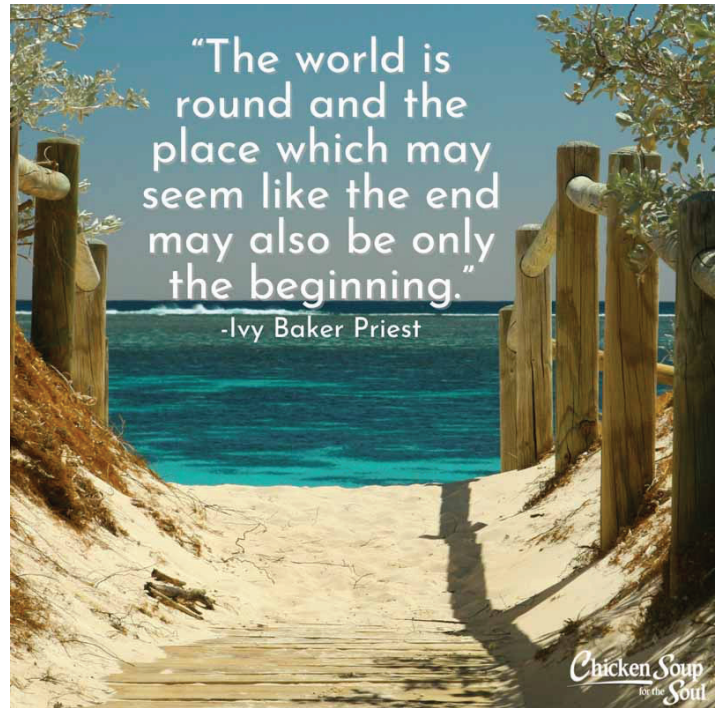


# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 1 of 98

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Chamber Ad](#)
- [2- Mosquito Grants Awarded](#)
- [3- Ground Fog Photo](#)
- [4- Groton Legion splits with Redfield](#)
- [5- Jr. Teeners beat Webster in doubleheader](#)
- [8- Weather Pages](#)
- [12- Daily Devotional](#)
- [13- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [14- Subscription Form](#)
- [15- News from the Associated Press](#)



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  
7:30 p.m. U10 at Claremont, 1 game, (R/B)  
5:30 p.m.: T-Ball Gold at Claremont

July 7  
5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners host Warner, DH  
6 p.m.: U8 at Webster, DH (R/B)  
6 p.m.: U8 SB at Mellette, 1 game  
7 p.m.: U10 SB at Mellette, 1 game  
8 p.m.: U12 SB at Mellette, DH

July 7-9  
Legion at Clark Tourney

July 8  
6 p.m.: T-Ball Scrimmage

July 8-11  
U12 State Tourney in Parker

July 11  
5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Webster, DH (All Groups), Nelson Field  
5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Doland, 1 game (All Groups), Falk Field  
6:30 p.m.: U10 hosts Doland, 1 game (R/W)  
6 p.m.: U12 SB at Webster, DH

July 12  
6 p.m.: Legion at Milbank, 1 game  
5:30 p.m.: Jr. Legion at Milbank, DH  
6 p.m.: U12 SB at Britton, DH  
6 p.m.: U8 SB at Clark, DH

July 13

**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 Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 2 of 98

## 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**

### Mosquito Grants Awarded

The 2022 Mosquito Control Grants have been awarded by the South Dakota Department of Health.

Locally, the following grants were awarded: Aberdeen \$20,000, Bristol \$1,163, Britton \$7,253, Brown County \$15,000, Claremont \$2,441, Columbia \$1,322, Conde \$1,000, Edmunds County \$3,000, Frederick \$1,000, Groton \$5,000, Hecla \$2,282, Ipswich \$3,570, Langford \$2,000, Pierpont \$1,642, Redfield \$5,505, Roslyn \$1,000, Spink County \$6,000, Warner \$2,000, Webster \$4,000, Westport \$2,441.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 3 of 98



**Ground fog rolled into the low lying areas Friday morning.** (Photo by Tina Kosel)

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 4 of 98

## **Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser Runs Away With Early Lead in Victory**

Groton Legion Post #39 watched the game slip away early and couldn't recover in a 10-7 loss to Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser on Thursday. Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser scored on a walk by Keaton Rohfls and a walk by Easton Millar in the first inning.

Groton Legion Post #39 collected nine hits and Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser had seven in the high-scoring affair.

Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser fired up the offense in the first inning. Rohfls drew a walk, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post #39 put up four runs in the seventh inning. Groton Legion Post #39's big bats in the inning were led by a triple by Ryan Groeblichhoff and a sac fly by Jackson Cogley.

Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser scored four runs in the fifth inning. Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser scored its runs on a grand slam by Elliot Komraus.

Peyton Osborn was credited with the victory for Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser. The righty lasted six innings, allowing eight hits and three runs while striking out nine. Seth Siebrecht threw one inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Cogley took the loss for Groton Legion Post #39. Cogley allowed four hits and nine runs over four and two-thirds innings, striking out three.

Groton Legion Post #39 racked up nine hits in the game. Groeblichhoff and Tate Larson all managed multiple hits for Groton Legion Post #39. Groeblichhoff led Groton Legion Post #39 with three hits in four at bats.

Erik Salmen went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser in hits.

## **Groton Legion Post #39 Clinches Lead in Eighth Inning for Victory Over Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser**

Groton Legion Post #39 snatched the lead late in the game in an 8-3 victory over Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser on Friday. The game was tied at three with Groton Legion Post #39 batting in the top of the eighth when Tate Larson singled on a 1-1 count, scoring two runs.

Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser scored three runs in the first inning, but Groton Legion Post #39 still managed to pull out the victory. The big inning for Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser came thanks to singles by Keaton Rohfls and Erik Salmen and a double by Owen Osborn.

In the first inning, Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser got their offense started when Osborn doubled on a 1-1 count, scoring one run.

In the top of the fifth inning, Groton Legion Post #39 tied things up at three when Logan Ringgingberg grounded out, scoring one run.

Dillon Abeln led the Groton Legion Post #39 to victory on the hill. Abeln allowed five hits and three runs over seven and two-thirds innings, striking out 12 and walking one. Bradin Althoff threw one-third of an inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Rohfls took the loss for Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser. The righty went six innings, allowing three runs on five hits and striking out three.

Groton Legion Post #39 racked up eight hits on the day. Larson and Ryan Groeblichhoff each had multiple hits for Groton Legion Post #39. Groeblichhoff and Larson all had two hits to lead Groton Legion Post #39.

Salmen went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Redfield Post 92, Clay Kiser in hits.

## Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Grabs Lead in Fifth Inning to Defeat Webster Teeners

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U snagged a late lead and defeated Vfw 4690 Teeners 12-4 on Thursday. The game was tied at four with Groton Jr. Teeners 14U batting in the top of the fifth when Jarrett Erdmann doubled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U got on the board in the first inning when Nick Groeblichhoff singled on a 0-1 count, scoring two runs.

Vfw 4690 Teeners knotted the game up at four in the bottom of the fourth inning, when Gage Baumgarn was struck by a pitch, driving in a run.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U notched six runs in the seventh inning. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U batters contributing to the big inning included Gavin Englund, K Antonsen, Karsten Flihs, Tristin McGannon, and Erdmann, all sending runners across the plate with RBIs in the inning.

Antonsen earned the win for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Antonsen lasted one inning, allowing three hits and zero runs while striking out one and walking zero.

Caleb Edwards took the loss for Vfw 4690 Teeners. The pitcher allowed nine hits and eight runs over three innings, striking out two.

Sheldon Schmiegl started the game for Vfw 4690 Teeners. Schmiegl lasted four innings, allowing six hits and four runs while walking zero. Englund started the game for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The righthander lasted six innings, allowing five hits and four runs while striking out six.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U tallied 15 hits. Antonsen, McGannon, Erdmann, and Carter Simon all collected multiple hits for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. McGannon and Antonsen each managed three hits to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U was sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Nicholas Morris had the most chances in the field with seven. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U tore up the base paths, as three players stole at least two bases. Antonsen led the way with two.

Vfw 4690 Teeners collected eight hits on the day. Matthew Mount and Dylan Carlson all managed multiple hits for Vfw 4690 Teeners. Mount led Vfw 4690 Teeners with three hits in four at bats. Vfw 4690 Teeners stole six bases during the game as two players stole more than one. Colby Coyne led the way with two. Vfw 4690 Teeners didn't commit a single error in the field. Mount had 11 chances in the field, the most on the team.

## Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Beats Webster Teeners by Eight Runs

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U blew out Vfw 4690 Teeners 11-3 on Friday.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U got things started in the first inning. Carter Simon grounded out, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U scored four runs in the third inning. Gavin Kroll, K Antonsen, Gavin Englund, and Jarrett Erdmann each drove in runs during the inning.

Erdmann was credited with the victory for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The pitcher lasted five innings, allowing four hits and three runs while striking out ten.

Owen E took the loss for Vfw 4690 Teeners. The righty surrendered four runs on three hits over two innings, striking out two.

Kroll, Tristin McGannon, Karter Moody, Englund, Karsten Flihs, Erdmann, and Antonsen each collected one hit to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U was sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Flihs had the most chances in the field with nine. Erdmann led Groton Jr. Teeners 14U with three stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with 17 stolen bases.

Matthew M led Vfw 4690 Teeners with two hits in three at bats. Vfw 4690 Teeners tore up the base paths, as two players stole at least two bases. Sheldon S led the way with three.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 6 of 98

## Groton Jr. Teeners 14U 11 - 3 Vfw 4690 Teeners

📍 Away 📅 Thursday June 30, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
GRTN	2	2	4	3	0	11	7	0
VFW4	0	2	1	0	0	3	4	1

### BATTING

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (3B)	3	1	1	0	1	1
J Erdmann (P)	3	1	1	0	1	0
C Simon (CF)	4	0	0	1	0	1
N Morris (SS)	1	0	0	0	1	0
K Flihs (C)	1	2	1	0	2	0
L Krause (2B)	1	1	0	0	2	1
K Moody (1B)	2	2	1	1	1	0
G Kroll (LF)	2	2	1	0	1	1
K Antonsen (RF)	1	1	1	0	0	0
G Englund	1	1	1	1	0	0
N Groeblichhoff	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

**TB:** J Erdmann, K Moody, T McGannon, G Kroll, K Flihs, K Antonsen, G Englund, **SAC:** K Antonsen, **CS:** N Morris 2, **HBP:** K Antonsen, G Englund, N Morris, **SB:** J Erdmann 3, K Moody, T McGannon 2, G Kroll, K Flihs 3, K Antonsen, G Englund 3, L Krause 3, **LOB:** 7

### PITCHING

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Erdmann	5.0	4	3	1	5	10	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** J Erdmann, **P-S:** J Erdmann 105-59, **BF:** J Erdmann 25

Vfw 4690 Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
Gabe B (3B, CF, P)	3	0	1	0	0	0
Owen E (P, SS)	2	0	0	0	1	0
Devin S (RF, C)	2	0	0	0	1	2
Matthew M (1B)	3	1	2	0	0	1
C Coyne (CF, RF)	3	1	0	0	0	3
Sheldon S (C, P,...	2	1	1	1	1	0
Dylan C (2B)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ethan S (2B)	2	0	0	0	0	2
Tayten K (LF)	2	0	0	0	0	1
Caleb E (SS, P, 3B)	0	0	0	0	2	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>

**3B:** Matthew M, **TB:** Matthew M 4, Sheldon S, Gabe B, **SB:** C Coyne 2, Sheldon S 3, Caleb E, **LOB:** 7

Vfw 4690 Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
Owen E	2.0	3	4	4	4	2	0
Caleb E	0.1	0	3	3	3	1	0
Sheldon S	1.1	4	4	4	2	1	0
Gabe B	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>

**L:** Owen E, **P-S:** Owen E 59-26, Sheldon S 32-14, Caleb E 15-4, Gabe B 14-8, **WP:** Owen E 2, Sheldon S 2, **HBP:** Owen E 2, Sheldon S, **BF:** Owen E 14, Sheldon S 11, Caleb E 4, Gabe B 4

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 7 of 98

## Groton Jr. Teeners 14U 12 - 4 Vfw 4690 Teeners

📍 Away 📅 Thursday June 30, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
GRTN	4	0	0	0	1	1	6	12	15	0
VFW4	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	8	0

### BATTING

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (CF)	5	1	3	1	0	0
J Erdmann (LF)	5	1	2	1	0	0
C Simon (3B)	3	2	2	0	0	0
N Morris (C)	3	2	1	0	1	0
N Groeblichhoff (...)	4	1	1	2	0	1
G Englund (P, 1B)	3	1	1	2	1	0
K Antonsen (2B, P)	4	1	3	1	0	0
K Fliehs (1B, 2B)	4	1	1	1	0	1
K Moody (RF)	1	1	0	0	1	0
L Krause (RF)	2	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

**2B:** J Erdmann, **3B:** T McGannon, **TB:** G Englund, N Groeblichhoff, T McGannon 5, J Erdmann 3, K Antonsen 3, K Fliehs, C Simon 2, N Morris, L Krause, **CS:** K Antonsen, **HBP:** C Simon, **SB:** G Englund, T McGannon 2, K Antonsen 2, C Simon, N Morris 2, **LOB:** 5

### PITCHING

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
G Englund	6.0	5	4	4	5	6	0
K Antonsen	1.0	3	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** K Antonsen, **P-S:** G Englund 100-53, K Antonsen 15-11, **WP:** G Englund 2, **HBP:** G Englund, **BF:** G Englund 28, K Antonsen 5

Vfw 4690 Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
G Baumgarn (CF)	3	1	1	1	0	1
O Edwards (SS)	4	0	1	0	0	0
D Snaza (LF)	2	0	0	0	1	2
T Kurkouski	1	0	1	0	0	0
M Mount (1B)	4	2	3	1	0	0
C Coyne (C)	2	1	0	0	2	0
S Schmiege (P, 3B)	4	0	0	0	0	2
D Carlson (2B)	2	0	2	1	1	0
E Schlotte (RF)	2	0	0	0	1	1
C Edwards (3B, P)	3	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>

**2B:** M Mount, **TB:** G Baumgarn, O Edwards, M Mount 4, T Kurkouski, D Carlson 2, **HBP:** G Baumgarn, **SB:** G Baumgarn, M Mount 2, C Coyne 2, D Carlson, **LOB:** 8

Vfw 4690 Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
S Schmiege	4.0	6	4	4	0	0	0
C Edwards	3.0	9	8	5	3	2	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

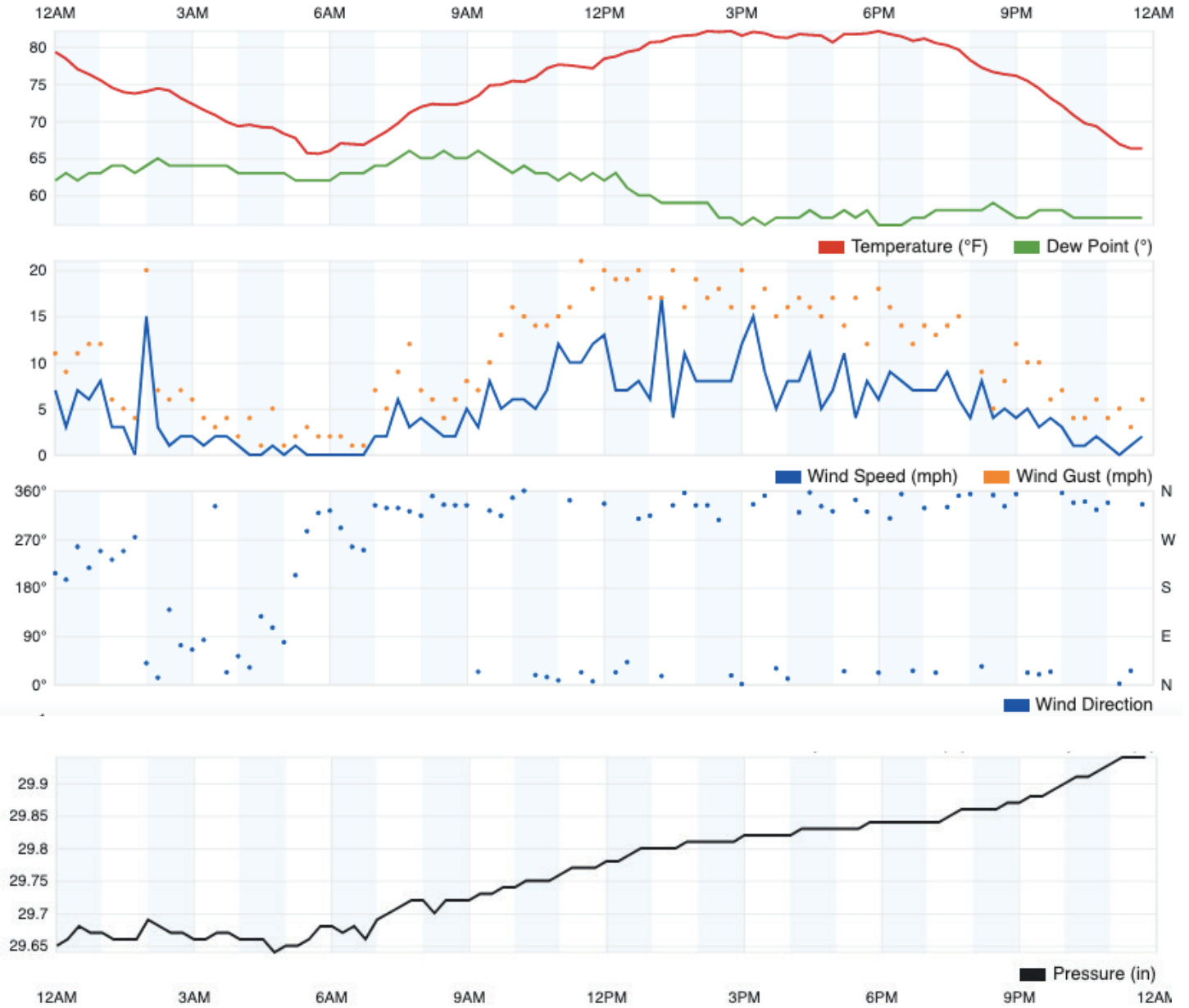
**L:** C Edwards, **P-S:** S Schmiege 40-29, C Edwards 60-34, **WP:** S Schmiege, **HBP:** C Edwards, **BF:** S Schmiege 17, C Edwards 21



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 8 of 98


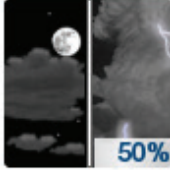
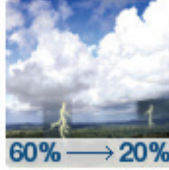


## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs










# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 9 of 98

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Chance T-storms	T-storms Likely then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms
High: 83 °F	Low: 60 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 61 °F	High: 87 °F

## Off and on Shower & Thunderstorm potential Tonight through the 4<sup>th</sup> of July!



Today	Saturday	Sunday	4 <sup>th</sup> of July! Monday
low to mid 80s	78 to 86°	mid to upper 80s	82 to 90°
			
Tonight: Showers and Thunderstorms pushing across the area	20-40% chance of Showers and Thunderstorms (highest chance in the morning & Saturday night)	Showers and Thunderstorms, mainly in the afternoon into Sunday night	20-50% chance of Showers and Thunderstorms

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

High temperatures will range from the upper 70s to near 90 degrees through the next several days. Off and on showers and thunderstorms will return to the forecast tonight through at least the 4th of July!

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 10 of 98

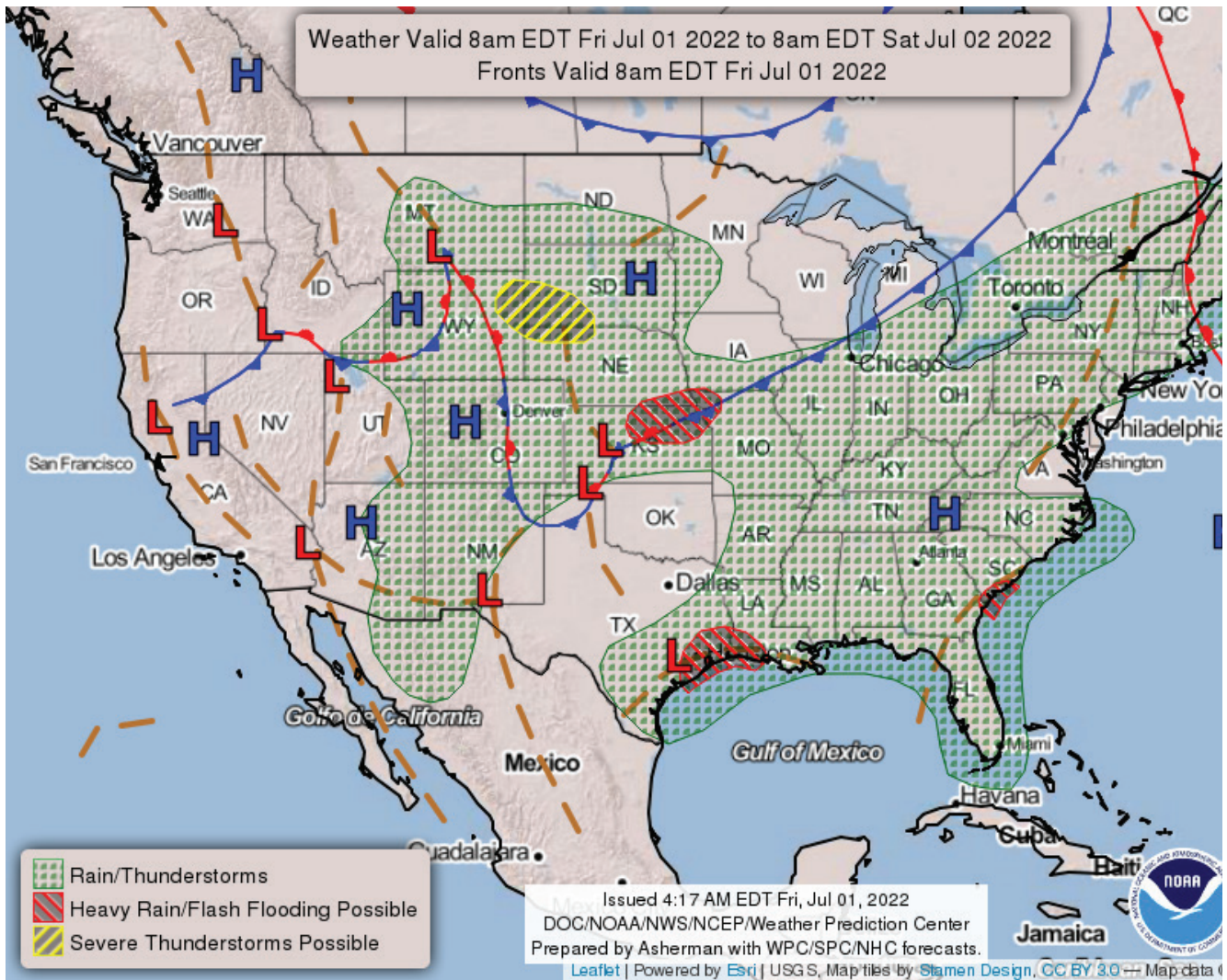
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 82 °F at 2:50 PM**  
**Low Temp: 65 °F at 5:33 AM**  
**Wind: 23 mph at 12:19 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 40 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 1911  
Record Low: 41 in 1995  
Average High: 84°F  
Average Low: 59°F  
Average Precip in July.: 0.12  
Precip to date in July.: 0.42  
Average Precip to date: 11.13  
Precip Year to Date: 11.58  
Sunset Tonight: 9:26:26 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:46:49 AM





# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 11 of 98

## Today in Weather History

July 1, 1928: A powerful, estimated F4 tornado moved southeast from 6 miles west of Miller, Hand County, destroying farms near the start of the path. All buildings were leveled to the ground, including two homes. A checkbook from one residence was found 10 miles away. Estimated property damaged was set at \$50,000.

July 1, 1955: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast near Bowdle. Two barns were destroyed. A small girl and a pony were reportedly carried a quarter mile without injury. A tornado was also spotted in Emmons County in North Dakota, causing \$10,000 worth of damage.

July 1, 2005: Torrential rains of three to seven inches fell across far eastern Brown, western and northern Day, and most of Marshall Counties in late June causing widespread flooding. The flood waters slowly receded through July 10th. Many township roads and highways were flooded along with thousands of acres of cropland. Water surrounded several homes resulting in people being rescued. Some of the houses were flooded. Many bridges were damaged, and roads and culverts were washed out. In Day County, 30 roads were washed out, and 15 bridges needed repairs.

July 1, 2006: With continued little or no rainfall along with much above average temperatures, a drought expanded and intensified through July across central and north central South Dakota. Severe (D2) to an extreme (D3) drought early in July worsened to an extreme (D3) to exceptional (D4) across all of the areas by the middle of July and remained there until the end of the month. Rainfall was 1.50 inches to 2.25 inches below average for the month and from 7 to 8 inches below average for the year. Soil moisture was 4 to 5 inches below average, and lakes and river flows were well below normal. Crops and pastures were devastated due to the extreme dryness and burn bans were in effect across all of the areas. Many ranchers had to sell off much of their cattle. Throughout July, periodic high winds, low relative humidity values, along with many lightning storms resulted in several fires across central and north central South Dakota. The fires burned tens of thousands of acres of pastureland and cropland. Hundreds of firefighters worked throughout the month to contain the flames. The governor of South Dakota declared a statewide emergency and the United States Department of Agriculture declared all of the counties drought disasters. Swan Lake, in north-central South Dakota between Lowry and Hoven, had completely dried up from the long period of dryness. The last time this happened to the lake was 30 years prior in 1976. Also, Lake Oahe at Pierre was four feet above its all-time low.

1792 - A tremendous storm (a tornado or hurricane) hit Philadelphia and New York City. Many young people were drowned while out boating on that Sunday. (David Ludlum)

1861: Cherrapunji, Meghalaya, India measured 366 inches of rain during the month of July 1861. From August 1, 1860, to July 31, 1861, Cherrapunji received a record-breaking 1,041.75 inches of precipitation.

1911 - The high of just 79 degrees at Phoenix AZ was their coolest daily maximum of record for the month of July. The normal daily high for July 1st is 105 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1979 - It snowed almost half a foot (5.8 inches) at Stampede Pass WA, a July record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Lake Charles LA was drenched with a month's worth of rain during the early morning. More than five inches of rain soaked the city, including 2.68 inches in one hour. A thunderstorm in the southern Yakima Valley of Washington State produced high winds which downed trees up to six feet in diameter. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Twenty-six cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Lows of 48 degrees at Providence RI, 48 degrees at Roanoke VA, 49 degrees at Stratford CT, and 48 degrees at Wilmington, DE, were records for the month of July. Boston MA equalled their record for July with a low of 50 degrees. Five inches of snow whitened Mount Washington NH. (The National Weather Summary)

2002: San Antonio, Texas recorded 9.52 inches of rain on this day to set a new record for its greatest rainfall for the entire month of July.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 12 of 98



## "Who's Simple?"

"God gives prudence to the simple?" Who are the 'simple ones,' and what does 'prudence' mean? And, if I'm not simple, do I need prudence?" asked a student in rapid succession. Trying to answer him while the class listened carefully was very important to me. I didn't want them to think I didn't know what I had been talking about.

Solomon was not being smug, or putting anyone "down," or ridiculing them, or being sarcastic. He was too wise to do that. He was being compassionate and giving a warning to those who are "easily led" or "gullible." There are times when all of us fall into one of those two categories: following the wrong leader or not thinking things through carefully.

And the word, "simple," as used here, refers to people who are "aimless," or "inexperienced," who allow themselves to "drift into temptation." They are unaware of what is going on around them, and, unfortunately, do not care to do anything about it. People in this condition are easily led astray because they have no interest in doing what is good for themselves, nor what the right thing to do might be. Honoring God is of no concern to them when faced with temptation. The "simple" refuse to accept God's wisdom as a guide for their lives and even refuse to hear and accept His guidance because they refuse to honor Him.

But, because of His love and grace, God continually reaches out to them, wanting to impart His wisdom to them. First, however, they must accept Him as Savior and enthrone Him as Lord.

God's wisdom is available to those who hear and respect Him. Never forget that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Those who do not hear and fear Him will remain "simple."

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for reaching out to us in love, and wanting us to have Your wisdom to guide us each day. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: For giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young. Proverbs 1:4



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 13 of 98

## 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)

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 14 of 98

## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## News from the Associated Press

### 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 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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 16 of 98

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 Supreme Court. It was to take effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourned on June 24. 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 because of concerns that the pre-Roe ban could put doctors, nurses and other providers at risk of prosecution. Republican state Attorney General Mark Brnovich said on June 30 that the pre-statehood law could be enforced, putting him at odds with the Republican governor. Brnovich said he would seek to remove an injunction in place since shortly after 1973's Roe decision. Also on June 30, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed Arizona to enforce a ban on abortions done solely because the fetus has a genetic abnormality. A federal judge blocked that part of the 2021 Arizona law last year, saying it was unconstitutionally vague, but will now have to reconsider that decision. He's also being asked again to block a "personhood" provision that grants rights to eggs and fetuses, which medical providers worry could be used to bring various charges for harming an unborn child.

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 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



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 17 of 98

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 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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 18 of 98

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 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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 19 of 98

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 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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 20 of 98

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 and in 2020 struck it down, saying it was unconstitutional. 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 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.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 21 of 98

## 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 emergencies. 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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 22 of 98

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 came from the decision, but the state's Republican attorney general has asked federal judges to lift orders blocking several state anti-abortion laws. Those include one aimed at prohibiting abortions based on gender, race or disability, and another banning a common second-trimester abortion procedure that the legislation called "dismemberment abortion."

What's next: Republican legislative leaders said 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 called the Legislature into a special session to take up a tax refund proposal, although state law allows legislators to consider any subject. The session can last up to 40 days.

## 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 restrictions, and lawmakers are out of session until January 2023. They can call themselves in to special

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 23 of 98

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 Democrats. Democratic Gov. Janet Mills has vowed to protect the right to an abortion, saying she will "fight with

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 24 of 98

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 it. 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 access to abortion — 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 June 24 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. The House of Representatives is expected to debate a bill later this week that is similar to the governor’s



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 25 of 98

executive order. It would add protections into state law for individuals seeking abortions and providers so they would not be subject to actions taken by other states.

## 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%.

## MISSISSIPPI

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 26 of 98

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 supervision, are being challenged in court. A state judge temporarily blocked enforcement in October 2021.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 27 of 98

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 it 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 on June 28 signed an executive order protecting abortion patients and providers from prosecution by other states. State agencies are barred from assisting other states in investigations of people who come to Nevada from other states for abortions. The order also protects providers from

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 28 of 98

discipline and having their license revoked.

What's next: Anti-abortion advocates are not expected to focus on trying to repeal Nevada's abortion law. 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. Democrats are urging Sununu to call a special session of the Legislature to codify abortion rights into state law, but both he and Republican legislative leaders say there is no need.

## 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



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 29 of 98

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 guarantees. 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.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 30 of 98

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 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.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 31 of 98

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 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.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 32 of 98

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 Republican hands next year. Abortion clinics in some parts of the state already are experiencing fallout from the ruling. Less than a week after it came out, a clinic in Pittsburgh was flooded with patients who suddenly lost appointments in Ohio, the clinic director said. Clinic representatives are warning that Pennsylvanians will have a harder time finding appointments because of rising demand from out-of-state residents.

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



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 33 of 98

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.

## 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: South Dakota law bans abortions except if the life of the woman is at risk. The state had only one clinic that regularly provided 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's trigger law immediately banned abortions except if the life of the pregnant woman is at risk.

What's next: Noem has called for a special session to craft laws under the new legal landscape now that *Roe v. Wade* is 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. The 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. On June 28, a federal appeals court let it take effect. 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: The state's attorney general, a Republican, has said a trigger law will go into effect in mid-August 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 the law.

What's next: Tennessee's attorney general has said the trigger law will take precedence over the 2020 law banning most abortions at about six weeks. 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 also could 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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 34 of 98

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 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 out-law 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.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 35 of 98

## 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 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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 36 of 98

access to abortions. Gov. Jim Justice, a Republican, opposes abortion access and has signed two anti-abortion laws since taking office in 2017.

Background: Prior to the Supreme Court ruling, West Virginia law banned 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." The state has several other abortion restrictions that include: requiring patients seeking abortions to wait 24 hours after undergoing legislatively mandated counseling that is designed to discourage a woman from ending a pregnancy; requiring minors to get parental permission; banning the use of telemedicine to administer a medication abortion; and prohibiting abortions on the grounds that the child will be born with a disability.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: West Virginia's only abortion clinic announced after the Supreme Court's ruling that it would immediately halt abortion services out of concern that staff could be prosecuted under a state law banning abortion that dates back to the 1800s. Charleston-based Women's Health Center of West Virginia Executive Director Katie Quinonez said it would be "impossible" for the clinic to continue performing abortions with such a law on the books. 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. The law makes no exceptions for rape or incest. 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: State officials have not said formally how the 19th century abortion ban will be enforced. Abortion is addressed in numerous statutes in West Virginia state code, including the 20-week ban passed in 2015 that acknowledges the right to abortion access in the state. State Senate President Craig Blair and Speaker of the House Roger Hanshaw, both Republicans, said legislative attorneys are reviewing each statute on the books "to determine how they apply" in light of the high court's decision. No lawmakers have commented on whether they intend to outlaw medication abortion. The governor has said he will not hesitate to call the Legislature into a special session if the state's abortion law needs to be clarified. Quinonez said while her clinic is not currently performing abortions, it will remain open to continue to provide reproductive care, such as birth control and diagnosis, and to treat sexually transmitted diseases. 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: Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul filed a lawsuit June 28 against Republican leaders of the state Legislature, arguing that the 1849 abortion ban conflicts with a 1985 law that prohibits abortion either after 20 weeks or at the point of fetal viability. His lawsuit says the 1985 law should take precedence. Republican lawmakers are expected to attempt to clarify the 19th century law during next year's legislative session to ensure a ban is in place, even as that issue is being argued in the courts. Lawmakers' efforts would be stymied if Democratic Gov. Tony Evers wins reelection. Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, a Republican, said he supports a rape exception to an abortion ban, but also said the overturning of Roe could prompt Republican lawmakers to consider other reproductive issues, such as contraception.



## 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, according 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 Burkhart 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.

## Hundreds protest Roe decision in Sioux Falls, some arrests

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police in Sioux Falls used smoke bombs to try to disperse hundreds of people protesting the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

Police Chief Jon Thum said there were a "couple of arrests" during the demonstration Wednesday night in downtown Sioux Falls. Thum said those arrested could face a charge of failing to disperse and other misdemeanors.

Police blocked traffic on one street to accommodate protesters, some who chanted "my body, my choice."

Officers later used a loudspeaker to try to get demonstrators to move out of the street and onto sidewalks. Police in riot helmets held batons as they approached demonstrators and launched smoke bombs into the crowd.

That's when arrests were made. At least two people who were detained with zip tie restraints, the Argus Leader reported. Thum said no tear gas was deployed.

The demonstration, organized through word of mouth and social media, had no clear organizer and that groups promoting the event had different messaging and a lack of a clear plan where they were going, officials said.

"Throughout this time as I'm watching people move through the streets, my No. 1 concern is people running them over or cars getting involved or other things," Thum said. "We have a really tough time protecting people exercising their First Amendment Rights when we don't know what their plan is."

By 10:30 p.m., crowds had moved throughout downtown and began to separate.

## Healthcare group wants abortion issue on the ballot in SD

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A grassroots healthcare organization wants to put the abortion issue on the ballot in South Dakota.

Dakotans for Health has developed language for a potential constitutional ballot measure, which if passed by state voters would make South Dakota's near total ban on abortion less restrictive.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 38 of 98

Organization spokesman Rick Weiland says majority opinion should be the rule on abortion in South Dakota.

"The decision by the court, as you well know, was 'let's put it back to the states and let the voters decide.' So that's what we're doing," Weiland said. "We're going to give the voters a choice, not a Legislature that's heavily tilted."

The proposed language says the state may regulate or prohibit abortion after the second trimester, except when necessary to preserve the life or physical or emotional health of a pregnant woman.

State law currently bans abortions except to save the life of the mother. There are no exceptions for cases of rape or incest. The South Dakota law, which was passed in 2005, mirrored a similar abortion ban lawmakers passed one year later.

The state attorney general's office is reviewing the potential constitutional amendment language. The group cannot start circulating petitions until after the 2022 election, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported.

The Republican-controlled Legislature and Gov. Kristi Noem say they plan to call a special session to take up more abortion-related legislation, but no specific policies or dates have been announced.

## **Inflation hits record 8.6% for 19 countries using the euro**

By KELVIN CHAN Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Inflation in countries using the euro set another eye-watering record, pushed higher by a huge increase in energy costs fueled partly by Russia's war in Ukraine.

Annual inflation in the eurozone's 19 countries hit 8.6% in June, surging past the 8.1% recorded in May, according to the latest numbers published Friday by the European Union statistics agency, Eurostat. Inflation is at its highest level since recordkeeping for the euro began in 1997.

Energy prices rocketed 41.9%, and prices for food, alcohol and tobacco were up 8.9%, both faster than the increases recorded the previous month.

Demand for energy has risen as the global economy bounced back from the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine made things worse.

European Union leaders agreed to ban most Russian oil imports by the year's end, driving a price spike. The 27-nation bloc wants to punish Moscow and reduce its reliance on Russian energy, but it's also adding to financial pain for people and businesses as utility bills and prices at the pump soar.

Russia also reduced deliveries of natural gas used to power industry and generate electricity last month to several EU countries like Germany, Italy and Austria, on top of cutting off gas to France, Poland, Bulgaria and others.

"Importantly, the oil embargo and gas supply squeeze that unfolded over the month of June have caused energy prices to soar," ING Bank's senior eurozone economist, Bert Colijn, wrote in a commentary.

Rising consumer prices are a problem worldwide, with the U.S. and Britain seeing inflation hit 40-year highs of 8.6% and 9.1%, respectively. That has led the U.S. Federal Reserve, Bank of England and other central banks worldwide to approve a series of interest rate hikes to combat inflation.

Colijn said the eurozone's latest "ugly inflation reading" adds pressure on the European Central Bank to act quickly.

The ECB is planning its first interest rate hike in 11 years this month, followed by another increase in September. Bank President Christine Lagarde said this week that she wants to move gradually to tackle soaring consumer prices, to avoid stifling the economic recovery, but is leaving the door open for bigger rate hikes in case inflation surges more than expected.

"I don't think that we're going to go back to that environment of low inflation," Lagarde said at an ECB forum Wednesday in Sintra, Portugal. "I think that there are forces that have been unleashed as a result of the pandemic, as a result of this massive geopolitical shock that we are facing now that are going to change the picture and the landscape within which we operate."

But central banks run the risk of causing a recession as they make borrowing more expensive.

Inflation in the euro area has been setting monthly records since last year, underscoring how the war's

impact on global energy supplies is making life more expensive for 343 million people.

So-called core inflation was more stable after excluding the volatile energy and food categories. Price increases for goods like clothing, appliances, cars, computers and books held fairly steady at 4.3%, as did prices for services at 3.4%.

The EU data also showed countries neighboring Russia that have been trying to wean themselves off cheap Russian gas are bearing the brunt of rising prices. Annual inflation came in at 22% for Estonia, 20.5% for Lithuania and 19% for Latvia.

Poland, which does not use the euro but is an EU member, reported Friday that inflation rose to 15.6% in June compared with a year earlier, the highest rate in a quarter-century. That was an increase from the annual rate of 13.9% in May.

Analysts noted that the biggest rise in Poland was in gasoline and diesel prices, which went up 46.7% from a year ago. Food prices were up 14.1%.

## UK government faces new boozy scandal as deputy whip quits

By FRANK GRIFFITHS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's government is dealing with another boozy scandal after the deputy chief whip resigned from his post following a drunken incident and Prime Minister Boris Johnson faced calls Friday to expel the lawmaker from the Conservative Party.

Chris Pincher, whose role was to maintain discipline among Tory members of Parliament, submitted a letter of resignation to Johnson on Thursday.

"I drank far too much" on Wednesday night, Pincher said in the letter. "I've embarrassed myself and other people, which is the last thing I want to do, and for that I apologize to you and to those concerned."

But he said he would remain as a Conservative lawmaker and continue to support Johnson from the back benches of Parliament. Johnson didn't answer when journalists shouted questions to him outside his 10 Downing St. residence about whether he would suspend Pincher from the party.

Pincher's resignation as deputy chief whip added to the prime minister's troubles.

Johnson last month survived a no-confidence vote triggered by investigations into parties held in government buildings when coronavirus lockdowns prohibited group gatherings. A Conservative lawmaker also resigned for watching pornography on his phone in the House of Commons.

After returning from this week's Group of Seven and NATO summits, Johnson was looking to put those embarrassments - and his party's defeat in two special parliamentary elections - behind him.

Conservative Party chairman Oliver Dowden quit last week when the Tories lost two seats in byelections, saying the party "cannot carry on with business as usual." But Johnson has remained defiant amid appeals for his own resignation and said he wouldn't call an early election. The next general election must be called by 2024.

British tabloid The Sun reported that Pincher groped two men Wednesday night at a private members club in London for the Conservative Party. London's Metropolitan Police force said it hadn't yet received any reports of assault at the event.

It was the second time that Pincher, 52, quit a government whip job. In November 2017, he resigned as a junior whip after a complaint that he made an unwanted pass at former Olympic rower and Conservative candidate Alex Story.

But Prime Minister Theresa May brought him back into a government position in 2018 by making him deputy chief whip. When Johnson took over in July 2019, Pincher was moved to the Foreign Office as a junior minister before returning to the whips' office again.

Britain's opposition Labour Party said that Johnson's government had questions to answer about why Pincher was put into the position in the first place.

"This latest episode shows how far standards in public life have been degraded on Boris Johnson's watch," Labour deputy leader Angela Rayner said. "The Conservative Party is so mired in sleaze and scandal that it is totally unable to tackle the challenges facing the British people."

## Xi defends vision of Hong Kong on 25th anniversary of return

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — China's leader Xi Jinping marked the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return with a speech Friday that emphasized Beijing's control over the former British colony under its vision of "one country, two systems" — countering criticism that the political and civic freedoms promised for the next quarter-century have been largely erased under Chinese rule.

Xi praised the city for overcoming "violent social unrest" — a reference to massive pro-democracy protests in 2019 that were followed by a Beijing-driven crackdown that has snuffed out dissent and shut down independent media, aligning Hong Kong more closely with stricter controls under China's ruling Communist Party.

The shift shocked many in the city of 7.4 million people that Britain returned to China in 1997 after running it as a colony for more than a century. As part of the agreement, China agreed to allow Hong Kong to have its own government and legal system for 50 years.

In the ensuing years, Hong Kong activists pushed back against Chinese efforts to curtail freedoms in the city and even made demands for fully democratic elections, drawing out hundreds of thousands of people for marches in the streets.

Under Xi, that pushback has been silenced. For years, the anniversary of the July 1 handover was marked by an official ceremony in the morning and a protest march in the afternoon. Now, protesters have been cowed into silence in what the Communist Party hails as restoring stability to the city.

Xi said that Beijing has "comprehensive jurisdiction" over Hong Kong, and that Hong Kong should respect Chinese leadership, even as Beijing allows regions like Hong Kong and neighboring Macao to maintain their capitalist system and a degree of autonomy.

"After the return to the motherland, Hong Kong has overcome all kinds of challenges and moved forwards steadily," Xi said. "Regardless of whether it was the international financial crisis, the coronavirus pandemic or violent social unrest, nothing has stopped Hong Kong's progress."

His speech represented the culmination of what China scholar Jeff Wasserstrom has described as a push and pull between two competing visions of "one country, two systems."

Many in Hong Kong "fought for a more robust understanding of the two systems, to have an idea that there's a very different lifestyle there," said Wasserstrom, a professor at the University of California, Irvine, and author of "Vigil: Hong Kong on the Brink."

That view, at least for now, has lost out to the narrower one of the Communist Party, which is mainly interested in maintaining the economic advantages of Hong Kong's capitalist system, he said.

Hong Kong resident Grace Chan saw little reason to celebrate on Friday. "It's been very difficult for Hong Kong people in recent years," she said. "I just wanted to relax today and not to surround myself in a negative atmosphere for too long."

Since the 2019 protests, authorities have used a sweeping national security law to arrest scores of activists, media figures and democracy supporters. They introduced a more patriotic curriculum in schools and revamped election laws to keep opposition politicians who are deemed not patriotic enough out of the city's legislature.

In its view, China's Communist Party has restored stability to a city that was wracked with demonstrations seen as a direct challenge to its rule. For Western democracies, Xi has undermined the freedoms and way of life that had distinguished the city from mainland China and made it into a global finance and trade hub.

U.S. National Security Council spokeswoman Adrienne Watson said in a statement that China's policies toward Hong Kong, including the national security law, have "shaken the institutions, rules, and systems that had been the basis of international confidence in Hong Kong."

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said: "We have seen a steady erosion of political and civil rights since the imposition of the National Security Law on June 30, 2020. Authorities have stifled opposition, criminalized dissent and driven out anyone who can speak truth to power."

Xi warned that there would be no tolerance for foreign interference or traitors meddling in Hong Kong's



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 41 of 98

affairs. He said that "safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests" is of the highest priority.

"Nobody in any country or region in the world will allow foreign countries or even traitorous forces and figures to seize power," he said, adding that only by having patriots governing Hong Kong can it ensure long-term stability.

He said that that "one country, two systems" was still a good system that "must be maintained for a long time."

Xi also stressed the importance of caring for the youth of Hong Kong. Many of the protesters in pro-democracy movements in 2014 and 2019 were students, many disillusioned by not only the loss of promised political freedoms but also an increasingly competitive job market and rising housing costs.

"It is necessary to help the majority of young people solve the difficulties they face in their studies, employment, and in entrepreneurship and property ownership," he said. "There must be more opportunities created for them to grow and become talents."

Xi's trip to Hong Kong was his first outside of mainland China since the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in January 2020. He had last visited Hong Kong in 2017 for the 20th anniversary of the handover.

Thousands of guests were required to take daily coronavirus tests and ordered to check into quarantine hotels ahead of their attendance of events with Xi on Thursday and Friday.

Xi officiated at the swearing-in of Hong Kong's new leader John Lee, a former security chief who oversaw the crackdown on dissent.

"The next five years will be a crucial time for Hong Kong to advance from governance to prosperity," Lee said.

He has previously indicated plans to follow through on a long unfulfilled requirement for the city to enact its own laws to protect the Chinese government against acts that threaten national security, such as treason, secession, sedition, subversion and foreign collusion. An earlier initiative was abandoned after large protests in 2003.

Amnesty International warned that Lee's plans for laws governing state secrets and cybersecurity will likely "mirror similar laws in mainland China."

"The extremely broad definition of such laws facilitates arbitrary enforcement, a fact that creates yet more uncertainty and fear for people in Hong Kong," the watchdog's Asia-Pacific regional director Erwin van der Borgh said in a statement.

At a morning flag-raising ceremony — attended by Lee, his predecessor Carrie Lam and other officials but not Xi — police officers carrying the Chinese and Hong Kong flags marched into Golden Bauhinia Square for the ceremony with a Chinese "goose-stepping" style, replacing a British-style march. Guests stood at attention as the Chinese national anthem was played.

## Russian missiles kill at least 19 in Ukraine's Odesa region

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian missile attacks on residential areas in a coastal town near the Ukrainian port city of Odesa early Friday killed at least 19 people, authorities reported, a day after Russian forces withdrew from a strategic Black Sea island.

Video of the pre-dawn attack showed the charred remains of buildings in the small town of Serhiivka, located about 50 kilometers (31 miles) southwest of Odesa. The Ukrainian president's office said three X-22 missiles fired by Russian bombers struck an apartment building and two campsites.

"A terrorist country is killing our people. In response to defeats on the battlefield, they fight civilians," Andriy Yermak, the chief of staff to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Ukraine's Security Service said 19 people died, including two children. It said another 38, including six children and a pregnant woman, were hospitalized with injuries. Most of the victims were in the apartment building, Ukrainian emergency officials said.

The airstrikes followed the pullout of Russian forces from Snake Island on Thursday, a move that was expected to potentially ease the threat to nearby Odesa, home to Ukraine's biggest port. The island sits

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 42 of 98

along a busy shipping lane.

Russia took control of it in the opening days of the war in the apparent hope of using it as a staging ground for an assault on Odesa. The Kremlin portrayed the departure of Russian troops from Snake Island as a "goodwill gesture" intended to facilitate shipments of grain and other agricultural products to Africa, the Middle East and other parts of the world.

Ukraine's military claimed a barrage of its artillery and missiles forced the Russians to flee in two small speedboats. The exact number of withdrawing troops was not disclosed.

The island took on significance early in the war as a symbol of Ukraine's resistance to the Russian invasion. Ukrainian troops there reportedly received a demand from a Russian warship to surrender or be bombed. The answer supposedly came back, "Go (expletive) yourself."

Zelenskyy said that although the pullout did not guarantee the Black Sea region's safety, it would "significantly limit" Russian activities there.

"Step by step, we will push (Russia) out of our sea, our land, our sky," he said in his nightly address.

In eastern Ukraine, Russian forces kept up their push to encircle the last stronghold of resistance in Luhansk, one of two provinces that make up the country's Donbas region. Moscow-backed separatists have controlled much of the region for eight years.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said the Russians were trying to encircle the city of Lysychansk and fighting for control over an oil refinery on the city's edge.

"The shelling of the city is very intensive," Haidai told The Associated Press. "The occupiers are destroying one house after another with heavy artillery and other weapons. Residents of Lysychansk are hiding in basements almost round the clock."

The offensive has failed so far to cut Ukrainian supply lines, although the main highway leading west was not being used because of constant Russian shelling, the governor said. "The evacuation is impossible," he added.

But Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Friday that Russian and Luhansk separatist forces had taken control of the refinery as well as a mine and a gelatin factory in Lysychansk "over the last three days."

Ukraine's presidential office said a series of Russian strikes in the past 24 hours also killed civilians in eastern Ukraine - four in the northeastern Kharkiv region and another four in Donetsk province.

Russian bombardments killed large numbers of civilians earlier in the war, including at a hospital and a theater in the port city of Mariupol. Mass casualties had appeared to become more infrequent as Moscow concentrated on capturing the Donbas region.

However, a missile strike Monday on a shopping mall in Kremenchuk, a city in central Ukraine, killed at least 19 people and injured another 62, authorities said Friday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday denied that Russian forces targeted the shopping mall, saying that his country doesn't hit civilian facilities. He claimed the target in Kremenchuk was a nearby weapons depot, echoing the remarks of his military officials.

## Cups, straws, spoons: India starts on single-use plastic ban

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL AP Science Writer

NEW DELHI (AP) — India banned some single-use or disposable plastic products Friday as part of a federal plan to phase out the ubiquitous material in the nation of nearly 1.4 billion people.

For the first stage, it has identified 19 plastic items that aren't very useful but have a high potential to become litter and makes it illegal to produce, import, stock, distribute or sell them. These items range from plastic cups and straws to ice cream sticks. Some disposable plastic bags will also be phased out and replaced with thicker ones.

Thousands of other plastic products — like bottles for water or soda or bags of chips — aren't covered by the ban. But the federal government has set targets for manufacturers to be responsible for recycling or disposing of them after their use.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 43 of 98

Plastic manufacturers had appealed to the government to delay the ban, citing inflation and potential job losses. But India's federal environment minister Bhupender Yadav said at a press briefing in New Delhi that the ban had been in the pipeline for a year.

"Now that time is up," he said.

This isn't the first time that India has considered a plastic ban. But previous iterations have focused on specific regions, resulting in varying degrees of success. A nationwide ban that includes not just the use of plastic, but also its production or importation was a "definite boost," said Satyarupa Shekhar, the Asia-Pacific coordinator of the advocacy group Break Free from Plastic.

Most plastic isn't recycled globally and millions of tons pollute the world's oceans, impact wildlife and turn up in drinking water. Scientists are still trying to assess the risks posed by the tiny bits of broken-down plastic, known as microplastics. In 2020, over 4.1 million metric tons (4.5 million U.S. tons) of plastic waste was generated in India, according to its federal pollution watchdog.

The creaky waste management system in the country's burgeoning cities and villages means that much of this waste isn't recycled and ends up polluting the environment. Nearly 13 million metric tons (14 million U.S. tons) of plastic waste was either littered or not recycled by the South Asian nation in 2019 — the highest in the world, according to Our World in Data.

Making plastic releases earth-warming greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and India is home to factories that make over 243,000 metric tons (268,000 U.S. tons) of disposable plastic each year. This means that reducing the manufacture and consequent waste of plastic is crucial for India to meet its target of reducing the intensity of emissions in economic activity by 45% in eight years.

A recent study identified over 8,000 chemical additives used for plastic processing, some of which are a thousand times more potent as greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide. Products like single-use packaging, plastic resins, foamed plastic insulation, bottles and containers, among many others, add to global greenhouse emissions.

Most plastic cannot be recycled, only downgraded, and it's often incinerated or used as fuel in waste-to-energy plants, sometimes known as chemical recycling. While plastics are worth three to four times as much for fuel than as scrap, these recycling processes release more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, adding to the greenhouse effect.

"Given the magnitude of the plastic crisis, this is too little. And it's too little both in its scope as well as the coverage," said Shekhar.

Ravi Agarwal, the director of Toxics Link, a New Delhi-based advocacy group that focuses on waste management, added that the ban was "a good beginning," but its success will depend on how well it is implemented. The actual enforcement of the law will be in the hands of individual states and city municipal bodies.

India said that the banned items were identified while keeping in mind the availability of alternatives: bamboo spoons, plantain trays, wooden ice-cream sticks. But in the days leading up to the ban, many vendors said that they were confused.

Moti Rahman, 40, is a vegetable vendor in New Delhi. Customers at his cart carefully picked out fresh summer produce Tuesday before he tipped them into a plastic bag. Rahman said that he agrees with the ban, but added that if plastic bags are stopped without a readily available and equally cost-effective replacement, his business will be impacted.

"After all, plastic is used in everything," he said.

## Trial for US basketball star begins in Moscow-area court

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — American basketball star Brittney Griner appeared in a Moscow-area court for trial Friday, about 4 1/2 months after she was arrested on cannabis possession charges at an airport while traveling to play for a Russian team.

Griner was arrested in February at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport. Police said she was carrying vape

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 44 of 98

canisters with cannabis oil. The Phoenix Mercury center and two-time U.S. Olympic gold medalist could face up to 10 years in prison if convicted of large-scale transportation of drugs.

Fewer than 1% of defendants in Russian criminal cases are acquitted, and unlike in the U.S., acquittals can be overturned.

At a closed-door preliminary hearing Monday in the Moscow suburb of Khimki, Griner's detention was extended for another six months, to Dec. 20.

The athlete's detention and trial come at an extraordinarily low point in Moscow-Washington relations. Griner was arrested less than a week before Russia sent troops into Ukraine, which aggravated already high tensions between the two countries.

The invasion led to sweeping sanctions imposed by the United States, and Russia denounced the U.S. for sending weapons to Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Friday denied politics played a role in Griner's detention and prosecution.

"The facts are that the famous athlete was detained in possession of prohibited medication containing narcotic substances," Peskov told reporters. "In view of what I've said, it can't be politically motivated," he added.

Griner's supporters have kept a low profile in hopes of a quiet resolution, until May, when the State Department reclassified her as wrongfully detained and shifted oversight of her case to its special presidential envoy for hostage affairs — effectively the U.S. government's chief negotiator.

Griner's wife, Cherelle, has urged President Joe Biden to secure her release, calling her "a political pawn."

"It was good to see her in some of those images, but it's tough. Every time's a reminder that their teammate, their friend, is wrongfully imprisoned in another country," Phoenix Mercury coach Vanessa Nygaard said Monday.

The coach hoped that Biden would "take the steps to ensure she comes home."

Griner's supporters have encouraged a prisoner swap like the one in April that brought home Marine veteran Trevor Reed in exchange for a Russian pilot convicted of drug trafficking conspiracy.

Russian news media have repeatedly raised speculation that she could be swapped for Russian arms trader Viktor Bout, nicknamed "the Merchant of Death," who is serving a 25-year sentence on conviction of conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens and providing aid to a terrorist organization.

Russia has agitated for Bout's release for years. But the wide discrepancy between Griner's case — which involves alleged possession of vape cartridges containing cannabis oil — and Bout's global dealings in deadly weapons could make such a swap unpalatable to the U.S.

Others have suggested that she could be traded in tandem with Paul Whelan, a former Marine and security director serving a 16-year sentence on an espionage conviction that the United States has repeatedly described as a setup.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, when asked Sunday on CNN whether a joint swap of Griner and Whelan for Bout was being considered, sidestepped the question.

"As a general proposition ... I have got no higher priority than making sure that Americans who are being illegally detained in one way or another around the world come home," he said. But he said he could not comment "in any detail on what we're doing, except to say this is an absolute priority."

## **EXPLAINER: How will R. Kelly sentence impact other trials?**

By MICHAEL TARM AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — R. Kelly could be in his 80s before the singer is free again, based on a 30-year prison term imposed this week by a New York federal judge for parlaying his fame to sexually abuse young fans, including some who were children.

And if the 55-year-old loses at three related trials in coming months, he could be staring at decades more behind bars. That prospect, said one of his lawyers not involved in the New York trial, could lead Kelly to pursue a plea deal.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 45 of 98

Here's a look at the potential impact of Kelly's lengthy prison term in New York on those other cases:  
WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE CASES?

A federal trial in Chicago is slated to begin next, on Aug. 15. Chicago is Kelly's hometown and where many of his accusers live, so interest is expected to be especially intense. Kelly faces charges that he and two co-defendants fixed his state child pornography trial in 2008, when he was acquitted.

The two other cases are state cases: a multiple count sex-abuse case in Cook County, Illinois, where Chicago is located, and a solicitation case in Hennepin County, Minnesota. Both have been on back burners while the federal cases play out. No trial dates are set for either.

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES KELLY PURSUES A PLEA DEAL?

The chances are greater after the sentence handed down in New York, said Steve Greenberg, a longtime Kelly lawyer who represents Kelly in the Cook County case.

"I suspect there have been discussions" between Kelly's federal trial-team lawyers and prosecutors, Greenberg said.

A message seeking comment from Kelly's lead attorney in his federal cases, Jennifer Bonjean, was not immediately returned. She said earlier that Kelly would appeal his New York convictions.

Kelly must weigh the likelihood of winning the Chicago federal case against agreeing to a deal that includes more prison time, Greenberg said.

But Greenberg believes the cases against Kelly in Cook County and in Minnesota are far weaker and that Kelly could secure acquittals in those state courts.

WOULD ANOTHER SENTENCE BE ADDED TO THE NEW YORK SENTENCE?

If Kelly is convicted in U.S. District Court in Chicago, his judge could order that Kelly serve that sentence after his New York sentence is complete, said Phil Turner, a former federal prosecutor in Chicago with no tie to Kelly's cases.

Turner said he expected prosecutors would ask for such a consecutive sentence but that a judge would most likely impose a concurrent sentence — meaning they would be served simultaneously.

WOULD PROSECUTORS BE OPEN TO A PLEA DEAL?

They could be, if Kelly agrees to take responsibility for the crimes charged.

Kelly's attorneys likely would not agree to anything that involves the possibility of extending the 30-year sentence and would only sign a deal that foresees sentences lower than 30 years. They would also want assurances prosecutors won't press for consecutive sentences.

Turner said the advantage to Kelly of a deal ending the prospect of more trials is that his attorneys would be able to turn their full attention to the New York appeal.

Greenberg said there was reason to think Kelly could prevail with that appeal. Turner said it was a long shot. But if that sentence is thrown out, Turner said Kelly would be looking at completing what his lawyers would hope are lower sentences in the other districts.

COULD PROSECUTORS DECIDE TO SIMPLY DROP THE OTHERS CASES?

Chances of that seem slim.

Turner said the typical mindset in U.S. attorney's offices is to remain persistent and aggressive. That attitude has been particularly pronounced when it comes to Kelly.

"They want this guy badly," Turner said.

U.S. attorney's offices also effectively have unlimited resources, so the costs and time needed for a trial won't dissuade them, he added.

Turner thought it was more likely that the state cases could be dropped, especially if Kelly is convicted in federal court in Chicago and receives additional prison time.

"Their resources are much more limited. They would be spending money they don't have," he said. "They have murders and serious crimes to prosecute. They may ask, 'Why spend (money and time) on Kelly when he is already facing decades behind bars.'"

WHAT ELSE COULD DRIVE DECISIONS TO PUSH AHEAD WITH OTHER TRIALS?

The possibility that the New York convictions could be overturned is one factor. Kelly could go free im-

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 46 of 98

mediately if state prosecutors and federal prosecutors in Chicago chose to drop their cases and the New York convictions were overturned.

Prosecutors in the different districts may all see winning convictions and sentences as insurance that Kelly would stay behind bars — even if an appeals court ends up tossing some convictions.

IS THERE ANY REASON FOR KELLY TO PLEAD GUILTY WITH NO DEAL?

Pleading guilty to the remaining charges would mean no more trials. It would lower Kelly's legal bills, which at times he has struggled to pay.

But Kelly would have no assurance that prosecutors wouldn't seek the toughest possible sentences.

Still, he could hold out hope that, by pleading guilty and accepting responsibility, judges would be more inclined to hand him sentences on the lower end of the guidelines.

## After two pandemic years, a summer travel bounce — and chaos

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — At a tourism conference in Phuket last month, Thailand's prime minister looked out at attendees and posed a question with a predictable answer.

"Are you ready?" Prayuth Chan-ocha asked, dramatically removing his mask and launching what's hoped to be the country's economic reset after more than two years of coronavirus-driven restrictions. When the crowd yelled its answer — yes, according to local media — it might have been speaking for the entire pandemic-battered world.

But a full recovery could take as long as the catastrophe itself, according to projections and interviews by The Associated Press in 11 countries in June. They suggest that the hoped-for rebound is less like a definitive bounce — and more like a bumpy path out of a deep and dark cave.

Some locales, such as the French Riviera and the American Midwest, are contributing to the climb more than others — like shuttered, "zero-COVID" China, which before the pandemic was the world's leading source of tourists and their spending.

The human drive to bust out and explore is helping fuel the ascent, packing flights and museums despite rising coronavirus infections and inflation. But economic urgency is the real driver for an industry worth \$3.5 trillion in 2019 that the United Nations estimates lost about that much during the pandemic. By some estimates, tourism provides work for one in 10 people on Earth.

Many places, particularly those that have loosened safety requirements, are seeing what passes for a go-go summer of sunny optimism and adventure.

"They are saying it's the summer of revenge travel," Pittsburgh resident Theresa Starta, 52, said as she gazed across one of Amsterdam's canals at crowds thronging to the Dutch capital. "Everything seems so bad all around the world, so it's nice to see some things coming back."

"The road to a full recovery is very long, but at least we are back on it," said Sanga Ruangwattanakul, president of the Khao San Road Business Association in Bangkok.

Despite the roaring return of travelers, challenges and uncertainty cast shadows over the post-pandemic landscape. Full recoveries are generally not expected until at least 2024. Concerns hovered around a long list of issues, including inflation, supply chain problems, rising infection rates and labor shortages.

Before June was over, chaos had come to define travel in the summer of 2022. Airports and airlines that had cut back during the depths of the pandemic struggled to meet the demand, resulting in cancelled flights, lost baggage and other, assorted nightmares. Spooked tourists booked trips on shorter notice, making it harder for hotels, tour operators and others to plan, industry insiders said.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, too, added risk to the uneven recovery and contributed to inflation — a factor that could become a major obstacle even as other pandemic pain recedes.

"It's really the fall season that is of concern," said Sandra Carvao, chief of market intelligence and competitiveness at the U.N. World Tourism Organization. If inflation continues to rise, particularly interest rates, "families will have to rethink their spending."

For all of the lifted virus travel restrictions, safety is not likely to recede as a concern.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 47 of 98

"The most important thing for people when they decide to go on vacation is health and safety. Always has been," said Simon Hudson, a professor of tourism at the University of South Carolina, who is writing a book about the pandemic recovery. "This is going to take awhile."

Starting with the bright spots, the U.N. reported that during the first quarter of 2022, international arrivals almost tripled over the same three months last year. March this year produced the healthiest results since the start of the pandemic, with arrivals climbing to nearly 50% of 2019 levels. That could rise to as much as 70% of 2019 arrivals by the end of this year, the UNWTO said in projections it revised in May.

That's produced encouraging signs in certain places, from Israel to the United States, Italy, Mexico and France. Resets like Thailand's are all the rage. Big plans for 2023 are in the offing in the United States, such as a cruise featuring some of Broadway's biggest stars.

Those projections are playing out on the ground, generally in places that had aggressive and agile restrictions early-on and adapted by lifting many protections as vaccinations rose and the omicron variant proved less lethal than other variants.

Foreign tourists are flocking to places like the French Riviera, where supply-chain issues are making everything more expensive — including champagne, one restaurateur said.

"It's been summer here since spring, every single night," said Elie Dagher, a manager of La Villa Massenet in Nice. Since April, he said, the bistro has been packed with visitors from Scandinavia and the Netherlands, but especially the United Kingdom and the United States.

In Branson, Missouri, known for its country music shows and outdoor attractions, no rebound is necessary. It hosted a record 10 million visitors last year and appears to be on pace to top that, said Lynn Berry, spokeswoman for the Branson Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Jeff Johnson, co-owner of Shepherd of the Hills adventure park, attributes that to a short shutdown in 2020, a loyal customer base drawn from nearby states and cities like St. Louis and Kansas City. "When we reopened," he said, "it never slowed down."

In Italy, tourists — especially from the United States — returned this year in droves. The run-up to Easter was especially notable in Rome, reflecting pent-up demand to visit perennial all-star sites like the Sistine Chapel and the Colosseum.

"There's a huge craving to travel, just like popping a (cork) from a bottle," said Bernabò Bocca, president of the national hotel association Federalberghi. The moment Italy loosened safety measures in April, "a tsunami of bookings arrived from the United States at a speed never seen before."

Hopes are high for Thailand, too, in the wake of its announcement last month that the country was dropping virtually all requirements other than proof of vaccination, or in its absence, a negative coronavirus test.

Already the return of tourists has breathed new life into local tourism. Bangkok's famous backpacker street, Khao San Road, almost deserted last year, is getting up to 5,000 visitors a day — promising numbers but a far cry from the 30,000 daily visitors before the pandemic, according to Ruangwattanakul, the business association president.

Thailand is an instructive look at the struggle to recover, with China a major factor. By 2019, Chinese tourists accounted for a quarter of foreign arrivals in Thailand, but there are no signs that they will return in such numbers.

The fitful nature of the post-pandemic climb could be seen from Israel to India.

"I think we are moving in the right direction," said restaurant owner Vaibhav Khulbe in Dharmasala, India, where 4 million visitors are expected in country this year, compared to 11 million in 2019.

As elsewhere in the world, Israel is struggling to match its record-setting tourism of 2019, when 4.5 million people visited. Despite lifting all restrictions, Israel expects less than half that — about 2 million visitors — this year, Tourism Ministry officials say. Added to the other concerns, political strife is an issue after a wave of deadly Palestinian violence inside Israel in the spring, along with the collapse of the government last month.

Still, the ministry is reporting a steady, though gradual, climb. An unusual convergence of springtime religious holidays for Jews, Christians and Muslims helped boost visitors in April. By May, the number of

visitors had risen to about 57% of the same month two years earlier.

But the recovery has been uneven for many, particularly in the occupied West Bank.

"We were expecting really more people to come at least this month, like May, June, but still it's very slow," said Wisam Salsaa, manager of The Walled Off Hotel in Bethlehem, the storied ancient city where President Joe Biden is expected to visit in July during a trip to Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Designed by London-based artist Banksy and brimming with color, the hotel is locally run and well-known — but struggling. It expanded physically during the pandemic but has been forced to whittle its staff from about 50 people to 32 now. In June, its occupancy rate stood at about 30%.

"Tourism here," Salsaa said, "is very fragile."

## **Abortion, women's rights grow as priorities: AP-NORC poll**

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new poll finds a growing percentage of Americans calling out abortion or women's rights as priorities for the government in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, especially among Democrats and those who support abortion access.

With midterm elections looming, President Joe Biden and Democrats will seek to capitalize on that shift.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in remarks immediately after the decision that "reproductive freedom is on the ballot in November." But with pervasive pessimism and a myriad of crises facing the nation, it's not clear whether the ruling will break through to motivate those voters — or just disappoint them.

"It does feel like a major setback," said 26-year-old Lauren Nelson of San Diego, who has been worrying about the environment her young niece will grow up in. She doesn't think the midterms will change the course that states are on. "You can't help but feel kind of helpless, as though there's not much that can be done."

Twenty-two percent of U.S. adults name abortion or women's rights in an open-ended question as one of up to five problems they want the government to work on, according to the poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. That's more than doubled since December, when an AP-NORC poll found a notable uptick in mentions of abortion from years before, likely in anticipation of the Dobbs ruling on abortion.

The new poll, which included interviews conducted before and after the Supreme Court's ruling, finds prioritization of the issues grew sharply following the decision.

The Dobbs ruling kicks decision-making on abortion back to states, and in the last week, Republican governors and legislatures have moved to introduce or advance legislation that bans or curtails abortions.

Polling conducted before the decision showed it was unpopular with a majority of Americans, who wanted to see the court leave Roe as is. A majority of Americans support abortion access in general, though many say there should be restrictions.

Mentions of abortion specifically are not limited to Americans who support abortion rights; instead, the poll shows abortion is named as a priority about equally by adults with hardline opinions on both sides of the issue -- the third who think abortion should be legal in all cases and the 1 in 10 who think abortion should be illegal in all cases.

Earnestine Smith, a 68-year-old resident of Waukegan, Illinois, said the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe represents progress. The issue is one of her highest priorities right now.

"We want abortion abolished and done away with," she said. "We got to stand up and say no."

Still, it's significant that those with the most liberal views on abortion and those with the most conservative views are about equally likely to prioritize the issue; historically, research has shown opponents of abortion have been more likely to consider the issue important to them than those supporting abortion access.

And the new poll finds mentions of women's rights are almost exclusively by those who think abortion should be legal.

According to the poll, the percentage of women prioritizing abortion or women's rights was already higher in interviews conducted before the ruling than six months ago, 21% vs. 9% in December; it swelled to



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 49 of 98

37% in the days after. Mentions grew sharply among men, too, but the growth was concentrated in the wake of the ruling, from 6% in interviews conducted before to 21% after.

Lyle Gist said he wouldn't have thought of abortion as a top priority a few years ago. The court decision to overturn Roe, though unsurprising, makes it a major issue.

"I think the ramifications of this are substantial," said 36-year-old Gist of Los Angeles. Gist thinks that there will be ripple effects, including a "mass exodus" of people moving out of states with abortion bans.

In a small town in Louisiana in 1968, when abortion was illegal, Anne Jones carried a pregnancy to term and gave her daughter up for adoption. Jones, now 74 in Plano, Texas, worries about what the Republican Party might go after next -- like birth control -- and thinks it's hypocritical that lawmakers like Texas Gov. Greg Abbott want to "hold the woman accountable for the child that she may not be able to afford to keep" even as they limit health and social services for women and children.

"Politics in Texas has taken a wrong turn," she said. She wants to see abortion access made national law but remains skeptical that Biden and Democrats can do so.

The poll shows these issues have been increasingly important to Democrats, growing from just 3% in 2020 to 13% in 2021 and now 33%. In interviews before the ruling, 18% of Democrats mentioned abortion or women's rights; that was 42% after.

Among Republicans, 11% identify abortion or women's rights as a priority in the new poll, a modest increase from 5% who said that in December.

Steven Lefemine, who protests outside the Planned Parenthood in Columbia, South Carolina, called Roe's reversal a "major benchmark" but said lawmakers needed to do much more, including pursuing a constitutional amendment to protect unborn children.

"I'd like to see legislation that lives up to God's word," he said.

Biden and Democrats have vowed to fight for abortion access, but they've struggled with how to act given crippling opposition from Republicans in a sharply divided Senate. Biden said to reporters on Thursday that he would support an exception to the filibuster rule to codify Roe into law.

Roderick Hinton, who voted for Biden, wants to see the president move on court reform, saying the court's decisions "are not matching today's time." He was angry after the court overturned Roe -- that the older generation is "putting the screws" to younger Americans, including his two daughters.

Biden commissioned a review of the Supreme Court after promising to do so on the campaign trail, a response to rhetoric within the Democratic Party about expanding the court following former President Donald Trump's three conservative appointments. The report released last year exercised caution about proposals to expand the court or set term limits.

"Their lifetime position is really crazy," Hinton said. "As neutral as the courts were, it's now becoming political. Their personal beliefs are being put in place."

## Timeline: Hong Kong under 25 years of Chinese rule

HONG KONG (AP) — The following are key events in the history of Hong Kong, which marked the 25th anniversary of its handover from British to Chinese rule on Friday.

China had promised the territory could retain its civil, economic and political liberties for 50 years under the "one country, two systems" framework. However, in recent years Beijing has severely limited rights to free speech and assembly and virtually eliminated political opposition under the rubric of maintaining national security.

— 1841: The Qing dynasty cedes Hong Kong Island to Britain after China's defeat in the first Opium War. British administration begins the next year, helping to grow trade in goods from tea to porcelain, while China's leadership deals with internal conflicts and increasing demands for foreign access to its enormous domestic market.

— 1860: The colony grows after the Qing cede Kowloon, a mountainous region opposite Hong Kong Island, to Britain after the second Opium War. China accedes to the demands after the imperial court is driven from Beijing and its famed Summer Palace is sacked, looted and torched by foreign troops.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 50 of 98

— 1898: Britain leases the New Territories, a large area around Kowloon, from China for 99 years, or until 1997. The largely rural area provides a buffer against unrest within mainland China and greater economic viability for the colony as a whole. The lease also sets the clock ticking on Hong Kong's eventual return to Chinese rule.

— 1941-45: Japan occupies Hong Kong until the end of World War II. British, Chinese and allied forces resisted for three weeks, but were forced to surrender against overwhelming odds. Along with anti-colonialism, rhetoric against Japanese wartime atrocities remains a central theme in the Communist Party's nationalistic appeal.

— 1984: Britain agrees to return Hong Kong to China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" framework that gives the city its own economic and political system for 50 years. The Sino-British Joint Agreement is registered with the United Nations, although Beijing now says it is null and void and rejects any foreign criticism as meddling in its internal affairs.

— 1997: Hong Kong is handed over to Chinese rule in a ceremony attended by Prince Charles and Chinese President Jiang Zemin. Hours later, People's Liberation Army troops enter the city in a highly public display of China's repudiation of colonial rule.

— 2003: In the largest protest since the handover, hundreds of thousands of citizens march against proposed national security legislation that would have criminalized "subversion" against the Chinese government. The bill was subsequently withdrawn in what was seen as a victory for civic organization and an indication of Beijing's continued — although waning — tolerance for dissent.

— 2014: Protesters seeking direct elections for Hong Kong's leader lay siege to government headquarters for 79 days but fail to win any concessions. The protests spawn a generation of young activists who will continue to push for greater freedoms against an increasingly intransigent Chinese leadership.

— 2017: Chinese leader Xi Jinping visits Hong Kong on the 20th anniversary of its return to Chinese rule, during which he delivers a speech declaring Beijing will accept no opposition. Long-time civil servant and close Beijing ally Carrie Lam becomes Hong Kong's chief executive with a mandate to enforce China's will, while maintaining the city's status as an international business hub.

— 2019: Protests break out over proposed legislation that could have seen Hong Kongers and foreign residents sent to mainland China for trials in a legal system beset with accusations of ill-treatment and forced confessions. While the bill is withdrawn, protests continue among mostly students and young people frustrated with a lack of representation and opportunities in one of the world's most economically divided cities.

— 2020: Following a heavy crackdown on protesters, opposition figures and independent media, China's rubber-stamp parliament imposes a sweeping National Security Law that jails thousands of government critics, with others seeking asylum abroad or being intimidated into silence. Changes to the makeup of Hong Kong's Legislative Council ensure only "patriots" loyal to Beijing will have a voice.

— 2022: Former security chief John Lee is installed as Hong Kong's chief executive following what was widely seen as a sham election in which he was the only candidate. Lee is among a number of Hong Kong and mainland Chinese officials under U.S. and European visa bans for their roles in cracking down on human rights in the territory. Authorities require new textbooks asserting that Hong Kong was never a British colony, claiming China never recognized the treaties over its status. The move is seen as an attempt to erase the memory of past freedoms and assert the ideology of China's "great rejuvenation" that is central to Xi's political agenda.

## **Putin's week: Facing NATO expansion, West's unity on Ukraine**

It has not been an easy week for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

He took his first foreign trip since the invasion of Ukraine to shore up relations with troublesome Central Asian allies. He watched as NATO declared Moscow its main enemy and invited Russia's neighbors Sweden and Finland to join the alliance. And he was forced to deny that his troops had yet again attacked a civilian target in Ukraine.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 51 of 98

Countering a show of Western unity over Ukraine at a series of summits in Europe this week, Putin has sought to cast the moves by the U.S. and its allies as a proof of their hostile designs, and he vowed to press the offensive against Russia's neighbor, now in its fifth month.

Putin long has described NATO's expansion to Russia's borders as the top security threat to his country. When he sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, he cited increasingly close military ties between Kyiv and the West as a key reason behind his action.

Russia's aggression against its neighbor has helped cement Western unity, with allies offering billions of dollars in weapons and aid to Kyiv and slamming Russia with unprecedented sanctions that froze its hard currency reserves, targeted oil and other key exports, and barred its planes from European skies.

The invasion also prompted NATO to deploy more troops and weapons into the territories of its members in Eastern Europe and encouraged Sweden and Finland to abandon their neutrality and seek NATO membership.

At its summit in Madrid on Wednesday, the alliance formally invited the two nations to join and declared Russia the "most significant and direct threat" to its members' peace and security.

Putin, who visited Turkmenistan Wednesday to attend a Caspian Sea summit with three former Soviet nations and Iran, responded by saying that NATO's actions proved its anti-Russian focus while admitting his action helped Western allies cement their ranks.

At the summit in Ashgabat, Putin and other participants didn't mention the war in Ukraine in their public comments. In a communique after the talks, they emphasized their agreement to bar any foreign militaries from the Caspian and underlined a pledge not to offer their territories for aggression against another country on its shores.

During a meeting with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on the sidelines of the summit, Putin emphasized "strategic" ties between Moscow and Tehran.

Speaking to reporters in Turkmenistan, Putin charged that the U.S. has "long been looking for an external enemy, for a threat that would help rally allies," adding that "Iran wasn't good enough for that role, and Russia fit much better."

"We have given them a chance to unite all allies," Putin said, noting that the NATO summit's decisions offer a fresh proof that the Western group "is a relic of the Cold War intended to serve as an instrument of the U.S. foreign policy to keep its satellites in rein."

Before the war, Russia insisted on binding guarantees precluding NATO's expansion to Ukraine and other ex-Soviet nations and demanded a rollback of the military alliance's deployments in Eastern Europe. The U.S. and its allies firmly rejected the demands, emphasizing that a key alliance principle is that membership is open to any qualifying country and no outsiders have veto power.

At the same time, Washington and NATO offered to discuss arms control, confidence-building measures, greater transparency and risk reduction — issues that Moscow shrugged off as secondary to its main security demands.

Until the invasion, the Kremlin denied having plans to attack but warned the West that NATO's expansion to Ukraine and other ex-Soviet nations is a "red line" that must not be crossed.

Putin alleged the West had "swindled, blatantly cheated" Moscow by offering verbal pledges in the 1990s not to expand NATO's eastward and then enlarged it to incorporate former Soviet bloc countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet republics in the Baltics.

On Thursday, he spoke with his usual rancor about what he described as Western efforts to discourage Ukraine from sitting down for talks with Russia to negotiate an end to hostilities.

"The calls to Ukraine to continue fighting and to abandon any further negotiations confirm our belief that the united West and NATO do not care for Ukraine or the interests of the Ukrainian people, and that their goal is to protect their own interests," Putin said. "The leading NATO members are using the Ukrainian people to reinforce their positions and their role in the world, reaffirm their hegemony and their imperial ambitions."

Commenting on NATO's invitation to Finland and Sweden, Putin rejected the Western description of the move as a major defeat for Russia.

"As for the assumption that we were fighting against NATO expansion to Ukraine but now have Sweden

and Finland to deal with, there is no substance behind it at all, because for us Finland and Sweden joining NATO is not at all the same as the potential membership of Ukraine," he said.

Sweden and Finland are free to do what they want, he said, but noted that "we will have to respond quid pro quo if military contingents and infrastructure are deployed there and create the same threats for the territories where they are created for us."

He said Russia doesn't have territorial disputes with those countries, unlike Ukraine, which has declared an intention to win back Crimea that Russia annexed in 2014 and regain control over the Moscow-backed separatist regions in the east, known as the Donbas..

"Ukraine is a totally different matter," Putin said. "They were turning Ukraine into an anti-Russia, a bridgehead for trying to destabilize Russia."

He hailed his forces in Ukraine as "heroes" protecting Russia's security and said that the "special military operation" will continue until its goals of "liberating Donbas, protecting its people and creating conditions that will guarantee the security of Russia itself" are achieved.

Putin also denied that Russian forces targeted a busy shopping mall in the central Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk, saying that his country doesn't hit civilian facilities and alleging the airstrike was directed at a nearby weapons depot, echoing the remarks of his military officials.

But that was disputed by Ukrainian officials and witnesses, who said a Russian missile directly struck the mall, killing at least 18 people, injuring dozens and leaving 20 others missing. Earlier in the war, Russia hit a hospital, theater, residential buildings and a railway station crowded with fleeing civilians.

Putin said the actions in Ukraine "are proceeding according to plan" and "our forces are moving forward and attaining the objectives that have been set for the particular period of the engagement," adding that he wouldn't rush the operation to minimize losses.

U.S. director of national intelligence Avril Haines said Putin apparently has gotten beyond the disappointment by the failure to quickly defeat Ukraine and may now hope that if Russia succeeds in crushing the Ukrainian military in Donbas, "that will lead to a slump basically in the Ukrainian resistance and that that may give them greater opportunities."

## Same-sex couples updating legal status after abortion ruling

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Emails and phone calls from same-sex couples, worried about the legal status of their marriages and keeping their children, flooded attorney Sydney Duncan's office within hours of the Supreme Court's decision eliminating the constitutional right to abortion.

The ruling last week didn't directly affect the 2015 decision that paved the way for same-sex marriage. But, Duncan said, it was still a warning shot for families headed by same-sex parents who fear their rights could evaporate like those of people seeking to end a pregnancy.

"That has a lot of people scared and, I think, rightfully so," said Duncan, who specializes in representing members of the LGBTQ community at the Magic City Legal Center in Birmingham.

Overturing a nearly 50-year-old precedent, the Supreme Court ruled in a Mississippi case that abortion wasn't protected by the Constitution, a decision likely to lead to bans in about half the states. Justice Samuel Alito said the ruling involved only the medical procedure, writing: "Nothing in this opinion should be understood to cast doubt on precedents that do not concern abortion."

But conservative Justice Clarence Thomas called on his colleagues to reconsider cases that allowed same-sex marriage, gay sex and contraception.

The court's three most liberal members warn in their dissent that the ruling could be used to challenge other personal freedoms: "Either the mass of the majority's opinion is hypocrisy, or additional constitutional rights are under threat. It is one or the other."

That prospect alarms some LGBTQ couples, who worry about a return to a time when they lacked equal rights to married heterosexual couples under the law. Many, fearful that their marital status is in danger, are moving now to square away potential medical, parental and estate issues.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 53 of 98

Dawn Betts-Green and wife Anna Green didn't waste time shoring up their legal paperwork after the decision. They've already visited a legal clinic for same-sex families to start the process of making a will.

"That way, if they blast us back to the Dark Ages again, we have legal protections for our relationship," said Betts-Green, who works with an Alabama-based nonprofit that documents the history of LGBTQ people in the South.

As a white woman married to a Black transgender man, Robbin Reed of Minneapolis feels particularly vulnerable. A decision undermining same-sex marriage or interracial unions would completely upend Reed's life, which includes the couple's 3-month-old child.

"I have no expectation that anything about my marriage is safe," said Reed, a legal aide.

Reed's employer, Sarah Breiner of the Breiner Law Firm, is setting up seminars in both the Twin Cities and the Atlanta area to help same-sex couples navigate potential legal needs after the court's decision. Breiner said helping people remain calm about the future is part of her job these days.

"We don't know what might happen, and that's the problem," Breiner said.

In a sign of what could come, the state of Alabama already has cited the abortion ruling in asking a federal appeals court to let it enforce a new state law that makes it a felony for doctors to prescribe puberty blockers and hormones to trans people under age 19. The decision giving states the power to restrict abortion means states should also be able to ban medical treatments for transgender youth, the state claimed.

Any attempt to undo gay marriage would begin with a lawsuit, and any possible rollback is years away since no major legal threat is on the horizon, said Cathryn Oakley, senior counsel and state legislative director with the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ advocacy organization.

"This is definitely a scary moment and people are nervous, but peoples' marriages are still safe," Oakley said.

Although the threat to same-sex couples feels particularly acute in conservative states, Oakley said she's heard of people all over the country in recent days seeking second-parent adoptions, which protect a family by having the names of both adoptive parents on the birth certificate. People also are completing medical directives in case one spouse is incapacitated and doing general estate planning, she said.

Ryanne Seyba's law firm in Hollywood, Florida, is offering free second-parent adoptions, which are similar to step-parent adoptions, for qualified same-sex couples to help ease some of the stress caused by the possible ripple effects of the abortion decision.

"We realized last week when (the ruling) came out we needed to do something," said Seyba of The Upgrade Lawyers.

A judge in Broward County plans to have a special day in August to finalize all the adoptions at once, Seyba said. If nothing else, completing the process should give nervous families more security, she said.

"If gay marriage goes away, we don't really know what's going to happen," she said. "It's better to be on the safe side."

## 5 players, \$1.1 billion: NBA free agency starts with a bang

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

The NBA generated more basketball-related income than ever this past season, the total number coming up just short of \$9 billion.

Business is good. The first night of free agency underscored how good.

Nikola Jokic agreed to the biggest contract in NBA history, Bradley Beal agreed to a deal worth a quarter-billion dollars, and the money just kept flowing. Shortly after midnight Friday in the Eastern time zone, three more players — Karl-Anthony Towns, Devin Booker and Ja Morant — also agreed to huge-money extensions.

Towns and Booker agreed to four-year deals that will commence in 2024 and are worth at least \$224 million, their agent, Jessica Holtz of CAA, said. Morant will sign his first rookie extension, one that'll be worth at least \$193 million and could reach the \$230 million range, according to Tandem Sports, which

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 54 of 98

represents him.

Those five players — Jokic, Beal, Towns, Booker and Morant — had more than \$1.1 billion in money committed to them in their new deals, highlighting the moves made Thursday when the NBA's annual free-agent negotiating window opened.

Jokic agreed to a supermax extension to remain with the Denver Nuggets, the two-time reigning MVP guaranteeing himself at least \$264 million over five seasons starting with the 2023-24 campaign. The final number may go up slightly depending on what the league's salary cap is going into the '23-24 season and if it exceeds current projections.

Beal will make \$251 million over the next five seasons after re-signing with Washington, one day after turning down \$37 million for this coming season from the team with whom he's spent the entirety of his 10-year career.

Towns and Booker got their deals not long afterward, as did Morant. More big-money extensions are coming at some point, particularly rookie extensions — Miami's Tyler Herro and New Orleans' Zion Williamson among the names on that list.

All those moves, even the biggest-money ones, were overshadowed by a piece of non-free-agent news that came earlier Thursday when Kevin Durant, according to a person with direct knowledge of the situation, told the Brooklyn Nets that he wanted a trade. That undoubtedly had some sort of an impact on the decisions some teams were making, or were considering, with the surprise development that one of the world's elite players is looking for a new place to play.

Jokic and Beal have signed lucrative contracts before. For some, the ones they get this summer will be their first.

Jalen Brunson, as had been widely speculated given his deep ties to the Knicks — his father played there, for starters — agreed to sign with New York, on a deal that ESPN reported would be worth \$104 million over four years. He had earned about \$6 million, total, in his four seasons with the Dallas Mavericks and saw his value soar by averaging 21.6 points in 18 playoff games this past season.

Anfernee Simons, who had a breakout season for the injury-plagued Portland Trail Blazers last year — taking advantage of his opportunity, and then some — agreed to a four-year, \$100 million contract to remain with that club. And Lu Dort, undrafted three years ago and someone who made about \$4 million combined in his three seasons with Oklahoma City, will stay with the Thunder for the next five years on a deal worth nearly \$88 million.

## NBA NUMBERS

The NBA set the new salary cap, luxury tax and other numbers that will be used this coming season and go into effect Friday.

The cap is \$123.655 million, the tax level is \$150.267 million. The minimum team salary level is \$111.29 million and the exceptions were set as well. The non-taxpayer mid-level is \$10.49 million, taxpayer mid-level is \$6.479 million, and the mid-level for a team with room under the cap is \$5.401 million.

## TUCKER TO PHILADELPHIA

P.J. Tucker is reuniting with Philadelphia general manager Daryl Morey and — assuming he re-signs, as planned — James Harden as well. Tucker agreed Thursday to a three-year deal with the 76ers for \$33 million. Morey, Tucker and Harden were together with the Houston Rockets; Harden declared free agency Wednesday with the intention of coming back to Philadelphia. Tucker won a title with Milwaukee in 2021 and helped Miami to the Eastern Conference finals in 2022.

## MCGEE CHOOSES MAVERICKS

Dallas and JaVale McGee — a three-time NBA champion and an Olympic gold medalist as well — agreed on a contract for two seasons and a third at McGee's option worth about \$20 million. McGee has played for eight NBA teams and is heading to Dallas for a second time; he played 34 games there in 2015-16.

## PORTIS, INGLES TO BUCKS

Bobby Portis (four years, \$49 million) is returning to Milwaukee, and the Bucks are adding veteran guard Joe Ingles as well. Ingles is signing a one-year deal, according to his wife, Renae Ingles, who tweeted that "CEO of the house, Renae Ingles, is thrilled for Joe and their family."

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 55 of 98

## HEAT DECISIONS

Miami will retain Victor Oladipo on a one-year, \$11 million deal and Dewayne Dedmon on a two-year deal for about \$9 million, though the second year has conditional protections.

## MAGIC KEEPING HARRIS

Gary Harris signed with the Orlando Magic, the team said, with the sides agreeing on two years for \$26 million for the guard. The Magic are also keeping center Mo Bamba on a two-year deal.

## RAPTORS MOVES

Toronto is keeping forwards Chris Boucher (three years, \$36 million) and Thaddeus Young (two years, \$16 million).

## BAGLEY STAYING

Detroit moved quickly to lock up restricted free agent Marvin Bagley III, agreeing to keep him with a three-year, \$37 million deal.

## WRIGHT TO WIZARDS

In addition to keeping Beal, the Wizards also agreed to a two-year, \$16 million deal with guard Delon Wright.

## Trump's vulnerabilities for 2024 mount after new testimony

By STEVE PEOPLES and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

SIoux CENTER, Iowa (AP) — Stunning new revelations about former President Donald Trump's fight to overturn the 2020 election have exposed growing political vulnerabilities just as he eyes another presidential bid.

A former White House aide this week described Trump as an unhinged leader with no regard for the safety of elected officials in either party as he clung to power on Jan. 6, 2021. The testimony from the congressional panel investigating the Capitol attack provided a roadmap for prosecutors to potentially charge Trump with a crime, some legal experts say.

Republican voters — and Trump's would-be rivals in the 2024 presidential race — took notice.

Here in Iowa, the state expected to host the first presidential nominating contest in roughly 18 months, several voters signaled Thursday that they were open to another presidential candidate even if Trump were to run again. At the same time, some conservative media outlets issued scathing rebukes of the former president. Aides for multiple GOP presidential prospects also indicated, publicly and privately, that they felt increasingly emboldened to challenge Trump in 2024 following the explosive new testimony.

Nikki Haley, Trump's ambassador to the United Nations, drew roughly 350 conservative activists to a congressional fundraising barbecue on Thursday in Sioux County, where Trump won 82% of the vote in 2020. There was ample evidence of Trump fatigue. Interviews with a dozen attendees revealed strong interest in a 2024 alternative, even if Trump is on the ballot.

"You'd be hard-pressed to find people in this area who support the idea that people aren't looking for someone else," said Dave Van Wyk, a transportation company owner. "To presume that conservative America is 100% behind Donald Trump is simply not the case."

For some Republican voters, that was the feeling even before this week's stunning new testimony.

Former White House staffer Cassidy Hutchinson on Tuesday offered previously unknown details about the extent of Trump's rage in his final weeks of office, his awareness that some supporters had brought weapons to the city on Jan. 6 and his ambivalence as rioters later laid siege to the Capitol.

Upset at the size of the crowd at his "Stop the Steal" rally — many supporters avoided entering because they were armed and didn't want to go through metal detectors — Trump said words to the effect of, "I don't care that they have weapons. They're not here to hurt me," according to Hutchinson. She recalled hearing about a separate incident after the rally in which Trump tried to grab at the steering wheel of the presidential vehicle to go to the Capitol to join his supporters.

That detail has caused some pushback. The agent who was driving the vehicle and another official were reportedly prepared to testify under oath that Trump never lunged for the wheel.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 56 of 98

But the renewed concern was evident,

The conservative Washington Examiner's editorial board said Hutchinson's testimony "ought to ring the death knell" for Trump's political career. "Trump is unfit to be anywhere near power ever again."

The often Trump-friendly New York Post blasted the headline: "Tyrant Trump." And the conservative editorial page of the Wall Street Journal wrote, "Just when it seems as if Donald Trump's behavior after his 2020 loss couldn't possibly look worse, a new piece of wild testimony arrives."

To be sure, conservatives have shared serious concerns about Trump repeatedly in recent years. And in every case, the former president has emerged largely unscathed, sometimes stronger. He has been caught on video bragging about sexual assault; he instigated a violent attack on the Capitol; and he has been twice impeached.

Yet Trump is sitting on campaign funds that exceed \$101 million and remains deeply popular with many Republican voters. Lest there be any question, Republican candidates from Arizona to Pennsylvania to Georgia have been battling one another this midterm season for his support.

"The American people remain hungry for his leadership," Trump spokesperson Taylor Budowich said, citing Trump's strong endorsement record and fundraising success. "And as another witch hunt is blowing up in the faces of Democrats, President Trump is in a stronger position now than at anytime before."

But even before this week's revelations, a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 48% of U.S. adults say Trump should be charged with a crime for his role in the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

Views on Trump's criminal liability break down predictably along party lines, with 86% of Democrats and 10% of Republicans saying Trump should be charged. Still, the fact that nearly half the country believes he should be prosecuted is a remarkable position for the former president, pointing to the difficulties he could face if he makes another run at the White House.

Meanwhile, Trump's fundraising has fallen off dramatically over the last two months. He reported raising just over \$19,000 in May and June combined after taking in nearly \$9 million in March and April.

Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, eyeing a presidential bid in 2024, says he was hearing concerns about Trump from donors and voters alike before this week's testimony, which adds to the "cumulative weight" of the former president's political shortcomings.

"People are concerned that we could lose the election in '24 and want to make sure that we don't nominate someone who would be seriously flawed," Christie said.

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, who is also considering a 2024 run, said he considers Trump beatable in a GOP primary even if Republican voters aren't paying close attention to the congressional hearings, as he suspects.

"His approval among Republican primary voters has already been somewhat diminished," Hogan said in an interview. "Trump was the least popular president in American history until Joe Biden."

Aides for other Republican presidential prospects said privately this week that Trump may still be the overwhelming favorite to win the next GOP presidential nomination, but they believe his standing with Republican voters has been in steady decline. There was a broad sense — or at least a hope — that Hutchinson's testimony would accelerate that decline among voters and donors in a way that would open opportunities for others.

Marc Short, a senior adviser to former Vice President Mike Pence, another likely 2024 presidential contender, was blunt when asked about Trump's political strength.

"Republican activists believed Donald Trump was the only candidate who could beat Hillary," Short said. "Now, the dynamic is reversed. He is the only one who has lost to Joe Biden."

Indeed, Trump's would-be Republican competitors are leaning in.

Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, who serves on the Jan. 6 commission and has not ruled out a 2024 presidential bid, cast Trump as a direct threat to American democracy in a Wednesday night speech at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

"Republicans cannot both be loyal to Donald Trump and loyal to the Constitution. We must choose," she said.



Haley, who has said she would not seek the 2024 GOP nomination if Trump ran, declined to say Thursday whether the testimony has given her reason to rethink that plan. Instead, she sounded an upbeat note.

"If it looks like there's a place for me next year, I've never lost a race, I'm not going to start now," Haley told reporters. "I'll put 1,000% in and I'll finish it. And if there's not a place for me, I will fight for this country until my last breath."

Farmer Bob de Koning said he remains devoted to Trump. He plans to support him in Iowa's leadoff caucuses no matter who runs.

But his wife, Kathy de Koning, said, "We can do better."

"I just don't know if he's electable anymore," she said.

## Court leaves dwindling paths for Biden's climate mission

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 500 days into his presidency, Joe Biden's hope for saving the Earth from the most devastating effects of climate change may not be dead.

But it's not far from it.

A Supreme Court ruling Thursday not only limited the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate climate pollution by power plants, but also suggests the court is poised to block other efforts by Biden and federal agencies to limit the climate-wrecking fumes emitted by oil, gas and coal.

It's a blow to Biden's commitment to slash emissions in the few years scientists say are left to stave off worse and deadlier levels of global warming. And it's a sign, to Democrats at home and allies abroad, of the dwindling options remaining for Biden to reverse the legacy of President Donald Trump, who mocked the science of climate change. Trump's three Supreme Court appointees provided half of the affirmative votes in Thursday's 6-3 ruling.

After the ruling, a veteran Democratic lawmaker acknowledged he saw no hope of Congress producing any meaningful climate legislation, either. The foreign allies whom Biden once spoke of leading to a global clean-power transformation are wondering if the United States can even lead itself.

And in a Houston neighborhood entering hurricane season, a man who had spent four decades advocating for the Black communities and other communities of color and poorer communities hit hardest by pollution and the record heat, cold, floods and storms of climate change reacted to the ruling like many others did Thursday — saying it was all up to Biden now to act — and act in a big way.

"This is real," said Robert Bullard, an academic who became a pioneer in what became the U.S. environmental justice movement, of the multiplying natural disasters — the kind scientists say are increasingly influenced by the heating atmosphere — wrecking cities on America's vulnerable Gulf of Mexico.

"Those communities that have been flooded out...some of those communities still have blue tarps on their houses," Bullard said. "So I don't think the Supreme Court and some of our elected officials are speaking about the urgency of where we are when it comes to our climate."

The dismay at the ruling expressed by many among what is a majority of people in America who say they care deeply about climate change reflected this was only the latest setback to Biden's early promises to slash emissions.

A narrowly divided Congress already handed Biden what's been the worst climate defeat of his term so far when two Democrats, including coal-state lawmaker Joe Manchin, joined Senate Republicans in refusing to pass Biden's Build Back Better package.

Climate parts of the legislation were meant to kickstart America's transformation into a land of electric cars, clean industry and energy-efficient buildings. Biden was able to move forward some smaller parts of his proposal, including electric car chargers.

And this year, in a development as dangerous for Biden's early climate hopes as the Supreme Court ruling, a global oil and gas supply crunch has sent gas prices ping-ponging off record highs. It's fueled inflation and voter anger against Biden, and potentially other Democrats.

The energy shortfall left Biden scrambling for additional oil and gas. It's also left it unclear whether he

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 58 of 98

still feels he has the political capital to lead the U.S. move to renewable energy as decisively as he promised as a candidate and in his first months in office.

The ruling left policy experts, lawmakers and ordinary people saying Biden, Democrats and climate-minded Republicans still have some routes left to push through climate efforts.

One is ambitious, shrewd executive action — if Biden dares — to push through carefully targeted emission-cutting steps.

A second is climate action by California and the other blue states that earlier swung into action to challenge Trump's climate rollbacks in court.

A third option is a pitch that Biden and Democrats are throwing to voters more and more — elect enough Democrats in the midterms to allow Congress to pass laws thwarting rollbacks by conservatives, in Congress and on the Supreme Court.

Biden has pledged to cut the nation's greenhouse gas emissions in half by the end of the decade and to have an emissions-free power sector by 2035.

Biden offered no guarantees of success in his comments after the court ruling.

"While this decision risks damaging our nation's ability to keep our air clean and combat climate change, I will not relent in using my lawful authorities to protect public health and tackle the climate crisis," he said in a statement.

His team would "find ways that we can, under federal law, continue protecting Americans" from pollution and climate change, he said.

The Biden administration can still do a strong rule on carbon emissions and greenhouse gas emissions generally, and it ought to do it fast, said Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, a Rhode Island Democrat.

As it is, "there's no easy fix from Congress from this mess," Whitehouse said, blaming past court rulings on political donations for "the big, dark polluter money" he said holds sway in politics now.

The Supreme Court ruling came as Biden was savoring a successful gathering with NATO allies, who have rallied behind the U.S. in confronting Russia's invasion of Ukraine. After Biden's early proclamations in summits at the outset of his term that "America is back!," the setback in the Supreme Court underscored to allies how vulnerable the U.S. president remains on the domestic front, including when it comes to fulfilling climate commitments.

As the ruling was released, Biden envoy John Kerry was flying out after an oceans conference in Portugal, still working for global and country-by-country commitments to cut emissions.

The domestic climate setbacks have helped slow early global momentum for climate breakthroughs. They've weakened U.S. leverage as Kerry presses countries including China to swing away from coal and other damaging fossil fuels — something Biden had pledged the U.S. would lead on by example.

Among allies abroad, the Supreme Court ruling could shock America's transatlantic partners like few other developments, said Max Bergmann, director of the Europe program at the Center for Strategic and International studies.

The climate decision in some ways "may have broader impacts at least on the European populace that this is a country that, A: can't get things done and B: is going in a really bizarre direction domestically," Bergmann said.

## Last-minute deal averts casino strike in Atlantic City

By WAYNE PARRY Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — The main union for Atlantic City casino workers reached agreements on new contracts with four casinos on Thursday, providing for what one its president called "the best contract we've ever had" and labor peace that will avoid a strike on Fourth of July weekend, one of the casinos' busiest of the year.

Local 54 of the Unite Here union reached tentative agreements with the Borgata, which is owned by MGM Resorts International, and three Caesars Entertainment casinos: Caesars, Harrah's and the Tropicana.

A Sunday strike deadline remains against the Hard Rock casino, but the new pacts appear to greatly

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 59 of 98

increase the likelihood of a deal getting done with Hard Rock as well.

"This is the best contract we've ever had," union president Bob McDevitt told The Associated Press shortly after a deal was reached around 11 p.m. "We got everything we wanted and everything we needed. The workers delivered a contract that they can be proud of for years to come."

Workers, too, were elated at the deal.

"I'm super excited," said Ronnette Lark, a housekeeper at Harrah's. "I've been here 24 years and we've never gotten a raise like this. We got big raises."

The union did not reveal the terms of the settlement, saying they need to be presented to the full union membership and ratified before taking effect. But it said it had been seeking "significant" raises to help employees keep pace with rising costs.

Representatives of the four casinos did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the agreements.

The settlements come at a crucial time for Atlantic City and its casino industry, which is striving to recover from losses caused by the pandemic and exacerbated by inflation and a labor shortage.

Yet those same factors were the driving force behind the union seeking a much larger raise than it had in past years; the exact amount has not been made public. In past contracts, the union concentrated on preserving health care and pension benefits, but this time sought what it termed "significant" raises for workers to help them keep pace with spiraling prices for gasoline, food, rent and other living expenses.

The deals avoided what would have been the city's first casino strike since 2016, when the union rejected demands by billionaire Carl Icahn that the Trump Taj Mahal casino operate without health care and pension benefits that were terminated by a bankruptcy court.

The union went on strike on July 1, and the casino shut down on Oct. 10. It was sold months later to Hard Rock International, which gutted it and reopened it as the new Hard Rock Atlantic City in June 2018.

The finances underlying the current dispute are complex.

Including internet gambling and sports betting revenue, the casinos and their online partners have won \$1.8 billion over the first five months of this year. That's up more than 49% from the same period in 2019, before the coronavirus hit.

But the casinos claim those figures are misleading because third-party partners keep about 70% of internet and sports betting revenue, leaving little for the brick-and-mortar casinos.

They say a more accurate metric is money won from in-person gamblers. By that measure, the casinos have won only 5% more than they did from in-person gamblers over the first five months of 2019. Only three casinos — Borgata, Hard Rock and Ocean — have won more from in-person gamblers in that time frame.

## Wisconsin's conservative high court hands GOP another weapon

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Wisconsin's conservative-controlled Supreme Court handed Republicans their newest weapon to weaken any Democratic governors in the battleground state, ruling this week that political appointees don't have to leave their posts until the Senate confirms their successor.

The court's decision — in the case of a conservative who refused to step down from an environmental policy board for more than a year after his term expired — marks another loss for Democratic Gov. Tony Evers as he faces reelection in November. Republicans have worked to reduce Evers' powers since even before he took office and have refused to confirm many of his appointees. This week's ruling gives them the ability to block them simply by declining to hold a nomination vote.

"Most people on the street would say when a term ... expires, there's an opening. The Supreme Court has said that commonsense understanding is not right," University of Wisconsin-Madison political science professor Barry Burden said. The ruling "raises the question of why is there a term at all? Maybe we just say a person serves for life the way a U.S. Supreme Court justice does."

Republicans are likely to control the Legislature for years to come largely due to gerrymandered districts. After Evers was elected in 2018 but before he took office, they passed laws during a lame-duck ses-

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 60 of 98

sion that temporarily stripped him of his power to appoint members of the state's economic development agency and gave legislators the ability to block executive branch agencies' rules and policies.

So far, the Senate has refused to confirm about 42% of Evers' 299 appointees, according to Evers' office. What's more, the Senate took the rare step in 2019 of voting not to confirm Evers' agriculture secretary, Brad Pfaff, after Pfaff criticized GOP lawmakers for not providing enough money to help farmers with mental health problems. Pfaff had to step down.

The struggle over appointments took a turn in the spring of 2021 when Fred Prehn's term on the Department of Natural Resources policy board ended. Evers appointed his successor, a move that would have given his appointees a one-member majority on the board and his administration the power to shape environmental policy.

Prehn, who was appointed by former Republican Gov. Scott Walker, refused to step down. He has since cast the deciding vote to increase the quota for the state's wolf hunt and to scrap limits in well water on a group of chemicals known as PFAS, an abbreviation for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substance,

Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul sued to force Prehn off the board. The state Supreme Court's four-justice conservative majority ruled Wednesday that a vacancy must exist before a governor can fill it — and that a "vacancy" occurs only if the incumbent dies, resigns or is removed for misconduct.

The decision essentially prevents a governor from replacing the previous governor's appointees without Senate confirmation.

The ruling left Democrats stunned.

"Today, I remind the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the Republican Party of this state that we do still live in a democracy, a very basic function of which is the peaceful and respectful transfer of power, even — and most especially — when you lose," Evers said. "(His appointees) should be considered on their merit, and should have the opportunity to serve the people of our state, regardless of whether or not they were appointed by a Democrat or share the same ideas as Republicans in the Legislature."

Kaul called the decision another symptom of the breakdown of democracy.

"What this (ruling) is doing is allowing the Legislature to not represent the people of Wisconsin, to expand its authority and control an executive branch agency," Kaul said.

Adam Gibbs, a spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu, didn't respond to messages.

Prehn isn't the only Republican appointee who has refused to leave. The 13-member Wisconsin Technical College Board has three members whose terms ended in May 2021.

Nicholas Fleisher, president of the Wisconsin chapter of the American Association of University Professors, said the Prehn decision also adds another layer of politics to University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents, 16 of whom are appointed by the governor to seven-year terms. She said it could hurt the board's credibility nationwide.

"Like so much else in our (government) systems, there are certain norms, decorum and shame involved in making these systems work," he said. "Those things are obviously out the window."

## Lawyer: Hussle lifted up neighborhood he was gunned down in

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Nipsey Hussle was a hip-hop star who sought to raise up his neighborhood with him until a friend from the same streets gunned him down, a prosecutor said in his closing argument Thursday.

"This man was different," Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney John McKinney told jurors, seeking to humanize Hussle after two weeks of testimony that dwelled on the technical details surrounding the 2019 shooting. "He wanted to change the neighborhood. He kept the same friends. And the neighborhood loved him. They called him Neighborhood Nip."

McKinney's presentation came at the trial of Eric R. Holder Jr., who is charged with the first-degree murder of the 33-year-old Hussle, whose legal name was Ermias Asghedom.

Holder's attorney Aaron Jansen acknowledged, as he has throughout the trial, that Holder shot and killed Hussle. But he argued to jurors during his own closing that they should find his client guilty of the lesser



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 61 of 98

charge of voluntary manslaughter because he was acting in the "heat of passion" after a conversation in which Hussle told him there were rumors of his informing to authorities.

"That heat of passion consisted of being called publicly a snitch by someone as famous as Nipsey Hussle," Jansen said, later adding, "This is a provocation that stirs up rage and powerful emotion."

Hussle and Holder were both rappers, one successful, one unsuccessful, who grew up as members of the same South Los Angeles gang, the Rollin' 60s, the prosecutor McKinney said.

He showed the jurors a photo, taken moments before the shooting, of Hussle crouching down with a toddler wearing a shirt that read "Crenshaw," bought from Hussle's South LA clothing store, The Marathon, that they were standing outside of.

"He was no longer a gangbanger. He was a world-known recording artist and so much more," the prosecutor said. "It really is a shame that his life was so brutally and coldly taken, on his own property, in his own neighborhood, by someone from his own gang. By somebody that he considered a friend."

Jansen painted a similar picture of Holder, saying he had grown beyond his young gang life and moved miles away.

"By 2019 he had completely put the Rollin' 60s in his rearview mirror," Jansen said. "He was just living his life in Long Beach."

Holder had not been to the neighborhood where he grew up in years, and only stopped at Hussle's shopping center with a friend because he had a craving for food from a favorite fast-food place there. Jansen said he then found himself blindsided.

"This was a serious accusation that someone of Nipsey Hussle's stature was making against little Eric Holder Jr., who had just come into the neighborhood to get his chili-cheese fries," Jansen said.

He said it gave Holder reason to fear for his life and safety.

"What if he calls you a snitch in a song, and names you?" Jansen said.

McKinney downplayed this apparent motive, calling it a calm conversation that was "in the nature of advice," and saying no one who observed it thought there was any real hostility or imminent danger.

"I submit to you that the motive for killing Nipsey Hussle had little or nothing to do with the conversation they had," McKinney said. "There was already a preexisting jealousy or envy."

There had been no testimony to this effect during the trial, and the defense objected. The judge let the statement stand, but reminded jurors to focus on the actual evidence from the trial.

McKinney used the extensive surveillance and police body-camera images surrounding the shooting to take the jurors through a minute-by-minute narrative of the day.

He repeatedly showed the video, taken by a camera across a parking lot, of the moment Holder appeared with guns and Hussle collapsed to the ground.

Holder was gone for about 10 minutes before returning and firing. McKinney told jurors that it was plenty of time for premeditation as defined by the law.

"He thought about it and he did it," McKinney said. "That's all premeditated means. It doesn't mean he planned it for weeks."

Jansen countered that it was "a short period of time for such a serious, life threatening provocation."

"Clearly, emotions did not have time to clear in that short an amount of time," the defense attorney said. "There was no cooling off period. There was no time to reflect."

He even said the fact that Holder kicked Hussle in the head while he was on the ground is evidence that the lesser charge is more apt.

"That shows rage," Jansen said. "That shows heat of passion."

## AP source: Kevin Durant asks for trade from Brooklyn Nets

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Kevin Durant may be taking his quest for more titles elsewhere.

Durant has requested a trade from the Brooklyn Nets, according to a person with direct knowledge of the decision that undoubtedly will have teams scrambling to put together offers for the perennial All-Star.

The Nets have been working with Durant to find a trade partner, and he has multiple teams on his pre-

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 62 of 98

ferred list, according to the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Thursday because neither the player nor Brooklyn revealed any details publicly.

ESPN first reported Durant's trade request, citing Phoenix and Miami as two of his preferred destinations. The bombshell came just hours before the NBA's free-agent period for this summer was set to begin.

The news also came exactly three years to the day after Durant announced that he was joining Brooklyn in a social-media post — a move that came June 30, 2019.

Durant is a 12-time All-Star, four-time scoring champion, three-time Olympic gold medalist and two-time NBA champion — those rings coming with Golden State, the team he was with before joining Brooklyn. He has four years and nearly \$200 million remaining on his contract, which means that it may take a haul of players, draft picks or possibly both for a team to acquire him.

Durant has played 14 seasons, not including one year when he sat out while recovering from a torn Achilles. He has averaged 27.2 points in his career — over that span, only LeBron James, at 27.3 points per game, has averaged more.

And even at his age — Durant will turn 34 on Sept. 29, around the time training camps open this fall — he is still one of the best players in the game, his 6-foot-10 frame making his jump shot almost unstoppable by any defender.

Durant spent three seasons with Brooklyn, not playing in the first of those years while he recovered from the Achilles injury. He averaged 29.9 points in 55 games last season, after leading the U.S. to Olympic gold at the Tokyo Games last summer.

Unless he changes his mind and stays, his departure will be a huge blow to the Nets. At this time last year, the Nets were banking on contending for a championship with a core led by Durant, James Harden and Kyrie Irving.

That plan didn't come close to reality. Irving missed much of the year because of his refusal to be vaccinated against COVID-19; he was ineligible to play in home games for the majority of the season. Harden wound up getting traded to Philadelphia for Ben Simmons, who didn't play at all last season. Durant led Brooklyn into the playoffs, where it was swept in the first round by eventual Eastern Conference champion Boston.

And the offseason hasn't exactly been calm for the Nets, either. Irving's future was a major question mark until he decided to exercise his \$37 million option earlier this week to remain with Brooklyn this coming season.

Now, Durant wants out, and the Nets will either have to change his mind or go ahead with moves that will overhaul their team.

## Big Ten votes to add USC, UCLA as members starting in 2024

By RALPH D. RUSSO and ERIC OLSON AP College Sports Writers

In a surprising and seismic shift in college athletics, the Big Ten voted Thursday to add Southern California and UCLA as conference members beginning in 2024.

The expansion to 16 teams will happen after the Pac-12's current media rights contracts with Fox and ESPN expire and make the Big Ten the first conference to stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The announcement, which caught the Pac-12 off-guard, came almost a year after Oklahoma and Texas formally accepted invitations to join the Southeastern Conference in July 2025.

Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren said USC and UCLA, both members of the Pac-12 and its previous iterations for nearly a century, submitted applications for membership and the league's Council of Presidents and Chancellors voted unanimously to add the Los Angeles schools.

"Ultimately, the Big Ten is the best home for USC and Trojan athletics as we move into the new world of collegiate sports," USC athletic director Mike Bohn said. "We are excited that our values align with the league's member institutions. We also will benefit from the stability and strength of the conference; the athletic caliber of Big Ten institutions; the increased visibility, exposure, and resources the conference will bring our student-athletes and programs; and the ability to expand engagement with our passionate

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 63 of 98

alumni nationwide.”

The Big Ten is building on previous expansion into the nation’s largest media markets, and the move allows the conference to keep pace with the SEC as one of the most powerful entities in college sports.

The Big Ten will gain blueblood programs in football (USC) and basketball (UCLA) and big-name brands that will enhance the value of the conference’s new media rights package currently being negotiated.

Losing flagship schools like USC and UCLA is a major blow to the Pac-12, which has had a long and amicable relationship with the Big Ten best exemplified by its Rose Bowl partnership.

“While we are extremely surprised and disappointed by the news coming out of UCLA and USC today, we have a long and storied history in athletics, academics, and leadership in supporting student-athletes that we’re confident will continue to thrive and grow into the future,” the Pac-12 said in a statement.

The Pac-12’s next move is unknown, but adding schools to replace USC and UCLA is a possibility.

“We look forward to partnering with current and potential members to pioneer the future of college athletics together,” the Pac-12 said.

The Big Ten has expanded twice in recent years, with Nebraska joining in 2011 and Maryland and Rutgers in 2014.

USC and UCLA fit the Big Ten’s academic profile. Both schools are among the 65 members of the Association of American Universities, which is made up of top research universities. All Big Ten schools except Nebraska are members.

“From increased exposure and a broader national platform for our student-athletes, to enhanced resources for our teams, this move will help preserve the legacy of UCLA Athletics for generations to come,” UCLA athletic director Martin Jarmond said.

“We have deeply valued our membership in the Pac-12, and we have great respect for the conference and our fellow member institutions, but each school faces its own unique challenges and circumstances. We believe this is the right move for UCLA at the right time.”

USC and UCLA stand to significantly increase their revenues. The Pac-12 distributed only \$19.8 million per school in fiscal year 2021, by far the least among Power 5 conferences. The Big Ten’s per-school distribution was \$46.1 million, second only to the SEC’s \$54.6 million.

The Pac-12 has had difficulty getting its conference television network untracked while the Big Ten Network is the most established of the conference networks.

USC and UCLA would be taking a step up in football, both in visibility and competition.

“Pac-12 After Dark” televised games that kick off in the middle to late evenings in most of the country have made it difficult for the conference to get exposure. The Pac-12 has had teams in the College Football Playoff just twice — Oregon (2014 season) and Washington (2016).

USC President Carol L. Folt said she and university leaders considered the coast-to-coast travel that will come with competing in the Big Ten. Nebraska is the westernmost school in the conference now, and Lincoln is almost 1,500 miles from Los Angeles. Rutgers, the easternmost Big Ten school, is a nearly 5 1/2-hour flight from LA.

“We are fortunate we can spend the next two years working with the conference on travel and scheduling plans,” Folt said.

The Big Ten, Pac-12 and Atlantic Coast Conference last August formed an alliance in the wake of Oklahoma and Texas joining the SEC. The conferences said the 41 members would take a collaborative approach to charting the future of athletics. The three conferences set up scheduling arrangements in some sports and have pooled resources to promote athlete welfare.

Less than a year later, the future of the alliance would appear bleak with the Big Ten taking two of the Pac-12’s biggest brands.

USC and UCLA will be severing longstanding conference relationships. USC joined California, Oregon, Oregon State, Stanford, Washington and Washington State in the Pacific Coast Conference in 1922, followed by UCLA in 1928.

They went together in 1959 to the Athletic Association of Western Universities, which became the Pac-8 in 1968, the Pac-10 in 1978 and Pac-12 in 2011.

## California sets nation's toughest plastics reduction rules

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Companies selling shampoo, food and other products wrapped in plastic have a decade to cut down on their use of the polluting material if they want their wares on California store shelves.

Major legislation passed and signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom on Thursday aims to significantly reduce single-use plastic packaging in the state and drastically boost recycling rates for what remains. It sets the nation's most stringent requirements for the use of plastic packaging, with lawmakers saying they hope it sets a precedent for other states to follow.

"We're ruining the planet and we've got to change it," Sen. Bob Hertzberg, a Democrat, said before voting on the bill.

Under the bill, plastic producers would have to reduce plastics in single-use products 10% by 2027, increasing to 25% by 2032. That reduction in plastic packaging can be met through a combination of reducing package sizing, switching to a different material or making the product easily reusable or refillable. Also by 2032, plastic would have to be recycled at a rate of 65%, a massive jump from today's rates. It wouldn't apply to plastic beverage bottles, which have their own recycling rules.

Efforts to limit plastic packaging have failed in the Legislature for years, but the threat of a similar ballot measure going before voters in November prompted business groups to come to the negotiating table. The measure's three main backers withdrew it from the ballot after the bill passed, though they expressed concern the plastics industry will try to weaken the requirements.

States have passed bans on single-use plastic grocery bags, straws and other items, and plastic water bottles soon won't be allowed in national parks. But the material is still ubiquitous, used in everything from laundry detergent and soap bottles to packaging for vegetables and lunch meats. Most plastic products in the United States are not recycled, with millions of tons ending up in landfills and the world's oceans. It harms wildlife and shows up in drinking water in the form of microplastics.

Marine animals that live off the Pacific coast from crabs to whales are ingesting plastics that make their way into the ocean, said Amy Wolfram, California ocean policy senior manager at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. She called the bill a "fantastic start" to addressing a major problem.

Plastic makers would form their own industry group tasked with developing a plan to meet the requirements, which would need approval from the state's recycling department. They'll be required to collect \$500 million annually from producers for a fund aimed at cleaning up plastic pollution. Maine, Oregon and Colorado have similar producer responsibility systems.

It does not ban styrofoam food packaging but would require it to be recycled at a rate of 30% by 2028, which some supporters said is a de facto ban because the material can't be recycled. The ballot measure would have banned the material outright. It would have given more power to the state recycling agency to implement the rules rather than letting industry organize itself.

Sen. Ben Allen, a Santa Monica Democrat who led negotiations on the bill, said it represented an example of two groups that are often at odds — environmentalists and industry — coming together to make positive change.

He called it a "strong, meaningful compromise that will put California at the forefront of addressing a major global problem."

Though they withdrew their ballot initiative, the measure's proponents said they remain concerned that industry will try to water down the bill. The initiative's three backers were Linda Escalante of the Natural Resources Defense Council; Michael Sangiacomo, former head of the waste management company Recology; and Caryl Hart, a member of the California Coastal Commission.

Joshua Baca of the American Chemistry Council, which represents the plastics industry, said the bill unfairly caps the amount of post-consumer recycled plastic that can be used to meet the 25% reduction requirement and limits "new, innovative recycling technologies."



The bill bans incineration and combustion of plastic, but leaves open the possibility for some forms of so-called chemical recycling.

Judith Enck, president of Beyond Plastics, said while California's bill goes farther than any other state when it comes to reducing plastic pollution, it still falls short. She said it will only result in about a 10% reduction in overall packaging because producers can make products refillable or switch to other materials. She also said that it relies too heavily on failed plastics recycling policies.

Plastic production is supposed to triple globally by 2050, she said.

## **Jackson sworn in, becomes 1st Black woman on Supreme Court**

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ketanji Brown Jackson was sworn in to the Supreme Court on Thursday, shattering a glass ceiling as the first Black woman on the nation's highest court.

The 51-year-old Jackson is the court's 116th justice, and she took the place of the justice she once worked for. Justice Stephen Breyer's retirement was effective at noon.

Moments later, joined by her family, Jackson recited the two oaths required of Supreme Court justices, one administered by Breyer and the other by Chief Justice John Roberts.

"With a full heart, I accept the solemn responsibility of supporting and defending the Constitution of the United States and administering justice without fear or favor, so help me God," Jackson said in a statement issued by the court. "I am truly grateful to be part of the promise of our great Nation. I extend my sincerest thanks to all of my new colleagues for their warm and gracious welcome."

Roberts welcomed Jackson "to the court and our common calling." The ceremony was streamed live on the court's website. All the justices except for Neil Gorsuch attended the swearing-in, the court said. There was no immediate explanation for Gorsuch's absence.

Jackson, a federal judge since 2013, is joining three other women — Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Amy Coney Barrett. It's the first time four women will serve together on the nine-member court.

"Her historic swearing in today represents a profound step forward for our nation, for all the young, Black girls who now see themselves reflected on our highest court, and for all of us as Americans," President Joe Biden said in a statement after he returned from a trip to Europe. He also thanked Breyer "for his many years of exemplary service."

Biden nominated Jackson in February, a month after Breyer, 83, announced he would retire at the end of the court's term, assuming his successor had been confirmed. Breyer's earlier-than-usual announcement and the condition he attached was a recognition of the Democrats' tenuous hold on the Senate in an era of hyper-partisanship, especially surrounding federal judgeships.

The Senate confirmed Jackson's nomination in early April, by a 53-47 mostly party-line vote that included support from three Republicans.

Jackson had been in a sort of judicial limbo since, remaining a judge on the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., but not hearing any cases. Biden elevated her to that court from the district judgeship to which she was appointed by President Barack Obama.

Glynda Carr, president of Higher Heights for America, an organization that advocates for the growth of Black women's political power, said the timing of Jackson's swearing-in was bittersweet.

"Although we celebrate her today, one Black woman or a cohort of Black women can't save this democracy alone. We are a piece of it and we are doing our work, our part. She's going to forever reshape and shape that court. But she's just a piece of the work that needs to happen moving forward," Carr said.

Because of Jackson's appointment, Judith Browne Dianis, a Black lawyer in Washington, said she intends to end her protest against joining the Supreme Court Bar. She started it when Justice Clarence Thomas was confirmed in 1991. She said that even the series of conservative rulings from the court over the past week cannot take away from the significance of Thursday's ceremony.

"This is a momentous occasion and it's still a beautiful moment," said Dianis, executive director of the civil rights group Advancement Project.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 66 of 98

But, Dianis added, "she's joining the court at a time when conservatives are holding the line and trying to actually take us back, because they see the progress that's being made in our country. It's like the Civil War that never ended. That's the court that she's joining."

Jackson will be able to begin work immediately, but the court will have just finished the bulk of its work until the fall, apart from emergency appeals that occasionally arise. That will give her time to settle in and familiarize herself with the roughly two dozen cases the court already has agreed to hear starting in October as well as hundreds of appeals that will pile up over the summer.

She helps form the most diverse court in its 232-year history and is the first former public defender to be a justice. The court that Jackson is joining is the most conservative that it has been since the 1930s. She is likely to be on the losing end of important cases, which could include examinations of the role of race in college admissions, congressional redistricting and voting rights that the court, with its 6-3 conservative majority, will take up next term.

Today's court now is surrounded by fencing, and justices and their families have 24-hour protection by the U.S. Marshals, the result of a law passed days after a man carrying a gun, knife and zip ties was arrested near Justice Brett Kavanaugh's Maryland house after threatening to kill the justice. The bill was introduced in May shortly after the leak of a draft court opinion that would overrule *Roe v. Wade* and sharply curtail abortion rights in roughly half the states.

The court issued final opinions earlier Thursday after a momentous and rancorous term that included overturning *Roe v. Wade's* guarantee of the right to an abortion. One of Thursday's decisions limited how the Environmental Protection Agency can use the nation's main anti-air pollution law to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, a blow to the fight against climate change.

## US official: Migrants who died cleared inland checkpoint

By JUAN LOZANO and ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The tractor-trailer at the center of a human-smuggling attempt that left 53 people dead had passed through an inland U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint with migrants inside the sweltering rig earlier in its journey, a U.S. official said Thursday.

The truck went through the checkpoint on Interstate 35 located 26 miles (42 kilometers) northeast of the border city of Laredo, Texas.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, said there were 73 people in the truck when it was discovered Monday in San Antonio, including the 53 who died. It was unclear if agents stopped the driver for questioning at the inland checkpoint or if the truck went through unimpeded.

The disclosure brings new attention to an old policy question of whether the roughly 110 inland highway checkpoints along the Mexican and Canadian borders are sufficiently effective at spotting people in cars and trucks who enter the United States illegally. They are generally located up to 100 miles (160 kilometers) from the border.

Texas state police also announced they would operate their own inland checkpoints for tractor-trailers on the orders of Gov. Greg Abbott, who considers the Biden administration's efforts insufficient. It was unclear how many trucks they would be stopping.

Also Thursday, Homero Zamorano Jr., 45, the alleged driver of the tractor-trailer, made his initial appearance in San Antonio federal court. During a hearing that lasted about five minutes, Zamorano, wearing a white T-shirt and gray sweatpants, said very little, giving yes and no answers to questions from U.S. Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Chestney about his rights and the charges against him.

The judge appointed a federal public defender for Zamorano as well as a second attorney since the smuggling charge he faces carries a possible death sentence. She scheduled a hearing next week to determine if he is eligible for bail.

It remained unclear just how long the migrants were in the trailer on the sweltering day and whether having their cell phones confiscated by the smugglers before being placed inside contributed to the ex-

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 67 of 98

tremely high death toll. Emergency calls from trapped migrants have not emerged in this case as they have in earlier incidents.

On Thursday, José Santos Bueso of El Progreso, Honduras said his daughter, 37-year-old Jazmín Nayarith Bueso Núñez, told him in their last conversation that she was in Laredo, that the smugglers were going to take their phones and she would not be able to communicate for a time. She last messaged her 15-year-old son around midday Monday, saying they were about to head to San Antonio and she would be out of contact.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1976 that Border Patrol agents may stop vehicles at inland checkpoints for brief questioning without a warrant, even if there is no reason to believe that they are carrying people in the country illegally. Still, the practice has galvanized immigration advocates and civil libertarians who consider checkpoints ripe for racial profiling and abuse of authority. Some motorists post videos to social media accusing agents of heavy-handed, inappropriate questioning.

The Laredo-area checkpoint is on one of the busiest highways along the border, particularly for trucks, raising the possibility of choking commerce and creating havoc if every motorist is stopped and questioned.

Border Patrol officials call the checkpoints an imperfect but effective second line of defense after the border, acknowledging that agents must balance law enforcement interests with disrupting legitimate commerce and travel.

Volume and configuration vary widely among checkpoints, but agents generally have five to seven seconds to decide whether to question a driver, said Roy Villareal, former chief of the Border Patrol's Tucson, Arizona, sector.

"Ultimately, it's very difficult to ascertain with crime in general. It's hard to say whether you're 100% effective, 50%, 10%."

U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar, who drives through the checkpoint almost weekly, said investigators believe the migrants boarded the truck in or around Laredo, though that is unconfirmed. That would be consistent with smuggling patterns: migrants cross the border on foot and hide in a house or in shrubbery on U.S. soil before getting picked up and taken to the nearest major city.

Even if the truck were empty, it would raise questions about the checkpoints. Migrants often perish trying to circumvent them, getting dropped off before reaching them with plans to get picked up on the other side. In Rio Grande Valley, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings, migrants walk through sweltering ranches to avoid a checkpoint in Falfurrias, Texas, about 70 miles (112 kilometers) north of the border.

The Government Accountability Office reported this month that agents at inland checkpoints detained about 35,700 people believed to be in the U.S. illegally from the 2016 to 2020 fiscal years, only about 2% of all Border Patrol arrests. Agents seized drugs nearly 18,000 times during that period with more than nine of 10 arrests involving U.S. citizens.

They have been a trap for U.S. citizens carrying even small bags of marijuana. About 40% of pot seizures at Border Patrol checkpoints from fiscal years 2013 to 2016 were an ounce (28 grams) or less from U.S. citizens, according to an earlier GAO report.

Abbott did not provide details on the extent of Texas' new inland inspections announced Thursday. Lt. Chris Olivarez, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Public Safety, said troopers would take a "more aggressive stance." Asked if that meant stopping every truck, Olivarez said he did not know and that it would partly depend on staffing.

"It's going to be inspecting more than what we usually inspect," Olivarez said.

In April, Abbott gridlocked Texas' border for a week after issuing orders that troopers inspect every tractor-trailer entering from Mexico as part of his ongoing fight with the Biden administration over immigration policy. Those inspections, which were mechanical and safety inspections, did not turn up any migrants or drugs.

## McConnell warns Dems of fallout for reviving Biden bill

By KEVIN FREKING and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 68 of 98

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell threatened Thursday to derail a bill designed to boost semiconductor manufacturing in the United States if Democrats revive their stalled package of energy and economic initiatives.

The rejuvenation of the Democratic reconciliation package, central to President Joe Biden's agenda is far from certain. But with some signs of progress in the negotiations, McConnell is moving to complicate Democratic plans. He's warning that Republicans would react by stopping separate semiconductor legislation from moving over the finish line in the coming weeks, despite its bipartisan support.

"Let me be perfectly clear: there will be no bipartisan USICA as long as Democrats are pursuing a partisan reconciliation bill," McConnell tweeted, referring to the shorthand name for the computer chips bill that passed the Senate last year.

Both chambers of Congress have passed their versions of the legislation, which would include \$52 billion in incentives for companies to locate chip manufacturing plants in the U.S. Lawmakers are now trying to reconcile the considerable differences between the two bills, but at a pace that has many supporters worried the job won't get done before lawmakers break for their August recess.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said McConnell was "holding hostage" a bipartisan package that would lower the cost of countless products that rely on semiconductors and would yield hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs.

"Senate Republicans are literally choosing to help China out compete the U.S. in order to protect big drug companies," Jean-Pierre said. "This takes loyalty to special interests over working Americans to a new and shocking height. We are not going to back down in the face of this outrageous threat."

Democrats have eyed using reconciliation — a special budget process — to pass parts of their agenda through the 50-50 Senate because it allows them to circumvent the filibuster and pass legislation with a simple majority. It was anticipated that any new reconciliation package Democrats pursue would include provisions designed to lower drug prices for many consumers.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. and Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., have been talking intermittently for months in an effort to craft a whittled-down version of the massive environment and social program measure that Manchin killed in December.

As part of that drive, Democrats are expected to submit language reducing prescription drug costs to the chamber's parliamentarian in coming days, according to an official familiar with the process.

The parliamentarian, Elizabeth MacDonough, must affirm that the provisions adhere to Senate rules. That would allow Democrats to use special procedures that would let them approve the legislation in the 50-50 chamber over unanimous Republican opposition.

The prescription drug provisions would be crucial to the bill because they could produce hundreds of billions of dollars in savings by reducing federal costs.

Those savings would be used to pay for other initiatives dealing with climate, energy and possibly health care subsidies for low earners. Schumer and Manchin have yet to reach agreement on other potential parts of the bill, which Schumer is hoping the Senate would consider as early as late July.

The prescription drug provisions would let Medicare begin negotiating prices for the drugs it buys from manufacturers next year and increase federal subsidies for premiums and co-pays for some low-income people, according to a summary obtained by The Associated Press.

It would also cap Medicare recipients' out-of-pocket drug costs at \$2,000 annually, payable in monthly installments; make it harder for pharmaceutical companies to raise prices by requiring them to provide rebates if the cost exceeds inflation and make vaccines free for Medicare beneficiaries, the outline said.

The now defunct version of the legislation would have cost around \$2 trillion over a decade and had cleared the House. But Manchin, who had negotiated with party leaders for months and whose vote Democrats needed for passage, abruptly said he was opposing it, arguing it would have fueled inflation.

Some Democrats have expressed optimism that the effort can be revived. Others have expressed pessimism that a fresh, election-year agreement with the West Virginian can be reached as the Senate calendar dwindles.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 69 of 98

"To his credit, Senator Schumer is much more optimistic than myself," No. 2 Senate Democratic leader Richard Durbin of Illinois told reporters Thursday in Madrid, where Biden and lawmakers were attending a NATO summit. "So perhaps before the end of the year, they'll deliver this miraculous bill, but I'm going to continue to work in the 60-vote environment."

That was a reference to the 60 votes, including support from at least 10 Republicans, that major legislation usually needs to pass the Senate.

The semiconductor legislation will need support from at least 10 Republicans in the Senate, and possibly more, to get a bill to Biden's desk to be signed into law. If McConnell withholds his support, it makes the task much harder, if not impossible, as other GOP lawmakers follow his lead.

Supporters of the semiconductor legislation include the nation's auto makers and the nation's biggest tech companies. They have ramped up their lobbying in recent weeks to congressional leaders, saying the bill's provisions boosting investments in research, workforce development and domestic manufacturing are critical if the U.S. wants to compete with other nations, particularly China.

## Supreme Court: Biden can end Trump-era asylum policy

By JESSICA GRESKO and ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court said Thursday the Biden administration can scrap a Trump-era immigration policy to make asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for hearings in U.S. immigration courts, a victory for a White House that still must address the growing number of people seeking refuge at America's southern border.

The ruling will have little immediate impact because the policy has been seldom applied under President Joe Biden, who reinstated it under a court order in December. It was his predecessor, Donald Trump, who launched the "Remain in Mexico" policy and fully embraced it.

Two conservative justices joined their three liberal colleagues in siding with the White House.

Under Trump, the program enrolled about 70,000 people after it was launched in 2019. Biden suspended the policy, formally known as Migrant Protection Protocols on his first day in office in January 2021. But lower courts ordered it reinstated in response to a lawsuit from Republican-led Texas and Missouri.

Dynamics at the border have changed considerably since "Remain in Mexico" was a centerpiece of Trump's border policies.

Another Trump-era policy that remains in effect and was not a part of Thursday's ruling allows the government to quickly expel migrants without a chance to ask for asylum, casting aside U.S. law and an international treaty on grounds of containing the spread of COVID-19. There have been more than 2 million expulsions since the pandemic-era rule, known as Title 42 authority, was introduced in March 2020.

In May, a federal judge in Louisiana prevented the Biden administration from halting Title 42, in a case that may ultimately reach the Supreme Court.

The court's decision Thursday was released on the same day that the justices dealt the administration a blow in an important environmental case about the nation's main anti-air pollution law. That ruling could complicate the administration's plans to combat climate change.

The heart of the legal fight in the immigration case was about whether U.S. immigration authorities, with far less detention capacity than needed, had to send people to Mexico or whether those authorities had the discretion under federal law to release asylum-seekers into the United States while they awaited their hearings.

After Biden's suspension of the program, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas ended it in June 2021. In October, the department produced additional justifications for the policy's demise, but that was to no avail in the courts.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote that an appeals court "erred in holding that the" federal Immigration and Nationality Act "required the Government to continue implementing MPP." Joining the majority opinion was fellow conservative Brett Kavanaugh, a Trump appointee, as well as liberal justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 70 of 98

Kavanaugh also wrote separately and noted that in general, when there is insufficient detention capacity, both releasing asylum-seekers into the United States and sending them back to Mexico "are legally permissible options under the immigration statutes."

The Department of Homeland Security said it welcomed the ruling and that it will "continue our efforts to terminate the program as soon as legally permissible." It added in a statement that it continues to enforce Title 42 and "our immigration laws at the border and administer consequences for those who enter unlawfully."

Cornell University law professor Stephen Yale-Loehr, an immigration expert, said the Biden administration does not need to take any further action to end the policy, but that Texas and Missouri can pursue a challenge over whether the administration followed appropriate procedure in ending the program.

In a dissent for himself and fellow conservatives Clarence Thomas and Neil Gorsuch, Justice Samuel Alito wrote that the practice of releasing "untold numbers of aliens" into the United States "violates the clear terms of the law, but the court looks the other way." Justice Amy Coney Barrett said she agreed with the majority's analysis of the merits of the case but would have sent the case back to a lower court for reconsideration.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said in a statement that the decision was "unfortunate." He argued it would make "the border crisis worse. But it's not the end. I'll keep pressing forward and focus on securing the border and keeping our communities safe in the dozen other immigration suits I'm litigating in court." Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, said the decision would "only embolden the Biden Administration's open border policies."

Since December, the administration has registered only 7,259 migrants in "Remain in Mexico." U.S. authorities stopped migrants 1.2 million times on the Mexico border from December through May, illustrating the policy's limited impact under Biden.

About 6 of every 10 people in the program are Nicaraguans. The administration has said it would apply the policy to nationalities that are less likely to be subject to the broader Title 42 policy. Strained diplomatic relations with Nicaragua makes it extremely difficult for the U.S. to expel people back to their homeland under Title 42.

Immigrant advocates acknowledged that a relatively small number of asylum seekers arriving on the southwest border are affected by the MPP program with which the court ruling dealt. Still, advocates and Democrats were among those cheering the decision as were those waiting in Mexico.

Oscar Rene Cruz, a taxi driver from Nicaragua who is in a Salvation Army Shelter in Tijuana, Mexico, said after the ruling: "We are all very happy, waiting to see what is going to happen now with us, we know the program has finished but we haven't been told what they are going to do with us."

Cruz added: "I wish this will be over soon. Nobody wants to stay here" in Mexico.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal, a Washington Democrat, said in a statement that those "fleeing violence and persecution to seek asylum —as they are entitled to by law —should not be forced to remain in places that have been deemed dangerous and unsafe while they wait for their day in court."

Jacob Lichtenbaum, staff attorney for the immigrant rights group CASA in Maryland, called the ruling a "major victory for safety, compassion, and the rule of law."

But Rep. John Katko of New York, the top Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee, said the program was a critical tool to help manage arrivals on the southwest border and the current administration lacks a plan to address the issue.

The case is Biden v. Texas, 21-954.

## AP source: Jokic, Nuggets agree on record \$264M extension

PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writer

DENVER (AP) — Nikola Jokic has gone from draft pick No. 41, to two-time MVP, and now the holder of the largest contract in NBA history.

Jokic and the Denver Nuggets agreed Thursday to a \$264 supermax extension, according to a person

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 71 of 98

with direct knowledge of the negotiations who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither the player nor team announced the agreement.

It begins with the 2023-24 season and continues through 2027-28 — when, should Jokic exercise his option for that season, he could make roughly \$60 million.

Jokic's extension happened on the same day Bradley Beal and Washington agreed on a five-year contract that could pay the Wizards guard as much as \$251 million.

The Serbian star has undergone a meteoric rise in his seven NBA seasons, all with the Nuggets. He became an All-Star in his fourth season and has stayed at that level since, plus won MVP in each of the last two seasons after averaging 26.4 points in 2020-21 and 27.1 points this past season.

And the MVP votes haven't exactly been close; Jokic has been atop roughly 75% of the ballots cast for that award over the last two seasons.

The 27-year-old Jokic is coming off one of his finest seasons — and creating a new category because of it. He's the first NBA player to eclipse 2,000 points, 1,000 rebounds and 500 assists in a season.

Jokic also averaged 13.8 rebounds and 7.9 assists for a Denver team that was missing two max players in Jamal Murray (ACL recovery) and Michael Porter Jr. (back). He helped the Nuggets to a 48-34 record and a No. 6 seed in the West, where they lost to the eventual NBA champion Golden State Warriors in the first round.

The organization has undergone big changes since the end of the season, starting in the front office with the departure of president of basketball operations Tim Connelly to division rival Minnesota. His vacancy created more responsibility for Nuggets general manager Calvin Booth, who orchestrated a trade Wednesday that sent guards Will Barton and Monte Morris to the Wizards for Kentavious Caldwell-Pope and Ish Smith. They team also dealt JaMychal Green and a 2027 protected first-round draft pick to Oklahoma City for Peyton Watson and two future second-round picks.

Provided everyone's healthy, it means a lineup that could look like this: Murray, Caldwell-Pope, Jokic, Aaron Gordon and Porter.

To think, Jokic was taken in second round of the 2014 draft — while a Taco Bell commercial aired. Not that he even knew that day.

"I was sleeping," Jokic recently cracked in a Zoom call from Serbia.

The player nicknamed "Joker" is one of a kind in the way he plays and even in his demeanor. He's the low-key sort of star whose hobbies include hanging out at his horse stable in Serbia. When he won his second straight MVP, he rode to the barn on a two-wheeled cart pulled by his horse.

As the 13th player to win back-to-back NBA MVP awards, his name will be linked with basketball greats such as Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Moses Malone and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Should he three-peat, Jokic would be in the company of Larry Bird, Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Russell.

"They were amazing. They won a lot of championships," Jokic said this spring. "So I don't know if I can compare myself with them. But just my name to be there, I think it's really cool."

## Supreme Court decision may slow transition to cleaner energy

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ AP Energy Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Supreme Court ruling limiting the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants could have far-reaching consequences for the energy sector — and make it harder for the Biden administration to meet its goal of having the U.S. power grid run on clean energy by 2035.

The nation has been gradually transitioning away from coal to cleaner sources of electricity such as natural gas, solar energy and wind, often because they are less expensive. Most experts don't think the Supreme Court decision in West Virginia vs. EPA will immediately reverse that trajectory.

But the ruling could slow the transition to clean energy in the future because it imposes constraints on what the EPA can do without exceeding its legal authority. That is a frightening prospect, with climate experts warning of dire consequences as global temperatures and extreme weather conditions steadily rise.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 72 of 98

Depending how Congress or the courts interpret the court's ruling in the future, it could also change the way other agencies can regulate the power sector.

The ruling will also set a tone in policymaking chambers, making it harder to persuade state lawmakers to craft laws to boost renewables, said Sachu Constantine, executive director of Vote Solar, which advocates for laws favorable to solar energy in state legislatures.

"Without the threat of EPA or federal regulation of climate, without a recognition that carbon pollution is really, truly harmful, it becomes harder to make that argument," Constantine said. "It makes it less likely that the risk or the cost of carbon will be directly felt by the utilities, or by other agencies who have control over how much solar we can deploy. And that loss of regulatory risk means they might be less likely to choose solar."

The case that the Supreme Court took up, *West Virginia vs. EPA*, had been filed in response to former President Barack Obama's Clean Power Plan. The Obama plan would have required states to reduce emissions from electricity generation, primarily by shifting away from coal-fired plants. That prospect upset several industries, including coal, and some state attorneys general. They challenged how far the EPA could go to influence the industry's transition away from coal and to cleaner sources.

"It was sort of a scary prospect that EPA had the authority to close down power plants and build others," said Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP who served as an assistant EPA administrator in the George W. Bush administration. "All the major industry groups opposed that approach because of what they saw as a regulatory overreach. Power companies may still feel the same way, but in the meantime, they've invested a lot of resources to try to decarbonize."

When Congress writes laws, it often leaves implementation details up to regulators such as the EPA. In this case, energy industry officials argued that the EPA had gone too far and overstepped what Congress had intended. The challenge in the *West Virginia* case sought to diminish that authority. It succeeded.

Thursday's ruling means the EPA cannot force states to shift away from coal to cleaner sources such as natural gas or renewables and compel coal plants shut down. One option that's now off the table as a result of the ruling is for the EPA to create a nationwide cap-and-trade system, said Richard Revesz, law professor at New York University. Under that system, a limit is set on how much carbon dioxide can be emitted, and companies can trade with each other to reach those goals.

"What the court is ruling out are the most effective and cheapest ways of regulating the power sector," Revesz said.

Nothing in the ruling would stop Congress from creating a cap-and-trade system, but "under the current gridlock and given the filibuster rules in the Senate, it's not going to happen," he said.

Still, Revesz said, the EPA does have authority to regulate emissions from power plants in other ways.

And while the Clean Power Plan never took effect, the nation has been pivoting from coal to cleaner sources such as renewables anyway, often for economic reasons. Many states and large companies have commitments to use clean energy in the near future.

"Those commitments are driven by shareholders, by the economics of carbon reduction options," said Sue Tierney, a senior advisor at Analysis Group and expert on power markets. "Multiple states have carbon reduction commitments, and large electricity users like very large corporations are saying we want 100% clean way earlier than 2050 ... so there's a whole lot of other forces going on besides EPA regulations at the moment that are driving things in a certain direction."

Most major electric utilities have aggressive net-zero goals and commitments to phase out coal plants.

"Those aren't fast enough for some advocates, but it's not clear how much faster you can go unless you build the infrastructure to replace them," Holmstead said.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, a trade association of local electric cooperatives, applauded Thursday's ruling.

"Coal, natural gas and nuclear plants — those are all dispatchable, always-available resources and at the same time, we're taking those offline," said the association's CEO, Jim Matheson. "In terms of the overall generating capacity in this country, I think it creates greater risk for reliability."

That doesn't mean power companies will re-open shut-down coal plants. Doing so would be far more



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 73 of 98

complicated than flipping a switch and turning power back on.

Meeting aggressive carbon reduction goals in the power sector will require work from agencies such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which plays a key role in approving the infrastructure that's needed to transition to a power sector with fewer emissions. The Supreme Court's ruling could affect how much authority FERC has to, for example, regulate pipeline emissions or approve locations for transmission lines or facilities, experts said.

"This is less about what's going to happen about power plants than what's going to happen about regulation more broadly," Tierney said.

## **EXPLAINER: Why Court's EPA-climate change ruling matters**

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court's climate change ruling on Thursday is likely to hinder President Joe Biden's plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by the end of the decade and to make the U.S. a global leader again in the fight to slow global warming.

In its decision, the court limited the reach of the nation's main anti-air pollution law that's used to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants. The 6-3 ruling declared that the Clean Air Act does not give the Environmental Protection Agency broad authority to regulate emissions from plants that contribute to global warming.

Power plants account for roughly 30% of carbon dioxide output.

The decision also could have a broader effect on other agencies' regulatory efforts, from education to transportation and food.

Leaders in coal-state West Virginia welcomed the ruling. But Biden called it "another devastating decision that aims to take our country backwards." He said he will continue to use his authority when possible to protect public health and address climate change.

A look at how the court ruling could impact efforts to slow global warming and other regulatory actions by the executive branch.

### **WHAT DID THE COURT SAY?**

Chief Justice John Roberts, writing for the court, said the Clean Air Act doesn't give EPA the authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions in a way that would force a nationwide transition away from the use of coal to generate electricity, and that Congress must speak clearly on this subject.

"A decision of such magnitude and consequence rests with Congress itself, or an agency acting pursuant to a clear delegation from that representative body," he wrote.

The Clean Air Act, which EPA used in its rulemaking, was passed in 1970, when global warming was little known.

"It's almost as if the court needs Congress to make a new law every time a new problem emerges, which is ridiculous and dangerous," said Georgetown University Law Professor Lisa Heinzerling, a former EPA official. She authored winning arguments in a 2007 case in which a previous high court found that greenhouse gases are air pollutants under the Clean Air Act and can in fact be regulated by the EPA.

### **WHAT DOES THE RULING MEAN FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE?**

In the short term, the ruling makes it harder for the Biden administration to meet its ambitious goal to slow climate change, even as environmental damage attributable to global warming increases and warnings about the future grow ever more dire. Biden has pledged to cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions at least in half by 2030 and push the country's electrical grid to become carbon-free by 2035.

But those goals are in clear jeopardy after the Supreme Court decision handed the responsibility to Congress. Biden's legislative approach has little chance against opposition from congressional Republicans and Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin from West Virginia.

The court ruling underscores for a global audience the difficulties a U.S. president has in making lasting progress to cut fossil fuels by executive authority. The United States is the world's biggest climate polluter over time. Biden's struggling to make big systemic changes at home won't impress countries such

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 74 of 98

as China, India and Russia as the United States pushes them to end their dependency on coal and make other big emissions cuts.

"Unfortunately, the climate system doesn't care about our politics," said Northern Illinois climate scientist Victor Gensini, adding that the court was "essentially leaving the decision to regulate carbon dioxide and other gases to those in Congress that may not have the best interest of the planet in mind."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR PEOPLE?

With the fight against climate change slowed, advocates say, sea level rise and weather extremes such as hotter wildfires and more severe droughts are likely to continue.

"In a way, this ruling is most concerning for communities who live on the fence line of power plants, who are exposed on a daily basis to the airborne pollutants that are released with greenhouse gases, and they face the most acute exposures," said Sabrina McCormick, associate professor of environmental and occupational health at George Washington University.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said the ruling makes it even more important that his state and others continue efforts to combat the climate crisis. "While the court has once again turned back the clock, California refuses to go backward — we're just getting started," Newsom said.

California has taken a lead in setting strict emissions standards for cars and trucks.

HOW WILL THE RULING AFFECT OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES?

Some legal scholars say the ruling's impact extends beyond climate change and the EPA to affect a host of major regulatory actions by the executive branch. The court held that Congress must speak with specificity when it wants to give an agency authority to regulate on an issue of major national significance.

The court is announcing it will apply this "broadly and aggressively," Heinzerling said.

She cited earlier rulings by the court to block the Biden administration's vaccine mandate for large employers and to lift a federal ban on evictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. In both cases, the court ruled that Congress had not given federal agencies specific power to adopt the wide-ranging measures.

"The court doesn't want an agency to find authority for the first time" in an existing statute to address a new problem, Heinzerling said.

Even before the court's ruling, opponents were threatening court action challenging the Education Department's proposed rule extending protections under the Title IX women's rights law to LGBTQ students, and an upcoming regulation of the rights of transgender students in athletics.

"Whenever the Biden regulations come out, it's absolutely going to be a bevy of court challenges to them, and this will absolutely be an argument trying to invalidate those regulations," said Scott Schneider, a lawyer who has worked on Title IX issues.

The ruling is also being watched closely in the technology sector, where agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission have been pursuing stronger rules meant to promote internet competition and rein in monopolistic behavior by Big Tech companies.

Stronger antitrust enforcement sought by Biden and FTC Chair Lina Khan "was already highly questionable and I think is weakened significantly by this decision," said Neil Chilson, an FTC chief technologist during the Trump administration and now a research fellow at libertarian-leaning Stand Together.

UCLA law professor Blake Emerson said that as a result of the ruling, agencies are likely to become more cautious "and maybe less effective in their efforts to address major threats to public health and safety."

WHAT WILL CONGRESS DO?

The court ruling says it is up to Congress to act with specificity on "major questions" such as climate change. That is unlikely.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, a Rhode Island Democrat who is a leading advocate for strong action on climate, said the court has handcuffed the government's ability to act.

"The problem is this: They closed down administrative agencies' ability to regulate, and then they send the questions over to Congress where we are blockaded by the filibuster and where all the big, dark polluter money that they let into the political system holds sway," he told The Associated Press.

However, West Virginia Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, the top Republican on the Senate environment panel,

hailed the court ruling, which comes in a case brought by her state.

"If Congress had intended to give EPA such sweeping authority to transform an entire sector of our economy, Congress would have done so explicitly," Capito said. She vowed to continue strong oversight over EPA.

#### WHAT CAN EPA DO?

The decision does not prohibit EPA from regulating carbon emissions from coal plants, advocates said, but does limit its authority to do so.

EPA head Michael Regan said the agency will move forward with "lawfully setting and implementing environmental standards that meet our obligation to protect all people and all communities from environmental harm."

The agency expects to propose a new power plant rule early next year.

"EPA has an important role to play, and it's important that they act," said David Doniger, senior strategic director of climate and clean energy at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The Edison Electric Institute, which represents investor-owned electric companies, said U.S. electric companies are committed to providing clean energy "without compromising on the reliability and affordability that customers value."

Utilities will continue to work with EPA as officials "undertake a new rulemaking that is consistent with the court's decision," said Emily Fisher, EEI's general counsel and senior vice president.

## Justice Department to investigate NYPD sex crimes unit

By MICHAEL R. SISA, LARRY NEUMEISTER and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. Justice Department has launched a sweeping inquiry into the New York Police Department's famed sex crimes investigators following years of complaints about the way they treat crime victims.

The civil rights investigation, announced Thursday and spurred by a letter last year from appalled victims, will examine whether the NYPD's Special Victims Division engages in a pattern of gender-biased policing, officials said.

"Survivors of sexual assault should expect effective, trauma-informed and victim-centered investigations by police departments," said Kristen Clarke, assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. New York City's two U.S. attorneys joined her in announcing the inquiry.

The police unit inspired TV's "Law & Order: SVU," and the real-life version has tackled such major cases as the prosecution of former movie mogul Harvey Weinstein. But the division also has faced a decade of complaints about thin staffing and superficial investigations.

In a 2019 lawsuit, a woman alleged detectives shrugged off her report of being raped by someone she'd been involved with, logging it as a "dispute" instead of a sex crime. Another woman said in the suit that her account of being kidnapped and gang-raped was grossly mishandled for months before she was told the case was "too complex" to investigate.

After the lawsuit and a leadership shakeup, the NYPD promised change. But victims' advocates say it hasn't happened.

"We hope the Justice Department's investigation and our lawsuit will finally result in real change for victims and survivors of sexual assault in New York City," said the women's lawyer, Mariann Wang.

The NYPD said it welcomes the review and is committed to improving its investigations.

Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell said she believed any "constructive" review would "show that the NYPD has been evolving and improving in this area, but we will be transparent and open to criticism as well as ideas."

Mayor Eric Adams, a retired police captain who took office in January and appointed Sewell, said she immediately took steps to make sure the unit was "professional."

"We were not sitting on our hands," the Democrat said.

Breon Peace, the U.S. attorney in Brooklyn, said the NYPD has already taken steps to address concerns,

but authorities want to ensure victims are treated fairly in the future.

Justice Department officials said they planned a comprehensive review of policies, procedures and training for the Special Victims Division's sex assault investigations — including how police interact with survivors and witnesses, collect evidence and complete investigations.

The officials also want to see what steps the police department has taken to fix deficiencies, including the unit's staffing and its services for sexual assault survivors.

In a letter to the Justice Department last August calling for an investigation, victims described the NYPD's work on sex crimes and other sensitive cases as "negligent and sexist."

The Weinstein case spotlighted the sex crimes division, which helped build a prosecution that ended with a watershed conviction for the #MeToo movement. But along the way, prosecutors dropped one of the charges in 2018, after evidence surfaced that a detective had coached a witness and told an accuser to delete material from her cellphone.

A lawyer for the woman whose allegation was dropped from the case has faulted prosecutors for what happened. She said Thursday that she welcomed shining light on police practices, offering a mixed view of the police sex crimes unit.

"Our experience is that many viable sexual assault cases are tossed out by police at the earliest stages of investigation," said the attorney, Carrie Goldberg. "On the other hand, some of the most consequential sexual assault prosecutions of recent history — for example, that of Harvey Weinstein — were driven by the tenacity of dedicated NYPD investigators."

After the 2019 lawsuit, the unit got a new leader, Judith Harrison, and shifted to what she called a "victim-centered" approach — but she soon moved to a different position.

Successor Michael King, appointed in 2020, was a veteran investigator and forensic nurse. King was removed from the job in February, amid complaints about his leadership and continued mishandling of cases.

Last October, a woman who identified herself as a rape victim told a City Council hearing that detectives failed to interview witnesses, collect security camera footage from the bar where she'd been before the attack, or test for date-rape drugs. She said they closed the case twice without telling her.

In another case, detailed in a 2020 article in The New York Times, a New York University student said a sex crimes detective openly doubted her allegation that a stranger had raped her in her apartment. The investigator talked her out of moving forward and shut down the case, she said.

The suspected rapist, identified through fingerprints on a condom wrapper found at the apartment, was later jailed on burglary charges — but ended up being released and assaulting three more women because the Special Victims Division never told prosecutors he was a rape suspect, the Times reported.

The unit has also been under scrutiny, including from the NYPD's internal affairs bureau, for allegedly mishandling rape kits and for investigators allegedly shortchanging the department on hours worked.

Damian Williams, the U.S. attorney in Manhattan, said sex crimes victims "deserve the same rigorous and unbiased investigations of their cases that the NYPD affords to other categories of crime."

## Judge to block Florida abortion ban; Kentucky ban on hold

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE, BRUCE SCHREINER and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A Florida judge said Thursday that he will temporarily block a 15-week ban on abortions in his state, but his bench ruling won't take effect before the ban becomes law Friday — an issue that could cause confusion for patients as well as abortion providers.

Meanwhile, a Kentucky judge temporarily blocked that state's near-total ban on abortions, allowing the procedures to resume after they were abruptly stopped when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last week. The state quickly appealed the judge's order.

The cases in Florida and Kentucky reflect battles being waged in courts across the country after the Supreme Court said abortion was no longer protected under the federal constitution. The high court left it up to states to decide whether abortion is legal within their borders — forcing attorneys on both sides of the debate to turn to their state constitutions.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 77 of 98

Some of the legal disputes involve trigger laws — like Kentucky's and Florida's — that were specifically designed to take effect if Roe were to fall. Some involve bans that have been on the books, unenforced, for generations. Others entail prohibitions on abortion that were held up pending the ruling on Roe and are now moving forward.

The legal wrangling is creating chaos for patients, including some in Kentucky who were turned away from clinics and rescheduled appointments in neighboring states. The owner of North Dakota's only abortion clinic — which is operating until July 28 — said one patient wrote on a form: "Will I be prosecuted for having an abortion today?"

In Florida, Judge John C. Cooper said Thursday that he will temporarily block the 15-week abortion ban from taking effect after reproductive health providers argued the state constitution guarantees a right to the procedure. Cooper said Florida's ban was "unconstitutional in that it violates the privacy provision of the Florida Constitution."

Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis said the state would appeal.

Cooper's decision, issued from the bench, will not be binding until he signs a written order — which appeared would not happen before Tuesday. That means the 15-week ban will take effect Friday, as scheduled, and the gap in timing raises questions about whether some patients will be affected. Florida's current law allows abortion up to 24 weeks.

Laura Goodhue, executive director of the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates, said clinics were still seeing patients and would operate under the law but the situation was challenging for doctors.

"It's a lot of unnecessary delays and patients are at the whims of the legal system right now," she said.

The back-and-forth court activity has caused confusion in other states as well.

The Texas attorney general filed an emergency appeal Thursday with the state Supreme Court, after a lower-court judge temporarily blocked enforcement of a decades-old law banning virtually all abortions. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said the old law prohibiting abortions unless necessary to save the life of the mother remains on the books.

Texas already bans most abortions after about six weeks — before many women know they are pregnant — with no exception in cases of rape or incest. A separate trigger law that would prohibit virtually all abortions in the state is set to take effect in coming months.

In Louisiana, where an abortion ban is temporarily blocked, doctors at a clinic in New Orleans were performing procedures Thursday — in spite of a letter from the attorney general that warned providers could lose their "liberty and medical license," said Amy Irvin, a spokeswoman for Women's Health Care Center.

And in West Virginia, Gov. Jim Justice said Thursday that he will call a special legislative session to address the abortion law there. West Virginia bans abortions after 20 weeks, but the state also has a law dating to the mid-1800s that calls for anyone seeking an abortion to be charged with a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison. The local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union is challenging it.

In Kentucky, clinics were planning to resume abortion services after they were abruptly halted last week.

The two clinics in Louisville began scheduling appointments. Amber Duke, interim executive director of the ACLU of Kentucky, said EMW Women's Surgical Center in Louisville would resume abortion services Friday. She said that, since the Supreme Court ruling, EMW turned away 199 patients with scheduled appointments — including 14 who were at the clinic when the Supreme Court issued its ruling. She said denying them care was "devastating."

Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron, a Republican running for governor, said Thursday's ruling had no basis in the state constitution. He asked the state Court of Appeals to block the lower court's ruling, saying every day that the laws are suspended means "more unborn lives will be lost."

Reproductive health providers challenged the Florida law based on a 1980 state constitutional amendment guaranteeing a broad right to privacy, which has been interpreted by the state Supreme Court to include abortion. The state said the right to privacy doesn't include abortion rights, arguing that the state has an interest in safeguarding health and protecting potential life.

In a statement, DeSantis said the Florida Supreme Court previously misinterpreted Florida's right to

privacy "because the Florida Constitution does not include – and has never included – a right to kill an innocent unborn child."

Elsewhere, the owner of North Dakota's only abortion clinic said she is working in an unpredictable environment. Tammi Kromenaker, owner and operator of Red River Women's Clinic in Fargo, said her clinic is still providing procedures but was told it must stop by July 28. Then, she'll move the clinic across state lines to neighboring Moorhead, Minnesota.

"The most important thing I need to get out is that we are still here, we are still seeing patients," Kromenaker said. "Patients shouldn't be facing these fears and confusion just for what used to be constitutionally protected medical care."

## Supreme Court limits EPA in curbing power plant emissions

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a blow to the fight against climate change, the Supreme Court on Thursday limited how the nation's main anti-air pollution law can be used to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.

By a 6-3 vote, with conservatives in the majority, the court said that the Clean Air Act does not give the Environmental Protection Agency broad authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants that contribute to global warming.

The decision, said environmental advocates and dissenting liberal justices, was a major step in the wrong direction — "a gut punch," one prominent meteorologist said — at a time of increasing environmental damage attributable to climate change amid dire warnings about the future.

The court's ruling could complicate the administration's plans to combat climate change. Its detailed proposal to regulate power plant emissions is expected by the end of the year. Though the decision was specific to the EPA, it was in line with the conservative majority's skepticism of the power of regulatory agencies and it sent a message on possible future effects beyond climate change and air pollution.

The decision put an exclamation point on a court term in which a conservative majority, bolstered by three appointees of former President Donald Trump, also overturned the nearly 50-year-old nationwide right to abortion, expanded gun rights and issued major religious rights rulings, all over liberal dissents.

President Joe Biden aims to cut the nation's greenhouse gas emissions in half by the end of the decade and to have an emissions-free power sector by 2035. Power plants account for roughly 30% of carbon dioxide output.

"Capping carbon dioxide emissions at a level that will force a nationwide transition away from the use of coal to generate electricity may be a sensible 'solution to the crisis of the day,'" Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in his opinion for the court.

But Roberts wrote that the Clean Air Act doesn't give EPA the authority to do so and that Congress must speak clearly on this subject.

"A decision of such magnitude and consequence rests with Congress itself, or an agency acting pursuant to a clear delegation from that representative body," he wrote.

In a dissent, Justice Elena Kagan wrote that the decision strips the EPA of the power Congress gave it to respond to "the most pressing environmental challenge of our time."

Kagan said the stakes in the case are high. She said, "The Court appoints itself—instead of Congress or the expert agency—the decisionmaker on climate policy. I cannot think of many things more frightening."

Biden, in a statement, called the ruling "another devastating decision that aims to take our country backwards." He said he would "not relent in using my lawful authorities to protect public health and tackle the climate crisis."

And EPA head Michael Regan said his agency will move forward with a rule to impose environmental standards on the energy sector.

United Nations spokesman Stephane Dujarric also weighed in to call the decision "a setback in our fight against climate change, when we are already far off-track in meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement,"

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 79 of 98

the international climate accord that U.S. left during the Trump administration and re-entered once Biden took office.

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, who led the legal challenge to EPA authority, said the "EPA can no longer sidestep Congress to exercise broad regulatory power that would radically transform the nation's energy grid and force states to fundamentally shift their energy portfolios away from coal-fired generation."

But University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd, a past president of the American Meteorological Society, said of the decision: "It feels like a gut punch to critical efforts to combat the climate crisis which has the potential to place lives at risk for decades to come."

Richard Revesz, an environmental expert at the New York University School of Law, called the decision "a significant setback for environmental protection and public health safeguards."

But he also said in a statement that EPA still has authority to address greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector.

EPA Administrator Regan said the agency "will move forward with lawfully setting and implementing environmental standards that meet our obligation to protect all people and all communities from environmental harm."

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said the consequences of Thursday's decision "will ripple across the entire federal government, from the regulation of food and drugs to our nation's health care system, all of which will put American lives at risk."

The court held that Congress must speak with specificity when it wants to give an agency authority to regulate on an issue of major national significance.

Several conservative justices have criticized what they see as the unchecked power of federal agencies. Those concerns were evident in the court's orders throwing out two Biden administration policies aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19. Last summer, the court's 6-3 conservative majority ended a pause on evictions over unpaid rent. In January, the same six justices blocked a requirement that workers at large employers be vaccinated or test regularly and wear a mask on the job.

Underlying all these issues is a lack of action from Congress, reflecting bitter, partisan disagreements over the role of the federal government.

On the environment, Biden's signature plan to address climate, a sweeping social and environmental policy bill known as Build Back Better, is all but dead amid united opposition from congressional Republicans and conservative Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin from coal state West Virginia.

Under a trimmed down version, the legislation backed by Democrats would offer tax credits and spending to boost renewable power such as wind and solar and sharply increase the number of electric vehicles.

The justices heard arguments in the case on the same day that a United Nations panel's report warned that the effects of climate change are about to get much worse, likely making the world sicker, hungrier, poorer and more dangerous in the coming years.

The power plant case has a long and complicated history that begins with the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan. That plan would have required states to reduce emissions from the generation of electricity, mainly by shifting away from coal-fired plants.

But that plan never took effect. Acting in a lawsuit filed by West Virginia and others, the Supreme Court blocked it in 2016 by a 5-4 vote, with conservatives in the majority.

With the plan on hold, the legal fight over it continued. But after President Donald Trump took office, the EPA repealed the Obama-era plan. The agency under Trump argued that its authority to reduce carbon emissions was limited, and it devised a new plan that sharply reduced the federal government's role in the issue.

New York, 21 other mainly Democratic states, the District of Columbia and some of the nation's largest cities sued over the Trump plan. The federal appeals court in Washington ruled against both the repeal and the new plan, and its decision left nothing in effect while the new administration drafted a new policy.

Adding to the unusual nature of the high court's involvement, the reductions sought in the Obama plan by 2030 already have been achieved through the market-driven closure of hundreds of coal plants.

Nineteen mostly Republican-led states and coal companies led the fight at the Supreme Court against broad EPA authority to regulate carbon output.

## Russian forces leave Snake Island, keep up eastern assault

By FRANCESCA EBEL Associated Press

SLOVIANSK, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces withdrew from a strategic Black Sea island Thursday, potentially easing the threat to the vital Ukrainian port city of Odesa, but kept up their push to encircle the last stronghold of resistance in the eastern province of Luhansk.

The Kremlin portrayed the pullout from Snake Island as a “goodwill gesture.” But Ukraine’s military claimed it forced the Russians to flee in two small speedboats following a barrage of Ukrainian artillery and missile strikes. The exact number of troops was not disclosed.

“Unable to withstand the impact of our artillery, missile and aviation units, the Russian occupiers have left Snake Island. The Odesa region is completely liberated,” the Ukrainian military said in its regular social media update Thursday evening.

A senior Ukrainian military official, Oleksiy Gromov, earlier said Kyiv was planning to deploy troops to Snake Island, but did not specify a timeline.

“At the moment, we control (the island) with the help of our weapons: long-range artillery, rocket units and aviation,” Gromov said.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Lt. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said the withdrawal was intended to demonstrate that Moscow isn’t hampering U.N. efforts to establish a humanitarian corridor for exporting agricultural products from Ukraine.

Ukraine and the West have accused Russia of blockading Ukrainian ports to prevent exports of grain, contributing to a global food crisis. Russia has denied that and said Ukraine needs to remove mines from the Black Sea to allow safe navigation.

Turkey has sought to broker a deal to unblock grain exports. But the talks have dragged on, with Kyiv expressing fear that Russia will exploit the removal of the mines to attack Odesa.

Snake Island sits along a busy shipping lane. Russia took control of it in the opening days of the war in the apparent hope of using it as a staging ground for an assault on Odesa.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that although the pullout did not guarantee the Black Sea region’s safety, it would “significantly limit” Russian activities there.

“Step by step, we will push (Russia) out of our sea, our land, our sky,” he said in his nightly address.

It was unclear if the evacuation of Snake Island meant a change in Moscow’s designs on Ukraine’s biggest port, which is crucial for shipping grain to Africa, the Middle East and other parts of the world. It’s also the headquarters of the country’s navy.

The island — shrouded in myth since ancient times — early on took on legendary significance for Ukraine’s resistance to the Russian invasion, when Ukrainian troops there reportedly received a demand from a Russian warship to surrender or be bombed. The answer supposedly came back, “Go (expletive) yourself.”

Ukraine has celebrated the story with patriotic fervor, issuing a postage stamp in commemoration.

The island’s Ukrainian defenders were captured by the Russians but later freed as part of a prisoner exchange. After the island was taken, the Ukrainian military heavily bombarded the small Russian garrison there and its air defenses.

At a NATO summit in Madrid, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson billed the Russian pullout as a sign that Ukraine will prevail in the war launched by Russian President Vladimir Putin. “In the end it will prove impossible for Putin to hold down a country that will not accept” occupation, Johnson said.

Meanwhile, Moscow kept up its push to take control of the entire Donbas region in eastern Ukraine. It is focused on the city of Lysychansk, the last remaining Ukrainian stronghold in Luhansk province.

Russian troops and their separatist allies control 95% of Luhansk and about half of Donetsk, the two provinces that make up the mostly Russian-speaking Donbas.

Ukraine said the Russians were shelling Lysychansk and clashing with Ukrainian defenders around an



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 81 of 98

oil refinery on its edges.

The Ukrainian military said Thursday evening that Russia had seen "partial success" that day around the plant, some 17 kilometers south-west of the city. They made no reference to claims that attacking forces had been able to cross the strategic Siverskiy Donets river and enter the city from the north.

Zelenskyy said in his nightly address that the situation in the Donbas remained "the toughest and extremely difficult."

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said Russian reconnaissance units trying to enter Lysychansk on Wednesday were repelled. He said the Russians were trying to block a highway used to deliver supplies, and fully encircle the city.

"The Russians have thrown practically all their forces to seize the city," Haidai said, but denied that Lysychansk had been encircled.

Nevertheless, Haidai noted that as of Thursday evening, evacuations from the city were impossible due to heavy shelling and mined access roads. Earlier, the Ukrainian military said it was not planning a retreat from Lysychansk.

A representative of Russia-backed separatists in Luhansk claimed that pro-Russian forces entered Lysychansk Thursday, after a perilous river crossing — which, if true, would be a significant development.

Military analysts previously told the AP that Russian forces had little chance of crossing the river without major losses due to the defenders' elevated positions.

It was impossible to immediately verify the accuracy of the statements by Andrey Marochko, who heads the armed forces of the self-proclaimed, unrecognized separatist territory, to Russia's Interfax agency. There was no official confirmation from Moscow or Kyiv.

In other developments:

—Ukraine's president hailed the launch Thursday of Ukrainian electricity exports to E.U. member state Romania, which Zelenskyy called "only the first stage" of a process that may see "a significant part" of the Russian gas consumed by Europeans replaced by Ukrainian energy.

— U.S. President Joe Biden said his administration will send an additional \$800 million in security assistance to Ukraine, including rockets and advanced air defense systems. In his nightly address, Zelenskyy thanked Biden for the move, saying that the equipment soon "will go to the frontline to work for Ukraine, to defend freedom."

— Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who held talks with Putin on Thursday a day after visiting Ukraine, said he handed the Russian leader a letter from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He did not elaborate.

— A senior Russian official warned that Moscow could consider Western sanctions as a cause for war. "Under certain circumstances, such hostile measures could be perceived ... even as a casus belli," Dmitry Medvedev, deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, said in a speech at a legal forum.

— Speaking on a visit to Turkmenistan on Thursday, Putin said his goals in Ukraine haven't changed since the start of the war. He said they were "the liberation of the Donbas, the protection of these people and the creation of conditions that would guarantee the security of Russia itself." He made no mention of his original stated goals to "demilitarize" and "de-Nazify" Ukraine. "As you can see, the troops are moving and reaching the marks that were set for them for a certain stage of this combat work. Everything is going according to plan," Putin said.

— Funerals were scheduled Thursday for some of the 18 people confirmed killed in a Russian airstrike Monday on a busy shopping mall in the central city of Kremenchuk. Crews searched the rubble for 20 still missing.

— Sweden announced plans to send more military aid to Ukraine, including anti-tank weapons and mine-clearing equipment. Sweden was invited this week to join NATO, a process that could take months.

— Iranian state media said Thursday Iran has proposed expanding financial exchanges with Russia and cooperating in the energy field. Both countries are under heavy Western sanctions. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Putin met on the sidelines of a summit in Turkmenistan.

## From stocks to crypto, a punishing six months for investors

By ALEX VEIGA and STAN CHOE AP Business Writers

Americans with stock portfolios or retirement investment plans would likely prefer to forget the last six months.

The S&P 500, Wall Street's broad benchmark for many stock funds, closed the first half of 2022 with a loss of more than 20% after starting the year at an all-time high. It's the worst start to a year since 1970, when Apple and Microsoft had yet to be founded.

Investors have been grappling with uncertainty and fear this year following a sharp rise in interest rates as the Federal Reserve and other central banks scrambled to tame the highest inflation in more than 40 years. Higher rates can bring down inflation, but they also slow the economy, raising the risk of a recession. That's helped drag down the value of stocks, bonds, cryptocurrencies and other investments.

On June 13, the S&P 500 tumbled into a bear market, dropping more than 20% below the record high it set in early this year. It's now 21.1% below that Jan. 3 all-time high, back to where it was in early March of last year.

The Fed has been at the center of the market's downturn, raising its key short-term interest rates three time this year. Its most recent increase earlier this month was triple the usual amount and its biggest hike since 1994. More outsized increases are almost certain.

"You can argue that they're just playing the hand they were dealt, but the reality is they got caught a little bit behind the curve and their pivot toward a much more aggressive policy stance has been the reason the market has sold off," said Ross Mayfield, investment strategist at Baird.

### ONE WINNER, MANY LOSERS

Technology companies, retailers and other stocks that were big winners during the pandemic have been among the biggest losers this year. That includes a more than 36% tumble for Tesla, a 71% nosedive for Netflix and a more than 50% plunge for Facebook parent Meta.

Rising bond yields have made these stocks look overpriced relative to less-risky corners of the market, such as utilities, household goods makers and health care firms. These are often called "value" stocks to distinguish them from stocks of high-growth companies.

Energy is the lone gainer this year among the 11 sectors in the S&P 500. The sector is up more than 29% so far, buoyed by surging oil and gasoline prices.

Of the 21 stocks in the index that have risen more than 20% this year, all but seven are energy companies.

### PUMP PAIN, ENERGY'S GAIN

The soaring prices at the pump are the result of a classic squeeze.

Demand surged for gasoline and other oil products after the economy roared out of the cavern created by the coronavirus. At the same time, supplies for crude oil and gasoline have remained tight. The invasion of Ukraine upset a key energy-producing region of the world, with sanctions blocking oil from Russia, which ranked third in the world for oil production at the end of last year.

Meanwhile, refineries have less ability to turn oil into gasoline in the U.S. after several shut down during the pandemic. U.S. refining capacity has dropped for two straight years, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

As a result, gasoline prices have shot to records this year, with the national average for a gallon of regular topping \$5 per gallon earlier this month, according to AAA.

That's meant misery for many drivers, but a nice payoff for investors who bet on energy stocks.

For such strength to continue, though, worries about a recession would have to abate. Recessions have historically led to drops in oil prices by destroying demand. And over the last week, stocks of energy companies have dropped even more than oil prices as some investors grew more fearful of just such a scenario, according to strategists at Barclays.

### BUSTED BONDS

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 83 of 98

Sometimes even the calm one in the group loses their cool.

Bonds are supposed to be the steadier, more reliable part of a portfolio. But they not only slammed investors with losses in the first half of this year, they're on pace for one of their worst performances in history.

High-quality, investment-grade bonds were down 11.3% for the first six months of 2022, as of Monday. Any down year is a notable thing for bonds. The Bloomberg US Aggregate index, which many bond fund use as their benchmark, has had just four losing years on records going back to 1976.

This year's losses are entirely the result of high inflation and the Fed's response to it. Inflation is generally anathema to investors because it erodes the purchasing value of the fixed payments bonds will make in the future.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury has already more than doubled this year. It stood at 2.97% Thursday. More pressure may be on the way as the Fed keeps raising rates, though some analysts say the worst of the damage may have passed.

Strategists at the Wells Fargo Investment Institute recently hiked their forecast for where the 10-year Treasury will end this year to a range of 3.25% to 3.75%. But they also see it moderating the next year to a range of 2.75% to 3.25%.

## CRYPTO CRASH

Supporters of cryptocurrencies have touted them as, among other things, a good hedge against inflation and a safe haven when the stock market slumps. They've been neither of those things this year.

Bitcoin sank from nearly \$69,000 in November to below \$20,000 this month, partly due to the same forces that pummeled stocks: inflation and higher interest rates.

Some events unique to the cryptocurrency industry also factored in and eroded investors' confidence. A so-called stablecoin collapsed, costing investors around \$40 billion. A hedge fund dedicated to digital assets was reportedly facing liquidation. And some bank-like companies, which take cryptocurrencies as deposits and then lend them out, suspended withdrawals as they scrambled to shore up their finances.

## Biden notched gains at summit; returns to turmoil at home

By ZEKE MILLER and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — The dissonant realities of President Joe Biden's second year in office were on display Thursday as he wound up a five-day trip to Europe that highlighted both the key U.S. role in mounting a strong allied response to Vladimir Putin's aggression and the domestic turmoil that is dragging Biden down at home.

Huddling with the leaders of Group of Seven advanced economies in the Bavarian Alps and with NATO allies in Madrid, Biden was greeted warmly by colleagues and notched significant policy accomplishments on modernizing the trans-Atlantic alliance to adapt to new threats from Russia and China.

At home, though, the U.S. was grappling with fallout from last week's Supreme Court decision ending the constitutional right to abortion, which Biden condemned Thursday as "destabilizing." Biden faces both the lowest approval ratings of his presidency and rising pessimism about the direction of the country.

Biden appeared to welcome the time away from Washington as a respite from his domestic predicament, insisting that despite turmoil at home on matters from inflation to gun violence, world leaders still valued America's — and his — leadership.

"I have not seen anyone come up to me and ... say anything other than 'Thank you for America's leadership,'" Biden said in high-spirited remarks during a press conference at the end of what he called a "historic" summit. "America is better positioned to lead the world than we ever have been."

The three-day NATO meeting included the Biden administration announcing plans to permanently bolster the U.S. military presence in Europe, an agreement between Turkey, Finland and Sweden — championed by Biden — to pave the way for the accession of the Nordic nations into NATO, and the alliance updating its strategic concept to reflect that China's "coercive policies" are a challenge to the Western bloc's interests.

Biden noted that the last time NATO updated what is essentially its mission statement was 12 years ago, when Russia was characterized as a partner and the document didn't even mention China. The new

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 84 of 98

concept document fulfills a years-long effort by American presidents to reorient the alliance to address challenges from China.

"The world has changed, changed a great deal since then," Biden said. He added: "This summit was about strengthening our alliance, meeting the challenges of our world as it is today, and the threats we're going to face in the future."

Biden's efforts drew praise from across the aisle, with GOP North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis, who led a delegation to the Madrid summit with Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen and met with Biden Thursday morning, saying, "I think that the administration has played a key part in what's made this summit a success."

It was a far cry from the rancor that permeates Washington, where even positive developments become political cudgels.

"Here we have a bipartisan delegation and a president who have a common goal. Back home, maybe not quite as much," Tillis said.

Nebraska Sen. Deb Fischer, a Republican, added that Biden should apply some of his approaches to successful diplomacy abroad to Washington as well.

"I think it would only be helpful for the president if he would reach out to us in our country as well as here," she said.

At home, Biden has been burdened with the ongoing reckoning over the Capitol insurrection and former President Donald Trump's attempts to overturn the 2020 presidential election and with his own weakened political posture.

That has stoked concern among allies about who may follow Biden into the White House and whether his successor would reverse Biden's efforts to rebuild the trans-Atlantic alliance.

Soaring inflation — a global problem — is especially acute for Americans as they get on the road for the July 4 holiday. And his legislative agenda has been largely stalled, but for a modest gun control measure that passed after a pair of horrific mass shootings.

Added to the mix just 24 hours before Biden departed for Europe was the abortion ruling.

"One thing that has been destabilizing is the outrageous behavior of the Supreme Court of United States in overruling not only *Roe v. Wade*, but essentially challenging the right to privacy," Biden said, "We've been a leader in the world in terms of personal rights and privacy rights."

And just minutes after he departed Madrid on Air Force One to return home, Biden suffered another judicial blow to his agenda, as the Supreme Court dramatically scaled back the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.

Kathleen McInnis, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said a president's influence tends to go far further overseas than at home.

"The American presidency has its own weight and gravitas that can't be discounted," she said.

That was evident as Biden helped cajole Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to drop his opposition to Finland and Sweden joining the NATO alliance.

As he parried reporters' questions with a microphone in hand, Biden also highlighted announcements at the G-7 meeting for more economic and military assistance to Ukraine as it aims to beat back Russia's four-month-long invasion and announcements on tougher sanctions meant to punish Moscow.

"We are going to stick with Ukraine and all of the alliance is going to stick with Ukraine as long as it takes," Biden said. "I don't know ... how it's going to end, but it will not end with a Russian defeat of Ukraine in Ukraine."

Delaware Sen. Chris Coons, a Democrat and Biden confidant, called the week "a significant accomplishment for the Biden administration and for diplomacy."

The view was more measured in some corners.

"Coming back from years of anti-European and anti-NATO rhetoric and policies is a pretty low bar when you look at it," said Leah Scheunemann, deputy director of the Transatlantic Security Initiative at the Atlantic Council. Even so, she said, "The Biden administration has done a lot of good in terms of rebuilding the reputation of NATO in America, and explaining the value of NATO as an alliance built on the values of



democracy and what that brings to U.S. security.”

As for Biden’s domestic challenges, Scheunemann said, “I don’t know how much to place at the doorstep of Biden versus the doorstep of obstructionist Republicans.”

## Alabama cites abortion ruling in transgender medication case

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Days after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states can prohibit abortion, Alabama has seized on the decision to argue that the state should also be able to ban gender-affirming medical treatments for transgender youths.

The case marks one of the first known instances in which a conservative state has tried to apply the abortion ruling to other realms, just as LGBTQ advocates and others were afraid would happen.

Critics have expressed fear that the legal reasoning behind the high court ruling could lead to a rollback of decisions involving such matters as gay marriage, birth control and parental rights.

The state is asking a federal appeals court to lift an injunction and let it enforce an Alabama law that would make it a felony to give puberty blockers or hormones to transgender minors to help affirm their gender identity.

In its historic ruling last Friday, the U.S. Supreme Court said terminating a pregnancy is not a fundamental constitutional right because abortion is not mentioned in the Constitution and is not “deeply rooted in this nation’s history and tradition.”

In a brief filed Monday, the Alabama attorney general’s office argued similarly that gender transition treatments are not “deeply rooted in our history or traditions,” and thus the state has the authority to ban them. Alabama contends such treatments are dangerous and experimental, a view disputed by medical organizations.

Shannon Minter, legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said this is the first case he is aware of in which a state cited the abortion ruling on another issue, but added, “It won’t be the last.”

Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito said in the majority opinion that the abortion ruling should not cast “doubt on precedents that do not concern abortion.” But Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the same legal reasoning should be used to reconsider high court rulings protecting same-sex marriage, gay sex and contraceptives.

“It is no surprise that Alabama and other extremely conservative states are going to take up that invitation as forcefully as they can,” Minter said. “Justice Thomas’ concurrence was a declaration of war on groups already under attack, and we expect the hostility to be escalated.”

In the aftermath of the Supreme Court’s so-called Dobbs decision, Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, in an interview with NewsNation, did not rule out defending a state law against gay sex if the GOP-controlled Legislature were to approve a new one. The previous one was struck down by the high court in 2003.

On the opposite side of the political spectrum, Massachusetts lawmakers are looking to increase state protections for gender-affirming care, in addition to abortion, in reaction to the Supreme Court ruling.

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall was unavailable for comment Thursday, a spokesman said.

Jeff Walker, who has a 15-year-old transgender daughter, said this spring that it felt as if Alabama were attacking families like his with legislation targeting transgender kids’ medication and dictating their choice of school bathrooms, locker rooms and sports teams. He said the state’s argument in this case is worrisome for everyone.

“I think everyone should be concerned by the wording of this appeal. By this logic, any health care the state feels isn’t in line with its morals or beliefs should be banned,” Walker said.

The Alabama case could become an early test of where judges stand on the scope of the abortion ruling. The appeals court granted the state’s request for an expedited schedule for submitting briefs, and a decision could come as early as this fall.

While Alabama was already appealing the injunction in the transgender medication case, the state quickly

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 86 of 98

incorporated the abortion decision into its filing.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey this spring signed the law making it a crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison to dispense certain medication to minors to help with their gender transition.

A federal judge in May issued a preliminary injunction blocking the measure, siding with parents who said the law violates their children's rights and their own rights to direct their youngsters' medical care.

"What's interesting about Supreme Court decisions is they tend to have a life of their own," said Alison Gash, a professor of political science at the University of Oregon.

Courts have generally supported the right of parents to make medical decisions for their children, including in cases where families don't want to get cancer treatments recommended by doctors, Gash said. She said she is expecting to see more arguments like Alabama's arising out of the Dobbs decision, and they could have a major effect on the right to make medical decisions.

"A lot of us feel like the guardrails have completely fallen off, because there is no real predictability about how relevant Dobbs will be to a whole wide range of issues that affect so many different vulnerable communities," Gash said.

## All eyes on airlines as July Fourth holiday weekend nears

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Airlines that have stumbled badly over the last two holidays face their biggest test yet of whether they can handle big crowds when July Fourth travelers mob the nation's airports this weekend.

Problems were popping up well before the weekend, with some disruptions caused by thunderstorms that slowed air traffic.

American Airlines canceled 8% of its flights on Tuesday and Wednesday, and United Airlines scrubbed 4% of its schedule both days, according to FlightAware.

Holiday revelers planning to drive face their own set of challenges, including high gasoline prices. The nationwide average has eased since hitting a record \$5.02 in mid-June to \$4.86 a gallon on Thursday, according to AAA, which expects prices to continue to ease because of rising gasoline inventories.

Americans are driving a bit less. Gas demand last week was down about 3% from the same week last June, according to government figures. In a Quinnipiac University poll in June, 40% of those surveyed said gas prices have caused them to change their summer vacation plans.

Air travel in the U.S. is almost back to pre-pandemic levels. Since last Saturday, an average of nearly 2.3 million people a day have gone through airport checkpoints — down just 8% from the same days in 2019. If that trend continues through weekend, records will be set for flying in the pandemic era.

Airlines may not have enough planes and flights to carry all of them, especially if there are cancellations due to weather, crew shortages or any other reason.

"Airlines are learning the hard way that there is a severe price for over-optimism," said Joseph Schwieterman, a transportation expert at DePaul University. "They are on the edge of a cliff this holiday."

Schwieterman calculates that airlines have little cushion between the number of travelers expected to fly this weekend and the flights they plan to operate — if all goes well. Any disruptions could cause chaos because planes are booked full — there will be no empty seats on later flights to accommodate stranded travelers.

Airlines have been caught short-staffed as they try to hire thousands of workers, including pilots, to replace those who they encouraged to quit when the pandemic caused air travel to plummet.

Many of them, including Delta, Southwest and JetBlue, have trimmed summer schedules to reduce stress on their operations. They are using larger planes on average to carry more passengers with the same number of pilots. Those steps haven't been enough so far this summer.

Delta Air Lines took the unusual step this week of warning travelers that there could be problems over the holiday weekend.

The Atlanta-based airline said it expects the biggest crowds since 2019, and this will create "some operational challenges." It is allowing passengers booked on flights between Friday and the Monday holiday

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 87 of 98

to change their schedule at no cost, even if the new flight comes with a higher fare.

"Delta people are working around the clock to rebuild Delta's operation while making it as resilient as possible to minimize the ripple effect of disruptions," the airline said.

Delta had by far the most canceled flights of any U.S. airline over the Memorial Day holiday stretch, when U.S. carriers scrubbed nearly 2,800 flights, and again last weekend, when it canceled 7% of its flights, according to FlightAware.

The airlines are increasingly trying to blame delays on understaffing at the Federal Aviation Administration, which manages the nation's airspace and hires air traffic controllers.

"This year versus previous years, the biggest issue has been air traffic control," said Barry Biffle, the CEO of Frontier Airlines. "We've made a lot of steps to avoid the Jacksonville center in our scheduling, and we have reduced some flying to accommodate that."

The FAA has a major facility in Jacksonville, Florida, that handles many flights up and down the East Coast. After a meeting with airline representatives in May, the FAA promised to increase staffing at the center.

Delta CEO Ed Bastian similarly blamed the FAA during an online meeting with employees Wednesday, trade publication Airline Weekly reported. Delta declined to comment.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg pushed back earlier this week when the head of the trade group Airlines for America blamed the FAA for delays.

"The majority of cancellations and the majority of delays have nothing to do with air traffic control staffing," Buttigieg told "NBC Nightly News."

Helene Becker, an airline analyst for investment firm Cowen, said there are many reasons for the disruptions including weather, FAA ground stops that last too long, and flight crews hitting their legal limit of working hours in a day. The airlines "seem to fail" when it comes down to daily operations, and the FAA didn't train enough new air traffic controllers — a process that can take up to four years — to offset retirements.

"We expect it to be a long, tiresome summer for everyone," she said.

The loudest lawmakers mostly seem to blame the airlines for leaving passengers stranded. Some point out that Congress gave the industry \$54 billion in pandemic relief.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., urged Buttigieg to require airlines to issue refunds for delays longer than an hour and fine them for delays longer than two hours and for scheduling flights that they can't staff. Sanders accused airlines of stranding passengers while charging "outrageously high prices."

Buttigieg has threatened fines if airlines don't fix their operations.

Sens. Edward Markey, D-Mass., and Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., asked 10 airline CEOs this week to "take immediate action" to reduce travel disruptions. The senators demanded information about how each airline decides which flights to cancel and the number of consumer refunds requested and granted.

## Some medical debt is being removed from US credit reports

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Help is coming for many people with medical debt on their credit reports.

Starting Friday, the three major U.S. credit reporting companies will stop counting paid medical debt on the reports that banks, potential landlords and others use to judge creditworthiness. The companies also will start giving people a year to resolve delinquent medical debt that has been sent to collections before reporting it — up from six months previously.

Next year, the companies also will stop counting unpaid medical debt under at least \$500.

The companies say these moves will wipe out nearly 70% of the medical debt listed on consumer credit reports.

Patient advocates call that a huge advance. But they question whether medical debt should be on credit reports at all, given that many see it as a poor indicator of whether someone is trustworthy for a loan or rent.

"These aren't people who bought shoes they couldn't afford," said Amanda Dunker, of the nonprofit

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 88 of 98

Community Service Society of New York. "They went to a doctor because they were sick or needed help with an injury."

Brooke Davis had about \$1,300 in medical debt from a breast cancer scare that lingered for years on her credit report.

The 48-year-old McDonough, Georgia, resident said that made it difficult to rent an apartment, and she needed a co-signer for a car loan.

"You can't get anything, you can't even get a credit card if you have bad credit," she said.

The non-profit RIP Medical Debt relieved Davis's debt last fall. But more health problems and the loss of a job have pushed Davis back into debt. She's currently stuck with a swollen knee for which she can't see her doctor.

"I don't have the money to really go for my knee right now, so I've just been suffering with it," she said.

The federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has said its research shows mortgages and credit cards are better predictors than medical bills of whether someone will repay a debt.

The agency, which monitors banks, lenders and other financial institutions, has noted that people often don't have time to shop for the best price when they seek care and may have little control over the progress of a serious illness.

Medical billing errors can wind up on credit reports. And patients are sometimes unsure about what they owe or whether an insurer will eventually pay it.

The agency said earlier this year it estimates that 58% of the debt in collections and on credit records is from medical bills, and past-due medical debt is more prevalent among Black and Hispanic people.

The bureau is trying to determine whether unpaid medical bills should be included on credit reports.

John McNamara, an assistant director with the bureau, declined to estimate when the agency might make a decision. It could propose a rule, after hearing from all sides on the issue, that would end the practice.

Credit reporting companies also are considering whether medical debt should remain on the reports, said Justin Hakes, a vice president with the Consumer Data Industry Association.

The three national credit reporting agencies — Experian, Equifax and TransUnion — announced the medical debt changes in March, after the bureau said it would hold those companies accountable for the accuracy of their reports.

Patient advocates said those changes will help a lot of people.

The wait in reporting delinquent debt will give patients time to figure out how to resolve a bill, noted Chi Chi Wu, an attorney with the National Consumer Law Center.

"It gives more breathing room to deal with the insurance company or your provider," Wu said. "Everybody has a story about that."

Much of the medical debt that landed on Melina Oien's credit report several years ago was for bills that were under \$500. The Tacoma, Washington, resident said she was living in an expensive place, Hawaii, where her former husband was stationed for the military. They were getting care for a daughter who had health issues that included a rare condition that affected her metabolism.

"We would zero out our checking account with living expenses every month," she said. "When you are counting out \$5 for gas until the next payday, how do you pay a \$30 bill?"

A severance package from the military eventually helped them pay their medical debt a few years ago. Oien said her credit score jumped about 70 points just from that.

But before that happened, they had to deal with higher interest rates on any loans they took out, and they could only get a mortgage after her sister gave them money to pay down some debt.

"It was embarrassing, it was very stressful," said Oien, who now works as a patient advocate.

## Anti-Roe justices a part of Catholicism's conservative wing

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

The Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade at a time when it has an unprecedented Catholic supermajority.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 89 of 98

That's not a coincidence. Nor is it the whole story.

The justices who voted to overturn Roe have been shaped by a church whose catechism affirms "the moral evil of every procured abortion" and whose U.S. bishops have declared opposition to abortion their "preeminent priority" in public policy.

But that alone doesn't explain the justices' votes.

U.S. Catholics as a whole are far more ambivalent on abortion than their church leaders, with more than half believing it should be legal in all or most circumstances, according to the Pew Research Center.

Notable Catholics who support abortion rights include President Joe Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, both Democrats. Democratic-appointed Justice Sonia Sotomayor, a Catholic, dissented in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision that overturned Roe.

But the justices in the *Dobbs* majority aren't simply cradle Catholics. Several have ties to intellectual and social currents within Catholicism that, for all their differences, share a doctrinal conservatism and strong opposition to abortion.

"It's not simply choosing Catholics," said Steven Millies, professor of public theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and author of "Good Intentions: A History of Catholic Voters' Road from Roe to Trump."

"It is because they are particular kinds of Catholics, traveling in particular Catholic circles that not everyone in your local parish is identifying with," Millies said.

In *Dobbs*, five justices voted to overturn Roe — Samuel Alito, Amy Coney Barrett, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Clarence Thomas. A sixth, Chief Justice John Roberts, balked at overturning Roe but voted to uphold the Mississippi abortion restrictions in question.

All six were raised Catholic.

Most went to some combination of Catholic high schools, colleges or graduate schools. The one exception, *Dobbs* author Alito, has fondly described growing up in a home where "church and the family" were preeminent. Five of the six justices still identify as Catholic, while Gorsuch has attended an Episcopal church more recently.

The Supreme Court was dominated by Protestant justices for much of its history. The majority have been Catholic since the 1990s, and for several years in the last decade, the court had six Catholic justices, three Jews and no Protestants. (Newly sworn-in Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson identifies as Protestant.)

But religious identity has mattered less of late than ideology, which is why conservative evangelicals have cheered on the Republican-nominated Catholics, said Nomi Stolzenberg, a University of Southern California Law School professor focusing on law and religion.

In fact, eight of the last nine Republican nominees to be confirmed to the Supreme Court, from the Reagan to the Trump presidencies, have had Catholic pedigrees.

That religious demographic may seem striking given Republicans' loyal evangelical Protestant constituency.

But partly it's a matter of the available talent pool: Catholic immigrants' descendants have intensely pursued legal professions.

Catholic institutions built their own intellectually rigorous law schools to aid in social assimilation and upward mobility. Duquesne University School of Law in Pittsburgh began as a night school for working class immigrants.

In time, Catholics were studying at Ivy League schools and reaching the judicial elite.

"It's an immigrant story, how Catholics and Jews overcame anti-Catholic and antisemitic resistance and eventually flooded into elite schools," Stolzenberg said. A 2017 study found 28% of federal appellate judges are Catholic, and 19% are Jewish.

Millies said some of the earlier Republican-appointed justices disappointed conservatives by voting to uphold Roe.

"Republicans were looking for an identifier in the selection process that would make them safe," he said.

"By the '80s, it became Catholics."

That, too, reflects the immigrant story, Millies said, as many midcentury Catholics sought to prove their

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 90 of 98

American bona fides as staunchly anti-communist social conservatives.

"Catholics earned a marquee spot in American culture as being reliable, patriotic Americans," he said.

Even the Catholic nominees weren't all reliable. The now-retired Anthony Kennedy affirmed Roe and gay marriage. But later Republican administrations also scrutinized candidates' judicial records and involvement in influential organizations such as the Federalist Society, Millies said.

Gorsuch, who like several in the Dobbs majority has appeared at multiple Federalist Society events, studied at Oxford University with Catholic legal philosopher John Finnis.

Finnis is a proponent of "natural law," described in the Catholic catechism as "the original moral sense which enables man to discern by reason the good and the evil." Gorsuch himself applied that principle in a book opposing assisted suicide.

"It may be the case that Gorsuch is no longer a practicing Catholic — we don't know," Stolzenberg said. "What we do know is that his legal philosophy is shaped by the conservative Catholic philosophy of natural law."

Barrett has long been affiliated with People of Praise, an ecumenical Christian group with a significant Catholic membership. It combines a doctrinal and moral conservatism, including opposition to abortion.

Thomas was raised Catholic in a largely Protestant extended family and briefly attended Catholic seminary, later attending an Episcopal church before returning to Catholicism. He has praised the Catholic nuns who taught him and the grandfather who raised him, a Catholic who "worked hard to provide for his family" and "a deeply religious man who lived by the Christian virtues."

Thomas, concurring on Dobbs, went further in saying the court should reconsider other rights that past courts granted based on legal theories similar to Roe. Such precedents voided state laws against contraception, gay sex and same-sex marriage.

In a speech at Notre Dame University in 2021, Thomas paid tribute to the influence of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, long the court's conservative stalwart.

Despite their different backgrounds — Thomas grew up in segregated Georgia in an African American family with limited education, Scalia in New Jersey as the son of a doctorate-earning Italian immigrant — "we were both Catholics, attended parochial schools and ... benefited from a common culture," Thomas said.

Scalia — who regularly attended the Latin Mass, a rite that appeals to many conservative Catholics — influenced not only Thomas but other recent appointees.

"All of these people would say, 'We are followers of Scalia,'" Stolzenberg said. "Scalia was a conservative Catholic. That very much stamped him and marked his legal philosophy."

But with conservatives racking up win after win on the court — overturning Roe, loosening gun restrictions and expanding religious access to public forums and money — their coalition will be tested, observers said.

They long coalesced around the idea of "originalism" — that justices should interpret the Constitution based on how its writers meant or applied it.

But originalism, with its purported moral neutrality, is "not any longer going to serve the needs of the pro-life coalition," said Bruce Ledewitz, a Duquesne University School of Law professor focused on constitutional law and religion. Some are talking about legislation declaring fetal personhood, and "originalism doesn't get you there," he said.

## **Biden backs filibuster exception to protect abortion access**

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Thursday that he would support an exception to the Senate filibuster to protect abortion access, a shift that comes as Democrats coalesce around an election-year message intended to rally voters who are outraged or deflated by the Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade.

Although Democrats already control the Senate by the narrowest of margins, there isn't enough support within their caucus to change the filibuster rule, which allows any member to block legislation unless it receives 60 votes. But Biden's statement was the latest indication that, if the party picks up a few more

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 91 of 98

seats in the midterm elections in November, Democrats could seize the opportunity to pass legislation creating a nationwide right to abortion.

"If the filibuster gets in the way, it's like voting rights," Biden said, referencing the rare other issue where he supports sidestepping the rule. Speaking during a news conference in Madrid, where he was attending a NATO summit, the Democratic president said there should be an "exception to the filibuster for this action to deal with the Supreme Court decision."

Democrats hold 50 seats in the 100-person Senate, with Vice President Kamala Harris able to break ties when she presides over the Senate. It would take 51 votes to change the filibuster rule.

But at least two Democratic senators, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, don't support changing the filibuster rule. They also blocked an effort to protect voting rights earlier this year, dealing a defeat to Biden and Democrats who said the legislation was vital to protecting democracy.

Harris said earlier this week that "the votes don't exist" for changing the filibuster now.

"Why are we talking about hypotheticals?" she told NPR.

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., who was also attending the NATO summit in Madrid, said Thursday that it's not practical to expect "massive institutional change" because of opposition to filibuster changes within the caucus.

"This is not the political environment to be looking for that," he said.

With Biden unpopular and inflation continuing to rise, Republicans are poised to make gains in the November elections and perhaps retake control of Congress. Democrats have been grasping for a message that would change the course of the election, and they've increasingly emphasized to voters that they need at least two more seats in the Senate to make progress on key issues.

During a Los Angeles fundraiser last month, Biden said "we need two more senators" because some members of the caucus are "slowing up what we're able to do."

Now the Supreme Court ruling on abortion has increased that pressure. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, a leading progressive voice in the party, recently pointed to races in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin as the best options for Democrats to flip Republican-held seats.

"We get two more senators on the Democratic side, two senators who are willing to protect access to abortion and get rid of the filibuster so that we can pass it," she told ABC News this weekend. "And, yes, John Fetterman, I'm looking at you in Pennsylvania. Mandela Barnes, I'm looking at you in Wisconsin. We bring them in, then we've got the votes, and we can protect every woman, no matter where she lives."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., endorsed a similar step in a letter to colleagues on Monday.

"It is essential that we protect and expand our pro-choice majorities in the House and Senate in November so that we can eliminate the filibuster so that we can restore women's fundamental rights — and freedom for every American," she wrote.

The president has been under pressure to take as much executive action as possible to protect abortion rights, although his options are limited. Biden said he's meeting Friday with governors to talk about abortion and "I'll have announcements to make then."

During Thursday's news conference, Biden harshly criticized the Supreme Court's decision on abortion and reiterated his warnings that other constitutional protections could be at risk.

"One thing that has been destabilizing is the outrageous behavior of the Supreme Court of the United States in overruling not only Roe v. Wade but essentially challenging the right to privacy," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Biden's comments were "below the dignity of the president," and that the "attacks on the court are unmerited and dangerous."

"He's upset that the court said the people, through their elected representatives, will have a say on abortion policy," McConnell said in a statement. "That does not destabilize democracy — it affirms it. By contrast, it is behavior like the president's that undermines equal justice and the rule of law."

## Texas woman accused in cyclist death arrested in Costa Rica

By KEN MILLER Associated Press

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 92 of 98

A Texas woman suspected in the fatal shooting of professional cyclist Anna Moriah Wilson at an Austin home has been arrested in Costa Rica, the U.S. Marshals Service said Thursday.

Kaitlin Marie Armstrong, 34, was arrested Wednesday at a hostel on Santa Teresa Beach in Provincia de Puntarenas, the Marshals Service said in a statement. Armstrong was expected to be returned to the United States, where she faces a murder charge, the agency said.

"The Marshals Service elevated the Kaitlin Armstrong investigation to major case status early in this investigation, which likely played a key role in her capture after a 43-day run," said U.S. Marshal for the Western District of Texas Susan Pamerleau.

Wilson, 25, was found dead May 11, and Austin police on May 19 issued a murder warrant for Armstrong. Authorities said Armstrong sold her vehicle May 13, then flew from Austin to Houston shortly after being questioned that day by authorities about Wilson's death. She then flew to New York before using a fraudulent passport to fly from Newark, New Jersey, to San Jose, Costa Rica, on May 18, the service said.

Wilson, a competitive gravel and mountain bike racer and Vermont native known as "Mo," had been in Austin for a cycling event. According to an affidavit, Wilson had previously dated Armstrong's boyfriend, cyclist Colin Strickland, who has cooperated with investigators and is not a suspect.

According to the affidavit, Armstrong's SUV was seen on surveillance video outside the home where Wilson was found shot to death.

## NATO vows to guard 'every inch of territory' as Russia fumes

By JILL LAWLESS, JOSEPH WILSON and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — An unstable world could get even more dangerous if NATO does not remain strong and united, the head of the alliance said Thursday at the end of a summit where Western leaders labeled Russia "a direct threat" to the security of their nations.

During their three-day meeting in Madrid, NATO members confronted a geopolitical landscape marked by big-power competition and myriad threats, from cyberattacks to climate change. The leaders cast their sights around the world — drawing a rebuke after accusing China of posing "serious challenges" to global stability. But Russia's invasion of Ukraine dominated the summit.

"We live in a more dangerous world and we live in a more unpredictable world, and we live in a world where we have a hot war going on in Europe," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said. "At the same time, we also know that this can get worse."

That is why the Western military alliance has a "core responsibility" to keep the war in Ukraine from spilling into other countries while making clear to Moscow that it would "protect every inch of NATO territory," Stoltenberg said.

That territory is set to grow. At the summit, NATO leaders formally invited Finland and Sweden to join the alliance, after striking an agreement to end opposition from Turkey. However, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he could still block the Nordic countries' membership, if the Nordic pair do not keep their promises.

If the accession is approved by all 30 member nations, it will give NATO a new 800-mile (1,300 kilometer) border with Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned he would respond in kind if Sweden or Finland agreed to host NATO troops and military infrastructure. He said Russia would have to "create the same threats for the territory from which threats against us are created."

Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas said Putin's threats were "nothing new."

"Of course, we have to expect some kind of surprises from Putin, but I doubt that he is attacking Sweden or Finland directly," Kallas said.

NATO leaders turned their gaze south for a final summit session Thursday focused on Africa's Sahel region and the Middle East, where political instability — aggravated by climate change and food insecurity sparked by the war in Ukraine — is driving large numbers of migrants toward Europe.

The U.S. and other Western nations also are seeking to counterbalance the growing influence of China



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 93 of 98

and Russia in the developing world. Stoltenberg said "Moscow and Beijing are using economic leverage, coercion and hybrid approaches to advance their interests in the region."

The Beijing government called the alliance a "Cold War remnant" and accused it of "maliciously attacking and smearing" China by including it on NATO's list of global challenges.

But Stoltenberg said it was Russia's invasion of Ukraine that had brought "the biggest overhaul of our collective defense since the end of the Cold War." In response, NATO has poured troops and weapons into Eastern Europe on a scale unseen in decades.

The NATO leaders agreed at the Madrid summit to dramatically scale up military force along the alliance's eastern flank, where countries from Romania to the Baltic states worry about Russia's future plans.

NATO announced plans to increase almost eightfold the size of the alliance's rapid reaction force, from 40,000 to 300,000 troops, by next year — though details of specific troop commitments remained vague.

Most of the troops would be based in their home nations but dedicated to specific countries in the east, where the alliance plans to build up stocks of equipment and ammunition.

Member nations have given Ukraine billions in military and civilian aid to strengthen its resistance. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who addressed the summit by video link, asked for more.

He urged NATO to send modern artillery systems and other weapons — or "face a delayed war between Russia and yourself."

"The question is, who's next? Moldova? Or the Baltics? Or Poland? The answer is: all of them," he said.

U.S. President Joe Biden, whose country provides the bulk of NATO's firepower, announced a hefty boost in America's military presence in Europe, including a permanent U.S. base in Poland, two more Navy destroyers based in Spain, and two more F35 squadrons in the U.K.

"Before the war started, I told Putin that if he invaded Ukraine, NATO would not only get stronger, but would get more united," Biden told reporters. "And we would see democracies in the world stand up and oppose his aggression and defend the rules-based order. That's exactly what we're seeing today."

Still, strains among NATO allies have emerged as the cost of energy and other essential goods has skyrocketed, partly because of the war and tough Western sanctions on Russia. There also are tensions over how the war will end and what, if any, concessions Ukraine should make.

Money remains a sensitive issue — just nine of NATO's 30 members currently meet the organization's target of spending 2% of gross domestic product on defense.

Britain, one of the nine, announced a further 1 billion pounds (\$1.21 billion) in military support to Ukraine on Thursday. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the U.K. it would increase military spending to 2.5% of GDP by the end of the decade. Host country Spain, one of the lowest spenders in the alliance, aims to hit the 2% target by 2029, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said.

The summit also produced a new Strategic Concept, NATO's once-a-decade set of priorities and goals.

The last such document, in 2010, called Russia a "strategic partner." Now, NATO accuses Russia of using "coercion, subversion, aggression and annexation" to extend its reach.

The 2010 document made no mention of China, but the new one flagged Beijing's growing economic and military reach as a challenge to NATO's members.

NATO said that China "strives to subvert the rules-based international order, including in the space, cyber and maritime domains" and warned of its close ties with Moscow.

China shot back that NATO was "creating problems around the world."

"Since NATO positions China as a 'systemic challenge,' we have to pay close attention and respond in a coordinated way. When it comes to acts that undermine China's interests, we will make firm and strong responses," a statement from Beijing's mission to the European Union said.

## Key inflation gauge tracked by the Fed remains a high 6.3%

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A measure of inflation that is closely tracked by the Federal Reserve jumped 6.3% in May from a year earlier, unchanged from its level in April.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 94 of 98

Thursday's report from the Commerce Department provided the latest evidence that painfully high inflation is pressuring American households and inflicting particular harm on low-income families and people of color.

The report also said that consumer spending rose at a sluggish 0.2% rate from April to May. Consumer spending is beginning to weaken in the face of high inflation. But it's still helping fuel inflation itself, especially as demand grows for services ranging from airline tickets and hotel rooms to restaurant meals and new and used autos.

"It should really come as no surprise that U.S. consumers are paring their spending due to the high costs of, well, almost everything," Jennifer Lee, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets, wrote in a research note. After adjusting for inflation, she noted, consumer spending actually fell 0.4% from April to May.

On a month-to-month basis, Thursday's report showed, prices rose 0.6% from April to May, up from the 0.2% increase from March to April.

Chronically high inflation has become a leading threat to the economy and a political hazard for President Joe Biden and Democrats as midterm elections near. Seventy-nine percent of U.S. adults describe the economy as poor, according to a new survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Inflation is eclipsing the healthy 3.6% unemployment rate as a focal point for Americans who are struggling, in particular, with high gasoline and food prices.

In response, the Fed has embarked on a series of aggressive interest rate hikes that are intended to slow growth by making borrowing more expensive but that also risk causing a recession. Two weeks ago, the Fed raised its key rate by three-quarters of a point — its largest hike in nearly three decades — and signaled more large rate increases to come.

The Fed tends to monitor Thursday's inflation gauge, called the personal consumption expenditures price index, even more closely it does the government's better-known consumer price index. While the components of the two indexes differ — CPI tends to weigh gasoline and housing costs more heavily and to show higher inflation — the two gauges tell the same basic story: Inflation is running dangerously hot.

The report also showed that consumer incomes rose 0.5% from April to May, staying slightly ahead of inflation. In addition, the savings rate rose slightly to 5.4% last month, though it remains well below its peak of nearly 34% in April 2020. At that time, millions of Americans were banking government relief checks and otherwise saving money while staying at home as a precaution against COVID-19.

Soaring prices are a consequence of the economy's unexpectedly swift rebound from the pandemic recession of 2020. Boosted by government stimulus checks, record-low borrowing rates and savings built up while stuck at home during the pandemic, consumers went on a spending spree that caught businesses off guard and overwhelmed factories, ports and freight yards. The resulting shortages of goods and labor sent prices spiking.

The Fed was slow to recognize the severity of the inflation threat, dismissing it as mainly a temporary consequence of supply chain bottlenecks. But spiking prices have proved intractable, and now the central bank is playing catch-up with sizable rate hikes that could end up derailing the economy.

High inflation has made consumers increasingly anxious about the economy. Prices have risen faster than their earnings and eroded their purchasing power. A measure of consumer confidence has reached its lowest point in 16 months, with Americans' outlook darkened by inflation fears, especially gas and food prices.

## Marcos takes helm in Philippines, silent on father's abuses

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the namesake son of an ousted dictator, praised his father's legacy and glossed over its violent past as he was sworn in as Philippine president Thursday after a stunning election victory that opponents say was pulled off by whitewashing his family's image.

His rise to power, 36 years after an army-backed "People Power" revolt booted his father from office and into global infamy, upends politics in the Asian democracy, where a public holiday, monuments and the Philippine Constitution stand as reminders of the end of Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s tyrannical rule.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 95 of 98

But in his inaugural speech, Marcos Jr. defended the legacy of his late father, who he said accomplished many things that had not been done since the country's independence.

"He got it done, sometimes with the needed support, sometimes without. So will it be with his son," he said to applause from his supporters in the crowd. "You will get no excuses from me."

"My father built more and better roads, produced more rice than all administrations before his," Marcos Jr. said. He praised the infrastructure projects by his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who ended his six-year term also with a legacy of violence, strong-man rule and contempt for those who stood in his path.

The new president called for unity, saying "we will go farther together than against each other. He did not touch on the human rights atrocities and plunder his father was accused of, saying he would not talk about the past but the future.

Activists and survivors of the martial law era under his father protested Marcos Jr.'s inauguration, which took place at a noontime ceremony at the steps of the National Museum in Manila. Thousands of police officers, including anti-riot contingents, SWAT commandos and snipers, were deployed in the bayside tourist district for security.

Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris's husband, Doug Emhoff, were among foreign dignitaries, who attended the event, which featured a 21-gun salute, a military parade and air force jet fly-bys.

"Wow is this really happening?" asked Bonifacio Ilagan, a 70-year-old activist who was detained and severely tortured by counterinsurgency forces during the elder Marcos's rule. "For victims of martial law like me, this is a nightmare."

Marching in the streets, the protesters displayed placards that read, "Never again to martial law" and "Reject Marcos-Duterte."

Such historical baggage and antagonism stand to hound Marcos Jr. during a six-year presidency beginning at a time of intense crises.

The Philippines has been among the countries worst-hit in Asia by the two-year coronavirus pandemic, after more than 60,000 deaths and extended lockdowns sent the economy to its worst recession since World War II and worsened poverty, unemployment and hunger. As the pandemic was easing early this year, Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent global inflation soaring and sparked fears of food shortages.

Last week, Marcos Jr. announced he would serve as secretary of agriculture temporarily after he takes office to prepare for possible food supply emergencies.

He also inherits decades-old Muslim and communist insurgencies, crime, gaping inequality and political divisions inflamed by his election.

Congress last month proclaimed his landslide victory, as well as that of his running mate Sara Duterte, the daughter of the outgoing president, in the vice-presidential race.

"I ask you all pray for me, wish me well. I want to do well because when the president does well, the country does well," he said after his congressional proclamation.

Marcos Jr. received more than 31 million votes and Sara Duterte more than 32 million of the more than 55 million votes cast in the May 9 election — massive victories that will provide them robust political capital as they face tremendous challenges as well as doubts arising from their fathers' reputations. It was the first majority presidential victory in the Philippines in decades.

Outgoing President Duterte presided over a brutal anti-drugs campaign that left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead in an unprecedented scale of killings the International Criminal Court was investigating as a possible crime against humanity. The probe was suspended in November, but the ICC chief prosecutor has asked that it be resumed immediately.

Marcos Jr. and Sara Duterte have faced calls to help prosecute her father and cooperate with the international court.

Marcos Jr., a former governor, congressman and senator, has refused to acknowledge massive human rights abuses and corruption that marked his father's reputation.

During the campaign, he and Sara Duterte avoided controversial issues and focused on a vague call for

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 96 of 98

national unity.

His father was toppled by a largely peaceful pro-democracy uprising in 1986, and died in 1989 while in exile in Hawaii without admitting any wrongdoing, including accusations that he, his family and cronies amassed an estimated \$5 billion to \$10 billion while in office.

A Hawaii court later found him liable for human rights violations and awarded \$2 billion to more than 9,000 Filipinos who filed a lawsuit against him for torture, incarceration, extrajudicial killings and disappearances.

Imelda Marcos and her children were allowed to return to the Philippines in 1991 to engineer a stunning reversal of their political fortunes, helped by a well-funded social media campaign to refurbish the family name. Imelda, the 92-year-old family matriarch, sat in at the inauguration in a traditional light-blue Filipiniana dress, kissed her son and posed for pictures on the stage.

Marcos Jr.'s alliance with Sara Duterte, whose father remains popular despite his human rights record, and a powerful name of one of the country's most well-known political dynasties, helped him capture the presidency. Many Filipinos too remained poor and grew disenchanted with post-Marcos administrations, Manila-based analyst Richard Heydarian said.

"These allowed the Marcoses to present themselves as the alternative," Heydarian said. "An unregulated social media landscape allowed their disinformation network to rebrand the dark days of martial law as supposedly the golden age of the Philippines."

Along metropolitan Manila's main avenue, democracy shrines and monuments erected after Marcos' 1986 downfall stand prominently. The anniversary of his ouster is celebrated each year as a special national holiday, and a presidential commission that has worked for decades to recover ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses still exists.

Marcos Jr. has not explained how he will deal with such stark reminders of the past.

## 'We cannot pause our lives': Ukrainians begin rebuilding

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

YAHIDNE, Ukraine (AP) — On the outskirts of a Ukrainian village stand the remnants of a small school that was partially destroyed in the early weeks of the Russian invasion.

Surrounded by tall pine trees, the school's broken windows offer glimpses of abandoned classrooms that are unlikely to see students again anytime soon. It is just one of many buildings in Yahidne that were shattered by the war.

But this village and others are gradually returning to life a few months after Russian troops retreated from the northern Chernihiv region. Now people are repairing homes, and the sound of construction tools fills the air. Volunteers from all over Ukraine, and from other countries, are coming to help because there is so much to do before another winter approaches.

Among the workers are a copywriter and a cameraman who have been repairing the roof of the apartment block in front of the school for several days under a scorching sun.

Denys Ovcharenko, 31, and Denys Huschyk, 43, came from the capital, Kyiv. They joined a volunteer building organization called Dobrobat, a name that combines "dobro," or kindness, with "bat" for battalion.

The men and 22 other volunteers help their compatriots return to their homes as soon as possible.

"While the guys are protecting us, we work here," Huschyk said, referring to troops at the front.

No one in the village yet plans to rebuild the school, which was used by the Russians as a base. Villagers prefer not to mention the place at all.

Most of Yahidne's residents — almost 400 people — spent a month in the school's basement, where they were held around the clock as human shields to protect against an attack by the Ukrainian army.

Only occasionally did the Russian troops allow villagers to climb upstairs and enter the yard. But that was not enough. Ten people died in the dark, crowded basement. Survivors blame the lack of fresh air.

The Russians left the village at the end of March.

The Dobrobat group plans to repair the roofs of 21 houses in the coming weeks. The volunteers include teachers, athletes and programmers. About 80% of them have no experience in construction.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 97 of 98

Yahidne is just one of the villages in northern Ukraine that suffered from Russia's aggression. And Dobrobat is just one of the groups responding, sometimes drawing volunteers from beyond Ukraine.

A father and son from the Czech Republic decided to spend their annual family trip in Ukraine this year. Michal and Daniel Kahle see each other for only a few weeks each summer, as the son studies in the United States.

"We wanted to do something meaningful instead of just being tourists," said Daniel, 21.

That's how they came to the town of Makariv in the Kyiv region. Many buildings there were destroyed or damaged in the first weeks of the war.

Father and son joined the youth volunteer movement Building Ukraine Together, which since 2014 has helped restore damaged buildings in eastern Ukraine. For several days, together with young people from different parts of Ukraine, they worked to rebuild the Makariv fire department, which was hit by an artillery shell on March 12.

"It's a long game. We cannot pause our lives, sit at home and wait for the war to end," said Tetyana Symkovych, the volunteer group's coordinator in Makariv.

Many Ukrainians volunteer because they want to be helpful. But that is not the only reason Yulia Kapustienko comes to the fire department every morning to putty the walls. At the end of April, the young woman left Mariupol after spending two months in the besieged port city.

"I saw dead bodies and burned houses. Still, when I see a normal house, I automatically imagine what will happen to it after the rocket hits," she said. "It is impossible to erase this from your mind. But at the same time, I try not to get stuck in the past, so it is important for me to do something, to take responsibility."

The 23-year-old is originally from Horlivka in the eastern Donetsk region. Her first experience of armed occupation was in 2014. After that, she cried for three years, unable to endure the loss of her hometown.

This time, she chose a different strategy.

"I know now that you need to do something," Kapustienko said. "I don't care what to rebuild. The main thing is for it to be in Ukraine."

## Today in History: July 1, Medicare program takes effect

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, July 1, the 182nd day of 2022. There are 183 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 1, 1966, the Medicare federal insurance program went into effect.

On this date:

In 1863, the pivotal, three-day Civil War Battle of Gettysburg, resulting in a Union victory, began in Pennsylvania.

In 1867, Canada became a self-governing dominion of Great Britain as the British North America Act took effect.

In 1903, the first Tour de France began. (It ended on July 19; the winner was Maurice Garin.)

In 1944, delegates from 44 countries began meeting at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, where they agreed to establish the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

In 1963, the U.S. Post Office inaugurated its five-digit ZIP codes.

In 1973, the Drug Enforcement Administration was established.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush nominated federal appeals court judge Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, beginning an ultimately successful confirmation process marked by allegations of sexual harassment.

In 1997, Hong Kong reverted to Chinese rule after 156 years as a British colony.

In 2004, actor Marlon Brando died in Los Angeles at age 80.

In 2009, actor Karl Malden, 97, died in Brentwood, California.

In 2015, after more than a half-century of hostility, the United States and Cuba declared they would re-

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, July 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 359 ~ 98 of 98

open embassies in each other's capitals, marking a historic full restoration of diplomatic relations between the Cold War foes.

In 2019, 15-year-old Coco Gauff, the youngest player to qualify at Wimbledon in the professional era, defeated 39-year-old Venus Williams in the first round, 6-4, 6-4. Los Angeles Angels pitcher Tyler Skaggs, 27, was found dead in his room at the Texas hotel where the team was staying; the medical examiner found that Skaggs had a toxic mix of alcohol and the painkillers fentanyl and oxycodone in his body.

Ten years ago: Syria's main opposition groups rejected a new international plan that called for a transitional government because the compromise agreement did not bar President Bashar Assad from participating. Voters in Mexico returned the Institutional Revolutionary Party to power. Tiger Woods won the AT&T National at Congressional in Bethesda, Maryland, closing with a 2-under 69 for the 74th win of his career.

Five years ago: Pope Francis declined to renew the mandate of German Cardinal Gerhard Mueller as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican office that handles sex abuse cases. (During Mueller's five-year term, the congregation amassed a 2,000-case backlog and came under blistering criticism from abuse survivors.)

One year ago: The Supreme Court's conservative majority cut back on a landmark voting rights law, in a decision likely to help Republican states fight challenges to voting restrictions that were put in place since the 2020 elections. Donald Trump's company and its longtime finance chief, Allen Weisselberg, were charged in New York in what prosecutors called a "sweeping and audacious" tax fraud scheme in which top executives allegedly failed to report compensation including free use of apartments and cars. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi named Republican Rep. Liz Cheney, the most unyielding GOP critic of Trump, to serve on a new select committee looking into the violent Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-dancer Leslie Caron is 91. Actor Jean Marsh is 88. Actor Jamie Farr is 88. Cookiemaker Wally Amos is 86. Dancer-choreographer Twyla Tharp is 81. Actor Genevieve Bujold is 80. Rock singer-actor Deborah Harry is 77. Movie-TV producer-director Michael Pressman is 72. Actor Daryl Anderson is 71. Actor Trevor Eve is 71. Actor Terrence Mann is 71. Rock singer Fred Schneider (B-52s) is 71. Pop singer Victor Willis (Village People) is 71. Actor-comedian Dan Aykroyd is 70. Actor Lorna Patterson is 66. Actor Alan Ruck is 66. Mystery novelist Louise Penny is 64. R&B singer Evelyn "Champagne" King is 62. Olympic gold medal track star Carl Lewis is 61. Country singer Michelle Wright is 61. Actor Andre Braugher is 60. Actor Dominic Keating is 60. Actor Pamela Anderson is 55. Rock musician Mark Pirro is 52. Rock musician Franny Griffiths (Space) is 52. Actor Henry Simmons is 52. Hip-hop artist Missy Elliott is 51. Actor Julianne Nicholson is 51. Actor Melissa Peterman is 51. Actor/writer Jill Kargman is 48. Rock musician Bryan Devendorf (The National) is 47. Singer/songwriter Sufjan Stevens is 47. Actor Thomas Sadoski is 46. Actor Liv Tyler is 45. Actor Hilarie Burton is 40. Actor Lynsey Bartilson is 39. Actor Lea Seydoux (LEE'-uh say-DOO') is 37. Actor Evan Ellingson is 34. Actors Andrew and Steven Cavarno are 30. Actor/singer Chloe Bailey is 24. Actor Storm Reid is 19.