1	2	0	1
J Tisher (P)	2	0	0	1	0	1
D Redler (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
J Tisher (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
W Richter (3B)	3	1	2	1	0	0
D Redler (RF)	2	1	1	1	1	1
M Purkeypyle	1	0	0	0	1	0
L Fredniels (2B)	1	1	0	1	1	1
Totals	23	10	9	10	8	8

2B: G Fossness, **TB:** G Fossness 2, J Rein 2, B Hawkinson, D Person, W Richter 2, B Heitkamp, D Redler, **HBP:** L Fredniels, M Purkeypyle, J Tisher 2, D Person, **SB:** J Rein 2, B Hawkinson, B Heitkamp, **LOB:** 11

PITCHING

Britton	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Tisher	4.1	8	8	6	3	6	0
D Redler	0.0	0	1	1	1	0	0
J Tisher	0.1	2	2	0	1	1	0
Totals	4.2	10	11	6	5	7	0

L: J Tisher, **P-S:** J Tisher 98-60, J Tisher 21-12, D Redler 1-0, **WP:** J Tisher, **BF:** J Tisher 25, J Tisher 6, D Redler

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T Mcgannon (3B,...)	3	1	0	0	1	1
K Fliehs (DH)	4	2	1	0	0	0
C Simon (SS, 3B)	2	1	0	0	2	1
N Moriss (C)	3	2	3	4	1	0
J Erdmann (CF, P)	3	1	1	2	0	0
K Antonsen (2B)	3	1	2	1	0	1
G Englund (1B)	1	0	0	0	0	0
K Moody (1B)	2	0	0	0	0	2
G Kroll (RF)	2	1	0	0	1	2
N Groeblinghoff (...)	3	2	3	1	0	0
L Krause (P, LF)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	26	11	10	8	5	7

TB: J Erdmann, K Fliehs, K Antonsen 2, N Moriss 3, N Groeblinghoff 3, **SB:** K Antonsen 3, C Simon, N Moriss 3, **LOB:** 4

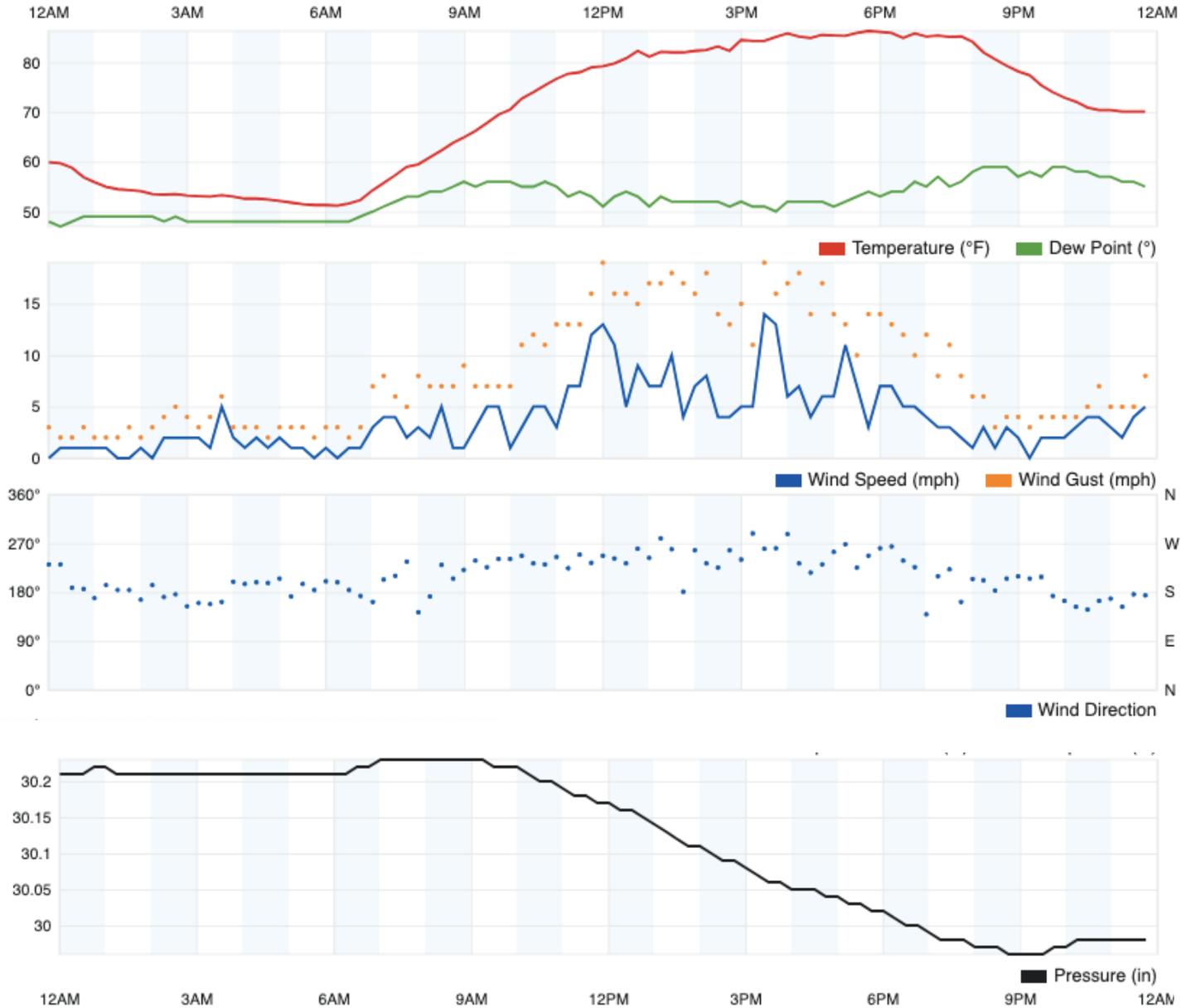
Groton Jr. Tei	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
R Jangula	1.0	7	8	8	3	0	0
L Krause	2.1	2	2	2	3	3	0
J Erdmann	1.2	0	0	0	2	5	0
Totals	5.0	9	10	10	8	8	0

W: J Erdmann, **P-S:** J Erdmann 38-21, R Jangula 44-23, L Krause 55-28, **HBP:** J Erdmann, R Jangula 3, L Krause, **BF:** J Erdmann 8, R Jangula 16, L Krause 12

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 84 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 60 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Sunny and Breezy then Mostly Sunny

High: 100 °F

Wednesday Night



Chance T-storms

Low: 67 °F

Thursday

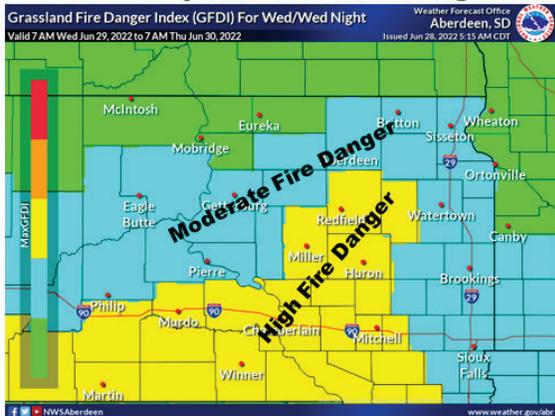


Mostly Sunny

High: 88 °F

High Heat Wednesday To Create Higher Fire Danger

Low Humidity And Breezy Southwest Winds To Also Help Increase Fire Danger



What

-Increased Fire Danger Wednesday afternoon from the combination of hot temperatures, low humidity, breezy southwest winds, and drying/curing fine fuels.

-A cold front's passage Wednesday night may produce a few severe thunderstorms.

When

Wednesday afternoon through Wednesday night

Impacts

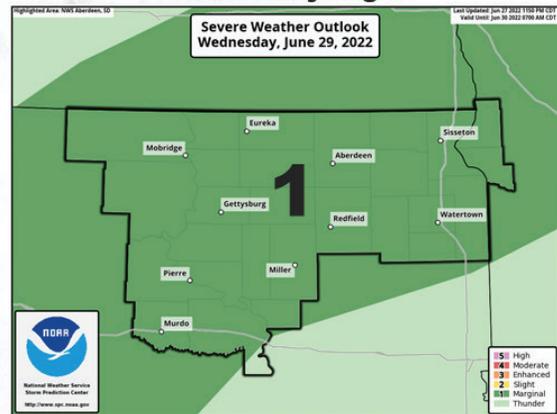
-The increased fire danger means it will be easier for a fire to run, if one should get out of control.

-Large hail and/or strong damaging winds could accompany a few storms, if any develop Wednesday night



National Weather Service Graphic Created
Aberdeen, SD 6/28/2022 5:36 AM

A Few Severe Storms Possible Wednesday Night



Wednesday will have a lot of weather concerns happening. First, it's going to be hot. Temperatures could reach or exceed 100 degrees. The air on Wednesday will not be overly humid, and that will cause humidity values to tank during the afternoon hours. Breezy to perhaps windy southwest winds will also aggravate fire weather concerns, further drying out already dry fine fuels. Once the concerns with fire weather conditions subside Wednesday evening, a cold front starts moving through the region. This front may serve to generate a handful of thunderstorms Wednesday night, which would be capable of producing large hail and damaging wind.

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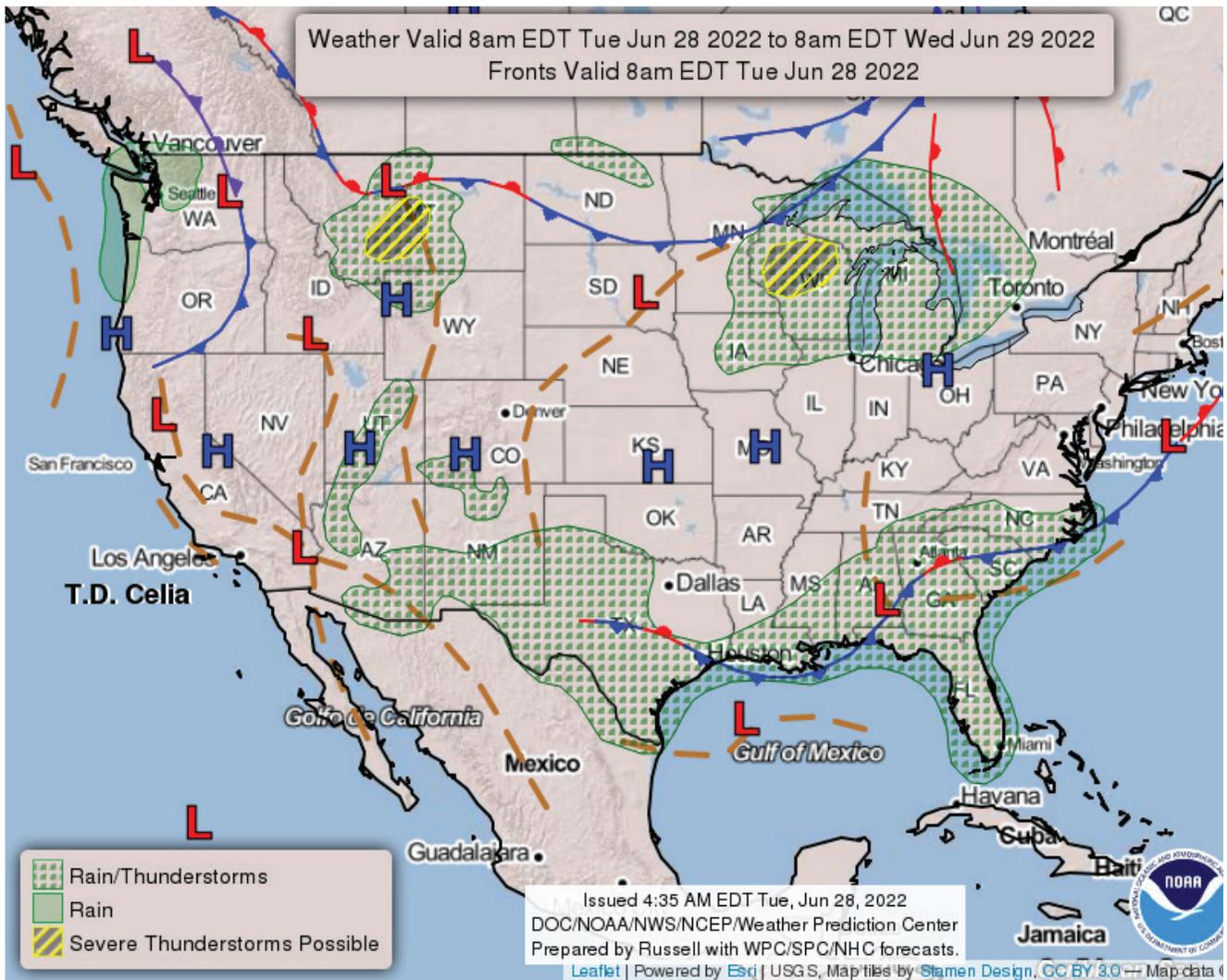
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 86 °F at 5:46 PM
Low Temp: 51 °F at 5:52 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 11:55 AM
Precip: 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 42 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 112 in 1931
Record Low: 40 in 1951
Average High: 83°F
Average Low: 58°F
Average Precip in June.: 3.51
Precip to date in June.: 0.30
Average Precip to date: 10.76
Precip Year to Date: 11.46
Sunset Tonight: 9:26:51 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45:08 AM



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June 28, 1961: An F2 tornado skipped ESE from about 5 miles south of Eureka to Lake Mina. About twelve farm buildings were destroyed. A house was damaged when a small shed was smashed against it in Hillsvie. The storm struck north of Roscoe where a barn was unroofed. A second F2 tornado hit west of Hoven. On one farm, a barn, and five small buildings were destroyed, although grain bin nearby was untouched. Another farm, across the road, lost four buildings including a house. The Langford area of Marshall County was struck by an EF2 tornado shortly after 8:00 pm. An estimated 15 to 20 farm buildings were demolished or heavily damaged, and a store in town was partially unroofed.

June 28, 1982: An estimated thunderstorm wind gust up to 94 mph knocked down trees and caused minor structural damage to several homes just west of Wheaton, Minnesota.

June 28, 1990: KDIO radio in Ortonville, Minnesota, clocked winds of 80 to 85 mph for several minutes as a thunderstorm passed. There were reports of numerous trees downed and scattered power outages in Ortonville.

1788 - The Battle of Monmouth in central New Jersey was fought in sweltering heat. The temperature was 96 degrees in the shade, and there were more casualties from the heat than from bullets. (David Ludlum)

1892 - The temperature at Orogrande UT soared to 116 degrees to establish a record for the state. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1923 - A massive tornado hit Sandusky, OH, then swept across Lake Erie to strike the town of Lorain. The tornado killed 86 persons and caused twelve million dollars damage. The tornado outbreak that day was the worst of record for the state of Ohio up til that time. (David Ludlum)

1924: An estimated F4 tornado struck the towns of Sandusky and Lorain, killing 85 people and injuring over 300. This tornado is the deadliest ever in Ohio history. Click [HERE](#) for some images from Ohio Historical Society.

1975 - Lee Trevino and two other golfers are struck by lightning at the Western Open golf tournament in Oak Brook, IL. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - The temperature at Wichita Falls, TX, soared to 117 degrees, their hottest reading of record. Daily highs were 110 degrees or above between the 24th of June and the 3rd of July. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather in the north central U.S. Thunderstorms in Nebraska produced wind gusts to 70 mph and baseball size hail at Arapahoe, and wind gusts to 80 mph along with baseball size hail at Wolback and Belgrade. Six cities in the Ohio Valley reported record low temperatures for the date, including Cincinnati, OH, with a reading of 50 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Showers and thunderstorms brought much needed rains to parts of the central U.S. Madison, WI, received 1.67 inches of rain, a record for the date, and their first measurable rain since the Mother's Day tornado outbreak on the 8th of May. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Evening thunderstorms deluged Winnfield LA with eleven inches of rain in four hours and fifteen minutes, and Baton Rouge LA reported 11 inches of rain in two days. Totals in west central Louisiana ranged up to 17 inches. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Northern High Plains. Two inch hail broke windows in nearly every building at Comstock, NE. Thunderstorms in North Dakota produced two inch hail at Killdeer, and golf ball size hail at Zap. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Attention!

There are very few pictures of "Attention!" that can rival a US Marine standing tall after hearing that word. As soon as that "word" is shouted by a "superior" heels come together, muscles tighten, and faces freeze as though they were carved in granite. Persons who have served in the military know the significance of that word. When "shouted to subordinates" it results in an external rigidity that is very visible to the onlooker and represents an internal attitude of concentration that is waiting for a command to be obeyed and followed with no hesitation.

Throughout His Word, God uses many different ways to get the "attention" of His children. There are times when He speaks directly to a person. There are times when He speaks to one person through another person. When God wants the attention of His children, He has many options.

We read in Job that one of God's options to get our attention is through suffering: "For He wounds, but He also binds up; He injures, but His hand also heals," wrote Job.

In Proverbs 1:2 we find a word that can be translated with several different meanings: instruction, discipline, training and chastened. But, in this instance, there is no doubt that it means "to teach by discipline" or "through punishment."

We often hear stories about people who "have to hit bottom" before they are willing to do something about a problem that is destroying them. It may be God at work. He often uses suffering and hardship to get our attention by "raising the bottom" to "save" us because He loves us.

"The Lord disciplines those He loves," wrote Solomon. God often uses discipline to get our "attention" when we abandon Him. Why? Because He refuses to let us destroy ourselves!"

Prayer: Lord, we know You love us. Do whatever is necessary to keep us in Your will - even if it means we must suffer for You to get our attention. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: For gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight. Proverbs 1:2

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2022 Community Events

- 01/30/2022 84th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
01/30/2022 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am – 1pm, Groton Community Center, 109 N 3rd St, Groton,
04/07/2022 Groton CDE
04/09/2022 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/09/2022 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
04/23/2022 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/24/2022 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/07/2022 Lions Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
St John's Lutheran Church VBS 9-11am
05/30/2022 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
Transit Fundraiser at the Community Center 4-7pm (Thursday Mid-June)
06/17/2022 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm Start
06/18/2022 Groton Triathlon
-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
10/01/2022 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/07/2022 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
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 Monday:

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 328,000,000

Powerball

11-13-18-30-37, Powerball: 16, Power Play: 3

(eleven, thirteen, eighteen, thirty, thirty-seven; Powerball: sixteen; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$365,000,000

Abortion ruling prompts variety of reactions from states

By The Associated Press undefined

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 decision that had provided a constitutional right to abortion. The ruling is expected to lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states, although the timing of those laws taking effect varies.

Some Republican-led states will ban or severely limit abortion immediately, while other restrictions will take effect later. At least one state, Texas, is waiting until after the Supreme Court issues its formal judgment in the case, which is separate from the opinion issued Friday and could take about a month.

In anticipation of the decision, several states led by Democrats have taken steps to protect abortion access. The decision also sets up the potential for legal fights between the states over whether providers and those who help women obtain abortions can be sued or prosecuted.

Here is an overview of abortion legislation and the expected impact of the court's decision in every state.

ALABAMA

Political control: Alabama has a Republican-controlled legislature and a Republican governor who want to ban or restrict access to abortions.

Background: In 2019, Alabama lawmakers approved what was then the most stringent abortion ban in the country, making it a felony to perform an abortion at any stage of pregnancy with no exceptions for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. The only exception would be when the woman's health was at serious risk. A federal judge issued an injunction, under the precedent of *Roe v. Wade*, blocking the state from enforcing the law. In 2018, voters agreed to amend the Alabama Constitution to say the state recognizes the "rights of unborn children" and "does not protect the right to an abortion or require the funding of abortion." A 1951 law made it a crime, punishable by up to 12 months in prison, to induce an abortion, unless it is done to preserve the life or health of the mother.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Abortions became almost entirely illegal in Alabama on Friday. A 2019 state abortion ban took effect making it a felony to perform an abortion at any stage of pregnancy, with no exceptions for pregnancies caused by rape or incest. All three clinics stopped providing abortions Friday morning under fear of prosecution under the 1951 state law. U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson hours later granted Alabama's request to lift an injunction and allow the state to enforce the 2019 abortion ban. Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall said it is now a felony to provide an abortion in Alabama beyond the one exception allowed in the 2019 law, which is for the sake of the mother's health. Doctors who violate the law could face up to 99 years in prison. Marshall said the state would also move to lift other injunctions that blocked previous abortion restrictions, including a requirement for doctors who perform abortions to have hospital admitting privileges.

What's next: Some Republican lawmakers have said they would like to see the state replace the 2019 ban with a slightly less stringent bill that would allow exceptions in cases of rape or incest. Proponents

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said the 2019 ban was deliberately strict in the hopes of sparking a court challenge to Roe.

ALASKA

Political control: Republicans currently hold a majority of seats in the state Legislature, but the House is controlled by a bipartisan coalition composed largely of Democrats. Fifty-nine of the Legislature's 60 seats are up for election this year. Gov. Mike Dunleavy, a Republican who believes life begins at conception, is seeking reelection.

Background: The Alaska Supreme Court has interpreted the right to privacy in the state constitution as encompassing abortion rights.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The U.S. Supreme Court's decision is not expected to immediately affect abortion rights in Alaska, given the existing precedent in the state.

What's next: Voters in the fall will be asked if they want to hold a constitutional convention, a question that comes up every 10 years. Many conservatives who want to overhaul how judges are selected and do away with the interpretation that the constitution's right to privacy clause allows for abortion rights see an opportunity in pushing for a convention. Recent efforts to advance a constitutional amendment through the Legislature have been unsuccessful.

ARIZONA

Political control: Both legislative chambers are controlled by Republicans, who regularly pass abortion restrictions that for the past eight sessions have been quickly signed by Republican Gov. Doug Ducey, an abortion opponent.

Background: Arizona law allows abortion through about 22 weeks, but the Legislature passed a 15-week abortion ban in March mirroring the Mississippi law that was contested before the U.S. Supreme Court. It will take effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, which it did Saturday. Current restrictions include bans on abortions because of gender and a 2021 law that makes it a felony for a doctor to terminate a pregnancy because the child has a survivable genetic abnormality. Arizona also has a pre-statehood law still on the books that would ban all abortions, although it has not been enforced since Roe was decided.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Ducey has argued in media interviews that the law he signed in late March takes precedence over the total ban that remains on the books. But the law he signed specifically says it does not overrule the total abortion ban in place for more than 100 years. Ducey is term-limited and leaves office in January. Abortion providers across the state stopped all procedures after the court ruled Friday because of concerns that the pre-Roe ban could put doctors, nurses and other providers at risk of prosecution.

What's next: Abortion-rights supporters in Arizona have launched a long-shot bid to enshrine the right to abortion in the state constitution. Rolled out weeks after the draft U.S. Supreme Court decision showing Roe could be overturned was leaked, backers must collect more than 356,000 signatures by July 7 to get the initiative on the November ballot. Voters would then be able to decide.

ARKANSAS

Political control: Arkansas' legislature is controlled by Republicans who have supported dozens of abortion bans and restrictions in recent years. Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson also has supported bans on abortion with some exceptions. He's term-limited and leaves office in January. Republican nominee Sarah Sanders, press secretary to former President Donald Trump, is widely favored in the November election to succeed him.

Background: Arkansas already had a law banning most abortions 20 weeks into a woman's pregnancy, with exceptions for rape, incest and the life of the mother. The state has several other bans that have been struck down or blocked by courts in recent years, including an outright abortion ban enacted last year that doesn't include rape or incest exceptions. That ban has been blocked by a federal judge, and the state has appealed.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Arkansas has a law it enacted in 2019 that bans nearly all abortions now

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that Roe is overturned. That ban, along with the outright ban that's been blocked by a federal judge, only allows exceptions to protect the life of the mother in a medical emergency. Hutchinson has said he thinks bans should include rape and incest exceptions, but he has not called on the Legislature to add those to either of the bans.

What's next: Hours after Friday's ruling, Attorney General Leslie Rutledge signed certification that Roe had been overturned. That certification allows the state's "trigger ban" to take effect immediately. The only exception in that ban is to protect the life of the mother in a medical emergency. The Legislature isn't scheduled to meet until January, but Hutchinson is considering calling a special session to take up tax relief proposals. The Republican governor said Friday he does not plan on asking lawmakers to consider adding rape and incest exceptions to the state's ban.

CALIFORNIA

Political control: Democrats who support access to abortion control all statewide elected offices and have large majorities in the state Legislature.

Background: California outlawed abortion in 1850, except when the life of the mother was in danger. The law changed in 1967 to include abortions in the case of rape, incest or if a woman's mental health were in danger. In 1969, the California Supreme Court declared the state's original abortion law to be unconstitutional but left the 1967 law in place. In 1972, California voters added a "right to privacy" to the state constitution. Since then, the state Supreme Court has interpreted that "right to privacy" as a right to access abortion, allow minors to get an abortion without their parents' permission and use public funding for abortions in the state's Medicaid program. California now requires private health insurance plans to cover abortions and does not allow them to charge things such as co-pays or deductibles for the procedure.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Abortion will remain legal in California prior to the viability of a fetus. Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has vowed to make California a sanctuary for women who live in other states where abortion is outlawed or severely restricted. The number of women who travel to the state for abortions is expected to rise significantly.

What's next: The state Legislature is considering 13 bills that would strengthen or expand access to abortion. The bills are based on a report from the Future of Abortion Council, which Newsom formed last year to study reproductive rights in California. They include proposals that would help pay for women from other states to come to California for abortions, ban enforcement of out-of-state civil judgments on California abortion providers and volunteers, and increase the number of people who can offer abortions by authorizing some nurse practitioners to perform the procedure without the supervision of a doctor. Lawmakers also plan to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot in November that would explicitly guarantee the right to an abortion and contraceptives.

COLORADO

Political control: The Democrats who control the Colorado Legislature support access to abortion, as does the state's Democratic governor.

Background: A 1967 state law legalized abortion up to 16 weeks of pregnancy. Abortion has been accessible ever since, despite repeated legislative attempts and ballot initiatives to restrict or abolish the procedure. Colorado voters have consistently rejected such initiatives, the latest in 2020 that would have banned abortion during the third trimester of pregnancy. In 2022, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis signed a law placing the right to abortion in state statute. The law guarantees access to reproductive care before and after pregnancy and bans local governments from imposing their own restrictions. It also declares that fertilized eggs, embryos and fetuses have no independent rights. Abortion rights advocates plan a 2024 ballot initiative to add abortion rights to the state constitution and repeal a 1980s constitutional amendment that bans public funding for abortion.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The decision won't have any immediate impact on Colorado law -- but providers are preparing for a surge of out-of-state patients. Democratic House Majority Leader Daneya

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Esgar says lawmakers must consider how to invest in a health care workforce to ensure Colorado has the capacity to meet that anticipated demand. Colorado's health department reports there were 11,580 abortions in the state in 2021; of those 14% were for non-residents. More than 900 of those non-residents were from Texas, Wyoming and Nebraska.

What's next: It's impossible to predict how many more patients from states surrounding Colorado will potentially seek care now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned. But the Texas law could induce more people to come. Oklahoma now has an early pregnancy abortion ban; Utah and Wyoming have trigger laws banning abortion now Roe is overturned; the Kansas Constitution protects abortion rights, but Republican lawmakers placed on an August primary ballot an initiative to overturn it.

CONNECTICUT

Political control: Democrats who control the Connecticut General Assembly support access to abortion, as does the state's Democratic governor.

Background: Connecticut passed a law in 1990 giving women the legal right to abortion. Having passed with strong bipartisan support, it was lauded at the time for being a rare compromise between abortion rights advocates and opponents. It affirmed a woman's unqualified right to an abortion "prior to viability of the fetus," as well as later-term abortions "necessary to preserve the life and health of the pregnant woman." It also repealed state laws predating Roe v. Wade that had made it a felony to have an abortion or to perform one and required that patients under 16 receive counseling about their options. This year, Gov. Ned Lamont signed legislation to protect medical providers and patients from out-of-state legal actions. The same law allows advanced practice registered nurses, nurse-midwives or physician assistants to perform aspiration abortions in the first 12 weeks of a pregnancy.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Connecticut Attorney General William Tong, a Democrat, has vowed to challenge any attempt to nullify Connecticut's abortion rights law. "Let's not mince words. They will come for us," Tong warned abortion rights supporters during a recent news conference. "We will fight that effort tooth-and-nail. Any court, any place, Connecticut will be there and will fight." The state is already involved in major abortion cases across the country. And while Connecticut is surrounded by mostly pro-abortion states, it's still bracing for out-of-state patients seeking abortions now that Roe has been overturned.

What's next: Connecticut's new law protecting abortion providers from other states' bans takes effect on July 1. It creates a legal cause of action for providers and others sued in another state, enabling them to recover certain legal costs. It also limits the governor's discretion to extradite someone accused of performing an abortion, as well as participation by Connecticut courts and agencies in those lawsuits. There's discussion of possibly amending the state's constitution to enshrine the right to abortion, making it more difficult to overturn, but that would be a multi-year process.

DELAWARE

Political control: Democrats control the governor's office and both chambers of the legislature in Delaware and have taken several steps to ensure access to abortion.

Background: In 2017, Delaware became the first state following the election of President Donald Trump to codify the right to an abortion. A bill signed by Gov. John Carney, a Catholic, guarantees the unfettered right to an abortion before a fetus is deemed "viable." The law defines viability as the point in a pregnancy when, in a physician's "good faith medical judgment," there is a reasonable likelihood that the fetus can survive outside the uterus without the application of extraordinary medical measures. The law also allows abortion after fetal viability if, in a doctor's "good faith medical judgment," abortion is necessary for the protection of the woman's life or health, or if there is a reasonable likelihood that the fetus cannot survive without extraordinary medical measures. The law eliminated existing code restrictions on abortions, much of which had already been declared unenforceable by Delaware's attorney general in 1973 following the Supreme Court rulings in Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton. In April of this year, Carney signed a bill allowing physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses to prescribe abortion-inducing medications

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including mifepristone and misoprostol.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: "In Delaware, the privacy protections of Roe v. Wade are codified in state law, guaranteeing residents have access to legal abortion services even if Roe were to be undone at the federal level," Democratic lawmakers noted earlier this month in unveiling legislation further broadening access to abortions. The bill, which is likely to pass before the end of June, allows physician assistants, certified nurse practitioners and nurse midwives to perform abortions before viability. It also includes various legal protections for abortion providers and patients, including out-of-state residents receiving abortions in Delaware. Those provisions include protections from civil actions in other states relating to the termination of a pregnancy, and protecting individuals from extradition to other states for criminal charges related to terminating a pregnancy.

What's next: According to state health officials, 2,042 abortions were performed in Delaware in 2019, with 1,765 involving Delaware residents and 277 involving nonresidents. Delaware is not likely to see a huge influx of women traveling from out of state to get abortions if Roe v. Wade is overturned, given that neighboring Maryland and New Jersey also have liberal abortion-access laws. In neighboring Pennsylvania, where Republicans control both chambers of the Legislature, future abortion access could hinge on the outcome of this year's gubernatorial contest.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Political control: The local government in the nation's capital is completely controlled by Democrats, with a Democratic mayor and the D.C. Council split between Democrats and nominal independent politicians, who are all, invariably, Democrats.

Background: Abortion is legal in the District of Columbia at all stages of pregnancy, a status that was upheld in the 1971 Supreme Court case *United States v. Vuitch*. However, the U.S. Congress has oversight power over D.C. laws and Congress has already banned the city from using local funds to pay for abortions for women on Medicaid.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Elected officials in Washington, D.C., fear Congress could move to restrict abortion access, particularly if Republicans recapture the House of Representatives in midterm elections later this year. President Joe Biden could theoretically veto such a move, but that protection is subject to political calculations and is not guaranteed.

What's next: Local officials have pledged defiance against any sort of Congressional move to restrict local abortion access. The D.C. Council is considering legislation that would declare Washington, D.C., a "sanctuary city" for those coming from states where abortion is banned. According to federal data, most of the women getting abortions in Washington already are coming from out of state. Those numbers could increase, particularly if new Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin moves to restrict abortion access in neighboring Virginia.

FLORIDA

Political control: Republicans control both chambers of the Florida Legislature and this year passed a ban on abortions after 15 weeks, which was signed into law by the state's Republican governor.

Background: Abortion was legal in Florida until the 24th week of pregnancy, though lawmakers have been tightening access in recent years with bills requiring a one-day waiting period and requiring parents of a pregnant minor to be notified before an abortion can be provided. This year, in anticipation of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade, the Legislature passed a ban on abortions after the 15th week, except to save the mother's life, prevent serious injury or if the fetus has a fatal abnormality. It does not allow for exemptions in cases where pregnancies were caused by rape or incest. Gov. Ron DeSantis called the legislation "the most significant protections for life that have been enacted in this state in a generation."

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The decision places Florida's 15-week ban on firm legal ground, at least under federal law. However, the legislation is already being challenged in state court on arguments that

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it violates a guarantee of the right to privacy under the state constitution.

What's next: Florida's 15-week ban goes into effect on July 1, but challenges to that legislation are pending. Though only about 2% of Florida's abortions take place after 15th week, abortion rights advocates have expressed concern over declining access to the procedure not only for Floridians but for residents from nearby Southern states where restrictions have historically been stricter than in Florida.

GEORGIA

Political control: Georgia has a Republican legislature and governor who support abortion restrictions, but all are up for election this November. Republicans are likely to retain legislative control, but there's a possibility a Democrat could become governor.

Background: Georgia lawmakers in 2019 passed a law by one vote that would ban most abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy, when fetal cardiac activity can be detected. The measure is unlike other so-called "heartbeat" bills in that it also contains language designating a fetus as a person for certain state-law purposes such as income tax deductions and child support. A federal judge quickly put the law on hold, saying it was unconstitutional, and the state appealed to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The 11th Circuit said it would wait to rule on the appeal pending a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in the Mississippi case.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The day the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, Georgia's attorney general asked the 11th Circuit to reverse the lower court's ruling and allow the state's abortion law to take effect. That same day, the 11th Circuit directed the parties to file briefs within three weeks addressing what effect, if any, the Supreme Court decision has on the Georgia appeal. If the law takes effect, it would ban the large majority of abortions that currently take place in Georgia – about 87%, according to providers. The change could happen in the middle of tightly contested races in Georgia for governor and U.S. Senate. Democratic U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock and challenger for governor Stacey Abrams say they want to secure abortion rights. Republican Senate challenger Herschel Walker and incumbent Republican Gov. Brian Kemp support restrictions.

What's next: Some Republican lawmakers and candidates want Georgia to go further and ban abortion entirely, but Kemp is unlikely to call a special session before this November's general election. Lawmakers are likely to consider further action when they return for their annual session in January. The Legislature or courts will have to sort out whether the provisions designating a fetus as a person are workable.

HAWAII

Political control: Hawaii's governor is a Democrat and Democrats control more than 90% of the seats in the state House and Senate.

Background: Hawaii legalized abortion in 1970, when it became the first state in the nation to allow the procedure at a woman's request. The state allows abortion until a fetus would be viable outside the womb. After that, it's legal if a patient's life or health is in danger. For many years, only licensed physicians could perform the procedure. Last year, the state enacted a law allowing advanced practice care nurses to carry out in-clinic abortions during the first trimester. This helps women on more rural islands who have been flying to Honolulu to obtain abortions because of doctor shortages in their communities. The law allows the nurses to prescribe medication to end a pregnancy and to perform aspiration abortion, a type of minor surgery during which a vacuum is used to empty a woman's uterus.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Existing Hawaii law allows abortions, but Gary Yamashiroya, a spokesperson for the state attorney general's office, has said the attorney general was carefully considering measures Hawaii might take to protect and strengthen reproductive rights if *Roe* ended. "No matter the outcome, our state remains committed to reproductive freedom and choice," he said.

What's next: Political support for abortion rights is strong. Anti-abortion bills are rarely heard at the state Legislature. When they have been, they haven't made it out of committee. Gov. David Ige issued a statement supporting abortion rights when the Supreme Court's draft opinion overturning *Roe* leaked. "No matter what the Supreme Court decides, I will fight to ensure a woman's right to choose in the State

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of Hawaii," he said. The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women earlier this month said 72% of the state Senate and 53% of state House members signed a pledge supporting abortion rights.

IDAHO

Political control: Republicans hold super-majorities in the House and Senate and oppose access to abortion, as does the state's Republican governor.

Background: Following the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, Idaho passed a law generally allowing abortions in the first and second trimester up to viability at about 23 to 24 weeks. The law allows abortions after viability only to protect the mother's life or in cases of nonviable fetuses. This year, lawmakers passed a Texas-style ban prohibiting abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy and authorizing family members to sue medical providers for performing an abortion. That law is on hold following a challenge by Planned Parenthood. The Idaho Supreme Court is scheduled to hear arguments in August.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: It triggers a 2020 Idaho law banning all abortions except in cases of reported rape or incest, or to protect the mother's life, to take effect in 30 days. Under the law, the person performing the abortion could face a felony prosecution punishable by up to five years in prison. In cases of rape or incest, the law requires pregnant women to file a police report and provide a copy of the report to the provider prior to an abortion. If the Idaho Supreme Court upholds the state's Texas-style abortion ban and Roe v. Wade is tossed aside, a medical provider who performs an abortion in Idaho could face a lawsuit and criminal charges.

What's Next: Pregnant women seeking abortions will have to travel out of state; the nearest abortion providers would be in Washington, Oregon, Nevada and Colorado. Planned Parenthood is renting space in the town of Ontario on the Idaho-Oregon border and says it's preparing for an influx of patients seeking abortions. Some Republican lawmakers in Idaho might propose new legislation in January to outlaw abortion pills and emergency contraception.

ILLINOIS

Political control: Illinois is overwhelmingly Democratic with laws providing greater access to abortion than most states. Democrats hold veto-proof supermajorities in the House and Senate, and the Democratic first-term governor seeking reelection this year, J.B. Pritzker, has promoted peaceful street protests to protect the constitutional right to an abortion.

Background: Abortion is legal in Illinois and can only be restricted after the point of viability, when a fetus is considered able to survive outside the womb. Medical science determines viability at 24 to 26 weeks, but the Illinois law does not specify a timeframe, saying a medical professional can determine viability in each case. Abortions are also allowed after viability to protect the patient's life or health.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: It won't change access to abortion in Illinois. After the Roe v. Wade decision in 1973, the Illinois Abortion Act of 1975 legalized abortion but enacted a "trigger law" that would reinstate the ban if Roe were overturned. That trigger law was repealed in 2017 in legislation that also required Medicaid and state employees' group health insurance to cover abortions. The 2019 Reproductive Health Act replaced the 1975 law, large parts of which were never enforced because they were found to be unconstitutional.

What's next: Like other states providing access to abortions, Illinois has seen a steady influx of patients crossing the state line for abortions in recent months and those numbers are expected to increase. Planned Parenthood of Illinois says it expects to handle an additional 20,000 to 30,000 patients in Illinois in the first year following the reversal of Roe.

INDIANA

Political control: Indiana has a Republican-dominated Legislature and a Republican governor in favor of restricting abortion access.

Background: Abortion in Indiana is legal up to about 20 weeks, with some provisions for medical emer-

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gencies. Before an abortion, patients must undergo an 18-hour waiting period. Medical providers must tell patients about the risks involved in abortion and must say the fetus can feel pain around 20 weeks, which is disputed. Providers must report complications related to abortion; failure to report can result in a misdemeanor, 180 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine. Federal courts have blocked several restrictions in Indiana, including an attempt to ban a common second-trimester abortion procedure and a law that would have required doctors to tell pregnant women about a disputed treatment to potentially stop a drug-induced abortion.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: No immediate changes are expected, but legislators unwilling to wait until the 2023 session could ask Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb to call a special session this summer to start modifying the state's abortion laws.

What's next: Republican legislative leaders said Friday they expected lawmakers to act on tightening Indiana's abortion laws during a special legislative session starting July 6, but gave no details about what restrictions would be considered. Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb earlier this week called the Legislature into a special session to take up a tax refund proposal, but state law allows legislators to consider any subject.

IOWA

Political control: Iowa's legislature is controlled by Republicans who want to ban or restrict abortion access and a Republican governor who agrees and is up for reelection this year.

Background: Iowa allows most abortions until the 20th week of pregnancy, when they're banned except to save a patient's life or prevent a substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function. In 2018, the state Supreme Court declared access to abortion a "fundamental" right under the state constitution, granting stronger protections to abortion rights than the U.S. Constitution. The state's high court, now with a conservative majority, overturned that decision June 17, thus allowing a state law requiring a 24-hour waiting period to go into effect immediately. That requirement is being challenged in district court.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Nothing is expected to change immediately in Iowa. The GOP-controlled Legislature has been working to get an amendment on the ballot in 2024 that would declare the state constitution does not grant a right to abortion but, with Roe overturned, Iowa lawmakers can ban abortion without completing that lengthy process.

What's next: Now that the Iowa Supreme Court has struck down its 2018 ruling, the state Legislature can convene a special session this summer and pass abortion restrictions. Republicans could still move to get the constitutional amendment on a public ballot in 2024.

KANSAS

Political control: Kansas has a legislature controlled by Republicans who want to ban or restrict access to abortions but a Democratic governor who supports access and is up for re-election this year.

Background: Under current law, Kansas does not ban most abortions until the 22nd week of pregnancy, when they're allowed only to save a patient's life or to prevent "a substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function." The state Supreme Court in 2019 declared that access to abortion is a "fundamental" right under the state constitution, granting stronger protections to abortion rights than the U.S. Constitution does currently. State law, however, doesn't allow providers to dispense abortion medications through telemedicine consultations.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Nothing will change immediately in Kansas. The state Supreme Court blocked enforcement of a 2015 legislative ban on a common second-trimester procedure, and abortion opponents fear a host of other rules could fall to legal challenges in the near future. The GOP-controlled Legislature responded by putting a constitutional amendment on the ballot during the Aug. 2 primary, when turnout is expected to be much lower than in a general election and will likely see a higher proportion of Republicans voting. The amendment would declare that the state constitution does not grant a right to abortion. It would allow lawmakers to restrict abortion as much as the federal courts will allow.

What's next: If voters approve the amendment, the Legislature would still have to approve the new

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restrictions, and lawmakers are out of session until January 2023. They can call themselves in to special session with two-thirds majorities, but they're likely to wait until after voters decide in the November general election whether to give Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly a second term.

KENTUCKY

Political control: Republicans have a supermajority in the Kentucky Legislature and have been restricting abortion rights since the 2016 election over the vetoes of Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear, who supports abortion rights and will seek a second term in 2023.

Background: Kentucky bans abortions after 20 weeks, but all abortion services were temporarily halted in April after the legislature imposed new restrictions and reporting requirements on the state's two abortion clinics. The clinics, both in Louisville, said they suspended abortions because state officials hadn't written guidelines on how to comply with the new law. Noncompliance could result in stiff fines, felony penalties and revocation of physician and facility licenses. Abortions resumed after a federal judge temporarily blocked key parts of the law, including a provision banning abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Abortion services in Kentucky immediately became illegal under a "trigger law" enacted in 2019. The measure contains a narrow exception allowing abortion to prevent the death or permanent injury of a pregnant woman. Kentuckians will be able to vote this November on a proposed amendment declaring there is no right to an abortion in the state constitution.

What's next: Abortion-rights activists say the suspension of abortion services in April foreshadowed what would happen in Kentucky and other Republican-leaning states if *Roe v. Wade* was overturned. It likely ends several legal challenges pending against other Kentucky abortion laws including a 2018 measure that abortion-rights supporters say would effectively ban a standard abortion method in the second trimester of pregnancy. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in March that Kentucky's Republican attorney general, Daniel Cameron, can defend the measure that was struck down by lower courts.

LOUISIANA

Political control: Louisiana's legislature is controlled by Republicans who want to ban or restrict abortion access. Its Democratic and Catholic governor also opposes abortions, though he supports exceptions for victims of rape or incest.

Background: Voters approved a constitutional amendment in 2020 stating that "a right to abortion and the funding of abortion shall not be found in the Louisiana Constitution." Of the about 2 million people who voted, 62% approved the amendment. Abortion had been legal in Louisiana through the 19th week of pregnancy. After that, it was legal only if the fetus would die anyway or if continuing the pregnancy would threaten the mother's life or health.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Louisiana has a trigger law that immediately outlaws abortions. There is no exception for rape or incest. The only exception is if there is substantial risk of death or impairment to the woman. Earlier this week, Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, signed a bill updating various aspects of the law and subjecting abortion providers to up to 10 years in prison and fines up to \$100,000. Edwards' office said the bill allows the use of emergency contraception "for victims of rape and incest prior to when a pregnancy can be clinically diagnosed."

Edwards signed another bill that would require the doctor to certify that a drug used for abortion was being prescribed for another medical reason. The bill makes it illegal to deliver abortion medication to a state resident "by mail-order, courier, or as a result of a sale made via the internet."

What's next: Louisiana's three abortion clinics — in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport — were no longer providing abortions to patients as of Friday and instead are recommending pregnant patients seeking the procedure to go to states where it remains legal.

MAINE

Political control: Both chambers of the Maine Legislature, which has adjourned, are controlled by Demo-

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crats. Democratic Gov. Janet Mills has vowed to protect the right to an abortion, saying she will “fight with everything I have to protect reproductive rights.”

Background: A Republican governor in 1993 signed a Maine law affirming the right to abortion before a fetus is viable. After that, abortion is only allowed if the life or health of the mother is at risk, or if the pregnancy is no longer viable. In 2019, lawmakers eliminated a physician-only rule and Mills signed it into law, allowing nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other medical professionals to perform abortions.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Nothing will change in Maine. Any attempt to restrict abortions when lawmakers reconvene next year would face fierce pushback. Abortion providers, meanwhile, said there could be an influx of patients seeking abortions from states that outlaw the procedure.

What’s next: Any major changes are unlikely unless former Gov. Paul LePage, a Republican, unseats Mills and Republicans take control of both chambers of the Legislature in November. LePage, a Catholic who opposes abortion rights, has said it’s up to lawmakers to address the abortion issue as they see fit.

MARYLAND

Political control: Maryland’s legislature is controlled by Democrats who expanded abortion access this year by ending a restriction that only physicians can provide them and requiring most insurance plans to cover abortion care without cost. The legislature overrode Republican Gov. Larry Hogan’s veto of the bill in April.

Background: The right to abortion is protected in Maryland law. The state approved legislation in 1991 to protect abortion rights if the Supreme Court should ever restrict access. Voters approved the right in 1992 with 62% of the vote. Maryland law prohibits restrictions on abortion prior to viability. Maryland does not have a gestational limit. After viability, clinicians make the determination, based on clinical standard of care.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Nothing will change immediately in Maryland law.

What’s next: Maryland’s new law that will enable nurse practitioners, nurse midwives and physician assistants to provide abortions with training is set to take effect July 1. However, \$3.5 million in state funding to provide training isn’t mandated until fiscal year 2024. Hogan, who is term limited, has indicated he will not approve the money sooner. Some nurse practitioners, nurse midwives and physician assistants already have received training on medication abortion and will be able to provide those services starting next month.

MASSACHUSETTS

Political control: The Democrats who control the Massachusetts Legislature support access to abortion, as does the state’s Republican governor, although they differ on specific policies.

Background: Massachusetts once had a contentious relationship with abortion in part due to the powerful influence of the Catholic Church, which opposes abortion. In recent years, that influence has waned and Massachusetts has become a strong supporter of abortion rights. In 2018, in anticipation of the conservative tilt on the U.S. Supreme Court, the state removed an 1845 abortion ban from its books that was not enforced. Two years later, Democratic state lawmakers clashed with Republican Gov. Charlie Baker — who says he supports abortion rights — over an effort to codify abortion rights into state law, allow abortions after 24 weeks of pregnancy in cases where the child would not survive after birth, and lower from 18 to 16 the age at which women could seek an abortion without consent from a parent or guardian. Lawmakers passed the bill — dubbed the Roe Act — over Baker’s veto.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Baker has vowed to fight to keep abortion legal in Massachusetts, but it is his last year in office. Both Democratic candidates for governor — state Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz and Attorney General Maura Healey — support abortion rights. Republican candidate Geoff Diehl said he believes in “the need to protect human life wherever and whenever possible.” Fellow GOP candidate Chris Doughty said he would “not seek any changes to our state’s abortion laws.”

What’s next: There is little chance Massachusetts will restrict abortion rights. Baker signed an executive order Friday barring state agencies from assisting another state’s investigation into people or businesses for receiving or delivering reproductive health services that are legal in Massachusetts. The state also won’t cooperate with extradition requests from states pursuing criminal charges against such individuals. As of

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2017, there were 47 facilities providing abortion in Massachusetts, according to the Guttmacher Institute, which supports abortion rights. With Roe v. Wade overturned, it's unclear how many people will travel there from states that ban or restrict abortion.

MICHIGAN

Political control: Both chambers of Michigan's legislature are controlled by Republicans who want to ban or restrict abortion access, but the state's Democratic governor supports access.

Background: A dormant 1931 law bans nearly all abortions in Michigan but it hasn't been enforced since Roe v. Wade. The law made it a felony to use an instrument or administer any substance with the intent to abort a fetus unless necessary to preserve the woman's life. It has no exceptions in cases of rape and incest. Anticipating that Roe could be overturned, Planned Parenthood of Michigan filed a lawsuit challenging Michigan's ban. A state judge suspended the law in May, saying it violates the state's constitution. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Attorney General Dana Nessel, both Democrats, hailed the decision.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The injunction granted in the Planned Parenthood case ensures that abortion does not immediately become illegal. Planned Parenthood of Michigan and other supporters hope the injunction indicates abortion rights in the state will be preserved. But in a statement to The Associated Press, Nessel's office said "given the ongoing lawsuits, we cannot speculate what the state of abortion rights will be in Michigan" after Roe.

What's next: Whitmer also filed suit asking the state's Supreme Court to declare the 91-year-old law unconstitutional. It has not acted yet. Michigan abortion rights supporters hope to put the issue on ballots this fall. Their proposed constitutional amendment would affirm the right to make pregnancy-related decisions without interference, including about abortion and other reproductive services such as birth control. The Reproductive Freedom for All committee needs to collect about 425,000 valid voter signatures by July 11 to make the November ballot. The measure would become law if voters approved it. The issue also is expected to shape statewide elections — Whitmer and Nessel are both up for reelection in the fall — and legislative races.

MINNESOTA

Political control: The Minnesota Legislature is divided; Anti-abortion Republicans control the Senate and Democrats have the House, but the majorities are slim in both chambers, so control will be up for grabs in the November elections. Most legislative Democrats support abortion rights. Democratic Gov. Tim Walz has said "no abortion ban will ever become law" while he's governor. But he faces a challenge this year from Republican Scott Jensen, who opposes abortion rights.

Background: Abortion is legal in Minnesota up to the point of fetal viability, around the 24th week of pregnancy. The state has some restrictions, including a 24-hour waiting period with state-mandated counseling, both parents generally must be notified prior to a minor getting an abortion, and only physicians can perform abortions.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Nothing will change immediately in Minnesota because the state Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that the state constitution protects abortion rights. If Republicans take control of both chambers, they could put a constitutional amendment on the ballot as soon as 2024 to reverse that ruling, but it's not clear yet if they would take that path. Minnesota governors can't block constitutional amendments with vetoes. But amendments are hard to enact because they require the backing of most of the citizens voting in that election, not just those voting on the amendment. Leaving the ballot blank counts as a "no."

What's next: Providers are preparing for a surge in women coming from other states to get abortions. Sarah Stoesz, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood North Central States, said before the ruling that her organization was "fortifying" its delivery systems, including telemedicine. Dr. Sarah Traxler, the group's medical director, has said demand in Minnesota is expected to rise by up to 25%.

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MISSISSIPPI

Political control: Republican Gov. Tate Reeves and leaders of the Republican-controlled Mississippi Legislature have been working for years to chip away at abortion access.

Background: Mississippi already had a law banning most abortions at 20 weeks, although the state's lone abortion clinic offered the procedure only through 16 weeks. The state tried to enact a law in 2018 to ban most abortions after 15 weeks. That law is the basis for the case that the Supreme Court has now used to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. A federal district judge blocked Mississippi's 15-week law from taking effect in 2018, and an appeals court agreed. The Supreme Court agreed to take the case in 2021. Justices heard arguments in December, with the Mississippi attorney general's office saying the court should overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Mississippi has one abortion clinic, and it stops offering abortions at 16 weeks. Reeves was lieutenant governor in 2018, when Mississippi tried to enact the 15-week ban, and in 2019, when the state tried to enact a six-week ban. Mississippi law does not allow providers to dispense abortion medications through telemedicine consultations.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Mississippi's only abortion clinic, Jackson Women's Health Organization, is expected to close by early July unless a judge blocks a trigger law. The clinic filed a lawsuit Monday challenging the 2007 law that bans most abortions if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned. That law is set to take effect July 7. Abortions still would be allowed if the woman's life is endangered by the pregnancy or if the pregnancy was caused by a rape that was reported to law enforcement. Any person who knowingly performs or attempts to induce an abortion, except the pregnant woman, could be punished by up to 10 years in prison.

What's next: Mississippi's 2007 law says the state attorney general must publish a notice in a state administrative bulletin after the U.S. Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*. Mississippi's ban on most abortions will take effect 10 days after that publication.

MISSOURI

Political control: Both GOP Gov. Mike Parson and the Republican-led Legislature support laws against abortion.

Background: Missouri law previously allowed abortions up until 22 weeks of pregnancy. But a 2019 state law banned abortions "except in cases of medical emergency," contingent upon the U.S. Supreme Court overturning its 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. Under that Missouri law, performing an illegal abortion is a felony punishable by 5 to 15 years in prison, though women receiving abortions cannot be prosecuted.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The 2019 law contained a provision making it effective upon notification by the attorney general, governor or Legislature that the U.S. Supreme Court had overruled *Roe v. Wade*. Moments after Friday's Supreme Court decision, Attorney General Eric Schmitt and Gov. Mike Parson filed the necessary paperwork for Missouri's law to kick in. State statutes were subsequently updated online Friday saying the abortion-ban law had taken effect.

What's next: Some Missouri residents wanting abortions are likely to travel to neighboring states, including Illinois and Kansas. A new Illinois logistics center near St. Louis helps women from out of state find travel, lodging and childcare if they need help getting to the area for an abortion, and it connects them with funding sources. The Kansas Supreme Court in 2019 declared that access to abortion is a "fundamental" right under the state constitution. Even without the ban in Missouri, the number of Missouri patients seeking abortions in Kansas has gone up in recent years, increasing about 8% from 2020 to 2021.

MONTANA

Political control: The Republicans who control the Montana Legislature and Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte want to limit access to abortion.

Background: Abortion used to be legal in Montana up until viability, or about 24 weeks of pregnancy, but the state Legislature passed a bill in 2021 to reduce that to 20 weeks, arguing that is when the fetus can feel pain. That law, along with one that requires chemical abortions to be done with in-person medical

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supervision, are being challenged in court. A state judge temporarily blocked enforcement in October 2021 while the challenges move through the courts. The state has asked the Montana Supreme Court to vacate that injunction and overturn a 1999 Montana Supreme Court opinion that found the state's constitutional right to privacy guarantees a woman's access to abortion care.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The effect is unclear because of the unresolved legal challenges to the 2021 state legislation. Montana does not have an abortion ban that was triggered when *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, but the Legislature could seek to further restrict access in the next session.

What's next: The Montana Supreme Court will issue a decision on the preliminary injunction. The Montana Legislature also passed a referendum to ask voters this November whether they support a state law to require abortion providers to give lifesaving treatment to a fetus that is born alive after a botched abortion. Opponents argue federal law already offers those protections.

NEBRASKA

Political control: Nebraska has an officially nonpartisan legislature with a Republican majority, but not a super-majority that would let the party unilaterally pass an abortion ban. Democrats appear to have enough votes to block such a bill, but just one defector could swing the vote. Nebraska's Republican governor vehemently opposes abortion.

Background: Nebraska allows most abortions until the 22nd week of pregnancy, although a few small towns have voted to outlaw the procedure within their borders. The state requires doctors to be physically present when patients take the first of two drugs that are used in medication abortions. Lawmakers have rejected attempts to allow abortion medications to be administered remotely, which would provide easier abortion access in rural areas.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: A ruling that lets states set their own abortion laws will trigger an immediate push by Nebraska conservatives to ban the procedure, but it's not clear whether they could do this year. Unlike other conservative states, Nebraska doesn't have a trigger law that automatically outlaws abortion. Gov. Pete Ricketts and other top Republicans have said they'll seek a special legislative session, but it's not clear whether they have enough votes to pass anything.

What's next: If Ricketts calls a special session, attention will likely shift to state Sen. Justin Wayne, an Omaha Democrat who has declined to specify where he stands on abortion. Wayne was notably absent from a vote on the issue this year; his support would give Republicans the super-majority they need to enact a ban. He has struck deals with senators from both parties in the past. If a proposed abortion ban fails during a special session or if no special session is called, the issue will likely become a factor in the November election.

NEVADA

Political control: Nevada's governor and state attorney general are Democrats who are up for reelection this year. Democrats control the state Senate and Assembly.

Background: Nevada voters enshrined the right to abortion in the state constitution in 1990. The law says a pregnancy can be terminated during the first 24 weeks, and after that to preserve the life or health of the pregnant person. It would take another statewide vote to change or repeal the law. Most Republican candidates for Congress, governor, state attorney general and other statewide posts say they oppose abortions.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: "Here in Nevada, overturning *Roe* would not be felt immediately," state Attorney General Aaron Ford said in a position paper released after the draft U.S. Supreme Court opinion became public. Ford noted that a federal ban on abortion would supersede state law and said it would be naive not to recognize that some people want to ban abortions or make them more difficult to obtain. But he said his office will fight "attacks on abortion rights, rights to birth control access and rights for LGTBQ people." Gov. Steve Sisolak promised in a statement to "continue to protect reproductive freedom."

What's next: Anti-abortion advocates are not expected to focus on trying to repeal Nevada's abortion law.

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But they will seek laws affecting waiting periods, mandatory counseling or requiring parental notification or consent. Melissa Clement, executive director of Nevada Right to Life, said she believes there is strong support for parental involvement.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Political control: New Hampshire has a Republican governor and the GOP controls the 424-member Legislature. All face reelection this fall.

Background: Any abortion restrictions New Hampshire had on the books before Roe v. Wade were not enforced after the landmark 1973 ruling, and they were repealed altogether in 1997. The state had no restrictions until January, when a ban on abortion after 24 weeks of pregnancy was enacted. In June, an exemption was added for cases in which the fetus has been diagnosed with "abnormalities incompatible with life." Anticipating the Supreme Court action, Democrats this year tried unsuccessfully to enshrine abortion rights into state law and the state constitution. Gov. Chris Sununu calls himself pro-choice and says he is committed to upholding Roe v. Wade, but he also has boasted "I've done more on the pro-life issue than anyone."

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Nothing will change immediately in New Hampshire. The Legislature won't return until fall, when there will be a one-day session to take up vetoed bills, and it would take a two-thirds majority vote to introduce new legislation then.

What's next: The majority leader of the New Hampshire House has said the public should not expect Republicans in the Legislature to further tighten state abortion laws. But anti-abortion lawmakers who have filed bills in the past are expected to try again.

NEW JERSEY

Political control: Democrats control both houses of the state Legislature and the governorship. Gov. Phil Murphy started his second consecutive term this year.

Background: Murphy ran for reelection on the promise that he would sign legislation to enshrine abortion rights into state law, and he fulfilled that promise in January. The measure also guaranteed the right to contraception and the right to carry a pregnancy to term. It stopped short of requiring insurance coverage for abortions, something advocates had sought. Instead, it authorizes the state Banking and Insurance Department to study the issue and possibly adopt regulations if a need is discovered. Under Murphy's predecessor, Republican Chris Christie, state funds to women's clinics, including Planned Parenthood, were slashed. Murphy restored those and has been a strong supporter of abortion rights. New Jersey doesn't have any significant restrictions on abortion, such as parental consent or a mandatory waiting period.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Officials, including the governor, have said the end of Roe would not lead to any rollback of abortion services in the state. "Instead of hoping for the best, we prepared ourselves for the worst," Murphy said in May, addressing reports of a leaked draft of a Supreme Court ruling.

What's next: Murphy has proposed several abortion-related measures. On the Monday after the ruling, the Legislature began considering a pair of bills to expand abortion rights. One would allow the state to block extradition of someone facing a criminal charge in another state related to reproductive services obtained legally in New Jersey. Another clarifies that out-of-state residents may access abortion services in New Jersey, as well as allowing those facing liability judgments stemming from abortion services to countersue.

NEW MEXICO

Political control: The Democrats who control the New Mexico Legislature support access to abortion, as does the state's Democratic governor. Several conservative Democratic state senators who voted against the repeal of the abortion ban in 2019 were ousted from office in 2020 by more socially progressive primary challengers.

Background: In 2021, state lawmakers repealed a dormant 1969 statute that outlawed most abortion procedures as felonies, thus ensuring access to abortion even after the federal court rolled back guaran-

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tees. Albuquerque is home to one of only a few independent clinics in the country that perform abortions in the third trimester without conditions. An abortion clinic in Santa Teresa, New Mexico, is just a mile from the state line with Texas and caters to patients from El Paso, western Texas and Arizona.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: There will be no immediate change in New Mexico now that the high court has overturned *Roe v. Wade*. It is unclear if Democrats, who control the state Legislature, will pursue additional guarantees to abortion access when lawmakers convene in January. Possible avenues of legislative reform include enshrining abortion rights in the state constitution, which requires approval by voters. Abortion rights activists say the state's equal rights amendment could be harnessed to guide more public funding for abortion-related programs. Raúl Torrez, the district attorney in Albuquerque and the Democratic nominee for attorney general, is urging lawmakers to take further steps to protect access to abortions, including protections for women coming from other states. The state Republican Party said it's time to elect more anti-abortion candidates to the Legislature.

What's next: The state can expect to continue to see a steady influx of people seeking abortions from neighboring states with more restrictive abortion laws. It already hosts patients from Texas and Oklahoma where among the strictest abortion bans in the country were introduced this year.

NEW YORK

Political control: The Democrats who control the New York Legislature support access to abortion, as does the state's Democratic governor.

Background: Abortion has been legal in New York state since a 1970 law was passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature and signed by Republican Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller. The law allows abortions within the first 24 weeks of pregnancy or to preserve the mother's life. The 2019 Reproductive Health Act removed abortion from the state's criminal code, codified *Roe v. Wade* and allowed abortions after 24 weeks if a fetus isn't viable or to protect the mother's life or health. Lawmakers have passed laws extending legal protections for people seeking and providing abortions in New York.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: *Roe v. Wade* protections are enshrined in state law. New York is planning to give abortion providers \$35 million this year to expand services and boost security in anticipation of an influx of out-of-state people seeking abortions once any ruling comes down. It's unclear how many more people from neighboring states could travel to New York to receive abortion care. New York had 252 facilities providing abortions as of 2017, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research organization that supports abortion rights.

What's next: Planned Parenthood and civil liberty groups are urging lawmakers to start the process of passing a constitutional amendment protecting access to abortion care in case a future Legislature repeals the state law.

NORTH CAROLINA

Political control: Republicans hold majorities in the state House and Senate, but the party lacks the margins to defeat a veto by Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper, a strong abortion-rights supporter. Since 2017, Cooper has vetoed a "born-alive" abortion measure and a bill prohibiting abortion based on race or a Down syndrome diagnosis. He can't seek reelection in 2024 due to term limits.

Background: A 1973 North Carolina law that banned most abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy is currently unenforceable after federal judges struck it down as unconstitutional in 2019 and 2021. Instead, abortions can be performed until fetal viability. A state law approved in 2015 provides for post-viability abortions only in a "medical emergency," which means the woman would die or face a "serious risk" of substantial and irreversible physical impairment without the procedure.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Now that *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned, the 20-week ban could be restored. Legal experts say formal action would have to be taken to cancel the earlier court rulings striking it down. Republican legislative leaders late Friday asked state Attorney General Josh Stein, a Democrat and abortion rights supporter whose agency's lawyers defended the 20-week law, to act. Otherwise, they

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said they would seek to intervene.

What's next: Republican General Assembly leaders don't plan to consider additional abortion restrictions during the soon-to-end legislative session, meaning a likely intensification of electoral efforts to gain the five additional seats the GOP needs to reach veto-proof margins come 2023. Cooper and other Democrats already are making abortion rights a key campaign pitch. Abortion politics are also expected to figure in two state Supreme Court seat elections in November. Republicans would gain a majority on the court if they win at least one of them.

NORTH DAKOTA

Political control: North Dakota has a legislature dominated by Republicans who want to ban abortion, and the GOP governor had hoped to see *Roe v. Wade* wiped off the books in favor of state's rights.

Background: The state has passed some of the nation's strictest abortion laws, including one that would have banned abortions once a fetal heartbeat can be detected, which can happen before a woman knows she is pregnant. The law never took effect because the state's lone abortion clinic successfully challenged it in court. One failed Republican proposal would have charged abortion providers with murder with a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: North Dakota has a trigger law that will shut down the state's sole abortion clinic in Fargo after 30 days. That 2007 state law makes it a felony to perform an abortion unless necessary to prevent the pregnant woman's death or in cases of rape or incest. Violators could be punished with a five-year prison sentence and a \$10,000 fine.

What's next: The owner and operator of the Red River Women's Clinic in Fargo said she would explore all legal options to ensure abortion services are available in North Dakota. Should that fail, clinic leader Tammi Kromenaker plans to move across the river to Moorhead, Minnesota, where abortion has not been outlawed. Planned Parenthood says it can provide abortions in Moorhead until Kromenaker gets up and running.

OHIO

Political control: The Ohio Legislature is controlled by Republicans who support restricting or banning abortions, and the Republican governor backs those efforts. He is up for reelection this year against a former mayor who supports abortion rights.

Background: Before Friday's ruling, Ohio did not ban most abortions until the 22nd week of pregnancy; after that they're allowed only to save a patient's life or when their health is seriously compromised. But the state imposes a host of other restrictions, including parental consent for minors, a required ultrasound, and in-person counseling followed by a 24-hour waiting period. Abortions are prohibited for the reason of a fetal Down syndrome diagnosis. Ohio also limits the public funding of abortions to cases of rape, incest or endangerment of the patient's life. It limits public employees' abortion-related insurance coverage and coverage through health plans offered in the Affordable Care Act health exchange to those same scenarios. Clinics providing abortions must comply with a host of regulations.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: A ban on most abortions at the first detectable fetal heartbeat became the law in Ohio hours after the ruling. Enforcement of Ohio's 2019 "heartbeat" ban had been on hold for nearly three years under a federal court injunction. The state attorney general, Republican Dave Yost, asked for that to be dissolved because of the high court's ruling, and U.S. Judge Michael Barrett agreed hours later.

Two trigger bills are on hold in the Legislature, but a key legislative leader has said he anticipates needing to write new legislation after the decision is reversed that more carefully reflects the actual ruling. That all but certainly would not happen until lawmakers return to the capital after the November election.

What's next: Activists are considering how to help Ohioans get abortions elsewhere. They may also mount a statewide ballot initiative that would embed the right to an abortion in the state constitution, though that could not happen before next year. Abortion opponents are weighing strategies for imposing

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a statewide abortion ban.

OKLAHOMA

Political control: Republicans in Oklahoma have a supermajority in both chambers of the Legislature and a Republican governor up for reelection this year who has vowed to sign "every pro-life legislation that came across my desk."

Background: Abortion services were halted in Oklahoma in May after Gov. Kevin Stitt signed a bill that prohibits all abortions with few exceptions. The ban is enforced by civil lawsuits rather than criminal prosecution. Republican lawmakers have been pushing to restrict abortion in the state for decades, passing 81 different restrictions since *Roe v. Wade* was decided in 1973, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: It will have little practical effect given that abortions are no longer being provided in Oklahoma. Oklahoma also has a "trigger law" that outlawed abortion as soon as *Roe* was overturned.

What's next: Given the fierce opposition to abortion from the governor and Legislature, Oklahoma will continue to prohibit the practice if states are given the option to do so. Meanwhile, abortion providers who had been operating in the state are taking steps to help patients seek abortions out of state, including coordinating funding for these women and developing a referral network of therapists to help address complications before or after a woman receives an abortion.

OREGON

Political control: The Democrats who control the Oregon Legislature support access to abortion, as does the state's Democratic governor.

Background: The Oregon Legislature passed a bill legalizing abortion in 1969. In 2017, Gov. Kate Brown signed into law a bill expanding health care coverage for reproductive services, including abortions, to thousands of Oregonians, regardless of income, citizenship status or gender identity. Oregon does not have any major abortion restrictions and it is legal at all stages of pregnancy.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The Guttmacher Institute has estimated that Oregon will experience a 234% increase in women seeking abortions arriving from out of state, especially from Idaho. In March, Oregon lawmakers approved \$15 million to expand abortion availability and pay for abortions and support services such as travel and lodgings for residents and out-of-state patients.

What's next: Brown said after the draft Supreme Court decision was leaked that access to abortion is a fundamental right and that she will fight to ensure access to abortion continues to be protected by state law in Oregon. Democratic state lawmakers recently formed the Reproductive Health and Access to Care Work Group of providers, clinics, community organizations and legislators that will make recommendations for the 2023 legislative session and beyond. Recommendations may include proposals to protect, strengthen, and expand equitable access to all forms of reproductive care.

PENNSYLVANIA

Political control: Republicans who control the Pennsylvania Legislature are hostile to abortion rights, but the state's Democratic governor is a strong supporter and has vetoed three GOP-penned bills in five years that would have added restrictions beyond the state's 24-week limit. The race for governor this year could tilt that balance.

Background: Abortion is legal in Pennsylvania under decades of state law, including a 1989 law that was challenged all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. That produced the landmark *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* ruling that affirmed the high court's 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade* that legalized abortion nationwide, but also allowed states to put certain limits on abortion access.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Gov. Tom Wolf has vowed to protect access to abortion for the remainder of his time in office, through January. Running to replace him is the state's Democratic attorney general, Josh Shapiro, who supports abortion rights, and Republican state Sen. Doug Mastriano, who has said he supports banning abortion altogether, with no exceptions. The Legislature is expected to remain in

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Republican hands next year.

What's next: Legislation to outlaw abortion after the detection of a fetal heartbeat — which can happen at six weeks, before many women even know they are pregnant — has passed a House committee and is awaiting a floor vote. The state Supreme Court is considering a lawsuit filed by Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers aiming to overturn a 1982 law that bans the use of state dollars for abortion, except in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother. In response, Republican lawmakers are advancing a proposed amendment that would declare there is no constitutional right to an abortion in Pennsylvania or to public funding for an abortion.

RHODE ISLAND

Political control: The Democrats who control Rhode Island's General Assembly support access to abortion, as does the Democratic governor.

Background: Rhode Island's governor signed legislation in 2019 to enshrine abortion protections in case the U.S. Supreme Court overturned its 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*. The law says the state will not restrict the right to an abortion prior to fetal viability or after if necessary to protect the health or life of the pregnant woman. It repealed older laws deemed unconstitutional by the courts. The Rhode Island Supreme Court upheld the 2019 law in May, just two days after the Supreme Court draft opinion was leaked suggesting that a majority of the justices were prepared to overturn *Roe*. Abortion opponents had argued the law violates the state constitution. In 2020, there were 2,611 abortions in Rhode Island, according to the state health department.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Rhode Island's attorney general believes the 2019 Reproductive Privacy Act will continue to protect access to abortion. Planned Parenthood Votes! Rhode Island also said abortion will remain legal regardless of the decision because the right was codified in state law.

What's next: On the Monday after the Supreme Court decision, Rhode Island's Democratic governor said he will sign an executive order to shield abortion providers in the state from lawsuits by anti-abortion activists in other states. McKee's office didn't have a date for the signing, but said the governor wants to act as soon as possible. Two of his opponents in September's Democratic primary for governor, Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea and Matt Brown, had urged McKee to sign such an order. They also want state lawmakers to return for a special session to add abortion coverage to Rhode Island's Medicaid program and to the insurance coverage for state employees. Legislative leaders said they plan to address abortion coverage next year because it has financial implications and wasn't included in this year's budget.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Political control: South Carolina has a Republican governor, and its General Assembly is dominated by the GOP. However, the party doesn't quite have the two-thirds majority in either chamber needed to overcome procedural hurdles or a veto if a Democrat wins the 2022 gubernatorial election.

Background: In 2021, South Carolina passed the "Fetal Heartbeat and Protection from Abortion Act" that requires doctors to use an ultrasound to try to detect a fetal heartbeat if they think a pregnant woman is at least eight weeks along. If they find a heartbeat, they can only perform an abortion if the woman's life is in danger, or if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. The law is currently tied up in a federal lawsuit.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: After the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, a federal judge allowed the state to begin enforcing the 2021 law. Planned Parenthood and others dropped their lawsuit, but the organization said it would continue to perform abortions in South Carolina under the parameters of the new law.

What's next: The South Carolina General Assembly's regular session ended in May, but Republican leaders had agreed they could return for a special session to take up more restrictive abortion bills if the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. They have yet to announce a special session, despite Friday's ruling. Some Republican lawmakers have opposed a complete abortion ban, especially without exceptions for victims of rape and incest.

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SOUTH DAKOTA

Political control: Republicans hold super-majorities in both Statehouse chambers. Republican Gov. Kristi Noem is up for reelection this year and has been an ardent opponent of abortion rights.

Background: Under current law, South Dakota bans abortions after the 22nd week of pregnancy. The state has only one clinic that regularly provides abortions, a Planned Parenthood facility in Sioux Falls. The legislature has worked over the years to make it more difficult for women to get abortions, passing mandatory waiting periods and requiring them to review and sign paperwork that discourages them from ending their pregnancies.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: South Dakota has a trigger law that immediately banned abortions except if the life of the pregnant woman is at risk.

What's next: Noem has said she planned to call a special session to craft laws for the new legal landscape if Roe v. Wade was overturned. She hasn't commented on specific legislation, but lawmakers have floated proposals that would make it more difficult for women to seek an abortion out of state. However, South Dakota voters rejected outright bans in 2006 and 2008, and abortion rights advocates are preparing for a similar referendum on abortion access. An outright ban on abortions could eventually be challenged through a citizen-initiated ballot measure.

TENNESSEE

Political control: Tennessee has a Republican governor who is consistently vocal about his opposition to abortion. The GOP holds a supermajority in the state legislature and has steadily chipped away at abortion access.

Background: In 2020, Tennessee passed a law banning most abortions when the fetal heartbeat can be detected at about six weeks, before many women know they're pregnant. The measure has never been enforced because it was promptly blocked by a federal court. Tennessee voters approved an amendment in 2014 declaring that the state's constitution doesn't protect or secure the right to abortion or require the funding of an abortion, and empowering state lawmakers to "enact, amend, or repeal statutes regarding abortion." State law also doesn't allow providers to dispense abortion medications through telemedicine consultations. There are six abortion providers in Tennessee.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Thirty days after the decision, a so-called trigger law will go into effect that bans all abortions in Tennessee except when necessary to prevent death or "serious risk of substantial and irreversible impairment of a major bodily function." Doctors could be charged with a felony for providing an abortion under this law.

What's next: It's unclear if the trigger law conflicts with the 2020 law banning most abortions at about six weeks. The state's attorney general, a Republican, has not publicly weighed in. Meanwhile, Republicans are expected to continue to have supermajority control after this year's midterm elections. Reproductive rights activists say they will direct patients seeking abortion to clinics in Illinois if Roe v. Wade is overturned, or to Florida, which would ban abortions at 15 weeks. North Carolina and Virginia could also be options for women in eastern Tennessee.

TEXAS

Political control: The GOP has commanding majorities in the Texas Legislature and has controlled every statewide office for nearly 30 years. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott is up for reelection in November and is favored to win a third term.

Background: Texas has given the nation a preview of the landscape of abortion access without the protections enshrined in Roe v. Wade. A new Texas law banning most abortions after about six weeks — before many women know they are pregnant — took effect in September and makes no exceptions in cases of rape or incest. Because of how Republicans wrote the law, which is enforceable only through lawsuits filed by private citizens against doctors or anyone who helps a woman obtain an abortion, Texas has essentially outmaneuvered decades of Supreme Court precedent governing a women's constitutional right

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to an abortion. State data shows the number of abortions performed in Texas' roughly two dozen clinics fell by half in the five months after the law came into effect compared to the same period a year earlier.

Effect of the Supreme Court ruling: Texas had more than 40 abortion clinics in 2012 before a decade of Republicans chipping away at abortion access began forcing providers to close. Without Roe v. Wade, Texas plans to ban virtually all abortions 30 days after the Supreme Court issues its judgment in the case, which could take about a month. Abortions would only be allowed when the patient's life is in danger or if they are at risk of "substantial impairment of a major bodily function."

What's next: Many Texas women have already traveled out of state for abortions since the law took effect, but they would likely have to travel much farther now that Roe is overturned as more states outlaw abortion. Some Republican lawmakers also want to punish companies that help their Texas-based employees get abortions elsewhere, although it's unclear how much support that idea will have when the Legislature returns in 2023.

UTAH

Political control: Utah is deeply conservative and the Legislature is controlled by a Republican supermajority.

Background: The state has been restricting abortion for years, including a ban after 18 weeks passed in 2019 that's now blocked in court. The following year, lawmakers passed a "trigger law" that would outlaw nearly all abortions if Roe v. Wade was overturned.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The trigger law banning nearly all abortions became enforceable Friday evening, after the legislative general counsel certified the Supreme Court ruling to lawmakers. It does have narrow exceptions for rape and incest if those crimes are reported to law enforcement, and for serious risk to the life or health of the mother, as well as confirmed lethal birth defects.

What's next: Utah law makes performing an abortion a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. While it's aimed primarily at providers, lawmakers have acknowledged that a woman who self-administers an abortion, including through medication, could potentially face charges.

VERMONT

Political control: The Vermont Legislature is controlled by Democrats, but Republican Gov. Phil Scott is a firm supporter of abortion rights.

Background: Vermont has a 2019 law guaranteeing the right to an abortion and voters will consider a proposal in November to amend the state constitution to protect abortion rights. Also in 2019, the Vermont Legislature began the process of amending the constitution to protect abortion rights, known as the Reproductive Liberty Amendment or Proposition 5. Vermont's proposed amendment does not contain the word "abortion." Proponents say that's because it's not meant to authorize only abortion but also would guarantee other reproductive rights such as the right to get pregnant or access birth control. Opponents say vague wording could have unintended consequences that could play out for years. Lawmakers approved the proposed amendment in February, leading the way for a statewide vote.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Nothing will change immediately in Vermont.

What's next: Vermont voters will cast ballots in November to decide if the state will amend its constitution to protect abortion rights.

VIRGINIA

Political control: Virginia has a Republican governor who says he would support new state-level restrictions on abortion. Gov. Glenn Youngkin said Friday that he will seek legislation to ban most abortions after 15 weeks. Youngkin told The Washington Post he has asked four antiabortion Republican lawmakers to draft the legislation. He told the Post that a cutoff at 20 weeks might be necessary to build consensus in the divided Virginia legislature, where Republicans control the House and Democrats control the Senate. Youngkin generally supports exceptions to abortion restrictions in cases of rape, incest or when the life

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of the mother is in danger.

Background: In recent years, when Democrats were in full control of state government, lawmakers rolled back abortion restrictions. They ended strict building code requirements on facilities where abortions are performed and did away with requirements that a patient seeking an abortion undergo a 24-hour waiting period and ultrasound. Advocates said the changes would make Virginia a haven for abortion access in the South. Republican victories in the November elections shook up the state's political landscape, but Senate Democrats defeated several measures that would have limited abortion access during the 2022 legislative session.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: There will be no immediate change to abortion laws in Virginia now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned. Some abortion providers expect to see an uptick in patients seeking care in Virginia from neighboring states with "trigger laws" that would ban abortion.

What's next: The future of abortion access in Virginia is murky. Senate Democrats say they intend to continue blocking attempts to roll back abortion access, though they control the chamber by the narrowest possible margin and have one caucus member who personally opposes abortion and says he is open to new restrictions. Republicans also have a narrow hold on the House, with several moderate members. Every seat in the General Assembly will be on the ballot in 2023.

WASHINGTON

Political control: The Democrats who control the Washington Legislature support access to abortion, as does the state's Democratic governor.

Background: Abortion has been legal in Washington state since a 1970 statewide ballot referendum. Another ballot measure approved by voters in 1991 declared a woman's right to choose physician-performed abortion prior to fetal viability and further expanded and protected access to abortion in the state if Roe v. Wade was overturned. And in 2018, the Legislature passed a measure that would require Washington insurers offering maternity care to also cover elective abortions and contraception. Earlier this year, Gov. Jay Inslee signed a measure that grants specific statutory authorization for physician assistants, advanced registered nurse practitioners and other providers acting within their scope of practice to perform abortions. Supporters say the move is designed to help meet the demand from the potential influx of out-of-state patients. That same measure also prohibits legal action by Washington state against people seeking an abortion and those who aid them.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The state "will use every available tool to protect and preserve Washingtonians' fundamental right to choose, and protect the rights of anyone who wants to come here to access reproductive health care," said Attorney General Bob Ferguson, a Democrat. Data from the Washington state Department of Health from 2020 shows that of the 16,909 abortions performed in the state that year, 852 involved non-residents. The majority of those people came from neighboring states such as Idaho and Oregon.

What's next: It's impossible to predict how many more non-resident patients will potentially seek care in Washington now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned, but the increase will likely be in the thousands, said Jennifer Allen, CEO of Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates. The state has more than 30 in-person abortion clinics, though the vast majority are in western Washington along the Interstate 5 corridor.

WEST VIRGINIA

Political control: West Virginia has a legislature controlled by Republicans who want to ban or restrict access to abortions. Gov. Jim Justice, a Republican, opposes abortion access and has signed two anti-abortion laws since taking office in 2017.

Background: West Virginia currently bans abortion after the 20th week of pregnancy unless a patient's life is in danger, or they face "substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function." Patients seeking abortions must wait 24 hours after undergoing legislatively mandated counseling designed to discourage abortions. A minor who wants an abortion must obtain parental permission. The use of telemedicine to administer a medication abortion is outlawed. The state also bars patients from getting

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abortions because they believe their child will be born with a disability. The House of Delegates this year passed a 15-week abortion ban, but it died in the Senate.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: It's unclear what the effect the ruling will have on abortion access in West Virginia. The state has had a law banning abortion on the books since 1848; Under that law, providers who perform abortions can face felony charges and three to 10 years in prison, unless the abortion is conducted to save a patient's life. In 2018, West Virginia voters approved a constitutional amendment to declare patients do not have the right to abortion and banning state funding for abortions.

What's next: West Virginia lawmakers could introduce new legislation restricting abortion access when they return to the Capitol in January, but they could return sooner if called into a special session. West Virginia only has one clinic that performs abortions. Women's Health Center of West Virginia Executive Director Katie Quinonez said if abortion access is outlawed, the clinic will continue to provide reproductive care, such as birth control and STI diagnosis and treatment. She said the clinic will help women travel to other states for abortions through its abortion fund.

WISCONSIN

Political control: Wisconsin has a legislature controlled by Republicans who want to ban or restrict access to abortions but a Democratic governor who supports access and is up for reelection this year.

Background: Wisconsin has allowed most abortions until the 22nd week of pregnancy to save the health or life of the mother. A woman seeking an abortion must meet with a counselor and doctor before obtaining an abortion and wait at least 24 hours before having it done. Anyone under age 18 must have an adult relative over age 25 with them to obtain an abortion.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned, it is presumed that a state law passed in 1849 making an abortion a felony offense could go into effect, and doctors have halted procedures. However, Wisconsin's Democratic attorney general argues that the law is so old that it's unenforceable. The language allows a woman to legally destroy her own fetus or embryo and grants immunity if an abortion is needed to save a woman's life and is performed at a hospital. Another state law, passed in 1985, prohibits abortions performed after a fetus reaches viability -- when it could survive outside the womb -- conflicting with the 1849 ban.

What's next: Republican lawmakers are expected to attempt to clarify the 1849 law to ensure there is a ban in place, even as that issue is fought in the courts. However, lawmakers' efforts would be stymied if Democratic Gov. Tony Evers wins reelection. Wisconsin's Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos has said he supports an exception in cases of rape and that a ruling on Roe could force lawmakers to consider other related reproductive issues such as contraception. Other Republicans will push for more restrictive abortion laws.

WYOMING

Political control: Wyoming has one of the most Republican legislatures in the U.S. and a long tradition of libertarian-type if not always social or religious conservatism. That may be changing. In March, Republican Gov. Mark Gordon signed into law a bill that would ban abortion in nearly all instances should the Supreme Court overturn Roe v. Wade.

Background: Current Wyoming law allows abortions up to when a fetus might be able to survive on its own outside its mother's body. The law does not specify when that happens, but it is generally considered to be at around 23 weeks into pregnancy. Wyoming currently doesn't allow abortions after then except to protect the mother from substantial risk to her life or health. Wyoming Republicans have traditionally taken a hands-off approach to abortion but have proven more willing to limit the practice lately. The number of Democrats in the Legislature has dwindled from 26 in 2010 to just nine out of 90 total seats now. A 2021 law requires physicians to provide lifesaving care to any aborted fetus born alive.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The new state law that bans abortion only provides exceptions in cases of rape or incest or to protect the mother's life or health, not including psychological conditions. Though Wyoming has no abortion clinics, abortions still occur. Ninety-eight took place in Wyoming in 2021, ac-

ording to state officials.

What's next: A planned women's health clinic in Casper that would have been the only one offering abortions in the state was on track to open in mid-June but an arson fire May 25 delayed those plans by around six months. Clinic founder Julie Burkhardt said Friday that, despite the ruling, she still plans to open the clinic and will continue to seek legal means to keep abortion legal in Wyoming. Police continue to look for a suspect in the arson investigation, and have offered a \$5,000 reward for information leading to an arrest.

Manchin: Commission on veterans facilities to be dismantled

By JOHN RABY Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A group of U.S. senators has agreed to effectively dismantle a commission tasked by the Department of Veterans Affairs to carry out closures, downsizing and other significant medical facility changes nationwide, Sen. Joe Manchin said Monday.

The West Virginia Democrat, a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said there is bipartisan support to avoid filling vacancies on the VA's Assets and Infrastructure Review Commission and to end the commission in the next National Defense Authorization Act.

The commission had recommended the closures or downsizing of several older facilities, a proposal that Manchin worried would significantly alter services provided to rural veterans across the country. But other groups had welcomed the commission's work, saying it was necessary to modernize and improve the VA's health offerings.

Manchin said in a statement that without the Senate's approval of the AIR Commission and its nominees, no commission will be established and the process as outlined by the 2018 VA Mission Act "will not move forward." The act required Veterans Affairs to make recommendations for its medical facilities and health care delivery, either through facility expansions, relocations, closures or changes in services.

For instance, the recommendations would have downsized three of four VA medical centers in West Virginia and would have closed four community-based outpatient clinics in New Mexico.

The group of senators said in the statement that the VA's recommendations given to the commission are not reflective of upholding the nation's obligations to its veterans.

The recommendations would put veterans "in both rural and urban areas at a disadvantage, which is why we are announcing that this process does not have our support and will not move forward," the statement said. "The Commission is not necessary for our continued push to invest in VA health infrastructure, and together we remain dedicated to providing the Department with the resources and tools it needs to continue delivering quality care and earned services to Veterans in 21st century facilities—now and into the future."

Joining Manchin in the letter were Democratic Sens. Jon Tester of Montana, Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico, Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire, Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Patty Murray of Washington, and Republicans Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, Mike Rounds and John Thune of South Dakota, Rob Portman of Ohio and Steve Daines of Montana.

The group Concerned Veterans for America said the senators' decision will only harm veterans.

"To say this is disappointing is an understatement," group senior adviser Darin Selnick said in a statement. "Simply put, this decision is short-sighted and will hurt veterans by keeping them trapped in a broken and outdated system not built to address their needs. The AIR commission was the best chance to modernize the VA health care system to meet the needs of the veterans it serves."

The VA released preliminary recommendations in March, prompting a bipartisan group of senators led by Manchin to initially ask President Joe Biden to be sure that rural perspectives were considered by the AIR Commission.

Removed South Dakota AG presses ethics case against Noem

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

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SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Former South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg, in his first public comments since being removed from office last week, appeared before a state ethics board Monday to press for an investigation of fellow Republican Gov. Kristi Noem, the person he blames for his impeachment over his conduct surrounding a 2020 fatal car crash.

As attorney general, Ravensborg last year filed a pair of complaints against Noem to the state's Government Accountability Board alleging she abused the powers of her office by interfering in a state agency as it evaluated her daughter's application for a real estate appraiser license and by misusing state airplanes. The board, which is comprised of retired judges, has not decided whether to investigate Noem and is working with an attorney to evaluate the merits of the complaints.

Ravnsborg appeared at the Government Accountability Board's meeting for the first time since he initiated the complaints last year and said he was ready to provide additional information.

He made it clear he thinks an investigation could have far-reaching consequences for Noem, who is running for reelection after a first term that vaulted her to national prominence. She's widely considered to be a White House aspirant in 2024.

"I'm not going to let this just drop. I think that they should pursue it and I do believe that, ultimately, the House will pursue it," Ravensborg told The Associated Press, suggesting that Noem could also face impeachment for her actions.

The former attorney general denied that he was out for revenge against Noem, although he blames her for his removal.

Noem and Ravensborg became political enemies after he struck and killed a pedestrian in 2020. Noem publicly called for Ravensborg to resign and later pressed the Legislature to impeach him. The House eventually did, and the Senate last week convicted him of two charges: committing a crime that caused someone's death and malfeasance for misleading investigators and misusing his office.

Ravnsborg blamed "emotion and political pressure" for tilting the Republican-controlled Senate against him and said Noem sought his removal because he had filed the complaints to the Government Accountability Board.

"I think that among these two complaints — and there's other scandals that she's involved in — that she did not want the information to come to light," he said.

Noem's spokesman Tony Mangan declined to comment on the board's proceedings or Ravensborg's remarks.

The board has tapped Sioux Falls attorney Mark Haigh, who primarily specializes in business and health care law, to help evaluate Ravensborg's complaints. Haigh also has experience arguing before juries, administrative boards and licensing agencies.

The Associated Press reported last year that the governor held a meeting in July 2020 that included her daughter and key decision-makers in her application for an appraiser license just days after the agency moved to deny the license. A Republican-controlled legislative committee concluded that Noem's daughter, Cassidy Peters, got preferential treatment.

Noem has rejected that finding, saying her daughter followed the same process as other applicants.

But the agency's former director, Sherry Bren, told the legislative committee last year that she felt "intimidated" at the July 2020 meeting, where she said Peters' unsuccessful application was discussed in detail and a plan was formed to give her an unprecedented, additional chance to show she could meet federal standards. Noem's office has said the plan was in the works before the meeting.

Peters got her license four months later. Shortly after that, Bren retired under pressure from Noem's cabinet secretary. She eventually received a \$200,000 settlement to withdraw an age discrimination complaint.

Ravnsborg's other complaint was sparked by a report from Raw Story, a news website. Noem in 2019 used state airplanes to travel to events held by political organizations including the National Rifle Association and the Republican Jewish Coalition, even though South Dakota law bars their use for anything other than state business.

Noem defended the trips as part of her work as an ambassador for the state.

The board's consideration of the complaints began last year and has happened entirely in private meet-

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ings. It could either investigate the complaints and potentially hold hearings or dismiss them entirely. The judges will meet next on Aug. 3.

France's Macron: Russia cannot, should not win Ukraine war

By FRANCESCA EBEL and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KREMENCHUK, Ukraine (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday that Russia “cannot and should not win” the war in Ukraine, as its terrible toll was on full view the day after a Russian missile strike hit a shopping mall, killing 18 people.

Speaking at the end of the Group of Seven summit in Germany, Macron said the seven industrialized democracies would support Ukraine and maintain sanctions against Russia “as long as necessary, and with the necessary intensity.”

He added: “Russia cannot and should not win.”

His comments came as rescuers searched through the charred rubble of the shopping mall, looking for more victims of what Ukraine’s president called “one of the most daring terrorist attacks in European history.”

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said more than 1,000 afternoon shoppers and workers were inside the mall in the city of Kremenchuk. Giant plumes of black smoke, dust and orange flames billowed from the wreckage as emergency crews combed through broken metal and concrete for victims. Drones whirred above, clouds of dark smoke still emanating from the ruins several hours after the fire was extinguished.

Casualty figures rose as rescuers sifted through the smoldering rubble. The regional governor, Dmytro Lunin, said at least 18 people were killed and 59 others sought medical assistance, of whom 25 were hospitalized. The region declared a day of mourning Tuesday for the victims of the attack.

“We are working to dismantle the construction so that it is possible to get machinery in there since the metal elements are very heavy and big, and disassembling them by hand is impossible,” said Volodymyr Hychkan, an emergency services official.

Ukraine’s Prosecutor General, Iryna Venediktova, who is leading investigations into possible war crimes, said the missile attack was one of Russia’s “crimes against humanity,” noting that the Russian military has been “systematically shelling civilian infrastructure with the aim to scare people, to kill people, to bring terror to our cities and villages.”

Venediktova emphasized the need for Ukrainians across the entire country to remain alert, adding that they should expect a similar strike “every minute.”

Wayne Jordash, a British barrister who is working with Venediktova’s office to investigate possible war crimes, rejected claims that a factory located near the shopping mall was a military object.

“The first indications are that the factory that got hit is a road construction factory, not a military target,” Jordash said. “We need to investigate whether there’s military targets nearby, and the first indications as I say is that there aren’t any military targets nearby.”

At Ukraine’s request, the U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting in New York on Tuesday to discuss the attack.

In the first Russian government comment on the missile strike, the country’s first deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyansky, alleged multiple inconsistencies that he didn’t specify, claiming on Twitter that the incident was a provocation by Ukraine. Russia has repeatedly denied it targets civilian infrastructure, even though Russian attacks have hit other shopping malls, theaters, hospitals, kindergartens and apartment buildings in the four-month war.

On Tuesday, Russian forces struck the Black Sea city of Ochakiv in the Mykolaiv region, damaging apartment buildings and killing two, including a 6-year-old child. A further six people, four of them children, were wounded. One of them, a 3-month-old baby, is in a coma, according to local officials.

The missile strike on Kremenchuk occurred as Western leaders pledged continued support for Ukraine and the world’s major economies prepared new sanctions against Russia, including a price cap on oil and higher tariffs on goods.

G-7 leaders condemned the attack in a statement late Monday saying “indiscriminate attacks on innocent

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civilians constitute a war crime," noting that "Russian President Putin and those responsible will be held to account."

The Russian strike echoed earlier attacks that caused large numbers of civilian casualties — such as one in March on a Mariupol theater where many civilians had holed up, killing an estimated 600, and another in April on a train station in eastern Kramatorsk that killed at least 59 people.

Zelenskyy said the mall presented "no threat to the Russian army" and had "no strategic value." He accused Russia of sabotaging "people's attempts to live a normal life, which make the occupiers so angry."

In his nightly address, he said that Russian forces had intentionally targeted the shopping center in "one of the most daring terrorist attacks in European history," denouncing Russia as "the largest terrorist organization in the world."

Russia has increasingly used long-range bombers in the war. Ukrainian officials said Russian Tu-22M3 long-range bombers flying over Russia's western Kursk region fired the missiles, one of which hit the shopping center and another that struck a sports arena in Kremenchuk.

The U.S. appeared ready to respond to Zelenskyy's call for more air defense systems, and NATO planned to increase the size of its rapid-reaction forces nearly eightfold — to 300,000 troops.

The attack on Kremenchuk coincided with Russia's all-out assault on the last Ukrainian stronghold in eastern Ukraine's Luhansk province, "pouring fire" on the city of Lysychansk from the ground and air, according to the local governor. At least eight people were killed and more than 20 wounded in Lysychansk when Russian rockets hit an area where a crowd gathered to obtain water from a tank, Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said.

The barrage was part of Russian forces' intensified offensive aimed at wresting the eastern Donbas region from Ukraine. Over the weekend, the Russian military and their local separatist allies forced Ukrainian government troops out of Lysychansk's neighboring city, Sievierodonetsk.

To the west of Lysychansk on Monday, the mayor of the city of Sloviansk — potentially the next major battleground — said Russian forces fired cluster munitions, including one that hit a residential neighborhood. Authorities said the number of victims had yet to be confirmed. The Associated Press saw one fatality: A man's body lay hunched over a car door frame, his blood pooling onto the ground from chest and head wounds. The blast blew out most windows in the surrounding apartment blocks and the cars parked below, littering the ground with broken glass.

"Everything is now destroyed," said resident Valentina Vitkovska, in tears as she spoke about the blast. "We are the only people left living in this part of the building. There is no power. I can't even call to tell others what had happened to us."

Germany: former Nazi guard, 101, jailed for aiding murder

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A 101-year-old man was convicted in Germany of 3,518 counts of accessory to murder on Tuesday for serving at the Nazis' Sachsenhausen concentration camp during World War II.

The Neuruppin Regional Court sentenced him to five years in prison.

The man, who was identified by local media as Josef S., had denied working as an SS guard at the camp and aiding and abetting the murder of thousands of prisoners.

In the trial, which opened in October, the man said that he had worked as a farm laborer near Pasewalk in northeastern Germany during the period in question.

However, the court considered it proven that he worked at the camp on the outskirts of Berlin between 1942 and 1945 as an enlisted member of the Nazi Party's paramilitary wing, the German news agency dpa reported.

"The court has come to the conclusion that, contrary to what you claim, you worked in the concentration camp as a guard for about three years," presiding Judge Udo Lechtermann said, according to dpa, adding that in doing so, the defendant had assisted in the terror and murder machinery of the Nazis.

"You willingly supported this mass extermination with your activity," Lechtermann said.

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Prosecutors had based their case on documents relating to an SS guard with the man's name, date and place of birth, as well as other documents.

The five-year prison sentence was in line with the prosecution's demand. However, the defendant can appeal the court's ruling.

For organizational reasons, the trial was held in a gymnasium in Brandenburg/Havel, the 101-year-old's place of residence. The man was only fit to stand trial to a limited extent and was only able to participate in the trial for about two and a half hours each day. The trial was interrupted several times for health reasons and hospital stays.

Efraim Zuroff, the head Nazi hunter at the Simon Wiesenthal Center's office in Jerusalem, told The Associated Press that the sentence "sends a message that if you commit such crimes, even decades later, you might be brought to justice."

"And it's a very important thing because it gives closure to the relatives of the victims," Zuroff added. "The fact that these people all of a sudden feel that their loss is being addressed and the suffering of their family who they lost in the camps is being addressed ... is a very important thing."

Sachsenhausen was established in 1936 just north of Berlin as the first new camp after Adolf Hitler gave the SS full control of the Nazi concentration camp system. It was intended to be a model facility and training camp for the labyrinthine network that the Nazis built across Germany, Austria and occupied territories.

More than 200,000 people were held there between 1936 and 1945. Tens of thousands of inmates died of starvation, disease, forced labor and other causes, as well as through medical experiments and systematic SS extermination operations including shootings, hangings and gassing.

Exact numbers on those killed vary, with upper estimates of some 100,000, though scholars suggest figures of 40,000 to 50,000 are likely more accurate.

In its early years, most prisoners were either political prisoners or criminal prisoners, but they also included some Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals. The first large group of Jewish prisoners was brought there in 1938 after the so-called Night of Broken Glass, or Kristallnacht, an antisemitic pogrom.

During the war, Sachsenhausen was expanded to include Soviet prisoners of war — who were shot by the thousands — as well as others.

As in other camps, Jewish prisoners were singled out at Sachsenhausen for particularly harsh treatment, and most who remained alive by 1942 were sent to the Auschwitz death camp.

Sachsenhausen was liberated in April 1945 by the Soviets, who turned it into a brutal camp of their own.

Tuesday's verdict relies on recent legal precedent in Germany establishing that anyone who helped a Nazi camp function can be prosecuted for accessory to the murders committed there.

In a different case, a 96-year-old woman went on trial in late September in the northern German town of Itzehoe. The woman, who allegedly worked during the war as the secretary for the SS commandant of the Stutthof concentration camp, has been charged with more than 11,000 counts of accessory to murder.

46 migrants found dead in abandoned trailer in San Antonio

By ERIC GAY and ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Forty-six people were found dead after being abandoned in a tractor-trailer on a remote back road in San Antonio in the latest tragedy to claim the lives of migrants smuggled across the border from Mexico to the U.S. Sixteen people were hospitalized, including four children.

A city worker heard a cry for help from the truck shortly before 6 p.m. Monday and discovered the gruesome scene, Police Chief William McManus said. Hours later, body bags lay spread on the ground near the trailer and bodies remained inside as authorities responded to the calamity.

San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg said the 46 who died had "families who were likely trying to find a better life."

"This is nothing short of a horrific human tragedy," Nirenberg said.

It's among the deadliest of the tragedies that have claimed thousands of lives in recent decades as people attempt to cross the U.S. border from Mexico. Ten migrants died in 2017 after being trapped inside

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a truck parked at a Walmart in San Antonio. In 2003, the bodies of 19 migrants were found in a sweltering truck southeast of San Antonio.

The home countries of the immigrants and how long they were abandoned on the side of the road was not immediately known.

South Texas has long been the busiest area for illegal border crossings. Migrants ride in vehicles through Border Patrol checkpoints to San Antonio, the closest major city, from which point they disperse across the United States.

Officers arrived to find a body on the ground outside the trailer and a partially opened gate to the trailer. Three people were taken into custody, but it was unclear if they were definitively connected with human trafficking, McManus said.

Of the 16 taken to hospitals with heat-related illnesses, 12 were adults and four were children, said Fire Chief Charles Hood. The patients were hot to the touch and dehydrated, and no water was found in the trailer, he said.

"They were suffering from heat stroke and exhaustion," Hood said. "It was a refrigerated tractor-trailer, but there was no visible working AC unit on that rig."

Those in the trailer were part of a presumed migrant smuggling attempt into the United States, and the investigation was being led by U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, McManus said.

Big rigs emerged as a popular smuggling method in the early 1990s amid a surge in U.S. border enforcement in San Diego and El Paso, Texas, which were then the busiest corridors for illegal crossings.

Before that, people paid small fees to mom-and-pop operators to get them across a largely unguarded border. As crossing became exponentially more difficult after the 2001 terror attacks in the U.S., migrants were led through more perilous terrain and paid thousands of dollars more.

Heat poses a serious danger, particularly when temperatures can rise severely inside vehicles. Weather in the San Antonio area was mostly cloudy Monday, but temperatures approached 100 degrees.

Some advocates drew a link to the Biden administration's border policies. Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, policy director at the American Immigration Council, wrote that he had been dreading such a tragedy for months.

"With the border shut as tightly as it is today for migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, people have been pushed into more and more dangerous routes. Truck smuggling is a way up," he wrote on Twitter.

Stephen Miller, a chief architect of former President Donald Trump's immigration policies, said, "Human smugglers and traffickers are wicked and evil" and that the administration's approach to border security rewards their actions.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican running for reelection, was blunt in a tweet about the Democratic president: "These deaths are on Biden. They are a result of his deadly open border policies."

Migrants — largely from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador — have been expelled more than 2 million times under a pandemic-era rule in effect since March 2020 that denies them a chance to seek asylum but encourages repeat attempts because there are no legal consequences for getting caught. People from other countries, notably Cuba, Nicaragua and Colombia, are subject to Title 42 authority less frequently due to higher costs of sending them home, strained diplomatic relations and other considerations.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported 557 deaths on the southwest border in the 12-month period ending Sept. 30, more than double the 247 deaths reported in the previous year and the highest since it began keeping track in 1998. Most are related to heat exposure.

CBP has not published a death tally for this year but said that the Border Patrol performed 14,278 "search-and-rescue missions" in a seven-month period through May, exceeding the 12,833 missions performed during the previous 12-month period and up from 5,071 the year before.

G-7 leaders end summit pledging to hurt Russia economically

By ZEKE MILLER and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

ELMAU, Germany (AP) — Leaders of the world's wealthiest democracies struck a united stance Tuesday

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to support Ukraine for "as long as necessary" as Russia's invasion grinds on, and said they would explore far-reaching steps to cap Kremlin income from oil sales that are financing the war.

The final statement from the Group of Seven summit in Germany left out key details on how the fossil fuel price caps would work in practice, setting up more discussion in the weeks ahead to "explore" measures to bar import of Russian oil above a certain level. That would hit a key Russian source of income and, in theory, relieve the energy price spikes afflicting the global economy as a result of the war.

Leaders also agreed on a ban on imports of Russian gold and to step up aid to countries hit with food shortages by the blockage on Ukraine grain shipments through the Black Sea.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below.

ELMAU, Germany (AP) — The Group of Seven on Tuesday was wrapping up a summit intended to send a strong signal of long-term commitment to Ukraine's future, ensuring that Russia pays a higher price for its invasion while also attempting to alleviate a global hunger crisis and show unity against climate change.

Before the summit's close, leaders joined in condemning what they called the "abominable" Russian attack on a shopping mall in the town of Kremenchuk, calling it a "war crime" and vowing that President Vladimir Putin and others involved "will be held to account."

The leaders of the U.S., Germany, France, Italy, the U.K., Canada and Japan on Monday pledged to support Ukraine "for as long as it takes" after conferring by video link with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The summit host, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, said he "once again very emphatically set out the situation as Ukraine currently sees it." Zelenskyy's address, amid a grinding Russian advance in Ukraine's east, came hours before Ukrainian officials reported a deadly Russian missile strike on a crowded shopping mall in the central city of Kremenchuk.

Officials have said during the summit that leaders of the major economies are preparing to unveil plans to pursue a price cap on Russian oil, raise tariffs on Russian goods and impose other new sanctions. Agreement on some of the complexities of the oil price cap — such as whether it would apply only to Russia or to other oil producers — could be left for further discussions beyond the summit.

From the secluded Schloss Elmau hotel in the Bavarian Alps, the G-7 leaders will continue straight to Madrid for a summit of NATO leaders — where fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine will again dominate the agenda. All G-7 members other than Japan are NATO members, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has been invited to Madrid.

Zelenskyy has openly worried that the West has become fatigued by the cost of a war that is contributing to soaring energy costs and price hikes on essential goods around the globe. The G-7 has sought to assuage those concerns.

While the group's annual gathering has been dominated by Ukraine and by the war's knock-on effects, such as the challenge to food supplies in parts of the world caused by the interruption of Ukrainian grain exports, Scholz has been keen to show that the G-7 also can move ahead on pre-war priorities.

The summit host has been keen to secure agreement on the creation of a "climate club" for countries that want to speed ahead when it comes to tackling global warming.

After a meeting Monday with leaders of five developing nations, a joint statement issued by Germany emphasized the need to accelerate a "clean and just energy transition" that would see an end to the burning of fossil fuels without causing a sharp rise in unemployment.

In the cautiously phrased statement, the leaders tentatively endorsed the global "climate club" idea.

EXPLAINER: How a G-7 ban on Russian gold would work

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia appears to have defaulted on its foreign debt for the first time since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, and the U.S. and its allies are taking aim at the former Soviet Union's second largest export industry after energy — gold.

On Tuesday, the Group of Seven nations will formally announce a ban on Russian gold imports in the

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latest round of sanctions over Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

The U.S. says Russia has used gold to support its currency as a way to circumvent the impact of sanctions. One way to do that is by swapping gold for a more liquid foreign exchange that is not subject to current sanctions.

Some experts say since only a few countries are implementing the gold ban, the move is largely symbolic, while others, including those in the administration, say a ban on imports of Russian gold will target its ability to interact with the global financial system.

How a G-7 Russian gold ban would work:

HOW MUCH GOLD DOES RUSSIA HAVE?

Secretary of State Antony Blinken told CNN on Sunday that since gold is Russia's second most lucrative export after energy and nearly 90% of the revenue comes from G-7 countries, "cutting that off, denying access to about \$19 billion of revenues a year, that's significant."

"It can't acquire what it needs to modernize its defense sector, to modernize its technology, to modernize its energy exploration," Blinken said.

Russia began increasing its gold purchases in 2014, after the U.S. issued sanctions on Russia for Putin's invasion of Crimea. Now the country holds \$100 billion to \$140 billion in gold reserves, which is roughly 20% of the holdings in the Russian Central Bank, according to U.S. officials.

HOW WOULD A GOLD BAN WORK?

While Russia will still be able to sell gold to other countries outside the Group of Seven jurisdiction, it will "impact the ability of Russia to earn export revenue," says Chris Weafer, a Russian economy analyst at consulting firm Macro-Advisory.

"It's that high level of export receipts that is sustaining the country and sustaining the economy since sanctions were ratcheted up after February 24th," Weafer said.

In practice, it could result in civil or criminal penalties on people who come from countries that have agreed on a gold ban from Russia.

Swiss customs officials on Friday said they are tracking roughly three tons of Russian gold — worth more than \$202 million — that entered Switzerland from the United Kingdom last month as they monitor potential violations of economic sanctions against Russia.

WHAT OTHER MEASURES HAVE BEEN MADE ON GOLD TRADE?

In March, the U.S. and its allies moved to block financial transactions with Russia's Central Bank that involve gold, aiming to further restrict the country's ability to use its international reserves. That came after calls from members of Congress to restrict Russia's gold trade.

The Treasury Department issued guidance that American individuals, including gold dealers, distributors, wholesalers, buyers, and financial institutions, are generally banned from buying, selling or facilitating gold-related transactions involving Russia and the various parties that have been sanctioned.

HOW WILL THIS MOVE PUNISH RUSSIA?

Like the thousands of sanctions imposed on Russia through a variety of means, the gold import ban is meant to isolate Russia economically, starve its funding arm and prevent money laundering.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said at the G-7 meetings in Elmau, Germany, that the ban will "directly hit Russian oligarchs and strike at the heart of Putin's war machine."

"Putin is squandering his dwindling resources on this pointless and barbaric war. He is bankrolling his ego at the expense of both the Ukrainian and Russian people," Johnson said.

A White House official told reporters the ban is yet another way to block off paths between the Russian economy and the broader global financial system.

Jan. 6 panel to hold surprise hearing, present new evidence

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House panel investigating the U.S. Capitol insurrection is holding a surprise hearing on Tuesday with an unidentified witness, cloaking the last-minute proceedings in extraordinary

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secrecy and raising expectations for new bombshells in the sweeping investigation into the Jan. 6, 2021, attack.

The unexpected hearing, scheduled for 1 p.m. Tuesday, was announced with 24 hours' notice while lawmakers are away from Washington on a two-week recess. The committee had said last week that there would be no more hearings until July.

The subject of the hearing is so far unclear, but the panel's announcement on Monday said it would be "to present recently obtained evidence and receive witness testimony." A spokesman for the panel declined to elaborate.

The committee's investigation has been ongoing during the hearings, which started three weeks ago, and the nine-member panel has continued to probe the attack by supporters of then-President Donald Trump. Among other investigative evidence, the committee recently obtained new footage of Trump and his inner circle taken both before and after Jan. 6 from British filmmaker Alex Holder.

Holder said last week that he had complied with a congressional subpoena to turn over all the footage he shot in the final weeks of Trump's 2020 reelection campaign, including exclusive interviews with Trump, his children and then-Vice President Mike Pence. The footage includes material from before the insurrection and afterward.

It is uncertain if Holder's footage will be shown at the hearing Tuesday. Russell Smith, a lawyer for Holder, declined to comment.

Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, the panel's Democratic chairman, told reporters last week that the committee was in possession of the footage and needed more time to go through the hours of video.

The panel has held five hearings so far, mostly laying out Trump's pressure campaign on various institutions of power in the weeks leading up to the Jan. 6 joint session of Congress, when hundreds of the Republican's supporters violently pushed past police, broke into the building and interrupted the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's presidential election victory.

The committee has used the hearings to detail the pressure from Trump and his allies on Pence, on the states that were certifying Biden's win, and on the Justice Department. The panel has used live interviews, video testimony of its private witness interviews and footage of the attack to detail what it has learned.

Lawmakers said last week that the two July hearings would focus on domestic extremists who breached the Capitol that day and on what Trump was doing as the violence unfolded.

Post-Roe: Dems challenge GOP to show they care for mothers

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

The Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade's constitutional protections for abortion rights set off a contest between Democrats and Republicans going into the midterm elections over whose policies would do more to help vulnerable mothers and children.

Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., who heads the Republican campaign committee in the Senate, said GOP lawmakers now have the responsibility to "do everything in our power to meet the needs of struggling women and their families so they can choose life."

It's a recognition that, even with a focus on inflation and high gas prices that have vexed President Joe Biden and Democrats, the culturally sensitive issue could complicate the expectations of a GOP takeover of Congress.

The fallout from Friday's ruling could add to the uncertainty in political races because abortion is also an economic issue for many people. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen last month said a repeal "would have very damaging effects on the economy and would set women back decades."

Democrats suggest their rivals are eleventh-hour converts who would offer half-measures at best and voters should judge them accordingly.

"It's pretty cynical to say you want to do it now," said Rep. Suzan DelBene, D-Wash. "If it's a priority, it should have always been a priority and actions really speak louder than words."

GOP leaders have generally opposed Biden's expansion of the child tax credit — saying it would discour-

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age people from working despite evidence to the contrary. Congressional Republicans said the Democrats' paid family leave plan — which would put the U.S. on par with other wealthy nations — could limit choices for families and crush small businesses. In 2017, House Republicans voted to repeal "Obamacare" and replace it with measures that could have made maternity care optional.

"Not only have leading congressional Republicans endorsed building on the Supreme Court's radical break with precedent by imposing a national abortion ban, but they have also spent years trying to make parenthood more expensive for middle class families," said Andrew Bates, White House deputy press secretary.

An Associated Press analysis earlier this year found that states with the strictest abortion laws — often led by Republicans — generally provide far less support to parents and children, usually leading to more poverty and worse health outcomes. In response to AP's findings, many conservative state lawmakers said women can give their newborns up for adoption and said they would support funding increases for foster-care programs.

Staffers for the top two Republican lawmakers, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy of California and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, declined to say which measures they would push to help mothers and children in the wake of abortion being banned.

But GOP lawmakers have put forth ideas that they say would help families in need.

A spokesman for Scott has said the senator would support removing work requirements for parents with children under the age of 6 who live in public housing and receive food aid through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Scott's "Rescue America" plan says that no federal program or tax laws should reward people for being unmarried and that the federal government should pay all costs for unwed mothers who put their children up for adoption, among other policies.

Families that adopt children are eligible for a tax credit that was worth up to \$14,300 in 2020. But House Republicans in 2017 also proposed a tax code overhaul that would have removed the adoption tax credit in order to simplify tax returns.

Following the Supreme Court ruling, Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida said on Twitter, "I will soon introduce a proposal to support mothers and their babies so that every child has a real opportunity to pursue the promise of America."

His proposal would allow for paid family leave, but it would require parents to use their Social Security benefits and delay retirement. It would also expand payments from the child tax credit, but not every parent would be eligible for full benefits as Biden allowed with his one-year expansion of the credit in 2021.

Announcing the framework in a Washington Examiner editorial, Rubio said, "What we need is a pro-life plan for post-Roe America."

There would be one major tweak to the tax credit, though: Parents with "unborn" children would be eligible for the payments.

US House: Boebert primary, runoffs, incumbent vs. incumbent

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In Colorado, Republican Rep. Lauren Boebert, one of the most polarizing members of Congress, is trying to beat back a challenge from a more mainstream Republican in her primary Tuesday.

Two Republican House incumbents from Mississippi are facing primary runoffs to keep their seats, including one who voted in favor of a commission to investigate the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

In Illinois, Republican Rep. Mary Miller, who called the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade a "historic victory for white life" during a rally with former President Donald Trump — her spokesperson said she misspoke — is going up against a fellow GOP incumbent.

A total of six states are holding congressional primary elections, primary runoffs or special elections on Tuesday. Many of the Republican races will test Trump's national influence, and others could provide the first hints of how voters are reacting to the high court's decision on abortion.

Some of the top elections:

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BOEBERT'S STAYING POWER

Boebert, a first-term firebrand, saw her GOP-leaning 3rd Congressional District in western Colorado become even more Republican after redistricting. She faces moderate state Rep. Don Coram, a rancher and hemp farmer, who slams what he calls Boebert's extremism.

Coram argues that the incumbent's fealty to Trump has meant neglect of her sprawling territory's all-important agriculture issues as she seeks social and conservative media celebrity. Boebert has railed against the "Biden regime" and "socialist" Democrats. She also trumpets her gun-toting Second Amendment credentials and opposition to COVID-19 restrictions that briefly shuttered her "Shooters" restaurant.

Boebert criticizes Coram for working with legislative Democrats. Her opponent is betting voters alienated by Boebert's provocations will choose someone more in the tradition of centrists that have played well in the area, including five-term Republican Rep. Scott Tipton, who lost to Boebert in an upset last cycle.

Also Tuesday, in Colorado's deeply conservative El Paso County, eight-term Republican Rep. Doug Lamborn faces a challenge from the right from state Rep. Dave Williams for his 5th Congressional District seat. Williams failed to get the phrase "Let's Go Brandon," code for an obscenity against Biden, added to his name on the ballot.

Lamborn, who faces an ongoing House ethics investigation over whether he misused official resources for personal purposes, has survived primary challenges in the past as an ardent opponent of abortion and backer of the significant U.S. military presence in Colorado Springs. Earlier this year, Williams led a 24-hour filibuster in the statehouse over a bill allowing unrestricted access to abortion. The bill eventually became law.

ILLINOIS INCUMBENTS CLASH

Miller, first elected in 2020, is no stranger to controversy. She quoted Adolf Hitler shortly after winning her seat, saying during a rally that "Hitler was right on one thing. He said, 'Whoever has the youth has the future.'" She later apologized after Democrats in Illinois called for her resignation. She also voted against certifying Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election and is a member of the far-right House Freedom Caucus.

On Saturday night, she made the "white life" comment as Trump stood behind her at a rally in Mendon, drawing cheers from the crowd. Miller has since said she's not racist, and her spokesperson said she had intended to say the ruling was a victory for the "right to life."

She is facing five-term Republican Rep. Rodney Davis on Tuesday for the GOP nomination for the 15th Congressional District, a sprawling, heavily red district in central Illinois that was redrawn after the state's shrinking population cost it a congressional seat.

Davis was a co-chair of Trump's 2020 Illinois campaign but voted to certify the 2020 presidential election results. He has the backing of almost all of the district's 35 county party chairs and has vowed to "reimplement" Trump policies, including walling off the U.S.-Mexico border.

In suburban Chicago, meanwhile, redistricting means both Democratic Reps. Sean Casten and Marie Newman are running for the state's 6th Congressional District, a blue-leaning seat.

Newman is a progressive first elected in 2020, when she defeated longtime Rep. Dan Lipinski, one of Congress' last anti-abortion Democrats. She faces an ongoing House Ethics Committee investigation over whether she promised federal employment to a political opponent.

Casten flipped a suburban seat in 2018 that Republicans held for decades.

FLOOD OF CANDIDATES FOR OPEN ILLINOIS SEATS

More than 20 candidates are vying for the chance to replace 15-term Democratic Rep. Bobby Rush, the only lawmaker who has ever beaten Barack Obama in a race. Obama challenged Rush in a 2000 U.S. House primary and lost.

The heavily Democratic 1st Congressional District was redrawn after the 2020 census and now stretches from Chicago's South Side to Kankakee.

Among the field running to replace Rush is Jonathan Jackson, the son of civil rights leader the Rev. Jesse Jackson; Karin Norington-Reaves, a federal workforce trainer endorsed by Rush; Pat Dowell, a member of

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the Chicago City Council whose ward is in the district; and businessman Jonathan Swain.

Democratic Rep. Cheri Bustos also is not seeking reelection in the 17th Congressional District in northwestern Illinois, a largely rural swath that Republicans are hoping to flip in November.

Republican Esther Joy King, who came close to defeating Bustos in 2020, is again running for the GOP nomination and has a large fundraising lead over her primary rivals. The Democratic field includes former meteorologist Eric Sorenson, Rockford City Council member Jonathan Logemann and educator Angie Normoyle, who has served on both her local school board and county board.

TWO RARE MISSISSIPPI RUNOFFS

Republican Rep. Michael Guest is seeking a third term after voting to create an independent commission to investigate the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Fellow GOP Rep. Steven Palazzo is seeking a seventh term after being accused in a congressional ethics report last year of abusing his office by mispending campaign funds.

Both Guest and Palazzo failed to cross the 50% threshold to win outright in their June 7 primaries. Guest now faces former Navy fighter pilot Michael Cassidy, while Palazzo is going up against Mike Ezell, the sheriff of a coastal county.

The congressional runoffs are rare. The Associated Press researched state records dating back 70 years, to 1952, and found that no U.S. representative from Mississippi had been in a party primary runoff during that time.

NEBRASKA SPECIAL ELECTION OVERLAPS WITH SENTENCING

Former Republican Rep. Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska will face sentencing Tuesday for lying to federal agents just as voters pick a replacement for the rest of his term.

Fortenberry resigned in March after being convicted of intentionally misleading FBI agents about his knowledge of an illegal, \$30,000 campaign contribution from a Nigerian billionaire at a 2016 fundraiser in Los Angeles.

Two state lawmakers, Republican Mike Flood and Democrat Patty Pansing Brooks, are running in a special election to succeed Fortenberry, who served nine terms in the Republican-heavy district that includes Lincoln and dozens of smaller, rural communities. They'll compete again in the November to determine who serves a new term, beginning next January.

Election 2022: Abortion central in first post-Roe primaries

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — The midterm primary season enters a new, more volatile phase on Tuesday as voters participate in the first elections since the U.S. Supreme Court's decision revoking a woman's constitutional right to an abortion jolted the nation's politics.

In Colorado's Republican U.S. Senate primary, voters are choosing between businessman Joe O'Dea and state Rep. Ron Hanks. O'Dea is the rare Republican who supports most abortion rights while Hanks backs a ban on the procedure in all cases.

Meanwhile, in the Republican race for governor in Illinois, Darren Bailey, a farmer endorsed by former President Donald Trump over the weekend, wants to end the state's right to abortion except for instances in which the mother's life is in danger. He doesn't support exceptions for rape or incest. His opponent, Richard Irvin, the first Black mayor of Aurora, has said he would allow abortions in instances of rape, incest or when the mother's life is at risk.

Both races are unfolding in states where abortion remains legal. Democrats have sought to elevate both Hanks and Bailey, betting that they have a better chance of winning the fall campaign if they're competing against Republicans they could portray as extreme. In Colorado, Democrats have spent more than \$2 million boosting Hanks' candidacy. In Illinois, the sums have been vastly higher, with Democrats spending at least \$16 million against Irvin and to boost Bailey as the nominee against Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

The strategy carries risks, especially if the magnitude of the GOP's expected gains this fall becomes so significant that Democrats lose in states like Illinois and Colorado, which have become strongholds for the

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party. But at a moment when Democrats are confronting voter frustration over inflation and rising gas prices, the focus on abortion may be their best hope.

"It's a very inviting target, to go after a Republican candidate whose position is no exceptions," said Dick Wadhams, a former chairman of the Colorado GOP who has worked for anti-abortion candidates in the past. "I do think the repeal of Roe v Wade may embolden more candidates to go in that direction."

Beyond Colorado and Illinois, elections are being held in Oklahoma, Utah, New York, Nebraska, Mississippi and South Carolina. This marks the final round of multistate primary nights until August, when closely watched races for governor and U.S. Senate will unfold in states such as Arizona, Wisconsin, Florida and Missouri.

And while Tuesday's primaries are the first to happen in a post-Roe landscape, they will offer further insight into the resonance of Trump's election lies among GOP voters.

In Oklahoma, one of the nation's most conservative senators, James Lankford, faces a primary challenge from evangelical pastor Jackson Lahmeyer, amid conservative anger that Lankford hasn't supported Trump's election claims.

In Utah, two Republican critics of Trump are targeting Sen. Mike Lee, accusing the two-term senator of being too preoccupied with winning the former president's favor and helping him try to overturn the 2020 presidential election. In Mississippi, Rep. Michael Guest, a Republican who bucked Trump to vote for an independent Jan. 6 commission, faces a challenge from Michael Cassidy, a former Navy pilot.

Also in Colorado, indicted county clerk Tina Peters, who has been barred by a judge from overseeing elections in her home county in the western part of the state, is running for the GOP nomination for the state's top elections post by contending she's being prosecuted for uncovering a grand conspiracy to steal the 2020 election from Trump. She faces Pam Anderson, a former county clerk and critic of Trump's election lies, for the nomination to challenge Democratic Secretary of State Jena Griswold in November.

Republicans worry that Peters, who is being prosecuted by a Republican district attorney for her role in a security breach in her county's election system, would drag down the entire ticket if she becomes the nominee. The GOP has lost almost every statewide race since 2014, but hopes public disenchantment with President Joe Biden gives them an opening.

"There's a lot of peril on June 28 for Republicans," Wadhams said. "A lot of opportunity, but a lot of peril as well."

Other GOP opportunities in the state come in the newly created congressional swing seat north of Denver, where four Republican candidates are competing to face state Rep. Yadira Caraveo, the only Democrat running in the primary. Heidi Ganahl, the lone statewide elected Republican as a member of the University of Colorado's board of regents, faces Greg Lopez, a former mayor in suburban Denver, in the contest for the GOP nomination to face Democratic Gov. Jared Polis.

Also in Colorado, firebrand Rep. Lauren Boebert faces moderate state Sen. Don Coram in the Republican primary in the western part of the state. In Colorado Springs, Republican Rep. Doug Lamborn, who faces regular primary challenges, this time is fighting back state Rep. Dave Williams, who failed to get the phrase "Let's Go Brandon," code for an obscenity against President Joe Biden, added to his official name on the ballot.

Other than the governor's race primary, Illinois also features two, rare incumbent vs. incumbent congressional primaries as a result of House districts being redrawn during last year's redistricting. Democratic Reps. Sean Casten and Marie Newman will compete in a Chicago-area seat. And GOP Rep. Rodney Davis, one of the last moderates in the Republican caucus, faces Trump-backed Rep. Mary Miller, who at a rally with the former president this weekend described the Supreme Court decision as "a victory for white life." A spokesman said she meant to say "right to life."

In New York, Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul, who became the state's chief executive last fall when Andrew Cuomo resigned during a sexual harassment scandal, is fighting off primary challenges from the left and center. New York City's elected public advocate, Jumaane Williams, contends Hochul hasn't been active enough on progressive issues while Long Island Rep. Tom Suozzi blasts her for being too liberal on crime.

On the Republican side, Rep. Lee Zeldin is the frontrunner in a crowded gubernatorial primary field that includes Andrew Giuliani, the son of former New York mayor and Trump confidant Rudolph Giuliani. Trump has not made an endorsement in the race.

A global look at suffocation deaths of trafficked migrants

By The Associated Press undefined

— June 27, 2022: 46 suspected immigrants were found dead in a sweltering trailer on a remote back road in southwestern San Antonio.

— October 23, 2019: 39 Vietnamese migrants were found dead in a truck trailer in Essex, England. Four men were jailed for manslaughter.

— July 23, 2017: Eight immigrants were found dead in a sweltering trailer at a San Antonio Walmart parking lot. Two others died later in hospitals. The driver was sentenced to life in prison.

— Feb. 20, 2017: 13 African migrants suffocated inside a shipping container while being transported between two towns in Libya. A total of 69 migrants, most from Mali, were packed into the container, according to the local Red Crescent branch.

— Aug. 27, 2015: Austrian police discovered an abandoned truck containing the bodies of 71 migrants, including eight children, from Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. The truck, found along a highway, had crossed into Austria from Hungary.

— April 4, 2009: 35 Afghan migrants suffocated inside a shipping container in southwestern Pakistan. Authorities said that more than 100 people were packed inside the container.

— April 9, 2008: 54 Burmese migrants suffocated in the back of an airtight refrigerated truck in Ranong, Thailand.

— May 14, 2003: 19 migrants died inside a sweltering tractor-trailer while they traveled from South Texas to Houston.

— June 18, 2000: 58 Chinese immigrants were found dead inside a truck in the English port town of Dover. The Dutch truck had transported the immigrants across the English Channel from Belgium. Two people survived.

Ghislaine Maxwell to be sentenced in Epstein sex abuse case

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and TOM HAYS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ghislaine Maxwell, the jet-setting socialite who once consorted with royals, presidents and billionaires, is set to be sentenced Tuesday for helping the wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein sexually abuse underage girls.

The 11 a.m. sentencing in New York is the culmination of a prosecution that detailed how the power couple flaunted their riches and prominent connections to lure vulnerable girls as young as 14, and then exploit them.

Prosecutors said Epstein, who killed himself in 2019 while awaiting trial, sexually abused children hundreds of times over more than a decade, and couldn't have done so without the help of Maxwell, his longtime companion and onetime girlfriend.

"Maxwell's conduct was shockingly predatory. She was a calculating, sophisticated, and dangerous criminal who preyed on vulnerable young girls and groomed them for sexual abuse," prosecutors wrote in a court filing.

In December, a jury convicted Maxwell of sex trafficking, transporting a minor to participate in illegal sex acts and two conspiracy charges. Prosecutors say she deserves 30 to 55 years in prison.

Maxwell, 60, has denied abusing anyone. Her lawyers have asked U.S. District Judge Alison J. Nathan to impose a sentence of no more than five years.

"The witnesses at trial testified about Ms. Maxwell's facilitation of Epstein's abuse, but Epstein was always the central figure: Epstein was the mastermind, Epstein was the principal abuser, and Epstein orchestrated the crimes for his personal gratification," they wrote in a court filing.

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Epstein and Maxwell's associations with some of the world's most famous people were not a prominent part of the trial, but mentions of friends like Bill Clinton, Donald Trump and Britain's Prince Andrew showed how the pair exploited their connections to impress their prey.

Over the past 17 years, scores of women have accused Epstein of abusing them. Many described Maxwell as acting as a madam who recruited them to give massages to Epstein.

The trial, though, revolved around allegations from only a handful of those women.

Four testified that they were abused as teens in the 1990s and early 2000s at Epstein's mansions in Florida, New York, New Mexico and the Virgin Islands.

Three were identified in court only by their first names or pseudonyms to protect their privacy: Jane, a television actress; Kate, an ex-model from the U.K.; and Carolyn, now a mom recovering from drug addiction. The fourth was Annie Farmer, who identified herself in court by her real name after speaking out publicly.

They described how Maxwell charmed them with conversation and gifts and promises that Epstein could use his wealth and connections to help fulfill their dreams.

Then, they testified, she led them to give massages to Epstein that turned sexual and played it off as normal.

Carolyn testified that she was one of several underprivileged teens who lived near Epstein's Florida home in the early 2000s and took up an offer to massage him in exchange for \$100 bills in what prosecutors described as "a pyramid of abuse."

Maxwell made all the arrangements, Carolyn told the jury, even though she knew the girl was only 14 at the time.

The allegations against Epstein first surfaced publicly in 2005. He pleaded guilty to sex charges in Florida and served 13 months in jail, much of it in a work-release program as part of a deal criticized as lenient. Afterward, he was required to register as a sex offender.

In the years that followed, many women sued Epstein over alleged abuse. One, Virginia Giuffre, claimed that Epstein and Maxwell had also pressured her into sexual trysts with other powerful men, including Prince Andrew. All of those men denied the allegations and Giuffre ultimately settled a lawsuit against Andrew out of court.

Federal prosecutors in New York revived the case against Epstein after stories by the Miami Herald in 2018 brought new attention to his crimes. He was arrested in 2019, but killed himself a month later.

Eleven months later after his death, Maxwell was arrested at a New Hampshire estate. A U.S., British and French citizen, she has remained in a federal jail in New York City since then as her lawyers repeatedly criticize her treatment, saying she was even unjustly placed under suicide watch days before sentencing. Prosecutors say the claims about the jail are exaggerated and that Maxwell has been treated better than other prisoners.

Her lawyers also fought to have her conviction tossed on the grounds of juror misconduct.

Days after the verdict, one juror gave media interviews in which he disclosed he had been sexually abused as a child — something he hadn't told the court during jury selection. Maxwell's lawyers said she deserved a new trial. A judge disagreed.

At least eight women have submitted letters to the judge, describing the sexual abuse they said they endured for having met Maxwell and Epstein. Four of them plan to make oral statements at sentencing, including two women — Annie Farmer and Kate — who testified at the trial.

In letters to the judge, six of Maxwell's seven living siblings pleaded for leniency.

Anne Holve and Philip Maxwell, her eldest siblings, wrote that her relationship with Epstein began soon after the 1991 death of their father, the British newspaper magnate Robert Maxwell.

They said Robert Maxwell had subjected her daughter to "frequent rapid mood swings, huge rages and rejections."

"This led her to becoming very vulnerable to abusive and powerful men who would be able to take advantage of her innate good nature," they wrote.

Prosecutors called Maxwell's shifting of blame to Epstein "absurd and offensive."

"Maxwell was an adult who made her own choices," they wrote to the court. "She made the choice to

sexually exploit numerous underage girls. She made the choice to conspire with Epstein for years, working as partners in crime and causing devastating harm to vulnerable victims. She should be held accountable for her disturbing role in an extensive child exploitation scheme."

Hong Kong burnishes China ties as luster as global hub fades

By ZEN SOO and JOE McDONALD Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Every few generations, Hong Kong transforms itself, evolving from a swampy fishing village to 19th century colonial port, to capitalist outpost and factory after China's 1949 revolution, to 21st century financial center.

As the former British colony marks the 25th anniversary of its return to China, reeling from pandemic curbs that devastated business and a crackdown on its pro-democracy movement, Hong Kong leaders say it is time to transform again. They say the city should become a leader in technology that relies more on its ties with nearby Chinese factory cities than on global trade.

Chief Executive-elect John Lee's government is under pressure to generate new sources of economic growth, looking beyond COVID outbreaks and anti-virus controls that have devastated tourism and business and uncertainty about the legal climate after a crackdown on the city's pro-democracy movement.

In April, during his election campaign, Lee promised to "start a new chapter" for the city better known as one of Asia's busiest ports and biggest stock markets and "strengthen its competitiveness" in technology and innovation as well as trade and finance.

Lee gave no details but pointed to the Greater Bay Area, a Chinese government initiative to link Hong Kong with neighboring mainland cities including the technology and finance hub of Shenzhen and the manufacturing powerhouses of Dongguan and Foshan.

"There are great opportunities in the Greater Bay Area that haven't been realized yet," said David Graham, executive director of the British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. "It is a big opportunity for Hong Kong, and it will be very hard to replicate in other cities like Singapore or Dubai."

Adding to the urgency for Lee to roll out a long-term strategy, executives frustrated with Hong Kong's travel controls are leaving the city, business groups say. Some companies are moving for good to Singapore, Bangkok, Dubai or other business centers.

"Hong Kong's strength as a global connector has been greatly reduced," said Joseph Armas, chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. Executives have left for cities where "travel is feasible."

Armas appealed to Lee for a "concrete roadmap" to revive Hong Kong, which remains, together with mainland China and Taiwan, one of the few places that still requires inbound travelers to serve mandatory quarantines.

For Michael Chan, who manages a fashion goods manufacturing business, the restrictions have extended what used to be one-week trips to factories in Bangladesh or China to a month or two, since it makes no sense to spend weeks in quarantine for a short work trip.

Chan has considered temporarily relocating to Singapore, whose controls are much less strict.

"When I meet government officials, I often have to meet them face to face and talk about things," said Chan, a veteran of multiple quarantines. "It's not like in the U.S. where I can just use Zoom for a video call."

Hong Kong lost nearly 90,000 of its 7.5 million population in 2021, according to government figures. More than 100,000 people left in February and March of this year, during the city's worst COVID wave.

The angst over Hong Kong's travel controls "presents an opportunity for others to dip into our talent pool," said Sally Wong, CEO of the Hong Kong Investment Funds Association.

Activists and foreign governments complain the ruling Communist Party is chipping away at the 50 years of autonomy Beijing promised after 1997. The freedoms afforded to Hong Kong and its leeway for self-governance had helped it keep its status as a center for Asian headquarters of global companies even as rent and other costs soared to record levels and levels of inequality grew ever wider.

Hong Kong still has a skilled workforce, an efficient port and a Western-style legal system considered to be impartial and reliable.

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But its status as a global hub for trade and business center is waning.

One in 20 companies surveyed by the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong plan to move their global or regional headquarters out of Hong Kong, the chamber reported in January. It said half were uncertain about whether to go.

Some businesses are watching to see how law enforcement and the free flow of information and people that are crucial to commerce and finance might change. Two out of five companies surveyed said they worry they will lose free internet access, vital for a trading center that relies on the flow of information.

"There is a perception that foreign businesses are less welcome," the report said. "More than half our respondents feel the government is 'unconcerned' or 'dismissive' about business concerns."

Until now, Hong Kong has been largely free of the censorship on the mainland, where internet barriers known as the "Great Firewall" are used by the ruling party to block China's public from seeing foreign websites run by news outfits, governments and human rights activists. But the territory's leading pro-democracy newspaper, Apple Daily, was shut down during the crackdown and its publisher, Jimmy Lai, sentenced to prison.

Kurt Tong, a former U.S. consul general in Hong Kong who is managing partner of The Asia Group, a consulting firm, said that so far the city's national security law, though used to stifle dissent, has not had much impact on business and finance.

But the effect of the law and Beijing's overhaul of the territory's political system bear watching, he said.

"People who care about the Hong Kong financial system need to think about that," Tong said.

Hong Kong thrived as the trade gateway to China for decades, but it was eclipsed as the world's busiest container port in 2000 by facilities in the Chinese mainland. Two decades later, with cargo volume barely 10% above its 2000 level, Hong Kong's port ranks 8th in the world. Shanghai, Shenzhen and three other Chinese ports are bigger.

Hong Kong's stock market, once Asia's biggest outside Japan, also has grown steadily but has slipped behind regional rivals.

Companies traded in Hong Kong have a total market value of \$5.4 trillion, compared with \$8.2 trillion for the Shanghai Stock Exchange. Companies on China's second exchange in Shenzhen are worth \$6.2 trillion, according to the World Federation of Exchanges.

Tong is among those who believe Hong Kong's recent setbacks are only temporary.

"The current status is that Hong Kong is a very significant global center, one of the most important in the world, and it plays a unique and critical role in linking the Chinese economy with the rest of the global economy and channeling finance in both directions," said Tong.

The city is meanwhile nurturing its role as a center for innovation, setting up research centers that have helped incubate dozens of start-up companies.

A vice chancellor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Rocky S. Tuan, pointed to medical and biotechnology research as one of the city's less well-known strengths. Writing in the newspaper South China Morning Post, he said "Hong Kong offers access to capital, expertise, global regulatory recognition of its clinical trial data and a network of world-class universities."

That could lend the city an edge over regional rivals.

"Other cities in the region, notably Singapore, perhaps will be more of an Asia hub or Southeast Asia hub," said Tommy Wu of Oxford Economics. "Hong Kong's business will be mainly focused on Greater China."

Russian missile strike hits crowded shopping mall in Ukraine

By YURAS KARMANAU and FRANCESCA EBEL Associated Press

KREMENCHUK, Ukraine (AP) — Russian long-range bombers struck a crowded shopping mall in Ukraine's central city of Kremenchuk with a missile on Monday, raising fears of what President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called an "unimaginable" number of victims in "one of the most daring terrorist attacks in European history."

Zelenskyy said that many of the more than 1,000 afternoon shoppers and staff inside the mall managed to escape. Giant plumes of black smoke, dust and orange flames emanated from the wreckage, with

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emergency crews rushing in to search broken metal and concrete for victims and put out fires. Onlookers watched in distress at the sight of how an everyday activity such as shopping could turn into a horror.

The casualty figures were changing as rescuers searched the smoldering rubble into early Tuesday. Ukraine's emergency services reported late Monday that at least 16 people were dead and about 60 wounded.

Soldiers worked into the night to lug sheets of twisted metal and broken concrete, as one drilled into what remained of the shopping center's roof. Drones whirred above, clouds of dark smoke still emanating from the ruins several hours after the fire had been put out.

"We are working to dismantle the construction so that it is possible to get machinery in there since the metal elements are very heavy and big, and disassembling them by hand is impossible," said Volodymyr Hychkan, an emergency services official.

At Ukraine's request, the U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting in New York on Tuesday to discuss the attack.

In the first Russian government comment on the missile strike, the country's first deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyansky, alleged multiple inconsistencies that he didn't specify, claiming on Twitter that the incident was a provocation by Ukraine. Russia has repeatedly denied it targets civilian infrastructure, even though Russian attacks have hit other shopping malls, theaters, hospitals, kindergartens and apartment buildings.

The missile strike unfolded as Western leaders pledged continued support for Ukraine, and the world's major economies prepared new sanctions against Russia, including a price cap on oil and higher tariffs on goods. Meanwhile, the U.S. appeared ready to respond to Zelenskyy's call for more air defense systems, and NATO planned to increase the size of its rapid-reaction forces nearly eightfold — to 300,000 troops.

Zelenskyy said the mall presented "no threat to the Russian army" and had "no strategic value." He accused Russia of sabotaging "people's attempts to live a normal life, which make the occupiers so angry."

In his nightly address, he said it appeared Russian forces had intentionally targeted the shopping center and added, "Today's Russian strike at a shopping mall in Kremenchuk is one of the most daring terrorist attacks in European history." He said Russia "has become the largest terrorist organization in the world."

Russia has increasingly used long-range bombers in the war. Ukrainian officials said Russian Tu-22M3 long-range bombers flying over Russia's western Kursk region fired the missile that hit the shopping center, as well as another that hit a sports arena in Kremenchuk.

The Russian strike echoed attacks earlier in the war that caused large numbers of civilian casualties — such as one in March on a Mariupol theater where many civilians had holed up, killing an estimated 600, and another in April on a train station in eastern Kramatorsk that left at least 59 people dead.

"Russia continues to take out its impotence on ordinary civilians. It is useless to hope for decency and humanity on its part," Zelenskyy said.

Kremenchuk Mayor Vitaliy Maletskiy wrote on Facebook that the attack "hit a very crowded area, which is 100% certain not to have any links to the armed forces."

The United Nations called the strike "deplorable," stressing that civilian infrastructure "should never ever be targeted," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. Group of Seven leaders issued a statement late Monday condemning the attack and saying that "indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians constitute a war crime. Russian President Putin and those responsible will be held to account."

The attack coincided with Russia's all-out assault on the last Ukrainian stronghold in eastern Ukraine's Luhansk province, "pouring fire" on the city of Lysychansk from the ground and air, according to the local governor. At least eight people were killed and more than 20 wounded in Lysychansk when Russian rockets hit an area where a crowd gathered to obtain water from a tank, Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said.

The eastern barrage was part of Russian forces' intensified offensive aimed at wresting the eastern Donbas region from Ukraine. Over the weekend, the Russian military and their local separatist allies forced Ukrainian government troops out of Lysychansk's neighboring city, Sievierodonetsk.

To the west of Lysychansk on Monday, the mayor of the city of Sloviansk — potentially the next major battleground — said Russian forces fired cluster munitions, including one that hit a residential neighbor-

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hood. Authorities said the number of victims had yet to be confirmed. The Associated Press saw one fatality: A man's body lay hunched over a car door frame, his blood pooling onto the ground from chest and head wounds. The blast blew out most windows in the surrounding apartment blocks and the cars parked below, littering the ground with broken glass.

"Everything is now destroyed," said resident Valentina Vitkovska, in tears as she spoke about the blast. "We are the only people left living in this part of the building. There is no power. I can't even call to tell others what had happened to us."

Before Monday's attacks, at least six civilians were killed and 31 others wounded as part of intense Russian shelling against various Ukrainian cities over the past 24 hours — including Kyiv and major cities in the country's south and east, according to Zelenskyy's office. Shelling on Monday in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, killed at least five people and wounded 15.

Russian forces continued to target the key southern Black Sea port of Odesa. A missile attack destroyed residential buildings and wounded six people, including a child, Ukrainian authorities said.

In Lysychansk, at least five high-rise buildings and the last road bridge were damaged over the past day, Haidai said. A crucial highway linking the city to government-held territory to the south was rendered impassable. The city's prewar population of around 100,000 has dwindled to fewer than 10,000.

Analysts say that Lysychansk's location high on the banks of the Siverskiy Donets River gives a major advantage to Ukrainian defenders.

"It's a very hard nut to crack. The Russians could spend many months and much effort storming Lysychansk," said military analyst Oleh Zhdanov.

In other developments, in Germany's Bavarian Alps, leaders of the G7 countries unveiled plans to seek new sanctions and pledged to continue supporting Ukraine "for as long as it takes." In a joint statement Monday after they held a session by video link with Zelenskyy, the leaders underlined their "unwavering commitment to support the government and people of Ukraine in their courageous defense of their country's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Elsewhere, Washington was expected to announce the purchase of an advanced surface-to-air missile system for Ukraine.

In Brussels, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg announced plans to greatly expand the alliance's rapid-reaction forces as part of its response to an "era of strategic competition." The NATO response force currently has about 40,000 soldiers. NATO will agree to deliver further military support to Ukraine — including secure communication and anti-drone systems — when its leaders convene in Spain for a summit later this week, Stoltenberg said.

Britain's defense ministry said Russia is likely to rely increasingly on reserve forces in the coming weeks. Analysts have said a call-up of reservists by Russia could vastly alter the balance in the war but could also come with negative political consequences for President Vladimir Putin's government.

The AP Interview: Spanish PM says NATO summit to show unity

By ARITZ PARRA and CIARÁN GILES Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said the NATO summit in Madrid this week aims to showcase the Western allies' united front in defense of democratic values in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while increasing the bloc's deterrence capabilities.

In an interview with The Associated Press a day before the summit begins Tuesday, he reiterated that the alliance would not tolerate any territorial aggression against its members.

"We have to transmit a message of deterrence, that we are ready to defend every centimeter of allied territory," Sánchez said.

Russian President Vladimir "Putin is not just invading Ukraine. What he wants is to destabilize, weaken the security, the prosperity of Europe."

Speaking at the palace that hosts the prime minister's office and residence in Madrid, Sánchez said the chief aim of the NATO summit was to send "a message of unity in line with democracy, security, international

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order, based on rules that, unfortunately, Putin and the Russian Federation have blown to smithereens with the invasion of Ukraine.”

A key issue will be boosting NATO’s military presence on its eastern flank, as well as satisfying Spain’s demand to not ignore budding threats on the southern fringe of the alliance, especially from unstable African areas such as the Sahel.

NATO’s secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg, said Monday the alliance will increase the size of its rapid reaction force to 300,000 troops. The force currently has about 40,000 soldiers.

Stoltenberg also said the allies will discuss how to respond to the growing influence of Russia and China in NATO’s “southern neighborhood.”

The Madrid summit, which opens with a state dinner Tuesday followed by discussions on Wednesday, was announced a year ago with eyes set on a new “Strategic Concept,” the once-in-a-decade renewal of vows by NATO members that outlines the threats to the alliance and its response.

But after Moscow launched its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, a key issue has become Finland and Sweden’s ending of their non-aligned and neutrality stance to apply for NATO membership, something that has greatly irked Russia.

NATO’s proclaimed unity is being put to test on the issue, as Turkey, which has the second-biggest army in the alliance after the United States, is looking for guarantees from Finland and Sweden regarding Kurdish groups that Ankara regards as terrorists.

The leaders of the three countries announced they would hold a special meeting Tuesday in Madrid.

“The incorporation of Finland and Sweden, before or after, will be made possible,” Sánchez told the AP. “We would like it to be in the Madrid summit, I don’t deny it but, evidently, if it’s not the case, the talks will continue.”

Sánchez, a Socialist politician who has led Spain’s first national coalition government since early 2020, is facing criticism from Unidas Podemos (United We Can), a far-left party that holds five of the 22 seats in the Cabinet, for its backing of NATO’s military commitment to Ukraine.

Some United We Can members have said they won’t back Spain’s national budget next year if it increases military spending while Spaniards grapple with runaway inflation and other economic hardship.

Without specifying a timeframe, Sánchez said Spain was committed to increasing its defense budget from just over 1% of GDP — the second-lowest share of all European NATO members — to the 2% committed by all allies “in the next decade.”

Two of the most-watched items at the summit will be Russia and China when it comes to NATO’s new strategic roadmap for the next 10 years.

Sánchez said the “Strategic Concept,” which was last updated in Lisbon in 2010, will see Russia transformed from being considered a NATO partner to becoming “the principal threat to the security of the Atlantic Alliance.”

Regarding China, Sánchez said that Beijing “represents a challenge that also offers opportunities for collaboration,” indicating that Spain doesn’t support classifying Beijing’s assertiveness as a threat, as some allies may want.

Pressed by the global disruption the Ukraine war is unleashing on energy and food supplies and the prospect of a serious recession, some European leaders have started to call for a negotiated end of the war, even if that involves territorial sacrifices by Ukraine.

But Sánchez steered clear of supporting those calls.

“It’s a decision that Ukraine must take, not us,” he said.

US officials back in Venezuela in a bid to rebuild ties

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press Writer

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Senior U.S. government officials have quietly traveled to Caracas in the latest bid to bring home detained Americans and rebuild relations with the South American oil giant as the war in Ukraine drags on, forcing the U.S. to recalibrate other foreign policy objectives.

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A U.S. State Department spokesperson described the trip as a welfare visit focused on the safety of several U.S. citizens detained in Caracas, including a group of oil executives from Houston-based Citgo jailed more than four years ago. The delegation includes Roger Carstens, the special presidential envoy on hostage affairs, as well as Ambassador James Story, who heads the U.S. government's Venezuelan Affairs Unit out of neighboring Colombia.

President Nicolás Maduro confirmed the visit during televised remarks, saying the delegation would meet with a trusted ally, National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez, to "give continuity to the bilateral agenda between the government of the United States and the government of Venezuela."

The visit follows a surprise trip in March by the two officials and Juan Gonzalez, the National Security Council director for the Western Hemisphere. That was the first White House trip to the county in more than two decades.

That trip resulted in the release of two American citizens who the U.S. considered unjustly detained and a promise from Maduro to jumpstart talks with his opponents. Months earlier, he had suspended the negotiations, led by Norwegian diplomats in Mexico, after a key ally was extradited to the U.S. on money-laundering charges.

It's unclear what else the officials are seeking to accomplish during the mission. But high on the list are likely to be Maduro's demand that the U.S. lift crippling oil sanctions that have exacerbated hardships in what was once South America's most prosperous nation.

Upon arrival in Caracas, Story met for two hours with Juan Guaidó, according to someone close to the leader of the U.S.-backed opposition. The two discussed efforts to jumpstart negotiations in Mexico, according to the person on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private meeting.

Since the March trip, both the Biden administration and Venezuela's socialist government have shown a willingness to engage after years of hostilities between Washington and Caracas over Maduro's 2018 re-election, which was marred by irregularities. The U.S. and other nations withdrew recognition of Maduro after that election, and instead, recognized Guaidó as Venezuela's legitimate leader.

Although negotiations between Maduro and the opposition have yet to resume, the U.S. then renewed a license so that oil companies, including Chevron, could continue to perform only basic upkeep of wells they operate jointly with Venezuela's state-run oil giant PDVSA.

The White House also lifted sanctions imposed in 2017 targeting the nephew of First Lady Cilia Flores, who at the time was accused of facilitating corruption while a top official at PDVSA.

The trip follows a public plea to the Biden administration from the family of Matthew Heath, a former U.S. Marine arrested nearly two years ago on what the U.S. considers trumped-up terror charges. Heath's family earlier this month called on the administration to take urgent action to save his life following what they said was a suicide attempt, which the AP has been unable to verify.

The U.S. is also interested in tapping into Venezuela's vast oil wealth as the war in Ukraine has led to a 50% jump in oil prices that is fueling the worst inflation in decades.

Maduro during his televised remarks Monday alluded to remarks from an official close to French President Emmanuel Macron urging the U.S. to ease sanctions on Venezuela and Iran to offset the spike in oil prices. The comments were made on the sidelines of a meeting of the Group of Seven leaders in Germany.

Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves but production has plummeted for the past decade as a result of a drop in prices, mismanagement and the U.S. sanctions. Its presence in the world oil market is today marginal and any attempt to boost production would take time to materialize.

3 killed, dozens hurt in Amtrak train crash in Missouri

By SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

MENDON, Mo. (AP) — An Amtrak passenger train traveling from Los Angeles to Chicago struck a dump truck Monday in a remote area of Missouri, killing three people and injuring dozens more as rail cars tumbled off the tracks and landed on their sides, officials said.

Two of those killed were on the train and one was in the truck, Missouri State Highway Patrol spokes-

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man Cpl. Justin Dunn said. It was not immediately clear exactly how many people were hurt, the patrol said, but hospitals reported receiving more than 40 patients from the crash and were expecting more.

Amtrak's Southwest Chief was carrying about 207 passengers and crew members when the collision happened near Mendon at a rural intersection on a gravel road with no lights or electronic controls, according to the highway patrol. Officials were still trying to determine the exact number of people aboard. Seven cars derailed, the patrol said.

Rob Nightingale said he was dozing off in his sleeper compartment when the lights flickered and the train rocked back and forth.

"It was like slow motion. Then all of a sudden I felt it tip my way. I saw the ground coming toward my window, and all the debris and dust," Nightingale told The Associated Press. "Then it sat on its side and it was complete silence. I sat there and didn't hear anything. Then I heard a little girl next door crying."

Nightingale was unhurt and he and other passengers were able to climb out of the overturned train car through a window.

The collision broke the dump truck apart, he said.

"It was all over the tracks," said Nightingale, an art gallery owner from Taos, New Mexico, who said he rides Amtrak regularly to Chicago.

It's too early to speculate on why the truck was on the tracks, said National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy. A team of NTSB investigators will arrive Tuesday, she said. Trains won't be able to run on the track for "a matter of days" while they gather evidence, she added.

At one point, KMBC-TV helicopter video showed rail cars on their side as emergency responders used ladders to climb into one of them. Six medical helicopters parked nearby were waiting to transport patients.

Close to 20 local and state law enforcement agencies, ambulance services, fire department and medical helicopter services responded, Dunn said. The first emergency responders arrived within 20 minutes of receiving a 911 call, he said.

Passenger Dian Couture was in the dining car with her husband celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary when she heard a loud noise and the train wobbled and then crashed onto its side.

"The people on our left-hand side flew across and hit us, and then we were standing on the windows on the right-hand side of the car," Couture told WDAF-TV. "Two gentlemen in the front came up, stacked a bunch of things and popped out the window and literally pulled us out by our hands."

Passengers included 16 youths and eight adults from two Boy Scout troops who were traveling home to Appleton, Wisconsin, after a backcountry excursion at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. No one in the group was seriously injured, said Scott Armstrong, director of national media relations for the Boy Scouts of America. The Scouts administered first aid to several injured passengers, including the driver of the dump truck, Armstrong said.

High school students from Pleasant Ridge High School in Easton, Kansas, who were headed to a Future Business Leaders of America conference in Chicago, were also aboard, Superintendent Tim Beying told The Kansas City Star.

Cheryl Benjamin was on her way home to East Lansing, Michigan, after an Alaskan cruise and a trip to Disneyland. She said she felt a bump, then heard a squeal, then looked out the window and saw the cars in front of her falling to the right. Then her car fell, the last to derail. It all took about 45 seconds.

Benjamin told The Associated Press that the passengers organized themselves to escape the cars. Some of the Boy Scouts on board helped her climb out of the train and onto the ground. She was spending Monday evening in a local high school gym, where community members had brought in food for the passengers as they waited for buses to take them to hotels.

Republican state Rep. Peggy McGaugh was at the high school. She said locals heard about the crash and started frying chicken, making sandwiches and delivering pallets of water.

"Being the small community this is, nobody wants to be the hero but everyone wants to help," McGaugh said.

Mike Spencer, who grows corn and soybeans on the land surrounding the intersection where the crash occurred, said everyone in Mendon understands that the intersection is dangerous, especially for those

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driving heavy, slow farm equipment. The approach to the tracks is on an inclining gravel road and it's difficult to see trains coming in either direction, he said.

Spencer said he had contacted state transportation officials, Chariton County commissioners and BNSF Railway, which owns the track, about the potential danger. Spencer, who is on the board of a local levy district, said the dump truck driver was hauling rock for a levy on a local creek, a project that had been ongoing for a couple days.

Amtrak is a federally supported company that operates more than 300 passenger trains daily in nearly every contiguous U.S. state and parts of Canada.

It was the second Amtrak collision in as many days. Three people in a car were killed Sunday afternoon when an Amtrak commuter train smashed into it in Northern California, authorities said.

The Southwest Chief takes about two days to travel from Los Angeles to Chicago, picking up passengers at stops in between. Mendon, with a population of about 160, is about 84 miles (135 kilometers) northeast of Kansas City.

Lawyer who advised Trump says federal agents seized phone

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A conservative lawyer who aided former President Donald Trump's efforts to undo the 2020 election results and who has been repeatedly referenced in House hearings on the Jan. 6, 2021 assault on the Capitol said in a court filing Monday that federal agents seized his cell phone last week.

John Eastman said the agents took his phone as he left a restaurant last Wednesday evening, the same day law enforcement officials conducted similar activity around the country as part of broadening probes into efforts by Trump allies to overturn the election.

The move underscores federal investigators' interest in the unsuccessful schemes advanced by Trump advisers to help keep the Republican president in power in the period between the November 2020 election and the riot at the Capitol two months later, when Trump loyalists stormed the building to halt the certification of the election results.

Eastman said the agents who approached him identified themselves as from the FBI but appeared to be serving a warrant on behalf of the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General, which he contends has no jurisdiction to investigate him since he has never worked for the department. He said the cell phone that was seized contains emails that have been the subject of a months-long dispute between him and the House panel.

"That litigation has received extensive media attention, so it is hard to imagine that the Department of Justice, which apparently submitted the application for the warrant at issue here, was not aware of it," wrote his lawyers, Charles Burnham and Joseph Gribble.

The action was disclosed in a filing in federal court in New Mexico in which Eastman challenges the legitimacy of the warrant, calling it overly broad, and asks that a court force the federal government to return his phone. He says the warrant does not specify any particular crime for which evidence from the phone might be relevant.

The filing does not specify where exactly agents seized his phone, though the warrant was signed by a federal magistrate judge in New Mexico and footage of the seizure aired by Fox News on Monday night describes it as having occurred in the city of Santa Fe. Lawyers for Eastman did not immediately return an email seeking comment.

Federal agents investigating the run-up to the Jan. 6 riot last week served a raft of subpoenas related to a scheme by Trump allies to put forward alternate, or fake, slates of electors in hopes of invalidating the election won by Democrat Joe Biden. Also that day, agents searched the Virginia home of Jeffrey Clark, a Trump Justice Department official who encouraged Trump's challenges of the election results.

A spokeswoman for the inspector general's office declined to comment.

Eastman, who last year resigned his position as a law professor at Chapman University, has been a central figure in the ongoing hearings by the House committee investigating the riot at the Capitol, though he has not been among the witnesses to testify.

The committee has heard testimony about how Eastman put forward a last-ditch, unorthodox proposal challenging the workings of the 130-year-old Electoral Count Act, which governs the process for tallying the election results in Congress.

Eastman pushed for Vice President Mike Pence to deviate from his ceremonial role and halt the certification of the electoral votes, a step Pence had no legal power to take and refused to attempt. His plan was to have the states send alternative slates of electors from 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.

A lawyer for Pence, Greg Jacob, detailed for the committee at a hearing earlier this month how he had fended off Eastman's pressure, and another witness, retired federal judge Michael Luttig, has called the plan from Eastman "incorrect at every turn."

The panel played video showing Eastman repeatedly invoking his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination while being interviewed by the committee.

Eastman later sought to be "on the pardon list," according to an email he sent to Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, shared by the committee.

Supreme Court backs coach in praying on field after games

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court said Monday that a high school football coach who knelt and prayed on the field after games was protected by the Constitution, a decision that opponents said would open the door to "much more coercive prayer" in public schools.

The court ruled 6-3 for the coach with the conservative justices in the majority and the liberals in dissent. The case was the latest in a line of rulings for religious plaintiffs.

The case forced the justices to wrestle with how to balance the religious and free speech rights of teachers and coaches with the rights of students not to feel pressured into participating in religious practices. The liberal justices in the minority said there was evidence that Bremerton (Washington) High School Coach Joseph Kennedy's prayers at the 50-yard-line had a coercive effect on students and allowed him to incorporate his "personal religious beliefs into a school event."

Dissenting Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that the decision "sets us further down a perilous path in forcing states to entangle themselves with religion."

But the justices in the majority emphasized that the coach's prayers came after the games were over and at a time when he wasn't responsible for students and was free to do other things.

The coach and his attorneys at First Liberty Institute, a Christian legal group, were among those cheering the decision. Kennedy said in an interview that his first reaction was one of pure joy.

"Just like in all my football games I just threw my arms up, you know, 'touchdown,'" he said. He described the seven years since the dispute began as tough on his family but "absolutely worth it."

Justice Neil Gorsuch, writing for the majority in the ruling, declared, "The Constitution and the best of our traditions counsel mutual respect and tolerance, not censorship and suppression, for religious and nonreligious views alike.

Gorsuch noted that the coach "prayed during a period when school employees were free to speak with a friend, call for a reservation at a restaurant, check email, or attend to other personal matters" and "while his students were otherwise occupied."

It would be wrong to treat everything public school teachers and coaches say and do as speech subject to government control, he wrote. If that were the case, "a school could fire a Muslim teacher for wearing a headscarf in the classroom or prohibit a Christian aide from praying quietly over her lunch in the cafeteria," he wrote.

He closed by writing that: "Respect for religious expressions is indispensable to life in a free and diverse Republic—whether those expressions take place in a sanctuary or on a field, and whether they manifest

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through the spoken word or a bowed head.”

The decision continues a pattern in which the court has ruled in favor of religious plaintiffs. Last week the court ruled that Maine can't exclude religious schools from a program that offers tuition aid for private education, a decision that could ease religious organizations' access to taxpayer money.

In dissent, Sotomayor wrote Monday that players “recognize that gaining the coach's approval may pay dividends small and large, from extra playing time to a stronger letter of recommendation to additional support in college athletic recruiting.” And she said “some students reported joining Kennedy's prayer because they felt social pressure to follow their coach and teammates.”

Sotomayor was joined in her dissent by Justices Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan.

Paul Clement, the attorney who argued the case on behalf of Kennedy, said in a statement that the decision would allow the coach “to finally return to the place he belongs – coaching football and quietly praying by himself after the game.”

Kennedy now lives in Florida, and it was unclear when — or if — he might move back across the country to Washington state for a part-time job that had paid him less than \$5,000. He said in the interview that he is in Florida to help his father-in-law but his family remains in Washington and it was never his intention to remain in Florida permanently. He said his lawyers and the school district would need to work things out for him to return to coaching.

He started coaching at the school in 2008 and initially prayed alone on the 50-yard line at the end of games. Students started joining him, and over time he began to deliver a short, inspirational talk with religious references. Kennedy did that for years and also led students in locker room prayers. The school district learned what he was doing in 2015 and asked him to stop out of concerns the district could be sued for violating students' religious freedom rights.

He stopped leading students in prayer in the locker room and on the field but wanted to continue kneeling and praying on the field himself after games. The school asked him not to do so while still “on duty” as a coach after the games. When he continued, the school put him on paid leave. The head coach of the varsity team later recommended he not be rehired because, among other things, he failed to follow district policy.

In a statement, the Bremerton School District and its attorneys at Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, said the decision undermines the separation required by the Constitution. The school district said in a statement that it had “followed the law and acted to protect the religious freedom of all students and their families.”

Rachel Laser, the head of Americans United, said the decision “opens the door to much more coercive prayer in our public schools” and undermines the religious freedom of students.

The school district's attorney, Richard Katskee, said it is studying the decision and considering its next steps.

Three justices on the court — Breyer, Kagan and Justice Samuel Alito — attended public high schools, while the other six attended Catholic schools.

The case is Kennedy v. Bremerton School District, 21-418.

Supreme Court's abortion ruling sets off new court fights

By KEVIN MCGILL, AMY FORLITI and GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Judges temporarily blocked abortion bans Monday in Louisiana and Utah, while a federal court in South Carolina said a law sharply restricting the procedure would take effect there immediately as the battle over whether women may end pregnancies shifted from the nation's highest court to courthouses around the country.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision Friday to end constitutional protection for abortion opened the gates for a wave of litigation. One side sought quickly to put statewide bans into effect, and the other tried to stop or at least delay such measures.

Much of Monday's court activity focused on “trigger laws,” adopted in 13 states that were designed to take effect swiftly upon last week's ruling. Additional lawsuits could also target old anti-abortion laws that

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were left on the books in some states and went unenforced under Roe. Newer abortion restrictions that were put on hold pending the Supreme Court ruling are also coming back into play.

"We'll be back in court tomorrow and the next day and the next day," Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights, which argued the case that resulted in the high court ruling, said Friday.

Rulings to put trigger laws on hold came swiftly in Utah and Louisiana.

A Utah judge blocked that state's near-total abortion ban from going into effect for 14 days, to allow time for the court to hear challenges to the state's trigger law. Planned Parenthood had challenged the law, which contains narrow exceptions for rape, incest or the mother's health, saying the law violates the equal protection and privacy provisions in the state constitution.

"I think the immediate effects that will occur outweigh any policy interest of the state in stopping abortions," Utah Judge Andrew Stone said.

In Louisiana, a judge in New Orleans, a liberal city in a conservative state, temporarily blocked enforcement of that state's trigger-law ban on abortion, after abortion rights activists argued that it is unclear. The ruling is in effect pending a July 8 hearing.

At least one of the state's three abortion clinics said it would resume performing procedures on Tuesday.

"We're going to do what we can," said Kathaleen Pittman, administrator of Hope Medical Group for Women, in Shreveport. "It could all come to a screeching halt."

Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, a Republican and staunch abortion opponent, vowed to fight the judge's ruling and enforce the law.

"We would remind everyone that the laws that are now in place were enacted by the people through State Constitutional Amendments and the LA Legislature," Landry tweeted Monday.

In South Carolina, a federal court lifted its prior hold on an abortion restriction there, allowing the state to ban abortions after an ultrasound detects a heartbeat, usually around six weeks into a pregnancy, before many women know they are pregnant. There are exceptions if the woman's life is in danger, or if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.

Planned Parenthood said after the ruling that it will continue to perform abortions at its South Carolina clinics within the parameters of the new law.

Also Monday, abortion rights advocates asked a Florida judge to block a new law there that bans the procedure after 15 weeks with some exceptions to save a mother's life or if the fetus has a fatal abnormality, but no exceptions for rape, incest or human trafficking. The ACLU of Florida argued that the law violates the Florida Constitution. A ruling on that is expected Thursday — a day before the law is scheduled to take effect.

Abortion rights activists also went to court Monday to try to fend off restrictions in Texas, Idaho, Kentucky and Mississippi, the state at the center of the Supreme Court ruling, while the American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona filed an emergency motion there on Saturday seeking to block a 2021 law they worry can be used to halt all abortions.

In Friday's ruling, the Supreme Court left it to the states to decide whether to allow abortion.

"The expectation is that this will result in years of legislative and judicial challenges," said Jonathan Turley, a professor at the George Washington University law school.

As of Saturday, abortion services had stopped in at least 11 states — either because of state laws or confusion over them.

In some cases, the lawsuits may only buy time. Even if courts block some restrictions from taking hold, lawmakers in many conservative states could move quickly to address any flaws cited.

That's likely to be the case in Louisiana. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit filed in state court don't deny that the state can now ban abortion. Instead, they contend Louisiana now has multiple, conflicting trigger mechanisms in the law.

They also argue that state law is unclear on whether it bans an abortion prior to a fertilized egg implanting in the uterus. And while the law provides an exception for "medically futile" pregnancies in cases of fetuses with lethal abnormalities, the plaintiffs noted the law gives no definition of the term.

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Now that the high court has ruled that the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee the right to an abortion, abortion rights groups are seeking protection under state constitutions. Challenges to trigger laws could be made on the grounds that the conditions to impose the bans have not been met, or that it was improper for a past legislature to bind the current one.

James Bopp Jr., general counsel for the National Right to Life Committee, said the wave of suits from abortion rights advocates is not surprising. "We know that the abortion industry has basically unlimited funds, and its allies have basically unlimited funds, and of course they're fanatical about abortion on demand throughout pregnancy," Bopp said in an interview.

But he said that the Supreme Court ruling should preclude abortion rights supporters from prevailing in any federal challenges. And he called efforts based on state constitutions "fanciful."

Still other cases could be filed as states try to sort out whether abortion bans in place before Roe was decided — sometimes referred to as "zombie laws" — apply now that there is no federal protection for abortion.

For instance, Wisconsin passed a law in 1849 banning abortions except to save the life of the mother. Attorney General Josh Kaul, a Democrat, said he does not believe it is enforceable. Abortion opponents have called on lawmakers to impose a new ban.

In the meantime, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin said it immediately suspended all abortions.

In Michigan, Planned Parenthood challenged a 1931 abortion ban ahead of last week's Supreme Court ruling. In May, a judge said the ban could not be enforced because it violates the state's constitution. Abortion rights supporters are now trying to get a proposed state constitutional amendment on the ballot in November to protect abortion and birth control.

Idaho, Oklahoma and Texas have adopted laws that allow people to seek bounties against those who help others get abortions. It is an open question as to whether that means people can be pursued across state lines, and legal challenges over the issue are likely to come up in cases of both surgical abortions and those involving medicine mailed to patients.

The California Legislature, controlled by Democrats, passed a bill Thursday to shield abortion providers and volunteers in the state from civil judgments imposed by other states. In liberal Massachusetts, Gov. Charlie Baker, a Republican, signed an executive order Friday that prohibits state agencies from assisting other states' investigations into anyone who receives a legal abortion in Massachusetts. Rhode Island's Democratic governor said he would sign a similar order.

Some cities nix July 4 fireworks for shortages, fire dangers

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The skies over a scattering of Western U.S. cities will stay dark for the third consecutive Fourth of July as some major fireworks displays are canceled again this year — some over wildfire concerns amid dry weather and others because of enduring pandemic-related staffing and supply chain issues.

Phoenix canceled its three major Independence Day displays because it couldn't obtain professional-grade fireworks. Shows in several other cities around Phoenix are still on.

"Unless you're in a really remote area where that was the only show, most people will be able to find a show nearby," said Julie Heckman, executive director of the American Pyrotechnics Association.

Overseas shipping, transportation in the U.S., rising insurance costs and labor shortages have led to the canceled displays, along with demand for fireworks shows at concerts, sports stadiums and the Fourth of July holiday that largely were absent during the first two years of the pandemic, Heckman said.

"The demand is so high that it's almost like a perfect storm," Heckman said, adding that not having enough crew to work the shows or rental trucks to transport materials have added to the crunch.

China produces most of the professional-grade fireworks that shoot up into the air and produce colorful, dazzling bursts in various shapes. The shortage doesn't lie in manufacturing, Heckman said, but in congestion at U.S. ports.

Heckman said some companies recently chartered about a dozen vessels, each carrying 200-250 con-

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tainers of consumer-grade fireworks that are considered hazardous material, and shipped them to ports in Alabama and Louisiana to free up space at ports on the West Coast.

Other cities around the country are halting the displays because of the threat of wildfire. Flagstaff in northern Arizona will carry out its annual Independence Day parade through the city's historic downtown, but a new laser light show will replace the standard pyrotechnic display.

Three large wildfires skirted the mountainous city this spring alone, prompting hundreds of people to evacuate, closing down a major highway and destroying some homes.

"The decision was made early because we wanted people to be able to make plans with their families," said Flagstaff city spokesperson Sarah Langley.

Many local jurisdictions have banned the use of fireworks amid a punishing drought, even with an early start of the annual rainy season that already has led to flooding in the U.S. Southwest. Fireworks always are prohibited in national forests.

A popular northern San Joaquin Valley fireworks show that in pre-pandemic times brought tens of thousands of people to Lake Don Pedro, California, also was canceled because of drought concerns, including the lake's projected low level.

"The safety of our guests and being good stewards of the land entrusted to us are our highest priorities," the Don Pedro Recreation Agency said in a statement.

Lompoc on California's central coast and Castle Rock in Colorado canceled their pyrotechnic displays over worries about wildfires. Still, an Independence Eve fireworks show with live music by the Colorado Symphony is planned July 3 at Denver's Civic Center Park.

In New Mexico, the most destructive wildfire season in modern history won't stop that state's major cities, including Albuquerque and Santa Fe, from holding Fourth of July fireworks displays under fire department supervision.

The Southgate Mall in Missoula, Montana, canceled its annual Fourth of July celebration and fireworks show without giving a reason.

Elsewhere in the U.S., some North Carolina towns canceled displays after a recent fireworks-related explosion killed a man on a small farm and a large cache of fireworks were destroyed in a related fire.

In Minneapolis, a fireworks display over the Mississippi won't be held because of staff shortages and construction at a nearby park.

Those who plan to light up consumer-grade fireworks like bottle rockets, firecrackers and ground-level fountains at home can expect to pay more for them. The American Pyrotechnic Association estimates that costs are up 35% across the industry.

Fire officials in some cities worry that the cancelations of community displays could prompt some people to ramp up their use of consumer-grade fireworks.

"We are typically worried about exposure of sparks and fire to homes and dry brush," said Phoenix Fire spokesperson Capt. Evan Gammage. "We get so many calls around this time of year."

Female referee at men's World Cup wants the game to shine

By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese referee Yoshimi Yamashita agrees with Pelé or whoever it was decades ago that first described soccer as the "beautiful game."

Yamashita is one of three women picked by FIFA to be referees at the men's World Cup in Qatar, which opens on Nov. 21. It's the first time a woman will be in charge on soccer's largest stage.

She sees her job this way: Let the game shine, as it should.

"One of the big goals as a referee is to bring out the the attractiveness of soccer," she said Monday in Tokyo in an interview with the Associated Press. "I do my best for that, and I will do what I should at that time toward that end. So if I need to communicate with the players, I will do that. If I need to show a card, I will show a card. Rather than control, I'm thinking about what to do toward the big goal of bringing out the appeal of soccer."

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Stéphanie Frappart of France and Salima Mukansanga of Rwanda are the other women who were selected. There are 36 referees in total. FIFA has also named three female assistant referees in a pool of 69: Neuza Back of Brazil, Karen Diaz Medina of Mexico, and Kathryn Nesbitt of the United States.

Though it's likely all three will be in charge of games, it's not a given. They would also be used as so-called "fourth referees" on the sidelines. However, they cannot be used as assistants.

"Each match official will be carefully monitored in the next months with a final assessment on technical, physical and medical aspects to be made shortly before the World Cup," Massimo Busacca, FIFA's director of refereeing, said in a statement.

Yamashita's selection puts the focus on Japan's low ranking on most measures of equal pay for women, and in global studies of gender equality.

Only 14.3% of the seats in Japan's national legislature are held by women — 152nd of 190 countries in a study published several months ago by the U.S. Congressional Research Service. Another study on the gender pay gap placed Japan 120th of 156 countries.

"I would be very happy if women could play an active role in sports in this way, and if sports and especially soccer could lead this," Yamashita said. "In Japan, there is still a long way to go in the world of soccer (regarding participation of women), so it would be great if this could connect to promotion of female participation in different ways, not only in soccer or in sports."

Women's soccer has led the way in Japan. Japanese women won the 2011 women's World Cup, were runners-up in 2015, and have been consistently among the game's elite teams.

Yamashita went through a workout on Monday just outside Tokyo, sweltering in temperatures that reached 35 C (95 F). She laughed when she was reminded that games in Qatar — located on a tip of the Arabian Peninsula — will be much cooler, being played in the Northern Hemisphere winter and in air-conditioned stadiums.

Yamashita seemed relaxed during the interview, removed from the obvious pressure. She has been a referee in Japan's men's J League, and has also been in charge of the Asian equivalent of the men's Champions League. She also handled matches during last year's Tokyo Olympics.

"Of course, I think the pressure is huge," she said, "and I think I have a lot of responsibility. But I am really happy to take this duty and pressure, so I try to take it positively and I try to be happy."

She described the excitement of leaving the waiting room just before a match.

"I guess it cheers me up in that moment. I feel like that's when I switch gears the most," she said.

She said the difference in the men's and women's game was, of course, speed. But not simply that some men might run faster.

"It's the speed, but not just the players' speed," she said. "Not the ball speed. It's just the game speed. It means for me I have to make quicker decisions — more speed."

Yamashita conducted most of the interview in Japanese, but said she would use English and "facial gestures, body gestures" when communicating with players in Qatar.

"Usually when I give a card, I say nothing," she said, shifting to English. "But when I give a warning, I just tell them I'm not happy. They understand."

Families brace for changes to pandemic-era free school meals

By LISA RATHKE Associated Press

ESSEX, Vt. (AP) — Before the pandemic, there was no room in the budget for Kate Murphy's children to buy lunch at school. She and her husband would buy in bulk and make bag lunches at home. So the free school meals that were made available to students nationwide amid the crisis have brought welcome relief, especially since her husband lost his job last year at a bakery company that closed.

The free meals gave the Essex Junction, Vermont, family one less thing to worry about.

"We make just too much money (literally by just a few dollars) to qualify for free or reduced lunches and other food-related benefits, but not enough to truly ever feel financially comfortable," Murphy, a mother of four and administrator at a trust company, said by email.

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The pandemic-era federal aid that made school meals available for free to all public school students — regardless of family income levels — is ending, raising fears about the effects in the upcoming school year for families already struggling with rising food and fuel costs.

For families already strained by inflation and the end of other federal help like expanded child tax credits, advocates say cuts to the aid could mean turning more frequently to food banks.

"Families across the country are facing a very difficult reality of having to choose between feeding their kids or filling up their gas tank or purchasing medicine," said Vince Hall, chief government relations officer for Feeding America, a nonprofit network of foodbanks.

The rules are set to revert to how they were before the coronavirus pandemic with families that are eligible based on income levels required to apply for their children to receive free or reduced-price lunch. Schools in predominantly low-income areas will be allowed to serve breakfast and lunch to everyone for free, as before.

Since waiving the eligibility requirement during the pandemic, the U.S. Agriculture Department, which oversees school meal programs, has seen the number of participating students soar.

During this past school year, about 30 million kids a day were getting free meals, compared to 20 million before the pandemic, said Cindy Long, administrator of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

At summer meal distributions, 1.3 billion meals and snacks were given out nationwide in fiscal year 2020 at a cost of \$4.1 billion — an eightfold increase from the previous year in terms of meals and cost, according to the USDA.

A bill passed in Congress last week and signed by President Joe Biden on Saturday aims to keep the rules around summer meals programs as they have been during the pandemic so that sites can operate in any community with need, rather than just where there's a high concentration of low-income children, and offer to-go meals. It also provides flexibility for schools to make substitutions for certain types of food without being fined if they run into supply chain problems.

Advocates say the legislation will provide relief, but the timing has caused confusion around plans for summer meal distributions.

"It's disappointing that the extension of the summer waivers would come so late that for the most part they're not going to be able to stem the dramatic loss in summer meal sites that are happening this summer," said Anore Horton, executive director of Hunger Free Vermont.

For the next school year, some states have taken it upon themselves to keep school meals free for all students.

California and Maine made universal meals permanent last year and Vermont, where Murphy and her family live, is continuing the free meals for all public school students for another year using surplus state education funding. In Massachusetts, House lawmakers included \$110 million in the budget to extend universal school meals for another year but the Senate version did not. Now both versions are before a conference committee. In Colorado, the Legislature passed a bill to ask voters this November whether to fund free universal breakfast and lunch at schools.

At the Albert D. Lawton Intermediate School in Vermont one recent day, eighth graders picked up freshly made pizza and Caesar salad on their trays and ate lunch with friends around round tables. Students said it was important to continue to provide free meals to all students.

"Not everybody has the same situation at home and it's hard to learn at school when you're super hungry so I think free lunch, it makes it easier for everybody," student Ethan Pringle said.

Not only do the free universal meals give kids nutrition so they can learn but they also provide some reliability for kids and families during what is still a challenging time, Vermont state Rep. Karen Dolan said. It also removes the stigma of being a free or reduced-price lunch kid and the embarrassment of families who can't pay their kids' lunch accounts, officials said.

But some officials worry about paying for meals for children from families who could easily afford them.

Vermont Republican Gov. Phil Scott supports helping those in need but "will not support imposing such taxes, which would disproportionately impact the very people we are trying to help, in order to fund meals

for children of affluent families," spokesperson Jason Maulucci said.

Families and advocates say losing universal school lunch and breakfast next year would have been hardship for families.

"Our kids have so much to worry about these days, and food shouldn't be one of them," Murphy said.

Anti-abortion centers to grow, wield more influence post-Roe

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — "Woman's Choice," the sign proclaims in bold pink letters. But despite promising abortion information and free pregnancy testing, the facility in Charleston, West Virginia, is designed to steer women facing an unwanted pregnancy away from choosing an abortion.

That will become much easier now that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that states like West Virginia can make abortion illegal.

It's one of hundreds of so-called crisis pregnancy centers nationwide whose aim is to discourage women from seeking abortions. The facilities, which have been accused repeatedly of deceiving women about their true purpose, are expected to wield even more influence in states where the dwindling number of clinics are now canceling abortion appointments.

Often religiously affiliated, the anti-abortion centers are not licensed medical facilities and do not provide medical services such as pre- or post-natal care or other health care for uninsured women, unlike clinics that offer abortions — which are subject to strict government regulations and patient privacy laws. They do sometimes have nurses on staff or as volunteers.

"Basically, these centers are looking around and saying, 'Our services are going to be needed now more than ever because there's going to be so many pregnant people who need support during their pregnancy — particularly unintended pregnancies,'" said Andrea Swartzendruber, a University of Georgia public health professor who has helped map center locations nationwide.

Shortly after Friday's Supreme Court decision, West Virginia's only abortion clinic announced it was suspending abortion services, but continuing to provide birth control, STI treatment and other services.

The Charleston anti-abortion center, which calls itself the Woman's Choice Pregnancy Resource Center, has been located next to the abortion clinic for years. The people who run it say their work won't change. They will continue to offer parenting and health classes, counseling for "women who regret a past decision to abort and wish to find comfort from guilt and sadness" and provide "facts about abortion risks — both physical and psychological," they said in an email to The Associated Press.

The board also said staff must complete training emphasizing the importance of clients' "right to be respected regardless of their decision."

At the clinic next door, called the Women's Health Center of West Virginia, executive director Katie Quinonez has her doubts about such statements. She has repeatedly seen patients seeking to end their pregnancies lured into the anti-abortion center and bombarded with warnings about abortion risks. Some who found their way to her office have shared pamphlets declaring that "abortion causes new problems that can haunt a woman for the rest of her life."

One titled "Abortion — Living Without Regret" shows a woman crying on the cover and lists "abortion risks," including "suicidal feelings," "death" and "cervical incompetence."

Quinonez said she worries about the dozens of patients whose abortion appointments were cancelled after the Supreme Court decision came down.

"I'm incredibly concerned," she said. "It's possible that they could think maybe there is another provider and state that's doing abortions. 'How about I call 'A Woman's Choice,' located in Charleston?' and then they make an appointment and go there because they've been lied to by a fake clinic that says 'Yes, we can provide you with care.'"

While the anti-abortion centers are mostly mum about their plans now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned, experts say they're likely to redouble efforts to persuade women not to end their pregnancies. The logistics work in their favor, since many women won't have the legal option of abortion without

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leaving their state.

The centers have been expanding in every state with support from wealthy conservative donors, powerful state lawmakers and religious institutions. They've also received tens of millions of tax dollars funneled to them by conservative state leaders.

Left-leaning states have shown more willingness to regulate how the centers advertise their services. Last year Connecticut banned them from using "deceptive advertising" about the services they provide.

Connecticut had 18 health clinics that provided abortions as of 2018; there are also around 20 pregnancy crisis centers.

"As we head into this new world and into this next phase, I think it's more important than ever for women to be able to access medically accurate information," said Democratic Rep. Jillian Gilcrest, who sponsored the Connecticut legislation.

"The last thing we want is for women to be at what they believe to be a health clinic only to receive misinformation about their options."

Nationally, crisis pregnancy centers outnumber abortion clinics more than 3 to 1, but in Republican-led states the numbers can be far higher, according to a 2021 report from The Alliance: State Advocates for Women's Rights and Gender Equality. Some 2,500 centers are located across the country, while there are fewer than 800 abortion clinics.

In Missouri, which has just one abortion clinic, Swartzendruber and her colleagues identified nearly 70 anti-abortion centers in 2021. The situation is similar in North Dakota, where at least seven centers operated last year and the state's lone abortion clinic is relocating now that *Roe v. Wade* was overturned.

In Mississippi, there are 30 centers, while the Jackson Women's Health Organization — a plaintiff in the legal battle that came before the Supreme Court — was the lone provider offering abortion services.

Those three states are among 13 with so-called trigger laws that banned most abortions after *Roe* was overturned. West Virginia doesn't have a trigger law, but does have an old statute on the books that had been shelved while *Roe* was in place.

As abortion clinics shutter across the country, some anti-abortion centers have expressed concern they will be targeted amid protests against the Supreme Court's ruling, although historically such incidents have been rare. Meanwhile, abortion clinics have been the targets of attacks for decades.

Earlier this month, anti-abortion leaders called on churches to support their local crisis pregnancy centers.

"We have an opportunity like never before," said Dean Nelson, vice president of government relations for Human Coalition, a national anti-abortion group that frequently directs pregnant women seeking information online to the centers and operates a handful of its own.

Some centers offer financial counseling, free diapers and food pantries for mothers after they've given birth. By expanding and strengthening the network of centers, anti-abortion advocates hope women will see they have resources and options.

That concerns reproductive rights advocates, who worry that without licensed abortion providers, women who become unexpectedly pregnant and desperate for help will wind up in places intent on deceiving them. Earlier this year, the Center for Countering Digital Hate, an internet watchdog group, released a report that found 1 in 10 Google searches for abortion services in states with trigger laws led people to the centers.

Amanda Furdge says that happened to her while searching for information about Mississippi's only abortion clinic in 2014. Instead, she found a listing for what turned out to be a crisis pregnancy center in Jackson.

"I went for an appointment, and they kept me there all day, traumatized me. They gave me a pregnancy test and they told me, 'We are not going to be able to recommend any abortion services for you,'" she said. "I was clear: 'I don't want to carry this pregnancy. I want to terminate it.'"

By the time she found the abortion clinic, she said she decided on her own she was too far along to have the procedure. She is now happily raising her 7-year-old son.

In West Virginia, the Charleston abortion clinic has rows of hedges blocking view of the building next door to reduce confusion. In front a sign reads "WARNING: The building behind this sign is an ANTI-CHOICE, ANTI-BIRTH CONTROL Crisis Pregnancy Center. It is not affiliated with the Women's Health Center."

"You shouldn't be able to pose as a medical facility and just straight up lie to patients," director Quinonez said.

Lawsuit: Texans 'turned a blind eye' to QB Watson's actions

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Texans had been told that their former quarterback Deshaun Watson was sexually assaulting and harassing women during massage sessions, but instead of trying to stop him, the team provided him with resources to enable his actions and "turned a blind eye" to his behavior, according to a lawsuit filed Monday.

The lawsuit against the team was filed in Houston by one of the 24 women who had previously sued Watson over allegations of sexual misconduct when he played for the Texans. Last week, the women's attorney, Tony Buzbee, announced 20 of the 24 lawsuits have been settled.

Watson, who was later traded to the Cleveland Browns, has denied any wrongdoing and vowed to clear his name. Watson is facing discipline from the NFL over the allegations. He is set to have a hearing this week with NFL disciplinary officer Sue L. Robinson, who will decide if the 26-year-old violated the league's personal conduct policy. Robinson is expected to rule before the Browns open training camp late next month.

In their lawsuits, the women accused Watson of exposing himself, touching them with his penis or kissing them against their will during massage appointments. One woman alleged Watson forced her to perform oral sex.

The lawsuit against the Texans accuses the team and some of its employees of having been told or being aware of Watson's troubling behavior. Joni Honn, the owner of a massage company that was contracted with the Texans, told police investigators that her therapists were aware of Watson's "known tendency to push boundaries during massage sessions," according to the lawsuit.

Honn told the Texans, including the team's head trainer, that Watson was reaching out to random women on Instagram for massages in early 2020, according to the lawsuit.

Magen Weisheit, another massage therapist who worked with the Texans, told Houston police investigators she and others were well aware of Watson's conduct during massage sessions. When Weisheit learned of the allegations made against Watson by a woman who filed the first lawsuit against him, she wrote in a text to the woman's former co-worker that she could reach out to the team's player personnel person but "they don't do much about the situation though," according to the lawsuit.

"Despite being actually aware of what can only be described as troubling behavior, the Houston Texans turned a blind eye. Worse, the Houston Texans organization enabled Watson's egregious behavior. The Texans also protected and shielded Watson — for Watson's own protection and the protection of the organization itself," according to the lawsuit.

The woman's lawsuit alleges the Texans provided Watson with various resources, including rooms at a Houston hotel, massage tables and a non-disclosure agreement the women were told to sign, that allowed the quarterback "to further his misconduct with women by turning the massage sessions into something sexual."

The Texans are also accused of having their head of security remove from the internet an Instagram video from November 2020 in which a woman had detailed alleged misconduct by Watson during massage sessions with her.

In a statement, the Houston Texans did not specifically address the various allegations made against the team.

"We are aware of the lawsuit filed against us today. Since March 2021, we have fully supported and complied with law enforcement and the various investigations. We will continue to take the necessary steps to address the allegations against our organization," the Texans said.

Buzbee said the lawsuit against the Texans was the first of many he plans to file against the team.

"Suffice it to say, the overwhelming evidence collected indicating that the Houston Texans enabled Watson's behavior is incredibly damning. We believe the Texans knew or most certainly should have known

of Watson's conduct," Buzbee said in a statement.

The NFL declined to comment on the lawsuit against the Texans.

"I never assaulted anyone," Watson said June 14 in his first public comments since being introduced by the Browns in March. "I never harassed anyone or I never disrespected anyone. I never forced anyone to do anything."

In March, two separate Texas grand juries declined to indict him on criminal complaints stemming from the allegations.

Houston police Detective Kamesha Baker, the lead investigator in the criminal investigation, told Buzbee in a deposition that she believed Watson had committed crimes in the 10 criminal complaints that had been filed against the quarterback. Baker also said that Watson's conduct during the massage sessions was escalating in such a way she believed that he would commit even more serious crimes, according to the lawsuit.

After the grand juries declined to indict, several teams pursued Watson, who agreed to be traded to the Browns. Cleveland signed the three-time Pro Bowler to a five-year, \$230 million contract in March.

The four lawsuits still pending against Watson could still go to trial, but that wouldn't happen until 2023 at the earliest.

Court revives block of vaccine mandate for federal workers

By KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — In a reversal for President Joe Biden, a federal appeals court in New Orleans on Monday agreed to reconsider its own April ruling that allowed the administration to require federal employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

The new order from the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans vacates an earlier ruling by a three-judge panel that upheld the mandate. The new order means a block on the mandate imposed in January by a Texas-based federal judge remains in effect, while the full court's 17 judges take up the appeal.

Biden had issued an order Sept. 9 requiring that more than 3.5 million federal executive branch workers undergo vaccination, with no option to get regularly tested instead, unless they secured approved medical or religious exemptions.

U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Brown, who was appointed to the District Court for the Southern District of Texas by then-President Donald Trump, issued a nationwide injunction against the requirement in January. At the time, the White House said 98% of federal workers were already vaccinated.

Brown's ruling was followed by back-and-forth rulings at the 5th Circuit.

In February, a 5th Circuit panel refused to block Brown's ruling pending appeal.

But after hearing arguments in March, a different panel ruled 2-1 that Brown did not have jurisdiction in the case. The panel said those challenging the requirement could have pursued administrative remedies under Civil Service law. Although the ruling was issued in April, it was not to officially take effect until May 31.

Judges Carl Stewart and James Dennis, who were nominated to the 5th Circuit by Democratic President Bill Clinton, were in the majority. Judge Rhesa Barksdale, a senior judge nominated by Republican President George H.W. Bush, dissented, saying the relief the challengers sought does not fall under the Civil Service Reform Act cited by the administration.

Barksdale is a senior judge, meaning he has a reduced case load and is no longer on active status at the court. Because he was part of the ruling panel he can participate in the reconsideration with the active judges. Of the 17 judges currently listed as active judges at the 5th Circuit, 12 are appointees of Republican presidents, including six nominated to the court by Trump.

When the case was argued before the three-judge 5th Circuit panel in March, administration lawyers had noted that district judges in a dozen jurisdictions had rejected a challenge to the vaccine requirement for federal workers before Brown ruled.

The administration argued the Constitution gives the president, as the head of the federal workforce,

the same authority as the CEO of a private corporation to require that employees be vaccinated.

No reruns: Committee tries new approach to break through

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — As television programming goes, expectations were widespread that the Jan. 6 committee hearings would essentially be reruns. Instead, they have been much more.

The five sessions have revealed a storyteller's eye, with focus, clarity, an understanding of how news is digested in modern media, and strong character development — even if former President Donald Trump's allies suggest there aren't enough actors.

After initially saying the hearings would pause for a break until next month, the Jan. 6 committee on Monday announced a surprise session will be held Tuesday to present new evidence.

As seen during Trump's impeachments, modern congressional hearings tend to produce more heat than light. That was part of why the Jan. 6 committee faced low expectations, along with the sense — 18 months after the insurrection, an event that played out on live television — that there may be little new to learn.

House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy's decision not to participate gave the committee a gift, the chance to craft hearings as a unicorn of sorts in today's political age.

The hearings are concise, no more than 2 ½ hours, each day with a specific theme. It goes like this: First, viewers are told at the outset what they're going to hear. Then they hear it. Then they are told at the end what they just heard. Usually there's a preview of what's next — a trick that likely reflects the advice of James Goldston, a former ABC News producer hired as a consultant.

Keeping the presentations understandable with short, simple bursts of information reflects lessons learned from the impeachment, said Norm Eisen, a former lawyer on the House Judiciary Committee who worked on those hearings and is now at the Brookings Institution.

"It's just focused on the witnesses and the evidence," said Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff of California, a member of the panel who also led the second Trump impeachment hearings. "We know we have a precious opportunity to get this information to the American people, and we don't want to waste a minute of it."

The committee uses clips from taped testimony like a journalist would include quotes in a story. Questioning of live witnesses doesn't wander.

Committee Chairman Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., and Republican Vice Chair Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., question witnesses alongside one other member who is in charge of each hearing.

The result is a rare sight in Congress: lawmakers staying silent.

"I'm surprised by the discipline involved in doing this effectively, because politicians love to grandstand," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a specialist in political communication and director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. "And if people were grandstanding, it wouldn't work."

As a result, sound bites that emerge from each hearing and are repeated online and in news reports — the way many Americans learn about these sessions — consistently reflect the narrative the committee is trying to advance, Jamieson said.

Each day's hearing fits the overall theme — that the plot to nullify the 2020 election was multi-faceted, with the events of Jan. 6, 2021, only one part, and that many of the people surrounding Trump didn't believe his claims of election fraud.

Witness testimony gains power because it mostly comes from Republicans, Trump's former aides and allies, Jamieson said. It's one thing to have Schiff declare Trump's rigged election claims were bull, quite another to have it come from the former president's attorney general, with an Ivanka Trump endorsement.

Former Vice President Mike Pence, who defied Trump's pleas not to certify the election, received the type of praise he'd never expect from a committee led by Democrats.

The most pointed political messages come from Cheney, who has spoken directly to Republican Trump supporters even as she knows many are furious with her.

"It can be difficult to accept that President Trump abused your trust, that he deceived you," she said at the conclusion of Thursday's hearing. "Many will invent excuses to ignore that fact. But that is a fact. I

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wish it weren't true. But it is."

The hearings also command the attention of journalists by consistently offering something new or unexamined, such as Thursday's revelation of congressmen who pleaded for presidential pardons, or the extent of Trump's fundraising off his false claims of fraud.

"Things really couldn't have gone much better from the committee's point of view," said veteran television producer Chris Whipple, author of a forthcoming book on the first year of the Biden administration. "The production has been fine, but it really has been a masterpiece of casting."

Citing the creator of "The West Wing," Whipple added: "Aaron Sorkin couldn't have dreamed up a character like Rusty Bowers," the Republican Arizona House speaker who resisted Trump's request to appoint false electors.

The committee has also created villains like John Eastman, architect of the effort to nullify the election, and Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, diminishing Giuliani by reports that he was intoxicated on election night.

The testimony of Georgia elections worker Wandrea "Shaye" Moss put a face on common Americans who were affected by false accusations of voter fraud.

Even an anchor on the frequently Trump-friendly Fox News Channel, Neil Cavuto, said after the hearing where Moss was featured that "this just seems to make Donald Trump look awful."

Trump seems to have sensed it. He criticized McCarthy, who pulled all of his Republican appointees off the Jan. 6 committee after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi rejected two of them. At the very least, having Trump allies on the panel would have hurt the committee's ability to control its message, Jamieson said.

Tim Graham of the conservative watchdog Media Research Center said he objects to the media portraying the commission's work as bipartisan when the only two Republicans — Cheney and Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger — are longtime Trump critics.

"The fact that this is not a balanced commission is really a shame," said Jonathan Turley, a George Washington University professor and Fox News analyst. "Having someone there to ask probing questions, rather than scripted questions, I think would have added greater authority and power to this hearing."

Given the evidence presented, Whipple wondered how effective additional Republicans would have been. "I'm not sure it would have helped them one iota," he said, "and it might have hurt them."

Jan. 6 panel calls surprise hearing to present new evidence

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Jan. 6 panel is calling a surprise hearing this week to present evidence it says it recently obtained, raising expectations of new bombshells in the sweeping investigation into the Capitol insurrection.

The hearing scheduled for 1 p.m. on Tuesday comes after Congress left Washington for a two-week recess. Lawmakers on the panel investigating the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection said last week that there would be no more hearings until July.

The subject of the hearings is so far unclear. A spokesman for the panel declined to comment on its substance.

The committee's investigation has been ongoing during the hearings that started three weeks ago, and the nine-member panel has continued to probe the attack by supporters of then-President Donald Trump. Among other investigative evidence, the committee recently obtained new footage of Trump and his inner circle taken both before and after Jan. 6, 2021 from British filmmaker Alex Holder.

Holder said last week that he had complied with a congressional subpoena to turn over all of the footage he shot in the final weeks of Trump's 2020 reelection campaign, including exclusive interviews with Trump, his children and then-Vice President Mike Pence while on the campaign trail. The footage includes material from before the insurrection and afterward.

It is uncertain if Holder's footage is the subject of the hearing on Tuesday, or if Holder himself will be there. Russell Smith, a lawyer for Holder, declined to comment.

Rep. Bennie Thompson, the panel's Democratic chairman, told reporters last week that the committee was

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in possession of the footage and needed more time to go through the hours of video Holder had turned over. The British filmmaker came in for a deposition Thursday that lasted two hours, Smith said last week.

Smith said then that it was Holder's "civic duty" to come forward and that the footage had shown some inconsistencies with previous testimony during the hearings.

The panel has held five hearings so far, mostly laying out Trump's pressure campaign on various institutions of power in the weeks leading up to the Jan. 6 joint session of Congress that eventually certified Democrat Joe Biden's presidential victory. The committee detailed the pressure from Trump and his allies on Vice President Mike Pence, on the states that were certifying Biden's win and on the Justice Department.

The panel has used live interviews, video testimony of its private witness interviews and also footage of the attack to detail what it has learned.

Lawmakers said last week that the two July hearings would focus on domestic extremists who breached the Capitol that day and on what Trump was doing as the violence unfolded.

Officials: US sending advanced missile systems to Ukraine

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. is planning to buy and send more medium- to long-range missile systems to Ukraine, a move officials hope will help Ukrainian forces hold onto the last remaining segments of land in the eastern Donbas that Russia has not yet been able to capture.

A senior defense official said Monday that Ukrainian forces are already effectively using advanced rocket systems, and that more of those will go into Ukraine with trained troops soon. A new plan for the U.S. to buy and send NASAMS, an advanced surface-to-air missile system, to Ukraine, is also in the works and would add to its longer-range rocket and missile strike capabilities.

President Joe Biden is expected to announce soon that the U.S. is purchasing NASAMS, a Norwegian-developed anti-aircraft system, to provide medium- to long-range defense for Ukraine, according to an administration official familiar with the matter. NASAMS is the same system used by the U.S. to protect the airspace around the White House and Capitol in Washington.

Both the defense official and the administration official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss U.S. military assessments and plans that have yet to be announced.

Russia has been mounting an all-out assault on the last Ukrainian stronghold in the eastern Luhansk region — the city of Lysychansk — from the ground and air, the local governor said Monday. Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said Russian forces were pummeling Lysychansk after capturing the neighboring city of Sievierodonetsk in recent days.

It's part of a stepped-up Russian offensive to wrest the broader Donbas region from Ukrainian government control in what Western experts say has become the new main goal of President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, now in its fifth month.

The defense official said the U.S. continues to see morale and other command and control problems among the Russian forces, and that some local Russian officials in Ukraine have been assassinated in recent days.

The U.S. has sent four High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or HIMARS, into Ukraine, which already are being used. Four more will go in soon.

Officials said the U.S. also expects to send additional aid soon, including more ammunition for Ukrainian artillery, as well as counter-battery radars, to help counter the Russian assault in the Donbas.

The administration official said Biden is also announcing a \$7.5 billion commitment to help Ukraine's government meet its expenses, as part of a drawdown of the \$40 billion military and economic aid package he signed into law last month.

They danced and died: Tragic teen party mystery in S. Africa

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — South African authorities were seeking answers Monday, a day after

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21 underage teenagers partying after the end of school exams died in a mysterious incident at a nightclub. The bodies of many of the victims, the youngest a 13-year-old girl, were discovered by police lying on tables, slumped in chairs and couches, and sprawled on the dancefloor of the club in the early hours of Sunday morning.

"They died as they danced," Police Minister Bheki Cele said. "They dance, fall, and die. Literally."

"Others would just feel dizzy, sleep on the sofa, (and) die. It tells you the story that they were all kids because somebody should have taken note."

Speculation has swirled over the cause of the tragedy, starting with a stampede — that has now been ruled out — to a possible gas leak. Police have sent forensic samples from the victims to a toxicology laboratory to investigate if the teens ingested poison or a toxin at the party.

Police said they were called to the Enyobeni Tavern in the city of East London in Eastern Cape province at around 4 a.m. Sunday morning after receiving a report that there were "lifeless bodies" there. Officers responding to the call walked in on a grim scene: 17 of the teenagers were found dead in the nightclub. Two more died at a local clinic, one died on the way to another hospital and one at that hospital. Their ages were between 13 and 17, police said.

Police spokeswoman Col. Athlenda Mathe said an investigation was ongoing and no cause of death had yet been established.

But Cele said forensic samples were being sent to an advanced toxicology laboratory in Cape Town, indicating that police were looking at the possibility that poison or a toxin was involved. Cele said the toxicology tests might take "a lot of time."

Provincial safety official Unathi Binqose told the Daily Maverick newspaper that the victims may have ingested a toxic substance through alcohol they were drinking or through hookah pipes, which were being smoked at the party. Initial reports speculated that the victims — 12 boys and nine girls — may have died in a crush because of overcrowding at the party, but authorities found no visible signs of injuries on the bodies and police have now ruled that out.

The teenagers were reportedly celebrating the end of mid-year exams, a local DJ's birthday and the relaxing of some of the last COVID-19 restrictions in South Africa, which was announced earlier in the week.

Parents were asked to come to a mortuary to identify their children. The Eastern Cape health department said there were survivors being treated in the hospital for backache, tight chests, vomiting and headaches.

Police Minister Cele said the teenagers died between 2 a.m. and 4.30 a.m. Sunday morning. He had also visited the nightclub and the mortuary on Sunday and choked back tears as he spoke to reporters outside the mortuary.

"The sight of those bodies sleeping there ... when you look at their faces you realize that you're dealing with kids, kids, kids," Cele said. "You've heard the story that they are young but when you see them you realize that it's a disaster. Twenty-one of them. Too many."

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who is in Germany for the G-7 summit, offered condolences to the families of the victims in a statement but also said he was concerned why "such young people were gathered at a venue which, on the face of it, should be off limits to persons under the age of 18."

It's illegal for anyone under 18 to consume or buy alcohol in South Africa and the Eastern Cape Liquor Board said it was revoking the nightclub's liquor license and would pursue criminal charges against the club's license holder. The tragedy will put renewed scrutiny on the many bars and nightclubs operating in the backstreets of poor neighborhoods in South Africa and which are often criticized for not abiding by liquor laws.

What to watch in primaries in Colorado, Illinois, elsewhere

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Politics Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Seven states are set to host primary elections Tuesday as the nation comes to terms with last week's stunning Supreme Court ruling eliminating the constitutional right to an abortion.

This week's nominating contests could offer the first clues as to whether the political landscape has

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shifted. Abortion is particularly relevant in Colorado, where GOP voters are deciding whether to nominate a rare abortion-rights-supporting Republican for U.S. Senate.

And in Illinois, a Donald Trump-backed congresswoman ignited a political firestorm over the weekend by celebrating the overturning of Roe v. Wade as "a victory for white life," phrasing that her spokesman later called a "stumble" and was meant to be "right to life."

The primaries will also offer new insight about the state of the Republican Party, with the central issue in virtually every GOP contest being fealty to Trump and his baseless conspiracy theories. Those Republicans who have pushed back at all, including a senator in Oklahoma and a congressman in Mississippi, are facing fierce challenges.

Democrats have their own challenges. Illinois voters will decide a rare incumbent-on-incumbent primary for a House seat, while in South Carolina, Democrats are picking which candidate will take on South Carolina Republican Sen. Tim Scott this fall.

In all, primary elections are playing out across Colorado, Illinois, Mississippi, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Utah on Tuesday. Nebraska is holding a special election.

What to watch:

COLORADO

GOP businessman Joe O'Dea, who has spoken publicly about his support for abortion rights, is running for the nomination to take on Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet this fall. O'Dea's top rival is state Rep. Ron Hanks, who opposes abortion in all circumstances and attended the Jan. 6 rally that preceded the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

O'Dea said he backs a ban on late-term abortions and government funding of abortions, but the decision to terminate a pregnancy in the initial months is "between a person and their God."

While Colorado has trended Democratic over the past decade, Tuesday's top Republican primary contests will show whether far-right candidates are making progress in their quest to take on uncontested Democrats like Bennet, Gov. Jared Polis and Secretary of State Jena Griswold, who's led the national fight against 2020 election deniers.

One of them is Republican Tina Peters, a conspiracy-theorist county elections clerk who's been indicted for tampering with voting equipment and posting data online. Peters wants to unseat Griswold as Colorado's top elections official despite calls from the state GOP for Peters to suspend her campaign. She's running against Republican Pam Anderson, a former head of the state's clerks association and defender of Colorado's mail-in elections system.

Colorado's congressional primaries will measure the staying power of first-term GOP firebrand Rep. Lauren Boebert in a sprawling western Colorado district that leans more Republican after redistricting. She's up against state Sen. Don Coram, a hemp farmer and GOP moderate.

In the Republican race to take on Polis, a former suburban Denver mayor, Greg Lopez, is facing Heidi Ganahl, the lone statewide-elected Republican as a University of Colorado regent.

ILLINOIS

As he is in most GOP contests, Trump is a central issue in Illinois' Republican primary for governor.

Darren Bailey, a conservative farmer who earned Trump's endorsement over the weekend and often reads from the Bible in campaign videos, is part of a six-candidate Republican field. His rivals include Richard Irvin, the first Black mayor of Aurora, Illinois' second-largest city, who had \$50 million in support from billionaire Ken Griffin but was heavily targeted by Democrats who see Bailey as an easier matchup for Pritzker.

While Trump endorsed Bailey, he also campaigned alongside first-term Rep. Mary Miller, who is challenging five-term Rep. Rodney Davis in one of the state's two incumbent-on-incumbent primaries.

But at Saturday's rally, Miller described the Supreme Court's reversal of Roe v. Wade as "a victory for white life." A spokesperson later said she had intended to say the decision was a victory for a "right to life."

But the Illinois congresswoman is no stranger to provocative statements. Soon after joining the House, Miller quoted Adolf Hitler, saying he was right to say that "whoever has the youth has the future."

Davis is a powerful, more moderate lawmaker who is the top Republican on the House Administration

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Committee, which deals with election legislation and the Capitol complex.

Meanwhile, two Democratic incumbents — Reps. Sean Casten and Marie Newman — are facing off for a Chicago-area seat. Also on the Democratic side, about two dozen candidates are fighting to succeed Rep. Bobby Rush, the only lawmaker to ever defeat Barack Obama. They include John Jackson, son of civil rights leader the Rev. Jesse Jackson, and Karin Norington-Reaves, who has Rush's endorsement.

NEW YORK

Gov. Kathy Hochul, who was vaulted into office last fall when Andrew Cuomo resigned amid a sexual harassment scandal, is trying to hold on to her job.

Hochul, a Democrat from western New York, is facing challenges from New York City's elected public advocate, Jumaane Williams, and Rep. Tom Suozzi, a moderate congressman from Long Island.

Tuesday's elections cover New York's statewide offices and state assembly races, but primary elections for U.S. House seats and the state Senate will be held Aug. 23. Those elections were delayed because of a redistricting lawsuit that led a court to throw out new political maps.

Hochul, who was Cuomo's lieutenant governor for six years, promised to restore New Yorkers' faith in its government after stepping into the office last summer, but she hit a major stumbling block in April, when her handpicked lieutenant governor was arrested in a federal corruption probe.

Williams, a progressive running to Hochul's left, said Hochul is either "consistently shamefully out of the loop, or shamefully enabling through her inaction." Suozzi, running to Hochul's right, says she's not being tough enough on crime, suggesting she should have gone further to harden the state's bail law.

On the Republican side, Rep. Lee Zeldin is considered the front-runner in a crowded field that features Andrew Giuliani, the son of New York City's former mayor Rudy Giuliani; Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino; and businessman Harry Wilson. Former Vice President Mike Pence has endorsed Zeldin, who also enjoys the backing of the state GOP and Conservative Party, but Trump has stayed out of the race.

UTAH

The Republican primary for U.S. Senate pits one of Trump's closest allies, GOP incumbent Sen. Mike Lee, against two challengers who have spent months questioning if Lee's loyalty to the former president will hurt Utah residents.

Former state lawmaker Becky Edwards and political operative Ally Isom have attacked Lee as a divisive politician who cares less about governing than about television appearances and winning Trump's favor. Unlike Lee, neither voted for Trump in 2020.

Both Republican challengers have highlighted the post-election text messages Lee sent to Trump's chief of staff, which show his early involvement in efforts to overturn the election. Edwards has also stood out by saying she disagreed with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to revisit Roe v. Wade.

The Senate primary is testing whether Trump's brand of divisive politics and conspiracy theories resonates with members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who make up a majority of Utah's population.

In November, the winner will take on independent Evan McMullin, a former Republican who won backing from the state Democratic Party in April.

MISSISSIPPI

Congressional primary runoffs are rare in Mississippi, but on Tuesday, two of the state's Republican incumbents are fighting to keep their jobs in runoffs against challengers from their own party.

Rep. Steven Palazzo is seeking a seventh term and was considered vulnerable after being accused in a 2021 congressional ethics report of abusing his office by mispending campaign funds.

Rep. Michael Guest is seeking a third term. He voted to create an independent commission to investigate the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection and was forced into a runoff amid criticism that he was disloyal to Trump.

Both Palazzo and Guest failed to cross the 50% threshold to win outright in their June 7 primaries. Palazzo is facing Mike Ezell, the sheriff of a coastal county, while Guest is going up against Michael Cassidy, a former Navy fighter pilot who has highlighted his allegiance to Trump.

OKLAHOMA

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Republicans are picking two U.S. Senate nominees on Tuesday.

A crowd of high-profile GOP contenders is vying to replace retiring Sen. Jim Inhofe, including Trump's former Environmental Protection Agency administrator, Scott Pruitt, who resigned from his Washington post under a cloud of ethics scandals. Other candidates include Rep. Markwayne Mullin; T.W. Shannon, the state legislature's first Black House speaker; and Luke Holland, Inhofe's longtime chief of staff.

Republican Sen. James Lankford is facing a primary test of his own that centers on Trump.

Lankford, among the Senate's most conservative members, has faced backlash from Trump loyalists for not embracing the former president's lies about election fraud. Lankford is facing Tulsa evangelical pastor Jackson Lahmeyer, a political newcomer endorsed by Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security adviser.

NEBRASKA

A judge on Tuesday will sentence longtime Nebraska congressman Jeff Fortenberry on campaign contribution charges on the same day voters will decide who should serve out the Republican's term. Fortenberry resigned in March.

Republican Mike Flood will be favored to win the election in the Republican-leaning district over Democrat Patty Pansing Brooks. Both are state legislators.

Regardless of who wins the special election, Flood and Pansing Brooks will face off again in the November general election. The eastern Nebraska district includes Lincoln and parts of suburban Omaha as well as rural area.

Zelensky tells G-7 summit Ukraine forces face urgent moment

By ZEKE MILLER, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

ELMAU, Germany (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday underscored the urgency of helping his country's military improve its position against Russia in a video meeting with leading economic powers, who in turn pledged to support Ukraine "for as long as it takes."

Zelenskyy addressed the delicacy of the moment for Ukraine in its war with Russia to the Group of Seven summit as the leaders of the major economies prepared to unveil plans to pursue a price cap on Russian oil, raise tariffs on Russian goods and impose other new sanctions.

In addition, the U.S. was preparing to announce the purchase of an advanced surface-to-air missile system for Kyiv to help Ukraine fight back against Vladimir Putin's aggression. The official announcement would come shortly after Russian missiles hit the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv for the first time in weeks and as the Russian military has continued a full-on assault on the last remaining Ukrainian redoubt in the Luhansk province in order to take control of the eastern Donbas region.

Ukrainian officials stressed the need for more air-defense systems on Monday after Russia launched a missile attack on a crowded shopping center in the central city of Kremenchuk. Officials said 1,000 civilians were in the mall with at least twenty injured and two dead.

The new aid and efforts by the G-7 leaders to punish Moscow come as Zelenskyy has openly worried that the West has become fatigued by the cost of a war that is contributing to soaring energy costs and price hikes on essential goods around the globe. The Ukrainian leader discussed his strategy for the course of the war, which has transformed into a bloody artillery battle in the country's west and east.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Zelenskyy's top request was for further air defense systems, followed by economic support to help his government meet its financial obligations. Zelenskyy also briefed the G-7 leaders on how his administration is using the assistance he's received to date "to maximize Ukraine's capacity both to resist Russian advances, and to pursue counter attacks where possible," Sullivan said.

Sullivan added that the Ukrainian leader was "very much focused on trying to ensure that Ukraine is in as advantageous a position on the battlefield as possible" in coming months because "he believes that a grinding conflict is not in the interest of the Ukrainian people."

Zelenskyy also told the leaders that he needs to be in stronger position before engaging in peace talks with Russia, according to a senior French diplomat, who spoke under condition of anonymity in line with

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the French presidency's customary practices.

After hearing from Zelenskyy, the leaders pledged in a statement to support Ukraine "for as long as it takes." They said it is up to Ukraine to decide on a future peace settlement.

Leaders were also finalizing the deal to seek a price cap. G-7 finance ministers will resolve details of how it would work, according to a senior administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview announcements from the summit.

Some market analysts doubt how effective a price cap on Russian oil would be, as enforcement by the G-7 would likely depend on cooperation from India and China.

"It is questionable whether countries like India and China will agree to cease purchasing Russian oil, especially as it is trading at a significant discount on the global market price," said Carsten Fritsch, a commodities analyst at Commerzbank.

The largest democratic economies will also commit to raising tariffs on Russian imports to their countries, with the U.S. announcing new tariffs on 570 categories of goods. President Joe Biden on Tuesday increased the tax to 35% on certain Russian-made goods.

Biden is expected to soon announce the U.S. is purchasing NASAMS, a Norwegian-developed anti-aircraft system, to provide medium- to long-range defense for Ukraine, according to a person familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. NASAMS is the same system used by the U.S. to protect the sensitive airspace around the White House and U.S. Capitol in Washington.

Additional aid includes more ammunition for Ukrainian artillery, as well as counter-battery radars, to help counter the Russian assault in Donbas, the person said. Biden is also announcing a \$7.5 billion commitment to help Ukraine's government meet its expenses, as part of a drawdown of the \$40 billion military and economic aid package he signed into law last month.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who is hosting the summit in the German Alps, said after meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that "we are taking tough decisions, that we are also cautious, that we will help ... Ukraine as much as possible but that we also avoid that there will be a big conflict between Russia and NATO."

Britain's Boris Johnson said that, under the circumstances, the G-7 has to "continue to help the Ukrainians to rebuild their economy, to get their grain out, to export their grain, and, of course, we have to help them to protect themselves. And that's what we're going to continue to do."

In Brussels, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the military alliance will increase the size of its rapid reaction forces nearly eightfold to 300,000 troops as part of its response to an "era of strategic competition." The NATO response force currently has about 40,000 soldiers, which can deploy quickly when needed.

Stoltenberg commented before he opens a NATO summit Tuesday in Madrid. The organization's 30 member countries are expected to also agree on further support for Ukraine.

The G-7 already is committed to help finance Ukraine's immediate needs and plans support to rebuild its economy long term. Finance ministers from the group last month agreed to provide \$19.8 billion in economic aid to help Kyiv keep basic services functioning and continue its defense against Russian forces.

A senior U.S. administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations among G-7 leaders, said the U.S. and Europe are aligned in their aims for a negotiated end to the conflict, even if the nature of their outreach differs.

Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron have held active conversations with Putin and Zelenskyy. The U.S. has largely cut off significant talks with Russia.

NATO to boost rapid reaction force, Ukraine military support

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO allies will decide at a summit this week to increase the strength of their rapid reaction force nearly eightfold to 300,000 troops as part of their response to an "era of strategic competition," the military alliance's secretary-general said Monday.

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The NATO response force (NRF) currently numbers around 40,000 soldiers which can deploy quickly when needed.

Coupled with other measures including the deployment of forces to defend specific allies, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the move is part of the "biggest overhaul of collective defense and deterrence since the Cold War."

"These troops will exercise together with home defense forces," Stoltenberg said. "And they will become familiar with local terrain, facilities, and our new pre-positioned stocks. So that they can respond smoothly and swiftly to any emergency."

In response to the Kremlin's decision to start the war, U.S. President Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts agreed in February to send thousands of troops, backed by air and naval support, to protect allies near Russia and Ukraine. The 30-nation organization decided at the time to send parts of the NRF and elements of a quickly deployable spearhead unit to the alliance's eastern flank, marking the first time the force had been used in a defense role.

Stoltenberg made the remarks at a press conference ahead of a NATO summit this week in Madrid when the 30 allies are expected to also agree on further support to Ukraine in its war against Russia.

Stoltenberg said he expects allies to make clear they consider Russia "as the most significant and direct threat to our security." At the summit, allies will also decide to strengthen their battlegroups on NATO's eastern flanks, he said.

In NATO's new strategic concept, the alliance is also set to address for the first time the security challenges posed by China, Stoltenberg said. In Madrid, allies will discuss how to respond to the growing influence of Russia and China in their "southern neighborhood," he added.

Stoltenberg said allies will agree to deliver further military support to Ukraine when they convene in Spain, with NATO members set to adopt a "strengthened comprehensive assistance package," including deliveries of secure communication and anti-drone systems.

Over the long term, Stoltenberg said allies aim to help Ukraine transition from Soviet-era armaments to modern NATO equipment. The world's seven leading economic powers underscored Monday their commitment to Ukraine for "as long as it takes."

Another central theme at the NATO summit will be the possibility for Finland and Sweden to join the alliance following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

NATO member Turkey has so far blocked the applications, citing what it considers to be the two countries' soft approach to organizations Turkey considers to be terrorist, such as the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

Stoltenberg said that Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Finnish President Sauli Niinisto and the Swedish prime minister Magdalena Andersson have agreed to meet Tuesday on the sidelines of the summit.

Officials from the three countries have stepped up talks ahead of the NATO gathering in a bid to break the deadlock.

"My strong hope is that this dialogue can be successful and concluded in the near future, ideally before the summit," Andersson said after talks with Stoltenberg in Brussels.

Turkey is demanding that Sweden and Finland grant extradition requests for individuals who are wanted by Turkish authorities. Ankara claims the countries are harboring PKK members as well people it says are linked to a failed 2016 coup.

Turkey also wants assurances that arms restrictions imposed by the two countries over Turkey's 2019 military incursion into northern Syria will be removed.

"I will not make any promises, but I can assure you that we are working actively to ensure progress because the application of Finland and Sweden to join NATO, they are historic," Stoltenberg said.

Andersson said Sweden's stance toward the PKK is "crystal clear" and that her country considers the organization as a terror group. She added that Sweden's anti-terror legislation is undergoing its most comprehensive overhaul in 30 years.

"Moreover, constitutional amendments are being prepared, which would help pave the way for criminalization or participation in terrorist organizations," she said.

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NATO released new defense spending figures showing that U.S. allies in Europe as well as Canada have increased defense spending for an eighth consecutive year.

"By the end of the year, they will have invested well over 350 billion US dollars extra since we agreed our defense investment pledge in 2014," Stoltenberg said.

NATO countries slashed their military budgets in the 1990s following the end of the Cold War, but upped spending when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014. In that year, NATO allies also pledged to reach a defense budget target of 2% of their gross domestic product by 2024.

"Nine allies now reach – or exceed – the 2% target. Nineteen allies have clear plans to reach it by 2024," Stoltenberg said. "Two percent is increasingly considered a floor, not a ceiling. We will also agree to invest more together in NATO."

New this week: 'Only Murders in the Building,' 'More Power'

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

MOVIES

— The biggest new movie streaming this week is "The Princess," coming to Hulu on Friday, starring Joey King as a royal who refuses to marry her intended (with good reason, as he's a sociopath). Still, the act of defiance gets her kidnapped and imprisoned while her betrothed tries to overthrow the kingdom. Le-Van Kiet directed the film, which also stars Dominic Cooper and Olga Kurylenko. Hulu is also getting "Independence Day" on July 1, if you're looking for a nostalgic watch leading up to the holiday.

— Netflix is adding an army of titles starting Friday, including several films featuring recently departed actors. Ray Liotta's star-making turn as aspiring mobster Henry Hill in Martin Scorsese's "GoodFellas" is one of them. Liotta, who died last month at age 67, had to fight for the role in that cast of heavyweights like Robert De Niro and Joe Pesci. The intensity of his performance and his memorable narration made him stand out even so. Also arriving on Netflix on Friday are "The Talented Mr. Ripley" and "Boogie Nights," featuring two memorable performances by Philip Baker Hall, who died earlier this month at 90, as a dogged detective and an unsentimental producer.

— And if "The Talented Mr. Ripley" doesn't satiate your dreams of an Italian vacation, Amazon Prime Video is getting Ridley Scott's "House of Gucci" on Saturday. The gaudy, operatic, two and a half hour family drama stars Adam Driver as the ill-fated Gucci heir Maurizio Gucci and Lady Gaga as his scorned wife Patrizia Reggiani, alongside a starry cast including Al Pacino, Jared Leto (unrecognizable under prosthetics) and Jeremy Irons.

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

MUSIC

— Imagine Dragons are back with the second half of their two-album "Mercury" project. "Act 1" came out in 2021 and was raw, confessional and searing, with the songs "Follow You," "Wrecked" and "Enemy." The new set — "Act 2" — drops Friday and promises another 18 tunes, including the upbeat, anthemic "Sharks" and "Bones." In a video for the latter song, Dragons frontman Dan Reynolds plays a stock trader — decked out in '80s-inspired clothing and huge hair — who soon is joined by dancing zombies in homage to the 1983 "Thriller" video. Reynolds has said the song is about the fragility of life.

— Super-producer Jack Antonoff has a '70s-era treat for us with the soundtrack for "Minions: Rise of Gru." It features Diana Ross, Tame Impala, St. Vincent, Brockhampton, Kali Uchis and others covering hit '70s material from Kool & the Gang, Nancy Sinatra, the Carpenters, John Lennon and many more. "Shining Star" is done by Brittany Howard, St. Vincent tackles "Funkytown," "Dance to the Music" is covered by H.E.R. and Phoebe Bridgers tries "Goodbye to Love."

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

TELEVISION

— Steve Martin, Martin Short and Selena Gomez as back as unlikely crime-solving New York City neigh-

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bors in Hulu's "Only Murders in the Building." In season two, the amateur sleuths are the talk of the town, or at least their apartment building, when they're linked to the death of the building board's president. In a cruel twist, the trio that began a podcast to unravel a murder are under scrutiny by a rival podcast. Shirley MacLaine and Cara Delevingne are among the high-profile visitors when the series returns Tuesday with two episodes and others out weekly.

— "Home Improvement" sitcom buddies Tim Allen and Richard Karn reunite for "More Power," a nonfiction series that explores the development and mechanics of tools, from big (bulldozers) to small (batteries). Each half-hour episode focuses on one implement, which gets dissected in Allen's workshop with help from April Wilkerson of YouTube do-it-yourself fame. Karn explains the tool's history, followed by field testing and a segment in which a skilled creator is challenged to devise innovative and "crazy new builds." The series debuts Wednesday on History Channel.

— Ken Burns adds his heft to "Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness," which gives a voice to young people — ages 11 to 27 — with mental health conditions and those in their lives, including parents, teachers and friends, along with mental health care experts. The two-part, four-hour film directed and co-produced by Erik Ewers and Christopher Loren Ewers, with Burns as executive producer, airs Monday and Tuesday on PBS. The film is part of Well Beings, a public media campaign that uses storytelling to help erase the stigma from physical and mental health issues.

US grapples with whether to modify COVID vaccine for fall

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

U.S. health authorities are facing a critical decision: whether to offer new COVID-19 booster shots this fall that are modified to better match recent changes of the shape-shifting coronavirus.

Moderna and Pfizer have tested updated shots against the super-contagious omicron variant, and advisers to the Food and Drug Administration will debate Tuesday if it's time to make a switch — setting the stage for similar moves by other countries.

"This is science at its toughest," FDA vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks told The Associated Press, adding that a final decision is expected within days of the advisory panel's recommendation.

Current COVID-19 vaccines saved millions of lives around the world in just their first year of use. And the Moderna and Pfizer shots still offer strong protection against the worst outcomes -- severe illness and death — especially after a booster dose.

But those vaccines target the original coronavirus strain and between waning immunity and a relentless barrage of variants, protection against infections has dropped markedly. The challenge is deciding if tweaked boosters offer a good chance of blunting another surge when there's no way to predict which mutant will be the main threat.

In an analysis prepared for Tuesday's meeting, FDA officials acknowledged targeting last winter's version of omicron is "somewhat outdated" since it already has been replaced by its even more contagious relatives.

"We would obviously like to get it right enough," Marks said, so that with one more shot "we get a full season of protection."

Many experts say updated boosters promise at least a little more benefit.

"It is more likely to be helpful" than simply giving additional doses of today's vaccine, said epidemiologist William Hanage of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

That's assuming the virus doesn't throw another curve ball.

"We're following rather than getting ahead which is so vexing -- that we haven't come up with a better variant-proof vaccine," said Dr. Eric Topol, head of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, who has urged a major government push for next-generation immunizations.

Adding to concern about a winter COVID-19 wave is that about half of Americans eligible for that all-important first booster dose never got it. An updated version might entice some of them.

But "we do need to change our expectations," said Dr. William Moss of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, who noted that studies early in the pandemic raised unrealistic hopes of blocking

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even the mildest infections. "Our strategy can't be booster doses every couple of months, even every six months, to prevent infections."

The top candidates are what scientists call "bivalent" shots — a combination of the original vaccine plus omicron protection.

That's because the original vaccines do spur production of at least some virus-fighting antibodies strong enough to cross-react with newer mutants -- in addition to their proven benefits against severe disease, said University of Pennsylvania immunologist E. John Wherry.

"Being able to push the boost response a little bit in one direction or the other without losing the core is really important," he said.

Moderna and Pfizer found their combo shots substantially boosted levels of omicron-fighting antibodies in adults who'd already had three vaccinations, more than simply giving another regular dose.

Recipients also developed antibodies that could fight omicron's newest relatives named BA.4 and BA.5, although not nearly as many. It's not clear how much protection that will translate into, and for how long.

Antibodies are a key first layer of defense that form after vaccination or a prior infection. They can prevent infection by recognizing the outer coating of the coronavirus -- the spike protein -- and blocking it from entering your cells.

But antibodies naturally wane and each new variant comes with a different-looking spike protein, giving it a better chance of evading detection by remaining antibodies. Separate studies published this month in *Nature* and the *New England Journal of Medicine* show the newest omicron relatives are even better at dodging antibodies — both in the vaccinated and in people who recovered from the original omicron.

That first booster people were supposed to get strengthened immune memory, helping explain why protection against hospitalization and death is proving more durable. If the virus sneaks past antibodies, different defenders called T cells spring into action, attacking infected cells to curb illness.

"T cells recognize the virus in a fundamentally different way," not hunting for disguised spike protein but for parts of the virus that so far haven't been altered as much, said Penn's Wherry.

Still, as people get older, all parts of their immune system gradually weaken. There's little data on how long T cell protection against COVID-19 lasts or how it varies with different mutations or vaccines.

Wherry and dozens of other scientists recently petitioned the FDA to quit focusing solely on antibodies and start measuring T cells as it decides vaccination strategy.

The Biden administration has made clear that it needs Congress to provide more money so that if the FDA clears updated boosters, the government can buy enough for every American who wants one. And Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, told Congress last week more research funding also is critical to create better next-generation vaccines, such as nasal versions that might better block infection in the nose or more variant-proof shots.

"The virus is changing and we need to keep up with it," Fauci, said.

Tale of 2 summits: 'America's back' to America's backsliding

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

ELMAU, Germany (AP) — One year ago, Joe Biden strode into his first Group of Seven summit as president and confidently told the closest U.S. allies that "America is Back." Now, many of them are worrying that America is backsliding.

As Biden meets this week in the Bavarian Alps with the heads of G-7 leading democratic economies, he carries with him the domestic baggage of political unrest, shocking mass shootings and the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to end constitutional protections for abortion.

Biden's 2021 summit was meant as a palate cleanser to the "America First" ideology of his predecessor, President Donald Trump.

Embracing multilateralism and global partnerships and restoring faith in America's alliances — especially NATO's mutual self-defense pact — were top on his agenda. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said of

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Biden, "We're totally on the same page."

Biden's election was seen by most allies as an American reset, returning to norms honed over decades, with predictability and stability at the fore.

A year later, the reception for Biden remains warm and the public emphasis on America's global leadership remains upbeat — especially in the context of Biden rallying the world against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But increasingly, that view is set against a backdrop of potential turmoil ahead.

"I think Europeans no doubt look at the U.S. domestic situation with a degree of dread," said Max Bergmann, director of the Europe Program at the private Center for Strategic and International Studies. He added: "It's sort of the best of times, the worst of times."

Biden's visit to Europe comes as a congressional committee investigates the attempted overthrow of the 2020 presidential election by Trump and his allies, whose party stands poised to make substantial inroads in the November midterm elections. The crisis of mass shootings and gun violence — uniquely American among similarly positioned nations — draws condemnation from horrified allies. And the high court decision that allows states to ban abortion sparked a fresh round of denunciations and worries from some of the United States' closest partners.

"Abortion is a fundamental right for all women," tweeted French President Emmanuel Macron. "It must be protected. I wish to express my solidarity with the women whose liberties are being undermined by the Supreme Court of the United States."

Biden told reporters Sunday evening that the subject of the abortion decision had not come up in his chats with world leaders.

"Not related to Ukraine or any of the issues discussed," he said, replying flatly "no" when asked if the matter was broached to him by another summit attendee.

Yet when the Supreme Court ruling came down Friday morning, Biden ended up being the third G-7 leader to offer reaction, with Canada's Justin Trudeau and Britain's Johnson quickly condemning the ruling even before Biden had delivered remarks at the White House.

"I've got to tell you I think it's a big step backwards," Johnson said Friday. "I've always believed in a woman's right to choose and I stick to that view and that's why the U.K. has the law that it does and we recently took steps to make sure those laws were enforced throughout the whole of the U.K."

Trudeau called the decision "horrific," adding: "No government, politician or man should tell a woman what she can and cannot do with her body." He said he couldn't "imagine the fear and anger" women in the U.S. must be experiencing in the wake of the ruling.

And after 19 students and two teachers were killed at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, condolences flowed in from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, even as his own country's armed forces suffer many times that number in casualties due to Russia's aggression.

"The people of Ukraine share the pain of the relatives and friends of the victims and all Americans," he tweeted at the time.

Bergmann said that while European leaders might have varying opinions on the merits of the Roe v. Wade ruling, they have broad concern about the upheaval that the ruling could unleash.

"They saw the January 6th insurrection, they are very concerned about America's domestic stability and then here is a decision ... that clearly has the potential to upend and explode American politics and make America's political divides even deeper and that is something that's incredibly worrying," he said.

The Europeans, he added, look at U.S. domestic discord through the lens of their own security.

"The underlying concern is what's this going to mean for the United States as their security guarantor," he said. "Will America be stable enough to uphold that?"

Pressed on how the abortion decision would affect America's standing in the world, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre called the ruling an "extreme decision" that endangered same-sex marriage and access to contraception by married couples. But she said Biden's position globally was unchanged.

"Look, we've heard from a lot of the leaders already," she told reporters aboard Air Force One on the way to Germany. "I know some of them have put out statements — very vocal — about what they have

seen from this decision," saying they were "offering support to the American people."

"I don't think this stops the work that the president is going to do or wants to do or looking to do with leaders," Jean-Pierre added.

Johnson, for his part, denied he harbored specific fears about America's overall path.

"Looking from the outside, it was pretty weird," he told CNN on Sunday when asked about the Jan. 6, 2021, attempt to overthrow the presidential election. "But I don't believe that American democracy is under serious threat, far from it. I continue to believe that America is the greatest global guarantor of democracy and freedom."

Most G-7 nations tend to be more liberal than the U.S. on a range of issues, and Trump's flip questioning of longstanding alliances rattled more than just heads of state and government.

Biden's "America is Back" messaging has faced renewed scrutiny from everyday citizens of allied countries.

"I think America is divided," said Gabriele Jocher, 59, a freelance social worker from Garmisch, Germany, just miles from the summit site. "I think there are really very good forces and people who really want to move forward like that but also very backwards. And that just makes me think, globally, what's going on there that just like two forces are clashing."

Christina Maurer, 59, a homemaker and nurse in the picturesque town, added: "Everything that Mr. Biden wants to change now, I don't know. Then another one will come, his name will be Trump or something similar and he will ruin everything again."

Will he go or not? Hong Kong awaits word on Xi Jinping visit

HONG KONG (AP) — Will he go or not?

Chinese President Xi Jinping kept Hong Kong guessing on Monday about his possible appearance at the 25th anniversary of the former British colony's return to Chinese rule.

The government has yet to say whether he will be physically present for the events, which include the inauguration of the city's new chief executive.

The event is hugely symbolic for Xi, who wants to be seen as propelling a "national rejuvenation" as he prepares for an expected third five-year term as head of the ruling Communist Party. Part of that is erasing the legacy of colonialism and what China regards as unequal treaties granting rights to foreign nations imposed during the waning years of the Qing Dynasty, which ended in 1911.

Asked about Xi's attendance plans at a daily briefing Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said he had no additional information and that the reporter should ask the "department responsible," without giving further details.

Xi hasn't left mainland China since the start of the coronavirus pandemic 2 1/2 years ago, and his exchanges with foreign leaders have been mainly limited to video calls.

Hong Kong, meanwhile, faces a renewed rise in COVID-19 infections after an avalanche of cases this year threatened to overwhelm its hospitals.

China's official media have said only that Xi will participate in the July 1 commemorations, without describing any travel plans.

Xi gave a speech in Hong Kong for the 20th anniversary of its turnover in which he pledged the central government would take a hard line against any challenges to its authority.

Pro-democracy protests in 2019 were followed by a sweeping crackdown that has effectively ended political opposition in the city. As with most matters concerning the ruling Communist Party, the travel plans of top leaders are generally kept secret.

China has stuck to its "zero-COVID" strategy of eliminating outbreaks by mass testing the population and locking down buildings, neighborhoods or whole cities for weeks or even months.

While the Hong Kong commemorations are purely symbolic, they will include the installation Friday of former security chief John Lee, who led a harsh crackdown on the 2019 pro-democracy protests, as the city's chief executive.

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After the protests, Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law that has jailed, silenced or exiled Hong Kong political activists; curtailed freedoms of expression and assembly; and removed or disqualified people from public office if they were deemed unpatriotic.

Xi's 2017 speech at the 20th anniversary marked a backing away from the "one country, two systems" framework under which Hong Kong was to retain its civil, political and economic liberties for 50 years, until 2047. China has declared the Sino-British Joint Declaration that laid the legal framework for Chinese rule as no longer relevant and has refused to acknowledge Hong Kong's former status as a British Crown Colony, saying it never accepted the treaties that were signed between the United Kingdom and the Qing empire.

Hong Kong political analyst Sonny Lo said he expects Xi to be present for Friday's ceremony, but that he will likely return at the end of the day to Shenzhen just across the border in mainland China for security reasons.

Xi's presence will demonstrate Beijing's confidence in its policies toward Hong Kong, including in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, Lo said.

Xi's government has emphasized the city's integration into the "Greater Bay Area" encompassing much of mainland China's manufacturing and technological bases in Guangdong province, and his message will likely focus in that direction rather than looking at past events, Lo said.

Having dealt with political opposition in Hong Kong, Xi will turn next to the task of unifying with the self-governing island of Taiwan, a close U.S.-ally which China claims as its own territory, Lo said. The sides split amid civil war in 1949 and China routinely flies military aircraft into the island's air defense identification zone to pressure it against taking steps toward formal independence.

China says it wants to bring the sides together through peaceful means, but does not rule out the use of force to achieve that goal.

"So half way to 2047, this visit is particularly significant," Lo said. "The positive overtone will be extremely important because we can expect Beijing to turn to Taiwan, to appeal for some kind of dialogue."

Today in History: June 28, Treaty of Versailles is signed

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, June 28, the 179th day of 2022. There are 186 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY') was signed in France, ending the First World War.

On this date:

In 1838, Britain's Queen Victoria was crowned in Westminster Abbey.

In 1863, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln appointed Maj. Gen. George G. Meade the new commander of the Army of the Potomac, following the resignation of Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker.

In 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, Sophie, were shot to death in Sarajevo (sah-ruh-YAY'-voh) by Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip (gavh-REE'-loh PREEN'-seep) — an act that sparked World War I.

In 1939, Pan American Airways began regular trans-Atlantic air service with a flight that departed New York for Marseilles (mar-SAY'), France.

In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Alien Registration Act, also known as the Smith Act, which required adult foreigners residing in the U.S. to be registered and fingerprinted.

In 1950, North Korean forces captured Seoul (sohl), the capital of South Korea.

In 1978, the Supreme Court ordered the University of California-Davis Medical School to admit Allan Bakke (BAH'-kee), a white man who argued he'd been a victim of reverse racial discrimination.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton became the first chief executive in U.S. history to set up a personal legal defense fund and ask Americans to contribute to it.

In 2000, seven months after he was cast adrift in the Florida Straits, Elian Gonzalez was returned to his native Cuba.

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In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled, 5-4, that Americans had the right to own a gun for self-defense anywhere they lived.

In 2013, the four plaintiffs in the U.S. Supreme Court case that overturned California's same-sex marriage ban tied the knot, just hours after a federal appeals court freed gay couples to obtain marriage licenses in the state for the first time in 4 1/2 years.

In 2019, avowed white supremacist James Alex Fields, who deliberately drove his car into a crowd of counterprotesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, killing a young woman and injuring dozens, apologized to his victims before being sentenced to life in prison on federal hate crime charges.

Ten years ago: The Affordable Care Act narrowly survived, 5-4, an election-year battle at the U.S. Supreme Court with the improbable help of conservative Chief Justice John Roberts. Attorney General Eric Holder became the first sitting Cabinet member held in contempt of Congress, a rebuke pushed by Republicans seeking to unearth the facts behind a bungled gun-tracking operation known as Fast and Furious. (The vote was 255-67, with more than 100 Democrats boycotting.) Katie Holmes filed for divorce from Tom Cruise after five years of marriage.

Five years ago: Republican donors paid \$35,000 apiece to hear a familiar message from President Donald Trump: that the media, particularly CNN, kept trying to take him down, and yet Republicans just kept on winning elections. ABC and a South Dakota meat producer announced a settlement in a \$1.9 billion lawsuit against the network over its reports on a beef product that critics dubbed "pink slime."

One year ago: Temperatures in parts of the Pacific Northwest wiped out records that had been set the day before, with Seattle reaching 108 degrees by evening; meteorologists said the record-breaking heat was caused by a dome of high pressure, and worsened by human-caused climate change. Big-wave surfer Greg "Da Bull" Noll died at 84; he'd become a surfing legend by combining an outsized personality with the courage and skill to ride bigger, more powerful waves than anyone had attempted before.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian-movie director Mel Brooks is 96. Comedian-impressionist John Byner is 85. Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta is 84. Rock musician Dave Knights (Procul Harum) is 77. Actor Bruce Davison is 76. Actor Kathy Bates is 74. Actor Alice Krige is 68. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer John Elway is 62. Jazz singer Tierney Sutton is 59. Actor Jessica Hecht is 57. Rock musician Saul Davies (James) is 57. Actor Mary Stuart Masterson is 56. Actor John Cusack is 56. Actor Gil Bellows is 55. Actor-singer Danielle Brisebois is 53. Actor Tichina Arnold is 53. Actor Steve Burton is 52. Entrepreneur Elon Musk is 51. Actor Alessandro Nivola (nih-VOH'-luh) is 50. Actor Camille Guaty is 46. Rock musician Tim Nordwind (OK Go) is 46. Rock musician Mark Stoermer (The Killers) is 45. Country singer Big Vinny Hickerson (Trailer Choir) is 39. Country singer Kellie Pickler is 36. Jamaican Olympic track star Elaine Thompson-Herah is 30.