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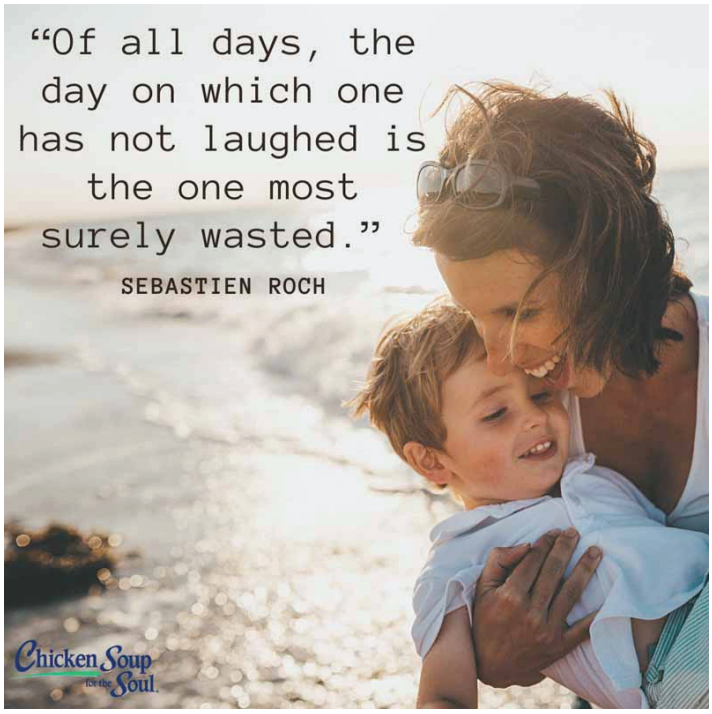


July 19-21
Legion Regions at Redfield

July 22-24
Jr. Teeners State Tourney at Hayti

July 23-24
Jr. Legion Region

July 29-Aug. 2
State Legion at Gregory

August 5-7: State Jr. Legion at Clark

Thursday, Aug. 4
First allowable day of football practice

Monday, Aug. 8
First allowable day of boys golf practice

Thursday, Aug. 11
First allowable day of volleyball and cross country practice

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.

Groton Legion Region Games

Groton Legion Post #39 Defeats Warner W.I.N. Varsity Despite Allowing 3-Run Inning

Groton Legion Post #39 managed through a push by Warner W.I.N. Varsity in the third inning where Groton Legion Post #39 coughed up three runs, but Groton Legion Post #39 still won 20-3 on Wednesday. Sam Nilsson and Quinton Fischbach all drove in runs in the frame.

Groton Legion Post #39 got on the board in the first inning. Bradin Althoff drew a walk, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post #39 put up nine runs in the second inning. The offensive firepower by Groton Legion Post #39 was led by Kaleb Hoover, Pierce Kettering, Cole Simon, and Althoff, all driving in runs in the inning.

Dillon Abeln was the winning pitcher for Groton Legion Post #39. The righthander allowed one hit and zero runs over two innings, striking out three and walking one. Ryan Groeblinghoff and Althoff entered the game out of the bullpen and helped to close out the game in relief.

Trekk Hannahs took the loss for Warner W.I.N. Varsity. The righthander allowed one hit and seven runs.

Groton Legion Post #39 socked one home run on the day. Tate Larson had a homer in the fourth inning.

Groton Legion Post #39 had ten hits in the game. Kettering and Simon all managed multiple hits for Groton Legion Post #39. Simon and Kettering all had two hits to lead Groton Legion Post #39. Groton Legion Post #39 didn't commit a single error in the field. Althoff had the most chances in the field with seven.

Fischbach led Warner W.I.N. Varsity with two hits in three at bats.

Groton Legion Post #39 Grabs Lead in Fifth Inning to Defeat Wessington Springs

Groton Legion Post #39 is battling back to the championship game after eliminating Wessington Springs in the Legion Region game played Wednesday evening in Redfield, 26-13. Groton took the lead late in the game to secure the win. Groton will play Clark/Willow Lake at 1 p.m. today in Redfield. Groton will have to beat Clark/Willow Lake twice in order to qualify for the state game. Clark/Willow Lake handed Groton its first loss earlier in the tournament.

The game was tied at seven with Groton Legion Post #39 batting in the top of the fifth when Cole Simon singled on a 2-0 count, scoring two runs.

Andrew Marzahn led Groton Legion Post #39 to victory by driving in four runs. Marzahn went 2-for-3 at the plate. Marzahn drove in runs on a single in the fifth, a in the fifth, and a walk in the sixth.

Wessington Springs opened up an early lead in the first inning when Landon Cleveland singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run.

Dillon Abeln took the win for Groton Legion Post #39. The pitcher went four and a third innings, allowing 12 runs on 15 hits, striking out four and walking zero. Kaleb Hoover threw one and two-thirds innings in relief out of the bullpen.

Blake Larson took the loss for Wessington Springs. Larson lasted four and a third innings, allowing six hits and eight runs while striking out four.

Groton Legion Post #39 had 13 hits in the game. Pierce Kettering, Hoover, Ryan Groeblinghoff, and Marzahn all managed multiple hits for Groton Legion Post #39. Marzahn, Groeblinghoff, Hoover, and Kettering each managed two hits to lead Groton Legion Post #39.

Wessington Springs saw the ball well, racking up 17 hits in the game. Mason Schelske, Cade Mohling, Camden Jost, Clay Olinger, Cleveland, and Blaze Herdman all managed multiple hits for Wessington Springs. Schelske went 5-for-5 at the plate to lead Wessington Springs in hits.

South Dakotans signed up for American Connectivity Program

On background from the White House: The Biden-Administration is announcing that 11,069 households in the state of South Dakota have enrolled in the American Connectivity Program.

Vice President Kamala Harris will discuss progress on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) in North Carolina. The plan, administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), allows tens of millions of American households to reduce their internet service costs by up to $30/month (or $75/month on Tribal lands).

Ahead of the trip, Vice President Harris is sending a letter to Governor Noem asking the governor to help accelerate ACP enrollments in the state. She wrote:

Our Administration is using every tool in our toolbox to get the word out about the ACP—including launching GetInternet.gov, a one-stop-shop where Americans can check their eligibility, find a plan that meets their needs, and sign up.

We need your help to keep that progress going and to ensure all eligible families in South Dakota sign up to save. […] Please help lower costs for more families by spreading the word in your state and by entering data-matching agreements to drive enrollment in your state.

In May, President Biden and Vice President Harris announced private sector commitments to lower high-speed internet costs for millions of American families by offering coverage plans as low as $30/month to low-income families. The commitments maximize public dollars and are a part of the Administration's efforts to lower costs for families.

The Administration launched GetInternet.gov to help families sign up for the Affordable Connectivity Program benefit and to find participating providers.

During President Biden's 2021 joint address to Congress, he asked Vice President Harris to lead the Administration's efforts on increasing access to high-speed internet and ensuring it was included in what later became the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Following the joint address, Vice President Harris traveled the country to meet with Americans, experts, lawmakers and others to make the case for closing the digital divide.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which successfully passed and the President signed into law in 2021, included $65 billion to help ensure that every American has access to reliable high-speed internet through a historic investment in broadband infrastructure deployment.

Access to internet has been a priority for the Vice President since she served in the U.S. Senate, where she co-sponsored the Accessible, Affordable, Broadband for All Act.

Notice of activities at Richmond Lake Dam.

Brown County has been notified that engineering activities will be starting on the Richmond Lake Dam on July 22, 2022. This will be the start of the process for the development of possible spillway modifications.

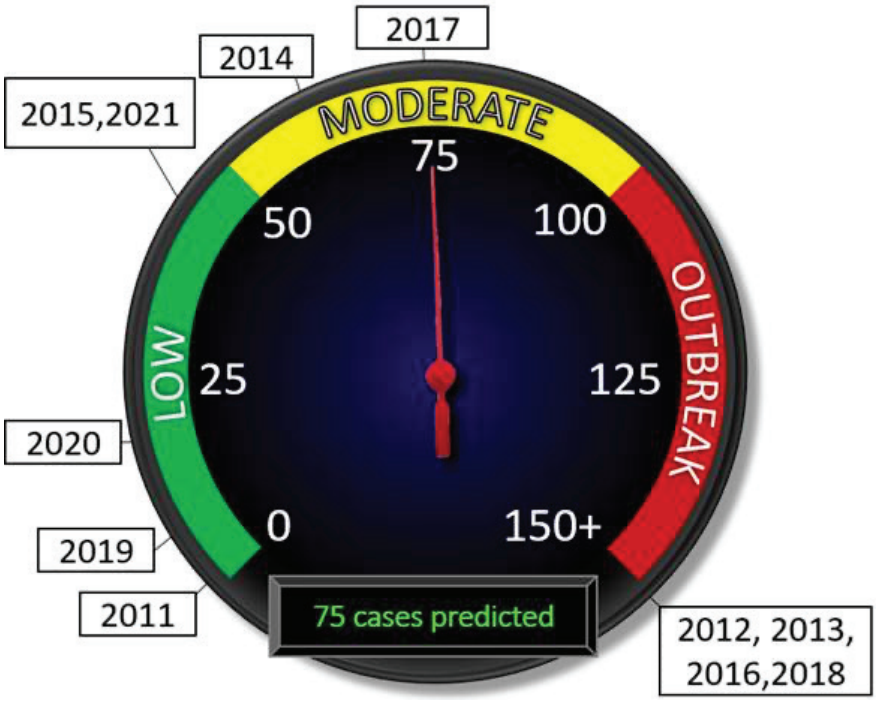
Work will be ongoing into August 2022. You may see survey crews, drill rigs, and drones in the area preforming this work. During this time there may also be roadway lane closures this will be handled with traffic control personnel.

There is no danger of dam failure this is only for engineering work.

Questions can be directed to the Brown County Emergency Management Office at 605-626-7122 or emailed to: EmergencyManagement@browncounty.sd.gov.

West Nile update – July 20, 2022

No human WNV cases have been reported at this time.
SD WNV (as of July 20): No human cases reported
3 counties with positive mosquito pools (Beadle, Brown, Minnehaha)
US WNV (as of July 12): 10 cases (AL, AZ, GA, IN, LA, MN, MS, ND, TX) and 1 death



Emerald Ash Borer Confirmed in Brandon

PIERRE S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) Forest Health Team has confirmed the presence of emerald ash borer (EAB) in Brandon, South Dakota. EAB has previously been confirmed in other areas of Minnehaha and Lincoln counties.

"A group of ash trees showing common symptoms of an EAB infestation was discovered by a DANR forest health specialist working in Brandon," said Marcus Warnke, DANR State Forester. "Upon inspection the presence of EAB larvae and adult exit holes were confirmed in one of the trees."

The discovery was immediately reported to city officials.

"Brandon has been anticipating the arrival of EAB in the community," said Bryan Read, Brandon City Administrator. "The infested trees were already marked for removal as part of our program to reduce the ash population."

The movement of infested wood, including firewood, is a common way to spread EAB from one community to another. State and local quarantines are in place to help slow the spread, but it is important to remember not to move firewood – Buy it Where you Burn It!

The state quarantine, which is in place year-round, prohibits the movement of any raw ash wood, such as logs, or firewood from any hardwood species out of Lincoln, Minnehaha, and Turner counties. In addition, the city of Sioux Falls has banned the movement of ash wood from Memorial Day to Labor Day. This action reduces the movement of EAB within the state quarantine area and is a great recommendation for those outside Sioux Falls city limits.

For more information about EAB or to report a suspected sighting please visit https://emeraldashborerinsouthdakota.sd.gov/.

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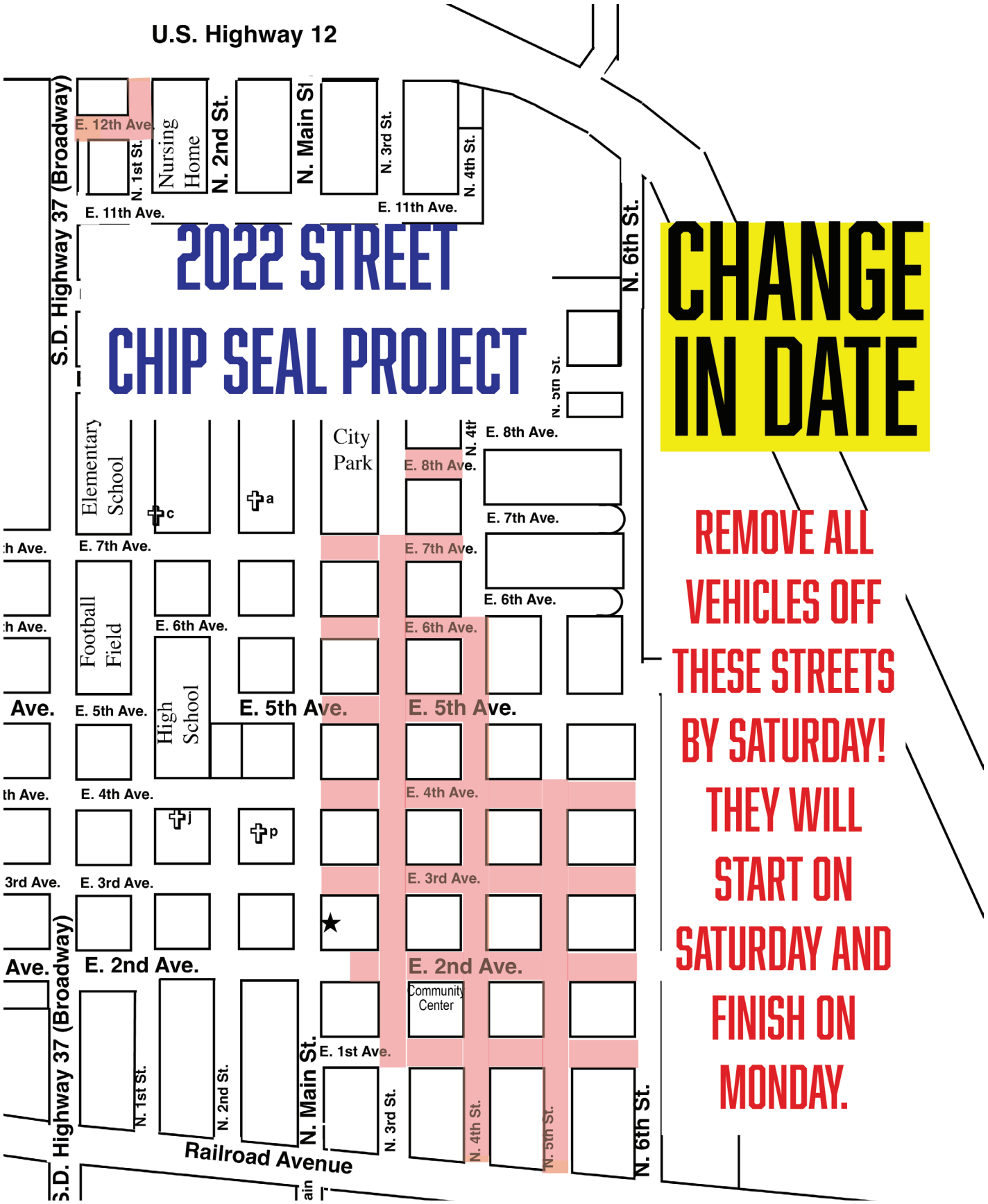

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Editorial by Doug Sombke, President South Dakota Farmers Union Farmers & Union Enterprises President

President Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia to beg for more oil seems unnecessary to us — he could have saved himself a long trip by coming to see what is being done right here in South Dakota.

Sky high gas prices are inflicting pain on our budgets and our psyche in part because we feel helpless. However, we can do something about it and it doesn't require us to get on bended knee to Saudi oil sheiks. Fortunately, we have a home-grown product that has been proven to significantly improve gasoline quality and save billions at the pump. Not to mention, it would dramatically boost our farmers, the environment, public health and the nation's energy security.

Today, ethanol displaces more than 400 million barrels of oil each year thanks to nationwide use of E10. Transitioning to a national E30 standard—which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the statutory authority to do (some say legal obligation)—would reduce U.S. oil imports by one billion barrels per year. That is more than $100 billion staying here at home to improve our economy.

Experts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Argonne National Laboratory have concluded that corn ethanol produced with precision agriculture and other conservation practices can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent to 76 percent compared to gasoline. Other experts predict that over the next several years, High Octane Low Carbon (HOLC) fuels, such as ethanol, will be classified as ultra-low carbon fuels, surpassing the greenhouse gas benefits of vehicles running on electricity produced from coal and natural gas. Higher octane fuels would also allow automakers to dramatically increase fuel economy and reduce carbon emissions, benefiting both the environment and public health.

For many years now, SD Farmers Union has supported the pioneering work of Glacial Lakes Energy in Watertown which every day proves that HOLC E30 blends work well in the existing fleet. Millions of trouble-free miles have been driven on E30 fuels, and lucky Watertown-area consumers have saved millions of dollars by purchasing a superior, high octane, cleaner burning gasoline.

Octane is the most important property in designing an internal combustion engine—the higher the octane the better. That is why automakers recently urged EPA to encourage the use of HOLC fuels in the existing fleet "as soon as possible". Ethanol's octane properties are superior to the only other available octane booster: benzene-based BTEX synthesized from crude oil. BTEX is the most expensive, toxic, and carbon intensive gasoline component. In the U.S., a typical gallon of gasoline contains 20% BTEX and 10% ethanol.

When Congress banned leaded gasoline in 1990, it knew that BTEX posed an even greater threat to public health and the environment, which is why it required EPA to get the "greatest degree of emission reduction achievable" by replacing carcinogenic BTEX with ethanol. EPA has thus far refused to comply. However, with a stroke of his pen, President Biden could direct his EPA Administrator to establish a nationwide E30 "clean octane" standard, which would save consumers billions of dollars in lower gasoline costs, reduce U.S. oil imports by one billion barrels a year—far more than we import from Saudi Arabia and Russia combined—and substantially reduce mobile source toxics and carbon emissions. A major bonus would be the enormous boost to the Midwestern farm economy.

So, Mr. President, the answer to our nation's fuel challenge lies right here in South Dakota. We hope you can visit us soon to see it for yourself.

— Doug Sombke, South Dakota Farmers Union President & Farmers Union Enterprises President. Editorial appeared in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

HIGHER EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY IS REGENTS TOP PRIORITY

PIERRE, S.D. – Keeping higher education affordable continues to be a top priority for the Board of Regents (BOR) and its institutions. During the BOR July meeting this week, board members outlined their budget priorities for the 2024 fiscal year, with a tuition freeze for public universities at the top of the list.

"We want our public universities to be able to recruit and retain students," said South Dakota BOR Executive Director Dr. Brian Maher. "And if we can offer tuition at the same level for three consecutive years, in this economy, we consider that a huge success for students and our state."

Delivering affordable, high-quality education aligned with the state's workforce needs is the focus of South Dakota's public universities and is the foundation for the economic well-being of our state. Last year, the legislature and governor were instrumental in securing an $8.6 million base general fund increase for FY23 to freeze tuition and fees while accommodating a 6% salary increase for BOR employees. A similar base increase in FY24 would ensure a tuition freeze for the 2023-2024 academic year.

"Continuing the trend of low to no increases in tuition and fees is critical to educating the next generation of South Dakotans," said BOR President Pam Roberts. "If we can continue tuition affordability while offering competitive compensation at our public universities and specialty schools, it will be a real victory for the Regental system and our citizens."

Additional budget priorities include funds for increased construction costs, building preservation, and cyber security updates. The South Dakota Board of Regents is the governing board for the six public state universities, the South Dakota School for the Blind, and the South Dakota School for the Deaf. For more information on these legislative priorities and more, visit sdbor.edu.

Kristi for Governor Responds to SDPB's Debate Gimmick

PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA – Today, the Kristi for Governor campaign responded to South Dakota Public Broadcasting's (SDPB) plan to "provide an empty chair in the space Kristi Noem would normally occupy."

"With this gimmick, SDPB has validated all our concerns about their bias. They are more interested in embarrassing the Governor than in a serious debate," said Ian Fury, Communications Director for Kristi for Governor. "I would remind SDPB that they are a taxpayer funded organization, and 49% of registered South Dakota voters are Republicans. Perhaps they should address concerns about their bias and learn their audience better. In the meantime, Governor Noem will continue to educate the people of South Dakota about their increasing leftward slant."

Last week, SDPB's national affiliate, National Public Radio (NPR), announced a new "disinformation reporting team," which quickly drew criticism from many for NPR's immediate dismissal of the Hunter Biden laptop scandal in the midst of the 2020 election. "We don't want to waste our time on stories that are not really stories, and we don't want to waste the listeners' and readers' time on stories that are just pure distractions," NPR's Managing Editor for News, Terence Samuels, said at the time. The original New York Post story has since been proven accurate.

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South Dakota Ends Fiscal Year with $115 Million Surplus

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem announced that South Dakota closed the 2022 budget year on June 30 with a surplus of $115.5 million. Total general fund revenue for fiscal year 2022 finished $72.3 million higher than adopted estimates, and the state general fund budget ended with expenses $43.2 million less than budgeted.

"South Dakota has the strongest economy in America and a strong financial position to match," said Governor Noem. "We live within our means and operate government conservatively. Low regulation, low tax burden and business friendly policies are still the recipe for economic success."

Actual general fund revenue for fiscal year 2022 was unexpectedly higher than recent adopted forecast estimates. In total, revenue finished above the adopted forecast by $72.3 million, or 3.3 percent. Sales and use tax, which is the state's largest revenue source, finished $36.6 million above estimates and grew 12% over the prior fiscal year. A combination of all other sources of general fund revenue finished the fiscal year $35.7 million above legislative estimates.

South Dakota's personal income growth led the nation again in the first quarter of 2022. South Dakota has been a leader in this metric since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. People continue to move to South Dakota as our net inbound migration was ranked second in the nation, while South Dakota's 2.3% unemployment rate is among the lowest in the nation and lower than before the pandemic.

"We must remain cautious and conservative due to 40-year highs in inflation caused by the Biden Administration's heavy spending and regulation," said Governor Noem. "However, we are prepared to weather any economic storm thanks to our structurally balanced budget, fully funded pension, and strong reserves."

By law, the fiscal 2022 surplus of $115.5 million was transferred to the state's budget reserves. The state's reserves now total $422.6 million or 20.5% of the fiscal year 2023 general fund budget.

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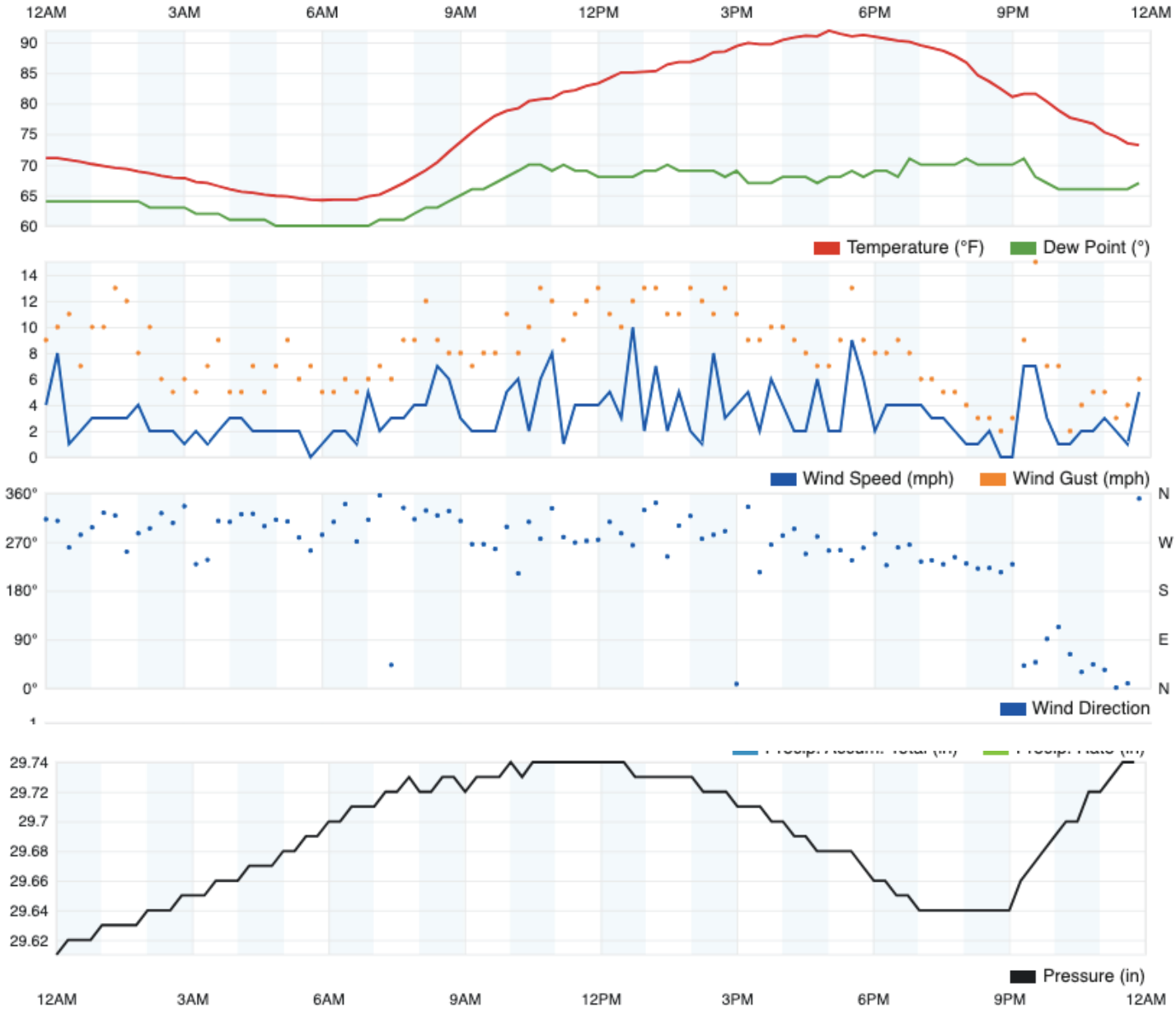
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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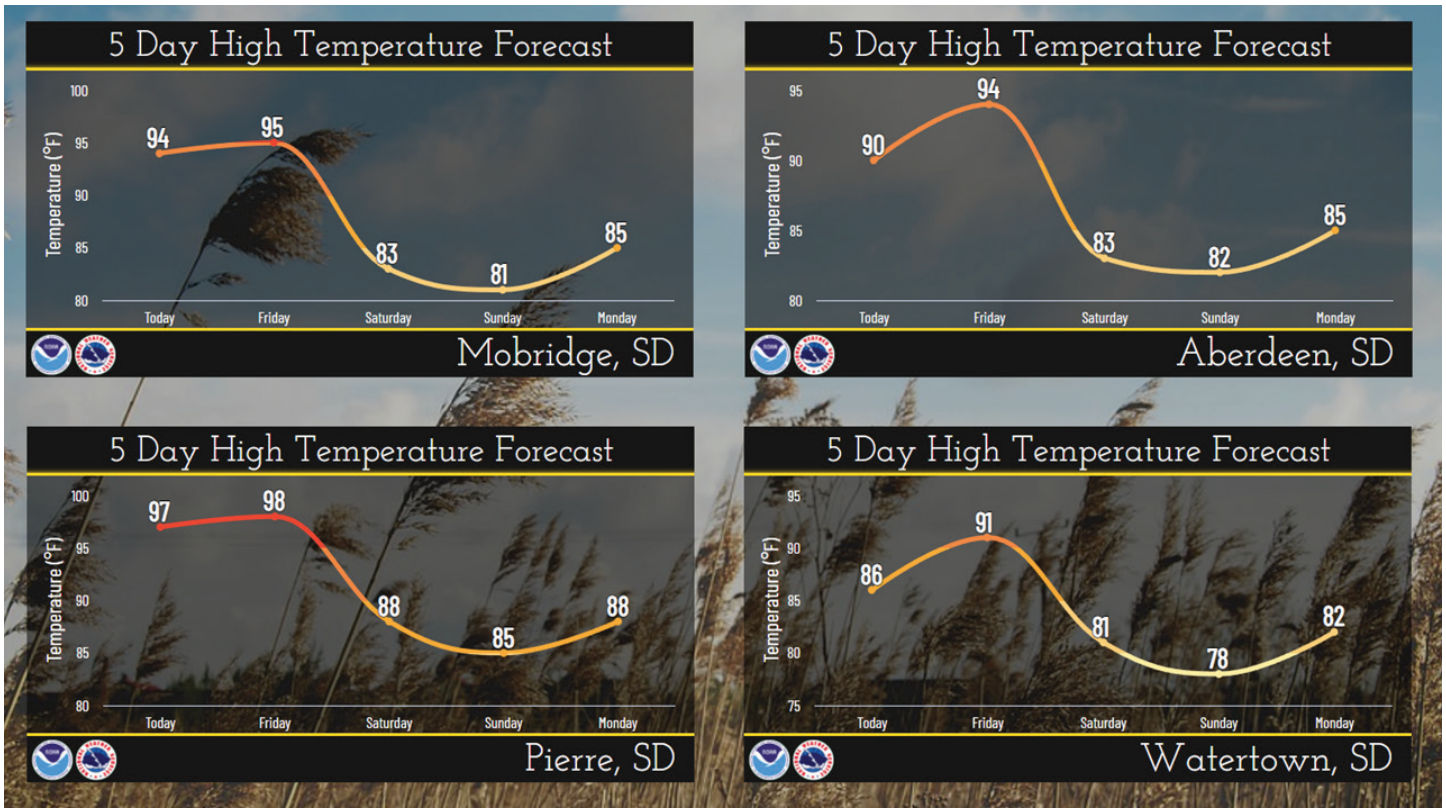
Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
				
Sunny	Slight Chance T-storms then Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms
High: 89 °F	Low: 61 °F	High: 93 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 84 °F



Today will be just a touch cooler than yesterday, but Friday will see an increase in high temperatures again. After that, temperatures return to about normal for the weekend. Slight chances exist for some showers and storms this afternoon.

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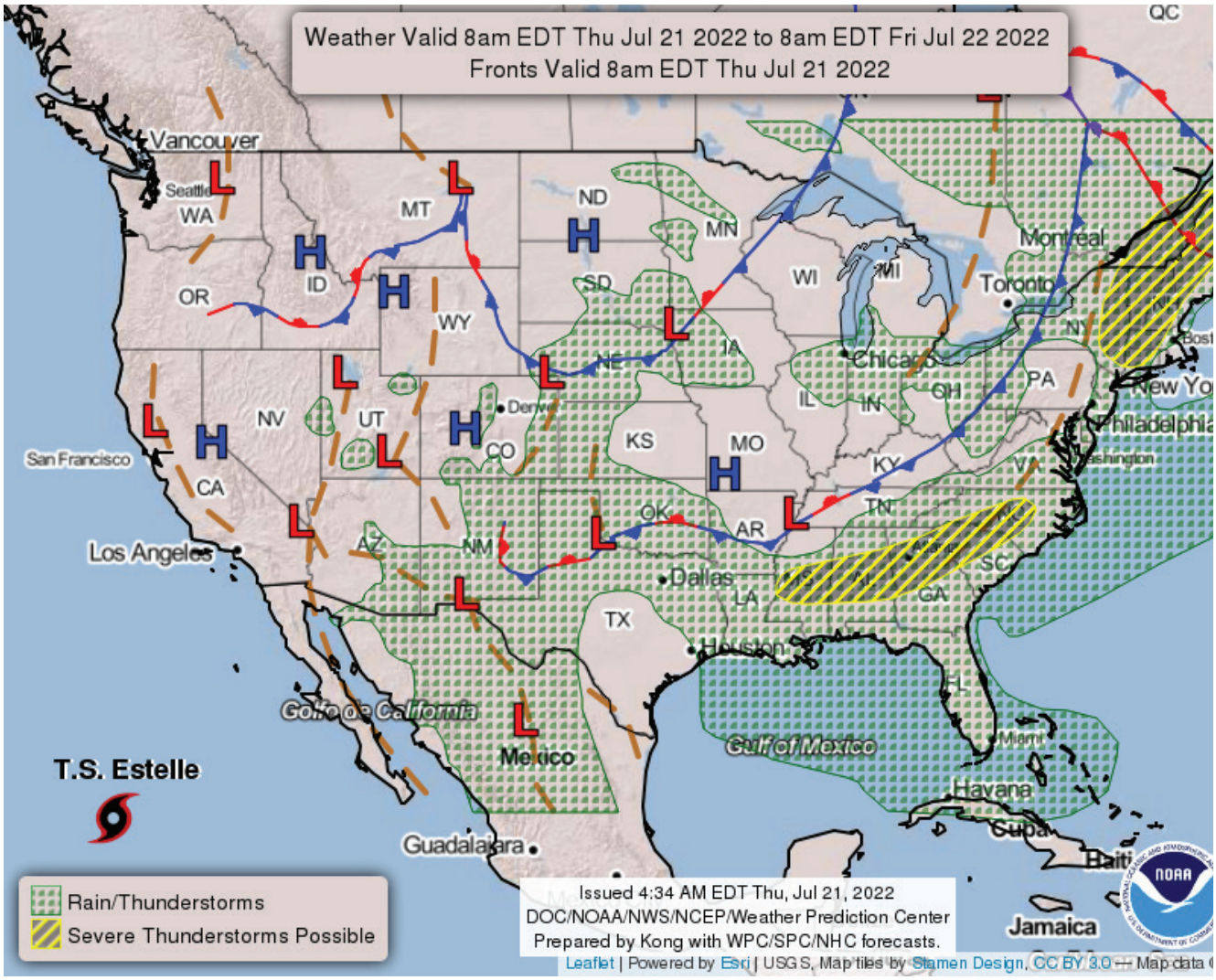
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 92 °F at 5:05 PM
Low Temp: 64 °F at 5:56 AM
Wind: 15 mph at 11:48 AM
Precip: 0.01

Day length: 15 hours, 11 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1899
Record Low: 41 in 1902
Average High: 85°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July.: 2.27
Precip to date in July.: 2.26
Average Precip to date: 13.28
Precip Year to Date: 13.84
Sunset Tonight: 9:14:40 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:04:05 AM



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Today in Weather History

July 21, 1940: From near Miller, an estimated F2 tornado moved southeast, destroying a barn, garage, and two windmills.

July 21, 2000: 3.25-inch hail was reported near Okreek in northeastern Todd County.

1911 - The temperature at Painter, WY, dipped to 10 degrees to equal the record low for July for the continental U.S. (The Weather Channel)

1934 - The temperature reached 109 degrees at Cincinnati, OH, to cap their hottest summer of record. The state record for Ohio was established that day with a reading of 113 degrees near the town of Gallipolis. (David Ludlum)

1975 - Six inches of rain fell across Mercer County, NJ, in just ten hours causing the worst flooding in twenty years. Assunpink Creek crested eleven feet above flood stage at Hamilton and Trenton, the highest level of record. Traffic was brought to a standstill, and railway service between New York City and Washington D.C. was cut off for two days. Flooding left 1000 persons homeless, and caused an estimated 25 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1983: At Vostok Station in Antarctica, the temperature dropped to 128.6 degrees below zero. This reading is the coldest temperature ever recorded.

1987: An F4 tornado ravages the Teton Wilderness and Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. The tornado's violent winds destroy millions of trees on a 24.3-mile track that traverses the Continental Divide at an elevation of 10,170 feet.

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Utah to North Dakota, spawning a dozen tornadoes in North Dakota. Thunderstorms in North Dakota also produced baseball size hail at Clifford which caused four million dollars damage, and high winds which toppled a couple of eighty foot towers cutting off power to the town of Blanchard. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - While cool air invaded the central U.S., unseasonably hot weather continued over the western states. The temperature at Spring Valley, NV, soared from a morning low of 35 degrees to an afternoon high of 95 degrees. Fallon, NV, reported an all-time record high of 108 degrees, and Death Valley, CA, reported their sixth straight day of 120 degree heat. (The Weather Channel) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Afternoon thunderstorms over Florida produced wind gusts to 92 mph at Jacksonville, damaging thirteen light planes at Herlong Field. Five cities in Texas reported record low temperatures for the date. Corpus Christi, TX, equalled their record low for the date with a reading of 71 degrees, and then tied their record high for the date that afternoon with a reading of 97 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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DON'T LEAVE SHORE WITHOUT HIM

A young ensign was completing his first deployment aboard a large destroyer. He had performed all of his duties in an exemplary manner, and as a reward, the captain gave him permission to "get the ship underway."

In his excitement and enthusiasm for being given such an honor, he went through every procedure carefully, wanting to further impress his superiors. However, in taking advantage of this new challenge, he broke an old tradition. As he was steering the ship out of the harbor, the First Officer quietly said to him, "Ensign, you have overlooked one of the unwritten rules of the sea. Make sure the Captain is on board before you get underway."

There are times in all of our lives when we are so anxious to "get underway" that we leave our "Captain" standing on the shore. We all face days of uncertainty with tasks that seem beyond us. We are overwhelmed by new opportunities that are unfamiliar to us and demands that have defeated others around us. So, unprepared and uncertain, we "get underway" without God "at the helm." Then we discover that we are in a sea with waves that would turn our lives upside down and winds that take away our breath. Unfortunately, we often "leave shore" without our Captain. Fortunately, when we return "to shore," we find Him there waiting to take the "helm" of our life and save us. The winds and waves obey His voice!

Prayer: Lord, may we realize that we are not safe unless You are at the "helm" of our lives. Without You steering us we place ourselves in harm's way. Save us! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 139:10 Even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.

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2022-23 Community Events

07/21/2022: Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/22/2022: Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
07/24/2022: Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
07/27/2022: 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
No Date Set: 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)
No Date Set: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3:30-5pm
09/11/2022: Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10 a.m.
09/02-04: 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
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

The Groton Independent
Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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News from the Associated Press

Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined

Yankton Press & Dakotan. July 16, 2022.

Editorial: South Dakota Budget Surplus And The Realities

South Dakota finished the most recent fiscal year with a $115 million budget surplus, which has given lawmakers reason to celebrate and self-congratulate.

In fact, Gov. Krisi Noem said in a press release announcing the surplus Monday that South Dakota has the strongest economy in the nation.

So, why doesn't it feel that way?

Even though the state has racked up surpluses since 2012, there always seems to be the storyline that finances are tight, and Pierre doesn't have the money to do a number of things that some people implore it to do.

For instance, our state's teacher salaries remain problematic. This issue received a modest boost in 2016 with a voter-approved tax that helped lift South Dakota out of last place nationally in educator pay for the first time since 1985. However, the salaries gradually settled back to the bottom of the rankings. A 6% boost in teacher pay approved this past winter lifted state salaries from 51st in the nation to 48th, according to the Associated School Board of South Dakota. But history suggests it is only a fleeting rise and that, without follow-up action, we shall soon revert back to our norm. Also, we still trail our neighboring states, which means South Dakota is at a perpetual competitive disadvantage when it comes to hiring and maintaining teachers.

South Dakota is one of 12 states that has not expanded Medicaid, which could help more than 42,000 low-income people get insurance coverage. The question has never made it out of the state capitol, so now it's being taken to the voters so that they may decide the matter.

South Dakota still taxes food/groceries. An effort to take the 4.5% tax off food made it out of the South Dakota House this winter but was killed in the Senate. A repeal would give a boost to lower income families, who are hit the hardest by this regressive tax..

This state is also, according to a pair of surveys in recent years, the national leader in states where people work at least two jobs. As recently as 2017, it was reported that 9.5% of South Dakotans hold two jobs, which was twice the national average.

Also, South Dakota is home to six of the 50 counties and/or parishes in the U.S. with the lowest per-capita personal income, and the state remains among the national leaders in infant mortality rate.

And yet, we congratulate ourselves on this $115 million surplus. That influx raises the state's budget reserves to $422.6 million, which is equal to 20.5% of the 2023 fiscal year general fund budget.

But next winter, we're sure to hear again about tight budgeting and an uncertain economic outlook making it difficult to invest in ideas such as raising aid for public schools, funding statewide pre-kindergarten, bolstering long-term care facilities and more.

This isn't to say the state should go on a spending frenzy and drain its reserves. That would be reckless.

But nothing in this situation is particularly new. As mentioned above, South Dakota has been running budget surpluses for a decade, and the educational, social and health issues have been around for years and years.

So, as we pat ourselves on the back for our budget surpluses (which have been fueled recently by federal COVID relief funding) and our financial acumen, we need to also bear in mind that prosperity is about more than what's on a balance sheet. It's also about how much good it can do for the people. Otherwise, celebrating surpluses feels disconnected with the realities on the ground.

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Vatican says they're gifts; Indigenous groups want them back

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican Museums are home to some of the most magnificent artworks in the world, from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel to ancient Egyptian antiquities and a pavilion full of papal chariots. But one of the museum's least-visited collections is becoming its most contested before Pope Francis' trip to Canada.

The Vatican's Anima Mundi Ethnological Museum, located near the food court and right before the main exit, houses tens of thousands of artifacts and art made by Indigenous peoples from around the world, much of it sent to Rome by Catholic missionaries for a 1925 exhibition in the Vatican gardens.

The Vatican says the feathered headdresses, carved walrus tusks, masks and embroidered animal skins were gifts to Pope Pius XI, who wanted to celebrate the Church's global reach, its missionaries and the lives of the Indigenous peoples they evangelized.

But Indigenous groups from Canada, who were shown a few items in the collection when they traveled to the Vatican last spring to meet with Francis, question how some of the works were actually acquired and wonder what else may be in storage after decades of not being on public display.

Some say they want them back.

"These pieces that belong to us should come home," said Cassidy Caron, president of the Metis National Council, who headed the Metis delegation that asked Francis to return the items.

Restitution of Indigenous and colonial-era artifacts, a pressing debate for museums and national collections across Europe, is one of the many agenda items awaiting Francis on his trip to Canada, which begins Sunday.

The trip is aimed primarily at allowing the pope to apologize in person, on Canadian soil, for abuses Indigenous people and their ancestors suffered at the hands of Catholic missionaries in notorious residential schools.

More than 150,000 Native children in Canada were forced to attend state-funded Christian schools from the 19th century until the 1970s in an effort to isolate them from the influence of their homes and culture. The aim was to Christianize and assimilate them into mainstream society.

Official Canadian policy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries also aimed to suppress Indigenous spiritual and cultural traditions at home, including the 1885 Potlatch Ban that prohibited the integral First Nations ceremony.

Government agents confiscated items used in the ceremony and other rituals, and some of them ended up in museums in Canada, the U.S. and Europe, as well as private collections.

It is possible Indigenous peoples gave their handiworks to Catholic missionaries for the 1925 expo or that the missionaries bought them. But historians question whether the items could have been offered freely given the power imbalances at play in Catholic missions and the government's policy of eliminating Indigenous traditions, which Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called "cultural genocide."

"By the power structure of what was going on at that time, it would be very hard for me to accept that there wasn't some coercion going on in those communities to get these objects," said Michael Galban, a Washoe and Mono Lake Paiute who is director and curator of the Seneca Art & Culture Center in upstate New York.

Gloria Bell, a fellow at the American Academy in Rome and assistant professor in McGill University's department of art history and communication studies, agreed.

"Using the term 'gift' just covers up the whole history," said Bell, who is of Metis ancestry and is completing a book about the 1925 expo. "We really need to question the context of how these cultural belongings got to the Vatican, and then also their relation to Indigenous communities today."

Katsitsionni Fox, a Mohawk filmmaker who served as spiritual adviser to the spring First Nations delegation, said she saw items that belong to her people and need to be "rematriated," or brought back home to the motherland.

"You can sense that that's not where they belong and that's not where they want to be," she said of the wampum belts, war clubs and other items she documented with her phone camera.

The Inuit delegation, meanwhile, inquired about an Inuit kayak in the collection.

The Vatican Museums declined repeated requests for an interview or comment.

Opening the revamped Anima Mundi gallery space in 2019 with artifacts from Oceania as well as a temporary Amazon exhibit, Francis said the items were cared for "with the same passion reserved for the masterpieces of the Renaissance or the immortal Greek and Roman statues."

You might miss the Anima Mundi if you were to spend the day in the Vatican Museums. Official tours don't include it and the audio guide, which features descriptions of two dozen museums and galleries, ignores it entirely. Private guides say they rarely take visitors there because there is no explanatory signage on display cases or wall text panels.

Margo Neale, who helped curate the Vatican's 2010 Aboriginal exhibition at the Anima Mundi as head of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledges at the Australian National Museum, said it is unacceptable for Indigenous collections today to lack informational labels.

"They are not being given the respect they deserve by being named in any way," said Neale, a member of the Kulin and Gumbaingirr nations. "They are beautifully displayed but are culturally diminished by the lack of acknowledgement of anything other than their 'exotic otherness.'"

In Victoria, British Columbia, Gregory Scofield has amassed a community collection of about 100 items of Metis beadwork, embroidery and other workmanship that he tracked down and acquired via online auctions and through travel and made available to Metis scholars and artists.

Scofield, a Metis poet and author of the forthcoming book "Our Grandmother's Hands: Repatriating Metis Material Art," said any discussion with the Vatican should focus on granting Indigenous scholars full access to the collection and, ultimately, bringing items home.

"These pieces hold our stories," he said. "These pieces hold our history. These pieces hold the energy of those ancestral grandmothers."

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

04-10-12-24-35

(four, ten, twelve, twenty-four, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: $125,000

Lotto America

01-15-23-42-48, Star Ball: 3, ASB: 3

(one, fifteen, twenty-three, forty-two, forty-eight; Star Ball: three; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: $17,260,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 630,000,000

Powerball

10-20-23-49-65, Powerball: 22, Power Play: 3

(ten, twenty, twenty-three, forty-nine, sixty-five; Powerball: twenty-two; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: $119,000,000

North Dakota's lawyers say July 28 abortion ban should stick

By DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — A motion seeking to block enforcement of a so-called trigger law that would shut down North Dakota's lone abortion clinic should be denied because the law was administered properly and the lawsuit on the constitutionality of the ban is unlikely to succeed, the state attorney general's office says.

A 20-page response filed Wednesday by the state argues that a judge should not grant a request by the Red River Women's Clinic in Fargo to delay the July 28 closing date that was certified by Attorney General

Drew Wrigley a few days after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade.

The clinic said Wrigley was premature in starting the 30-day countdown under the trigger ban. Rather than ruling on the opinion, the clinic said, Wrigley should have waited until the official judgment was sent to lower courts, which is likely to happen in a few days.

The North Dakota Legislature passed its trigger law in 2007 that made abortion illegal in the state except in cases of rape, incest and the life of the mother. The measure said the ban will go into effect 30 days after the "issuance of the judgment in any decision of the United States Supreme Court which, in whole or in part, restores to the states authority to prohibit abortion."

The response written by state attorneys Matthew Sagsveen and Courtney Titus said the only condition to shutting down the clinic was whether the U.S. Supreme Court case that effectively reversed federal abortion protections was clear. Wrigley properly construed that case, as well as the trigger language, and properly issued the certification, the state's document said.

Meetra Mehdizadeh, a staff attorney at the Center for Reproductive Rights and one of several lawyers working on behalf of the Fargo clinic, said Wrigley is trying to enforce a "draconian near-total abortion ban" by circumventing state law.

"The state has been relentless in its efforts to push out the last remaining abortion clinic with no consideration for the real, dangerous impacts on people's health and lives," Mehdizadeh said. The clinic has until the end of the day Monday to file its response.

The motion for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction is part of the clinic's suit arguing that the state constitution protects a woman's right to abortion. The clinic said the ban violates rights to life, safety and happiness and infringes on the right to liberty because it "deprives patients of the ability to control decisions about their families and their health."

The state's response filed Wednesday said the clinic "ignores the history of abortion regulations in North Dakota probably because a fair considering of that history is fatal" to its argument.

Clinic director Tammy Kromenaker has said the lawsuit should at least give more time to provide abortion care in North Dakota while she prepares for a possible relocation a few miles away to Moorhead, Minnesota, where abortion remains legal. Most of the clinic's patients come from North Dakota, Minnesota and South Dakota.

A GoFundMe page established to help pay for the clinic's transition has raised close to $1 million.

Abortion ruling prompts variety of reactions from states

By The Associated Press undefined

The U.S. Supreme Court on June 24 overturned Roe v. Wade, the 1973 decision that had provided a constitutional right to abortion. The ruling was expected to lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states, although the timing of those laws taking effect varies.

Some Republican-led states banned or severely limited abortion immediately, while other restrictions will take effect later.

In anticipation of the decision, several states led by Democrats took steps to protect abortion access. The decision also set 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.

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ALABAMA

Political control: Alabama's Republican-controlled Legislature and Republican governor 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 June 24. 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 that 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.

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ALASKA

Political control: Republicans currently hold a majority of seats in the 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. Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy, 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 decision has not immediately affected 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.

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ARIZONA

Political control: Both legislative chambers are controlled by Republicans. GOP Gov. Doug Ducey is to leave office in January because of term limits.

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 takes effect Sept. 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 fetus has a survivable genetic abnormality. Arizona also has a pre-statehood law 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 said the law he signed in late March takes precedence over the total ban that remains on the books. But that law specifically says it does not overrule the total abortion ban in place for more than 100 years. Abortion providers across the state stopped all procedures 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 29 that the pre-statehood law could be enforced. Brnovich said he would seek to remove an injunction in place since shortly after the Roe decision. The next day, 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 that 2021 Arizona law last year, saying it was unconstitutionally vague, but will now have to reconsider that decision. The same federal judge on July 12 blocked another part of that law, which grants all rights to fertilized eggs or fetuses. Abortion rights groups renewed a challenge to it after Roe fell, saying it could be used to charge providers with assault, child abuse or other crimes for providing otherwise-legal abortion services. The judge agreed it was likely unconstitutionally vague.

What's next: Brnovich has said he will ask a court to lift the injunction blocking his office and one county from enforcing the pre-statehood total abortion ban. Abortion-rights supporters in Arizona failed to collect enough signatures by the July 7 deadline to ask voters to enshrine the right to abortion in the state constitution this November. Their last-minute effort was a longshot because they needed to collect nearly 360,000 valid signatures in just over seven weeks.

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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 either of the bans.

What's next: Hours after the Supreme Court ruling, Attorney General Leslie Rutledge signed certification that Roe had been overturned. That allowed the state's "trigger ban" to take effect immediately. The only exception 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. He said he does not plan on asking lawmakers to consider adding rape and incest exceptions to the state's ban.

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CALIFORNIA

Political control: Democrats who support access to abortion control all statewide elected offices and have large majorities in the 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 remains 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 states where abortion is outlawed or severely restricted. The number of women who travel to California for abortions is expected to rise significantly.

What's next: The 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.

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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 didn'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 were from Texas, Wyoming and Nebraska.

What's next: It's impossible to predict how many more patients from surrounding states will seek care in Colorado. 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; the Kansas Constitution protects abortion rights, but Republican lawmakers placed on an August primary ballot an initiative to overturn it.

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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 took effect on July 1. It created 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.

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DELAWARE

Political control: Democrats control the governor's office and the General Assembly 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 federal level," Democratic lawmakers noted in June while unveiling legislation further broadening access to abortions. The measure, which passed June 30, allows physician assistants, certified nurse practitioners and nurse midwifes 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.

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Political control: The local government in the nation's capital is 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, 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.

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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 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 took effect July 1. It was briefly on hold July 5 due to a judge's order in a case brought by reproductive health providers who argued it "violates the privacy provision of the Florida Constitution." But the state's appeal automatically put the restrictions into effect. Although only about 2% of Florida's abortions take place after 15th week, abortion rights advocates have expressed concern over declining access to the procedure not only for Floridians but for residents from nearby Southern states where restrictions are stricter than in Florida.

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GEORGIA

Political control: Georgia has a GOP-controlled General Assembly and a Republican 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. The 11th Circuit on July 20 overruled the lower court decision blocking enforcement of the law and allowed the measure to take effect immediately. The law bans a large majority of abortions that had been taking place in Georgia – about 87%, according to providers. The change comes 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 November's general election. Lawmakers are

likely to consider further action when they return for their annual session in January.

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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.

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.

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IDAHO

Political control: Republicans hold supermajorities 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 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 30 days after the Supreme Court ruling. 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.

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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 did not change access to abortion in Illinois. 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.

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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 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: A federal judge on July 7 lifted an injunction that had blocked a 2019 law banning a second-trimester abortion procedure that the legislation called "dismemberment abortion," a move that allowed the law to take effect. Later in July, a federal judge lifted orders blocking a law aimed at prohibiting abortions based on gender, race or disability.

What's next: Republican legislative leaders have announced a proposal to ban abortion except in cases of rape, incest or to protect a woman's life. The measure was to be considered during a special session that starts July 25.

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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 changed 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.

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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 reelection 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 changed 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 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.

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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 were allowed to resume after a federal judge on June 30 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, but were then allowed to resume by a judge on June 30. 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.

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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. In June, 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: The latest in a series of court orders frees Louisiana's three abortion clinics — in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport — to provide abortions pending a court challenge of the state trigger law. A judge hears arguments on July 18.

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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 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 has changed 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.

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MARYLAND

Political control: Maryland's Genderal Assembly 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 changed immediately in Maryland law.

What's next: Maryland's new law to enable nurse practitioners, nurse midwives and physician assistants to provide abortions with training took 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.

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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 state House of Representatives has approved a bill later that is similar to the governor's 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.

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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 needed to collect about 425,000 valid voter signatures and it turned in 753,759 signatures on July 11. The signatures must be validated by the Board of State Canvassers before the proposed amendment can appear on the Nov. 8 ballot. The measure would become law if voters approved it. The issue also is expected to shape legislative and statewide elections this fall, when the ballots will include Whitmer and Nessel's reelection efforts.

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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 has generally been regarded as legal in Minnesota up to the point of fetal viability, around the 24th week of pregnancy, although some legal scholars question whether any cutoff could be legally enforced, citing a decades-old federal court ruling. A judge on July 11 lifted most of the state's other existing restrictions, including a 24-hour waiting period with state-mandated counseling, requirements that both parents generally be notified before a minor gets an abortion, that only physicians can perform abortions, and that abortions after the first trimester must be performed in hospitals.

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

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

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MISSISSIPPI

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

Background: Mississippi already had a law banning most abortions at 20 weeks, although the state's lone abortion clinic offered the procedure only through 16 weeks. The state tried to enact a law in 2018 to ban most abortions after 15 weeks. That law is the basis for the case that the Supreme Court used to overturn Roe v. Wade in a ruling issued June 24. 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, stopped doing abortions on July 6 and said about two weeks later that it would not reopen in Mississippi because it was relocating to New Mexico. Also in July, the clinic ended its legal challenge of a law that bans most abortions once Roe v. Wade is overturned. A judge rejected the clinic's request to block the law from taking effect. As of July 7, abortions are allowed only 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: Clinic attorneys filed papers July 7 asking the Mississippi Supreme Court to block the new ban on most abortions. Justices set a July 25 deadline for the state attorney general to respond.

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MISSOURI

Political control: Both GOP Gov. Mike Parson and the Republican-led General Assembly 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 banning most abortions kicked in the day the Supreme Court ruled in June.

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.

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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 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.

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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.

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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 into state law 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 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.

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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 changed 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.

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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: A week after the Supreme Court's ruling, Murphy signed two bills aimed at protecting the right to abortion for out-of-state residents and barring extradition of providers and patients to states that have prohibited the procedure. Another bill that would require health insurance companies to cover abortion services and set aside $20 million for access to the procedure remains pending in the Legislature. The bill would set aside $5 million for an abortion training program, $5 million for a "health security" grant and $10 million for health care facilities.

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NEW MEXICO

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

Background: In 2021, state lawmakers repealed a dormant 1969 statute that outlawed most abortion procedures as felonies, thus ensuring access to abortion even after the federal court rolled back 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 was no immediate change in New Mexico after the high court 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.

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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.

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NORTH CAROLINA

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

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

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: Now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned, the 20-week ban could be restored. Legal experts say formal action would have to be taken to cancel the earlier court rulings striking it down. On the day of the ruling, Republican legislative leaders asked state Attorney General Josh Stein, a Democrat and abortion rights supporter whose agency's lawyers defended the 20-week law, to demand the ban's injunction be lifted. Otherwise, they said they would seek to intervene. Stein hasn't committed to going to court, telling lawmakers on July 1 that a "thorough legal review" of the matter may take weeks to complete. Separately, Cooper signed an executive order on July 6 that shields out-of-state abortion patients from extradition and prohibits agencies under his control from assisting other states' prosecutions of abortion patients who travel to North Carolina for the procedure.

What's next: Republican General Assembly leaders didn't consider additional abortion restrictions in their legislative session that ended July 1. The party will likely intensify its efforts in this year's elections to gain the five additional seats it needs for veto-proof margins. Cooper and other Democrats already are making abortion rights a key campaign issue. Abortion politics also are expected to figure into two state Supreme Court elections in November. Republicans would gain a majority on the court if they win at least one of them.

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NORTH DAKOTA

Political control: North Dakota has a Legislative Assembly 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 fetal cardiac activity 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, though the state's sole abortion clinic filed a lawsuit in early July seeking to ban the law from taking effect. 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. The Red River Women's Clinic argues that the ban violates the rights to life, safety and happiness guaranteed by the state constitution that protect the right to abortion. The suit also questions Attorney General Drew Wrigley's statement that the ban would take effect July 28. The clinic argued that the Supreme Court released its opinion on June 24 but has not yet issued its judgment, which it said is a necessary step to trigger the state ban.

What's next: The owner and operator of the Red River Women's Clinic in Fargo has 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.

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

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

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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.

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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.

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PENNSYLVANIA

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

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

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

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RHODE ISLAND

Political control: 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 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, two days after the U.S. 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, 2,611 abortions were performed 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

remains legal because the right was codified in state law.

What's next: Democratic Gov. Daniel McKee signed an executive order July 5 prohibiting state agencies from cooperating with other states' investigations into people who travel to Rhode Island to seek abortions or health care providers that perform them. Two of McKee's opponents in September's Democratic primary for governor, Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea and Matt Brown, 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 will address abortion coverage next year.

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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 fetal cardiac activity if they think a pregnant woman is at least eight weeks along. If they find cardiac activity, 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 said it would continue to perform abortions in South Carolina under the parameters of the new law. The group has also sued over the new restrictions, arguing they violate state constitutional rights to privacy and equal protection.

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. Some Republican lawmakers have opposed a complete abortion ban, especially without exceptions for victims of rape and incest.

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SOUTH DAKOTA

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

Background: 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.

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TENNESSEE

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

Background: In 2020, Tennessee passed a law banning most abortions when the fetal cardiac activity 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.

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TEXAS

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

Background: Texas has given the nation a preview of the landscape of abortion access without the protections enshrined in Roe v. Wade. A new Texas law banning most abortions after about six weeks — before many women know they are pregnant — took effect in September and makes no exceptions in cases of rape or incest. Because of how Republicans wrote the law, which is enforceable only through lawsuits filed by private citizens against doctors or anyone who helps a woman obtain an abortion, Texas has essentially outmaneuvered decades of Supreme Court precedent governing a women's constitutional right 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: The fall of Roe put in motion Texas' trigger law that will ban virtually all abortions in the coming weeks. Clinics have tried to continue serving patients in the meantime, but a new round of court battles over whether a dormant 1925 abortion ban can be enforced for now has already stopped most doctors from performing abortions. Abortions soon will be allowed in Texas only when a mother's life is in danger or if she is at risk of "substantial impairment of a major bodily function."

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

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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 and, after the Supreme Court ruling, moved to implement two new restrictions — a "trigger law" outlawing nearly all abortions upon Roe v. Wade being overturned and a ban on abortions after 18 weeks that was passed a year earlier.

Effect of Supreme Court ruling: The trigger law banning nearly all abortions became enforceable the evening of the Supreme Court ruling, after the legislative general counsel certified the 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. The Planned Parenthood Association of Utah subsequently filed a lawsuit in state court arguing it violated the Utah

Constitution. Meanwhile, legal challenges blocking the 18-week law based on Roe v. Wade were dismissed. That law took effect while courts weigh state constitutional challenges to its trigger law.

What's next: A judge on July 11 put Utah's trigger law banning most abortions on hold until Planned Parenthood's lawsuit is decided. If it takes effect, performing an abortion would be a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a $10,000 fine. While the law is aimed primarily at providers, lawmakers have acknowledged that a woman who self-administers an abortion, including through medication, could 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 changed 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.

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VIRGINIA

Political control: Virginia has a Republican governor who says he would support new state-level restrictions on abortion. Gov. Glenn Youngkin said 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 General Assembly, 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 was 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 is 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.

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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. An-

other 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.

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WEST VIRGINIA

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

Background: Before 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. But Charleston-based Women's Health Center of West Virginia changed course on July 19 and began making appointments for abortions again as litigation over the old law continued. 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 West Virginia statutes, 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-induced 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.

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WISCONSIN

Political control: Wisconsin's Legislature is controlled by Republicans who want to ban or restrict access to abortions, but the Democratic governor 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 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.

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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 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.

State-licensed medical marijuana store opens next week

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Patients enrolled in South Dakota's medical marijuana program will have their first opportunity to buy cannabis from a state-licensed facility next week.

It has been a year and a-half since state voters overwhelmingly approved medical marijuana. The co-owner of one dispensary, United Rd. in Hartford, says the business has secured the first initial inventory available to state-run stores and the showroom is ready for customers.

The building was created with security in mind, said co-owner B.J. Olson.

"We started with a vault and then built the building around the vault. We have eight inch poured concrete walls, reinforced with rebar," Olson said.

The business is a Unity Rd. franchise, KELO-TV reported.

"The beauty of partnering with someone already established that has a plan in place is that we obtained the play book," co-owner Adam Jorgensen said. "This is stuff that we don't have the ability to go out and procure on our own. This is part of the design team that comes specifically with our partnership with Unity Rd."

Their franchise partnership means all their display tables, cases and security devices in the building are all the same as other Unity Rd. locations across the country.

Medical marijuana so far has only been available on tribal land in South Dakota, but next Wednesday Unity Rd. will be the first state-licensed dispensary to offer cannabis.

Jan. 6 panel probes Trump's 187 minutes as Capitol attacked

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

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Jan. 6 committee will hold its final hearing of the summer the way the series began — vividly making the case that Donald Trump's lies about a stolen election fueled the grisly U.S. Capitol attack, which he did nothing to stop but instead "gleefully" watched on television at the White House.

Thursday's prime-time hearing will dive into the 187 minutes that Trump failed to act on Jan. 6, 2021, despite pleas for help from aides, allies and even his family. The panel intends to show how the defeated president's attempt to overturn Joe Biden's election victory has left the United States facing enduring questions about the resiliency of its democracy.

"A profound moment of reckoning for America," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a member of the committee.

With live testimony from two former White House aides, and excerpts from its trove of more than 1,000 interviews, the nearly two-hour session will add a closing chapter to the past six weeks of hearings that at times have captivated the nation.

Returning to prime time for the first time since the series of hearings began, the panel aims to show just how close the United States came to what one retired federal judge testifying this summer called a constitutional crisis.

The events of Jan. 6 will be outlined "minute by minute," said the panel's vice chair, Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo.

"You will hear that Donald Trump never picked up the phone that day to order his administration to help," Cheney said.

"He did not call the military. His Secretary of Defense received no order. He did not call his Attorney General. He did not talk to the Department of Homeland Security," Cheney said. "Mike Pence did all of those things; Donald Trump did not."

Testifying Thursday will be former White House aides who had close proximity to power.

Matt Pottinger, who was deputy national security adviser, and Sarah Matthews, then press aide, both submitted their resignations on Jan. 6, 2021, after what they saw that day. Trump has dismissed the hearings on social media and regarded much of the testimony as fake.

Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., the chairman of the committee, is isolating after testing positive for COVID-19 and will attend by video. Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., a former Naval officer who will lead the session with Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., who flew combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, said she expects the testimony from the White House aides will "just be really compelling."

"These are people who believed in the work they were doing, but didn't believe in the stolen election," Luria said.

The White House aides were not alone in calling it quits that day. The panel is expected to provide a tally of the Trump administration aides and even Cabinet members who resigned after Trump failed to call

off the attack. Some Cabinet members were so alarmed they discussed invoking the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office.

As the panel continues to collect evidence and prepares to issue a preliminary report of findings, it has amassed the most substantial public record to date of what led up to Americans attacking the seat of democracy.

While the committee cannot make criminal charges, the Justice Department is monitoring its work.

So far, more than 840 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the Capitol riot. Over 330 of them have pleaded guilty, mostly to misdemeanors. Of the more than 200 defendants to be sentenced, approximately 100 received terms of imprisonment.

What remains uncertain is whether Trump or the former president's top allies will face serious charges. No former president has ever been federally prosecuted by the Justice Department.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said Wednesday that Jan. 6 is "the most wide-ranging investigation and the most important investigation that the Justice Department has ever entered into."

"We have to get this right," Garland said. "For people who are concerned, as I think every American should be, we have to do two things: We have to hold accountable every person who is criminally responsible for trying to overturn a legitimate election, and we must do it in a way filled with integrity and professionalism."

In delving into the timeline, the panel aims to show what happened between the time Trump left the stage at his "Stop the Steal" rally shortly after 1:10 p.m., after telling supporters to march to the Capitol, and some three hours later, when he issued a video address from the Rose Garden in which he told the rioters to "go home" but also praised them as "very special."

It also expects to produce additional evidence about Trump's confrontation with Secret Service agents who refused to drive him to the Capitol — a witness account that the security detail has disputed.

Five people died that day as Trump supporters battled the police in gory hand-to-hand combat to storm the Capitol. One officer has testified about how she was "slipping in other people's blood" as they tried to hold back the mob. One Trump supporter was shot and killed by police.

"The president didn't do very much but gleefully watch television during this time frame," Kinzinger said.

Not only did Trump refuse to tell the mob to leave the Capitol, he did not call other parts of the government for backup and gave no order to deploy the National Guard, Cheney said.

This despite countless pleas from Trump's aides and allies, including his daughter Ivanka Trump and Fox News host Sean Hannity, according to previous testimony and text messages the committee has obtained.

"You will hear that leaders on Capitol Hill begged the president for help," Cheney has said, including House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy, who she said indicated he was "'scared' and called multiple members of President Trump's family after he could not persuade the President himself."

The panel has said its investigation is ongoing and other hearings are possible. It expects to compile a preliminary report this fall, and a final report by the end of this session of Congress.

Ex-cop Thomas Lane faces sentencing in George Floyd killing

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Former Minneapolis police Officer Thomas Lane is hoping for a sentence Thursday that could let him go free after as little as two years in prison for his role in the killing of George Floyd.

His attorney, Earl Gray, has argued that the rookie was the least culpable of the four officers involved in Floyd's death under Officer Derek Chauvin's knee in May 2020, a killing that sparked protests in Minneapolis and around the world, and launched a national reckoning on race.

Lane is one of three former Minneapolis officers convicted by a federal jury in February of violating Floyd's civil rights by depriving him of medical care. He faces a separate sentencing Sept. 21 in state court after changing his plea there to guilty to a reduced charge of aiding and abetting manslaughter.

Lane, who is white, and fellow rookie J. Alexander Kueng helped restrain Floyd while Chauvin, who is white and was the most senior officer on the scene, killed Floyd by kneeling on his neck for nearly 9 1/2

minutes despite the handcuffed Black man's fading pleas that he couldn't breathe. Chauvin's partner, Tou Thao, helped hold back an increasingly concerned group of onlookers outside a Minneapolis convenience store where Floyd, who was unarmed, tried to pass a counterfeit $20 bill in May 2020.

Federal prosecutors have asked U.S. District Judge Paul Magnuson to follow nonbinding federal sentencing guidelines and sentence Lane to 5 1/4 to 6 1/2 years.

But Gray has asked for 2 1/4 years. Under federal probation rules, and assuming good behavior, that would result in two years in prison. That happens to be what Lane is facing under his plea agreement on the state charge, which calls for a sentence of three years but likely would amount to two under the state's parole system.

Gray argued during the trial that Lane "did everything he could possibly do to help George Floyd." He pointed out that Lane suggested rolling Floyd on his side so he could breathe, but was rebuffed twice by Chauvin. He also noted that Lane performed CPR to try to revive Floyd after the ambulance arrived.

"Any reasonable person should just be disgusted, should be infuriated" that Lane was ever charged, Gray told jurors in his closing argument.

Lane testified he didn't realize how dire Floyd's condition was until paramedics turned him over. Prosecutor Manda Sertich countered that his expressions of concern showed he knew Floyd was in distress but "did nothing to give Mr. Floyd the medical aid he knew Mr. Floyd so desperately needed."

When Lane pleaded guilty in state court in May, Gray said Lane hoped to avoid a long sentence. "He has a newborn baby and did not want to risk not being part of the child's life," he said.

Chauvin pleaded guilty to separate federal civil rights charges in December in Floyd's killing and in an unrelated case involving a Black teenager. That netted a 21-year sentence when he appeared before Magnuson two weeks ago, toward the low end of the range of 20 to 25 years both sides agreed to under his plea deal.

Magnuson had harsh words for Chauvin at the hearing, saying, "You absolutely destroyed the lives of three young officers by taking command of the scene."

Chauvin was already serving a 22 1/2-year state court sentence for second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. His federal and state sentences are running concurrently. While his plea agreement meant accepting nearly three more years behind bars than his state sentence alone, he's expected to be safer and have more freedom in the long run. Minnesota corrections officials have kept Chauvin in solitary confinement in the state's maximum security prison for his own safety, given his notoriety. He has not yet been transferred to the federal prison system.

Magnuson has not set sentencing dates for Thao, who is Hmong American, and Kueng, who is Black. But he has scheduled a hearing for Friday on objections by their attorneys to how their sentences should be calculated under the complicated federal guidelines. Prosecutors are seeking unspecified sentences for them that would be lower than Chauvin's but "substantially higher" than Lane's.

They have turned down plea deals and are scheduled to go on trial Oct. 24 on state charges of aiding and abetting both second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.

White House insiders to talk about Trump's actions on Jan. 6

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Matthew Pottinger was a journalist in China, concerned about the country's drift toward authoritarianism, when he decided — at age 31 — to enlist in the U.S. Marines after the invasion of Iraq.

"Our form of government is not inevitable," Pottinger recalled thinking during an interview two years ago with the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. "And it shouldn't be taken for granted. But it's a form of government very much worth fighting for."

Pottinger had no way of knowing when he put on his military uniform for the first time how close to home that battle for democracy would get. He became deputy national security adviser to President Donald Trump, and he resigned after the Jan. 6 attack that tried to stop the peaceful transfer of power

to President Joe Biden.

On Thursday, he'll be one of the key witnesses at a prime-time hearing of the select House committee investigating the attack. The other is Sarah Matthews, who resigned from her position as a deputy press secretary the same day.

Pottinger and Matthews will join Cassidy Hutchinson, a former assistant to Mark Meadows, Trump's final chief of staff, in the exclusive club of Trump White House insiders who have appeared publicly. Their appearances stand in blunt contrast to the cadre of Trump loyalists who have tried to defy the committee's subpoenas, remained silent or continued to dismiss the investigation's findings.

Any details on what Pottinger and Matthews will share on Thursday have been kept under wraps, but the hearing is expected to focus on what Trump did — and didn't do — as his supporters swarmed the U.S. Capitol and interrupted the ceremonial certification of the election.

Roughly three hours elapsed between Trump's speech at a rally near the White House and his release of a video calling the rioters "very special" but asking them to "go home now."

Pottinger, 49, and Matthews, 27, may be able to illuminate what was happening behind the scenes as Trump resisted pleas from family, aides and Republicans to condemn the riot and urge people to leave the building.

As a member of the press office, Matthews was privy to debates over what the White House and Trump should say publicly during the riot and what other aides advised. And although Pottinger was focused on foreign policy, his position placed him at the crossroads of national security matters.

Whatever they saw that day, they decided to quit, helping to begin an exodus that included other White House staff and various Cabinet officials.

"These are people who believed in the work they were doing, but didn't believe in the stolen election," said Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., a member of the select committee.

Luria added, "It's just a key piece of telling the story about that day, because we'll be hearing from people who were in the White House, what they observed, what their reactions were."

Alyssa Farah Griffin, the former White House director of strategic communications, said Pottinger and Matthews could make potent witnesses, particularly because of their very different backgrounds.

Pottinger, Griffin said, is someone with "enormous credibility," who is "highly respected in the national security space" and not seen as overtly political. Matthews, in contrast, is "a tried and true Republican" who worked for Trump's reelection campaign and was hand-picked to join the White House.

"I think their testimony will be incredibly compelling and carry a lot of weight," said Griffin, who has been supportive of the committee's work and has discussed Matthews' testimony with her.

Matthews began working for Republicans on Capitol Hill as an intern while she was still a student at Kent State University in Ohio. She was so eager to begin a career in Washington that she moved to the city for her first job a month before her graduation, missing her last weeks of college and finishing her final classes online, she told her alma mater in an interview two years ago.

Matthews was hired as a deputy press secretary for Trump's reelection campaign and was brought over to the White House by press secretary Kayleigh McEnany. She worked in the area of the West Wing known as "upper press," placing her in closer proximity to the Oval Office than others in her office.

Sometimes she joined Trump for media interviews, but mostly she fielded questions from reporters and helped prepare for White House briefings.

When Matthews resigned on Jan. 6, she issued a statement saying she was "deeply disturbed by what I saw today." On the anniversary of the attack, she called it "one of the darkest days in American history."

"Make no mistake, the events on the 6th were a coup attempt, a term we'd use had they happened in any other country, and former President Trump failed to meet the moment," she tweeted.

Pottinger did not issue a statement when he resigned on Jan. 6, but he discussed the decision during previous, closed-door testimony to the committee.

While the riot was underway, Pottinger said, a staff member brought him a printout of a Trump tweet accusing Vice President Mike Pence of not having "the courage to do what should have been done" to

overturn the election.

"I read that tweet and made a decision at that moment to resign," Pottinger said. "That's where I knew that I was leaving that day once I read that tweet."

Pottinger took a much more roundabout path to the White House than Matthews.

His father, John Stanley Pottinger, served as an assistant attorney general under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. Matthew Pottinger studied China in college, then moved to the country to work as a reporter for Reuters and The Wall Street Journal.

But in 2005, he joined the Marines. Explaining his unusual decision, Pottinger wrote an essay saying that "living in China also shows you what a nondemocratic country can do to its citizens."

Qualifying at age 31 wasn't easy. He wrote that he got winded after running for five minutes, and he could only do half a pullup. But by the time he took his physical fitness test, he could do 13 pullups and run 3 miles in less than 21 minutes.

Pottinger deployed to Iraq as an intelligence officer, and he later worked in Afghanistan with U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn. At the time, Flynn was a respected military leader, not the promoter of conspiracy theories that he's become today.

They ended up writing a report criticizing military intelligence efforts in Afghanistan. Years later, after Trump was elected, Flynn invited Pottinger to join him in the National Security Council. Flynn didn't last long — he was forced out after a little more than three weeks because of his obfuscations about his conversations with the Russian ambassador to the U.S. — but Pottinger stuck around.

He was promoted to deputy national security adviser in 2019. Pottinger was focused on Asia during his time in the Trump administration, and helped outline a more aggressive stance toward China, one that was rooted in his own experiences as a reporter in the country.

He is now a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution and the chair of the China program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

WHO again considers declaring monkeypox a global emergency

By MARIA CHENG AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — As the World Health Organization's emergency committee convenes Thursday to consider for the second time within weeks whether to declare monkeypox a global crisis, some scientists say the striking differences between the outbreaks in Africa and in developed countries will complicate any coordinated response.

African officials say they are already treating the continent's epidemic as an emergency. But experts elsewhere say the mild version of monkeypox in Europe, North America and beyond makes an emergency declaration unnecessary even if the virus can't be stopped. British officials recently downgraded their assessment of the disease, given its lack of severity.

Monkeypox has been entrenched for decades in parts of central and western Africa, where diseased wild animals occasionally infect people in rural areas in relatively contained epidemics. The disease in Europe, North America and beyond has circulated since at least May among gay and bisexual men. The epidemic in rich countries was likely triggered by sex at two raves in Spain and Belgium.

Some experts worry these and other differences could possibly deepen existing medical inequities between poor and wealthy nations.

There are now more than 15,000 monkeypox cases worldwide. While the United States, Britain, Canada and other countries have bought millions of vaccines, none have gone to Africa, where a more severe version of monkeypox has already killed more than 70 people. Rich countries haven't yet reported any monkeypox deaths.

"What's happening in Africa is almost entirely separate from the outbreak in Europe and North America," said Dr. Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at Britain's University of East Anglia who previously advised WHO on infectious diseases.

The U.N. health agency said this week that outside of Africa, 99% of all reported monkeypox cases are

in men and of those, 98% are in men who have sex with other men. Still, the disease can infect anyone in close, physical contact with a monkeypox patient, regardless of their sexual orientation.

"In these very active gay sexual networks, you have men who really, really don't want people to know what they're doing and may not themselves always know who they are having sex with," Hunter said.

Some of those men may be married to women or have families unaware of their sexual activity, which "makes contact tracing extremely difficult and even things like asking people to come forward for testing," Hunter said, explaining why vaccination may be the most effective way to shut down the outbreak.

That's probably not the case in Africa, where limited data suggests monkeypox is mainly jumping into people from infected animals. Although African experts acknowledge they could be missing cases among gay and bisexual men, given limited surveillance and stigmatization against LGBTQ people, authorities have relied on standard measures like isolation and education to control the disease.

Dr. Placide Mbala, a virologist who directs the global health department at Congo's Institute of National Biomedical Research, said there are also noticeable differences between patients in Africa and the West.

"We see here (in Congo) very quickly, after three to four days, visible lesions in people exposed to monkeypox," Mbala said, adding that someone with so many visible lesions is unlikely to go out in public, thus preventing further transmission.

But in countries including Britain and the U.S., doctors have observed some infected people with only one or two lesions, often in their genitals.

"You wouldn't notice that if you're just with that person in a taxi or a bar," Mbala said. "So in the West, people without these visible lesions may be silently spreading the disease."

He said different approaches in different countries will likely be needed to stop the global outbreak, making it challenging to adopt a single response strategy worldwide, like those for Ebola and COVID-19.

Dr. Dimie Ogoina, a professor of medicine at Nigeria's Niger Delta University, said he feared the world's limited vaccine supplies would result in a repeat of the problems that arose in the coronavirus pandemic, when poorer countries were left empty-handed after rich countries hoarded most of the doses.

"It does not make sense to just control the outbreak in Europe and America, because you will then still have the (animal) source of the outbreak in Africa," said Ogoina, who sits on WHO's monkeypox emergency committee.

This week, U.S. officials said more than 100,000 monkeypox vaccine doses were being sent to states in the next few days, with several million more on order for the months ahead. The U.S. has reported more than 2,000 cases so far, with hundreds more added every day.

Some U.S. public health experts have begun to wonder if the outbreak is becoming widespread enough that monkeypox will become a new sexually transmitted disease.

Declaring monkeypox to be a global emergency could also inadvertently worsen the rush for vaccines, despite the mildness of the disease being seen in most countries.

Dr. Hugh Adler, who treats monkeypox patients in Britain, said there aren't many serious cases or infections beyond gay and bisexual men. Still, he said it was frustrating that more vaccines weren't available, since the outbreak was doubling about every two weeks in the U.K..

"If reclassifying monkeypox as a global emergency will make (vaccines available), then maybe that's what needs to be done," he said. "But in an ideal world, we should be able to make the necessary interventions without the emergency declaration."

Comic-Con returns in full force with costumes, crowds

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The pop culture extravaganza that is Comic-Con International is back to its old extravagance. Stars, cosplayers and hordes of fans are filling the San Diego Convention Center in full force for the first time since 2019. Here's a look at this year's version of the four day festival.

COMIC-CROWDS

The pandemic necessitated virtual versions of Comic-Con in the summers of 2020 and 2021, and a scaled-back in-person version in November, but none were anything like the usual spectacle, with lovers

of all things geeky descending from around the globe and arena-sized panels on films and TV shows that resemble sporting events.

It's not clear whether the convention will draw the estimated 135,000 people who flooded San Diego before the pandemic. But when the doors of the Convention Center opened for Wednesday's preview night, the fans came in droves, mobbing the floor. As required, nearly all wore masks — the protective kind, not the super-villain kind, though there were plenty of those too — and the excitement amid the crowd was palpable.

"Everybody's just been cooped up for a while, and they've been anticipating this," said Dinh Truong, 34, who came to Comic-Con for the second time from his hometown of Minneapolis. "It's nice just to see everybody in the same atmosphere. I'm excited to see the program, see what's going on, see everybody cosplaying and all that, and just getting back to what we used to be."

Far bigger crowds are expected Thursday, when the events begin in earnest.

COMIC-COSPLAY

It's likely no one has missed the in-person convention more than the captains, queens and connoisseurs of cosplay. Comic-Con is their Met Gala, and no getup is too elaborate.

Lorelei McKelvey, 54, who is from San Diego but now lives in Yokosuka, Japan, was dressed as Captain Carter, Captain America's British, World War II-era counterpart.

"I had to do one that I could authentically replicate," McKelvey said. "I went and did my research and found out what were the authentic British officer leathers worn in World War II, and I found manufacturers to actually make those leathers."

She walked the Convention Center floor in real-as-possible officer cavalry boots and Royal Air Force gauntlets, and carried a 5-pound steel shield.

McKelvey came to Comic-Con and worked a booth for 20 straight years. This is her first time coming as a cosplayer, and her second time coming as a trans woman, and she's excited to be reunited with the cherished friends she's made here.

"My last convention is the first time they've seen me as Lorelei," McKelvey said. "This is their first time to see me four years later and to see how much I've grown since then."

Others wandered the halls Wednesday as "Star Wars" Stormtroopers, the Mandalorian, Wonder Woman, and Sailor Moon. Chuckie from "Child's Play" emerged from one cosplayer's stomach.

COMIC-COMING ATTRACTIONS

Comic-Con makes most of its news as a venue to show off trailers and footage from forthcoming films and TV shows during star-studded mega-panels held in Hall H, which holds some 6,000 people. Announced panels include Warner Bros. and the DC Universe's "Black Adam." It will include Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, who plays the titular antihero, director Jaume Collet-Serra, and the stars playing Hawkman, Dr. Fate, and other members of the Justice Society.

"Get ready, because the hype is real," Johnson said in pro-wrestler promo mode on Instagram earlier this month. "Guess who's coming to town, the most electrifying man in all the DC Universe."

Warner Bros. will also provide a preview of "Shazam: Fury of the Gods."

Marvel may hold back its best material for Disney's forthcoming D23 Expo, but is expected to tease its next film, "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" and the Disney+ TV series "She-Hulk: Attorney at Law."

A pair of much-anticipated fantasy prequels will also give fans a taste of their worlds. A new trailer dropped Wednesday in advance of a panel from HBO Max that will show off the "Game of Thrones" spinoff "House of the Dragon," set 200 years before the original series.

Amazon is going back in time 2000 years for "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power," a tale of the emergence of evil among the elves long before Frodo and Bilbo walked Middle Earth. Their panel this year comes 21 years after director Peter Jackson presented footage from the first of the original films at Comic-Con.

Michelle Obama's book 'The Light We Carry' coming this fall

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Michelle Obama will have a book out this fall, "The Light We Carry," in which she reflects upon her experiences and shares insights on navigating an increasingly stressful world.

It's the former first lady's first entirely new work since the 2018 release of her acclaimed blockbuster "Becoming," which has sold more than 17 million copies worldwide, surpassing the sales of any memoir by a previous first lady or modern president, including her husband, former President Barack Obama.

"I've learned it's okay to recognize that self-worth comes wrapped in vulnerability, and that what we share as humans on this earth is the impulse to strive for better, always and no matter what," Michelle Obama writes in the book's introduction, included in Thursday's announcement by the Random House Publishing Group and its imprint Crown.

"We become bolder in brightness. If you know your light, you know yourself. You know your own story in an honest way. In my experience, this type of self-knowledge builds confidence, which in turn breeds calmness and an ability to maintain perspective, which leads, finally, to being able to connect meaningfully with others — and this to me is the bedrock of all things."

The new book is not part of the reported eight-figure deal the Obamas reached in 2017, shortly after he left office, with parent company Penguin Random House for their respective memoirs. A spokesperson declined to discuss financial terms for "The Light We Carry."

Crown will publish the 336-page book Nov. 15, almost exactly four years after the release of "Becoming," and has announced a first printing of 2.75 million copies for the U.S. and Canada. "The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times" will come out simultaneously in 14 languages and 27 countries, with additional rights deals expected.

"In 'The Light We Carry,' Mrs. Obama offers readers a series of fresh stories and insightful reflections on change, challenge, and power, including her belief that when we light up for others, we can illuminate the richness and potential of the world around us, discovering deeper truths and new pathways for progress," the publisher's announcement reads in part.

"Drawing from her experiences as a mother, daughter, spouse, friend, and First Lady, she shares the habits and principles she has developed to successfully adapt to change and overcome various obstacles — the earned wisdom that helps her continue to 'become.'"

On Thursday, Penguin Random House announced it was renaming an annual writing prize in her honor, the $10,000 Michelle Obama Award for Memoir, part of an awards program for public high school students the company launched in 1993.

Since completing "Becoming," Michelle Obama has written an edition for younger readers and launched a podcast. With Barack Obama and their production company Higher Ground she has worked on such projects as the Oscar-winning documentary "American Factory" and a documentary about her tour for "Becoming," when she appeared at arenas nationwide with such guest interviewers as Oprah Winfrey and Sarah Jessica Parker. Promotional plans for "The Light We Carry" will be announced later.

Crown is also the longtime publisher of Barack Obama, himself a million-selling author. "A Promised Land," the first of two planned memoirs about his presidency, came out in 2020. A spokesperson declined to comment on when the next book will be released.

Key gas pipeline from Russia to Europe restarts after break

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Natural gas started flowing through a major pipeline from Russia to Europe on Thursday after a 10-day shutdown for maintenance — but the gas flow remained well short of full capacity and the outlook was uncertain, which leaves Europe still facing the prospect of a hard winter.

The Nord Stream 1 pipeline under the Baltic Sea to Germany had been closed since July 11 for annual maintenance work. Amid growing tensions over Russia's war in Ukraine, German officials had feared that the pipeline — the country's main source of Russian gas, which recently has accounted for around a third of Germany's gas supplies — might not reopen at all.

Network data showed gas beginning to arrive through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline as scheduled after 6 a.m., and the operator said that it had "successfully completed all planned maintenance works." But deliveries were still far below the pipeline's full capacity, as they were for weeks before the maintenance break.

The head of Germany's network regulator, Klaus Mueller, said Russia's Gazprom had notified deliveries Thursday of about 30% of the pipeline's capacity. He later tweeted that actual deliveries were above that amount and could reach the pre-maintenance level of some 40%.

That wouldn't be enough to resolve Europe's energy crisis. "The political uncertainty and the 60% reduction from mid-June unfortunately remain," Mueller wrote.

When Gazprom reduced the flow last month, it cited alleged technical problems involving equipment that partner Siemens Energy sent to Canada for overhaul and couldn't be returned because of sanctions imposed over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Canadian government earlier this month gave permission for the turbine that powers a compressor station at the Russian end of the pipeline to be delivered to Germany.

The German government has rejected Gazprom's technical explanation for the gas reduction, charging repeatedly that it was only a pretext for a political decision to sow uncertainty and further push up energy prices. It has said the turbine was a replacement that was only supposed to be installed in September, but that it's doing everything to deprive Russia of the pretext to reduce supplies.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that Gazprom still hadn't received the relevant documents for the turbine's return, and on Wednesday questioned the quality of the repair work. Putin said that Gazprom was to shut another turbine for repairs in late July, and if the one that was sent to Canada wasn't returned by then the flow of gas would decline even further.

The head of the European Union's executive Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said on Wednesday that the turbine was "in transit" and there was "no pretext not to deliver" gas.

Simone Tagliapietra, an energy policy expert at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels, said that Russia was playing a "strategic game."

"Keeping low flows going is better than cutoff. It decreases Europe's resolve to reduce gas demand," he said. He warned that Europe must go into crisis mode anyway "because an interruption is likely to happen in the winter. And each cubic meter of gas saved now, makes Europe more resilient in the next months."

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said "today underlines — even if there's an announcement that gas is flowing again — that this war isn't only being conducted with weapons against Ukraine, but that hybrid warfare means also using energy dependency as a means of war."

The European Commission proposed this week that member countries cut their gas use by 15% over the coming months as the bloc braces for a possible full Russian cutoff of gas supplies.

Germany and the rest of Europe are scrambling to fill gas storage in time for winter and reduce their dependence on Russian energy imports. Germany has Europe's biggest economy; gas is important to power its industries, provide heating and, to some extent, generate electricity.

Last month, the government activated the second phase of Germany's three-stage emergency plan for natural gas supplies, warning that Europe's biggest economy faced a "crisis" and winter storage targets were at risk. As of Wednesday, Germany's gas storage was 65.1% full.

To make up for shortfalls, the German government has given the green light for utility companies to fire up 10 dormant coal-fired power plants and six that are oil-fueled. Another 11 coal-fired power plants scheduled to be shut down in November will be allowed to keep operating.

Italy's Draghi resigns after government implodes

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italian Premier Mario Draghi resigned Thursday after key coalition allies boycotted a confidence vote, signaling the likelihood of an early election and a renewed period of uncertainty for Italy and Europe at a critical time.

Draghi tendered his resignation to President Sergio Mattarella during a morning meeting at the Quirinale

Palace. Mattarella, who rejected a similar resignation offer from the premier last week, "took note" of the new one and asked Draghi's government to remain on in a caretaker fashion, the president's office said.

Draghi's government of national unity imploded Wednesday after members of his uneasy coalition of right, left and populists rebuffed his appeal to band back together to finish the Italian Parliament's natural term and ensure implementation of a European Union-funded pandemic recovery program.

Instead, the center-right Forza Italia and League parties and the populist 5-Star Movement boycotted a confidence vote in the Senate, a clear sign they were done as partners in the former European Central Bank chief's 17-month government.

"Thank you for all the work done together in this period," Draghi told the lower Chamber of Deputies on Thursday morning before going to see Mattarella. Clearly moved by the applause he received there, he repeated a quip that even central bank chiefs have hearts.

Italian newspapers on Thursday were united in their outrage at the surreal outcome, given Italy is dealing with soaring inflation and energy costs, Russia's war against Ukraine and outstanding reforms needed to clinch the remainder of the EU's 200 billion euros in recovery funds.

"Shame," headlined La Stampa on the front page. "Italy Betrayed," said La Repubblica. "Farewell to Draghi's Government," said Corriere della Sera.

Mattarella tapped Draghi - who earned the nickname "Super Mario" during his European Central Bank tenure for his "whatever it takes" rescue of the euro — to be Italy's premier last year. He and his unity government were charged with pulling the country out of the pandemic and laying the groundwork to make use of the EU's recovery funds.

But the 5-Stars, the biggest vote-getter in the 2018 national election, had been chafing for months that their priorities of a basic income and minimum salary, among other agenda items, were being ignored. The movement also opposed Italy's military aid to Ukraine. Last week, the 5-Stars boycotted a confidence vote tied to a bill aimed at helping Italians endure a cost-of-living crisis, prompting Draghi's first offer to resign.

Mattarella rejected the offer then and asked Draghi to return to Parliament to brief lawmakers on the situation. He did that on Wednesday, appealing to party leaders to listen to the calls for unity from ordinary Italians who signed petitions asking him to stay on.

"You don't have to give the answer to me. You have to give it to all Italians," he told lawmakers.

While the next steps were unclear following Draghi's second resignation, the unraveling of his governing coalition suggested Mattarella could dissolve Parliament after a period of consultations, paving the way for an early election as soon as late September or early October. The legislature's current five-year term is due to expire in 2023.

Mattarella planned o meet with the presidents of the upper and lower chambers of Parliament later Thursday, his office said. Such consultations usually precede a public statement from Mattarella about his intentions.

Opinion polls have indicated neck-to-neck percentages for the center-left Democratic Party and the right-wing Brothers of Italy party, which had remained in the opposition to Draghi's coalition.

Democrat leader Enrico Letta said Parliament had betrayed Italy and urged Italians to respond at the polls. "Let Italians show at the ballot that they are smarter than their representatives," he tweeted.

The Brothers of Italy has long been allied with the center-right Forza Italia of ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi and the League of Matteo Salvini, suggesting that a center-right alliance would likely prevail in any election and propel Brothers' leader Giorgia Meloni to become Italy's first female premier.

Meloni, who has been gunning for an early election since before the crisis erupted, was triumphant.

"The will of the people is expressed in one way: by voting. Let's give hope and strength back to Italy," she said.

Some commentators noted that Draghi's government, which has been among Europe's strongest supporters of Ukraine against Russia, collapsed in large part thanks to political leaders who previously had ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Berlusconi has vacationed with Putin and considered him a friend; Salvini opposed EU sanctions against Russia after its 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, and 5-Star leader Giuseppe Conte opposed

Italian military aid to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia's invasion.

After 5-Star senators boycotted last week's vote, Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio accused Conte of giving Putin a gift by "serving Draghi's head on a silver platter."

Perhaps coincidentally, Italian energy giant ENI reported that Russia's Gazprom was significantly increasing its daily gas deliveries to Italy Thursday, to 36 million cubic meters compared to 21 million cubic meters in recent days.

Biden seeking $37B for fighting crime, hiring more police

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is proposing to spend roughly $37 billion for fighting and preventing crime, including $13 billion to help communities hire and train 100,000 police officers over five years.

Biden will outline his anti-crime program on Thursday during a visit to Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The Democratic president will request the money from Congress as part of his latest budget proposal, according to senior administration officials who previewed the plan on the condition of anonymity ahead of the formal announcement.

Republicans are trying to gain leverage in November's midterm elections by portraying Democrats as unwilling to confront crime problems.

As part of Biden's plans, $3 billion would be geared toward clearing court backlogs and resolving cases involving murders and guns. The president also wants to use $15 billion to create a grant program that would fund ideas for preventing violent crime or creating a public health response to nonviolence incidents, aimed at reducing the burden on law enforcement.

The remaining $5 billion would support programs intended to stop violence before it occurs.

After speaking in Wilkes-Barre, Biden is scheduled to attend a fundraiser for the Democratic National Committee in Philadelphia. Then he's expected to spend a long weekend in Wilmington, Delaware, where he has a home.

EXPLAINER: Can Europe live without Russian natural gas?

BERLIN (AP) — Europe faced an energy crisis even before drama emerged about the Nord Stream 1 pipeline reopening from Russia to Germany.

While natural gas started flowing again Thursday after the major pipeline shut down for 10 days of maintenance, Europe will still struggle to keep homes warm and industry humming this winter.

That is because Russia has already slashed Europe's amounts of natural gas used to power factories, generate electricity and heat homes in the winter, and Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned they could keep dwindling.

Deliveries through Nord Stream 1 were cut by 60% before annual repairs began and were expected to stay well below the pipeline's full capacity. Government officials had feared the pipeline may not reopen at all, saying Putin is using energy for political leverage in his confrontation with the European Union over the war in Ukraine.

Here are key things to know about Europe's energy crisis:

DID RUSSIA CUT OFF GAS TO EUROPE?

It has reduced supplies significantly. Even before the invasion of Ukraine, Russia was not selling gas on the short-term spot market. After the EU imposed sanctions on Russia's banks and companies and started sending weapons to Ukraine, Russian cut off gas to six countries and reduced supplies to six more.

Flows into Germany, the EU's biggest economy, through Nord Stream 1 were dialed back by two-thirds, with Russia blaming a part that was sent to Canada for maintenance and not returned due to sanctions. European leaders rejected that claim, calling it a political move to create uncertainty and spike energy prices.

It has left the 27-member EU scrambling to fill gas storage ahead of winter, when demand rises and utility companies draw down their reserves to keep homes warm and power plants running.

The EU's goal is to use less gas now to build storage for winter. Europe's gas reserves are only 65% full,

compared with a goal of 80% by Nov. 1.

WHY IS RUSSIAN NATURAL GAS SO IMPORTANT?

Russia supplied some 40% of Europe's natural gas before the war. That has dropped to around 15%, sending prices through the roof and straining energy-intensive industries.

Gas is used across a range of processes that most people never see — to forge steel to make cars, make glass bottles and pasteurize milk and cheese.

Companies warn that they often can't switch overnight to other energy sources such as fuel oil or electricity to produce heat. In some cases, equipment that holds molten metal or glass is ruined if the heat is turned off.

High energy prices are already threatening to cause a recession in Europe through record inflation, with consumers having less to spend as costs rise for food, fuel and utilities. A complete cutoff could deal an even heavier blow to an already troubled economy.

WHAT IS THE NORD STREAM 1 PIPELINE?

It is the major European natural gas pipeline that runs under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany and is Germany's main source of Russian gas.

The head of Germany's network regulator, Klaus Mueller, tweeted that gas deliveries could reach the pre-maintenance level of some 40% on Thursday.

Even with Nord Stream 1 resuming at reduced levels, Europe would need to save 12 billion cubic meters of gas, the equivalent of 120 LNG tankers, to fill its storage levels by winter.

Three other pipelines bring Russian gas to Europe, but one through Poland and Belarus has been shut down. Another, through Ukraine and Slovakia, is still bringing reduced amounts of gas despite the fighting, as is one through Turkey into Bulgaria.

Gas also comes by pipeline from Norway, North Africa and Azerbaijan.

WHAT'S PUTIN'S GAME?

Although Russia's oil and gas exporters are selling less energy, spiking prices mean Putin's earnings have actually increased, according to the International Energy Agency.

Since the invasion, Russia's revenue from exporting oil and gas to Europe has doubled over the average from recent years, to $95 billion, the Paris-based IEA said.

The increase in Russia's energy revenue in just the last five months is three times what it typically makes by exporting gas to Europe over an entire winter.

So Putin has cash in hand and could calculate that painful utility bills and an energy recession could undermine public support for Ukraine in Europe and increase sentiment for a negotiated settlement in his favor.

"Based on what we have seen over the past year, it would be unwise to exclude the possibility that Russia could decide to forgo the revenue it gets from exporting gas to Europe in order to gain political leverage," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said.

Indeed, Putin said Tuesday that the flow of gas through Nord Stream 1 would decline even further if the turbine that was sent to Canada for repairs wasn't returned by late July, when another turbine would shut down for maintenance. Canada has said it gave permission to return the part that powers a compression station.

"Our partners are trying to shift the blame for the mistakes they made to Russia and Gazprom, but it's absolutely unfounded," Putin said.

WHAT CAN EUROPE DO?

The EU has turned to more-expensive liquefied natural gas, or LNG, which comes by ship from places like the U.S. and Qatar. Germany is fast-tracking construction of LNG import terminals on its North Sea coast, but that will take years. The first of four floating reception terminals is to come online later this year.

But LNG alone can't make up the gap. The world's LNG export facilities are running at full capacity amid tight energy markets, and there's no more gas to be had. An explosion at a U.S. terminal in Freeport, Texas, that sent most of its gas to Europe took 2.5% of Europe's supply offline overnight.

Conservation and other energy sources are key. For example, Germany is running coal plants longer,

creating a gas auction system intended to encourage conservation, and resetting thermostats in public buildings.

The European Union on Wednesday proposed that member states voluntarily cut their gas use by 15% over the coming months. The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, is seeking the power to impose mandatory reductions across the bloc if there's a risk of a severe gas shortage or an exceptionally high demand.

EU member states will discuss the measures at an emergency meeting of energy ministers next Tuesday.

Countries have been scrambling to secure alternative energy supplies, with leaders of Italy, France and the European Union sealing deals with their counterparts in Algeria, Azerbaijan and the United Arab Emirates this week.

COULD PEOPLE FREEZE THIS WINTER?

It's unlikely homes, schools and hospitals will lose heat because governments are required to impose rationing first on businesses. The German government also could allow gas suppliers to immediately pass on increases to customers.

The choices could include torpedoing industry and/or socking consumers with even higher bills.

The IEA recommends European countries step up campaigns people to conserve at home and plan to share gas in an emergency. And time is getting short.

"European leaders need to be preparing for this possibility now to avoid the potential damage that would result from a disjointed and destabilizing response," Birol said. "This winter could become a historic test of European solidarity — one it cannot afford to fail — with implications far beyond the energy sector."

Sri Lanka's newly elected president sworn into office

By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Veteran politician Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Sri Lanka's new president Thursday to take charge of a nation bitterly angry he will remain in power amid an unprecedented economic crisis.

Sri Lankans have taken to the streets for months to demand their top leaders step down to take responsibility for economic chaos that has left the nation's 22 million people struggling with shortages of essentials, including medicine, fuel and food. While the protesters have focused on the Rajapaksa political dynasty, Wickremesinghe also has drawn their ire as a perceived Rajapaksa surrogate.

The six-time prime minister had never held the top job. But he easily won the secret ballot of lawmakers Wednesday to finish the term of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who fled the country after protesters stormed his residence last week and resigned.

His appointment received mixed reactions, with some supporters lighting firecrackers while protesters continued to demand that he resign.

Wickremesinghe, 73, has wide experience in diplomatic and international affairs and has been overseeing bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund. He won the support of 134 members in the 225-member Parliament.

Lawmakers apparently considered him the safer hands to lead the nation through the crisis, despite public anger at Wickremesinghe as an example of the nation's problematic political establishment. During demonstrations last week, crowds set his personal residence on fire and occupied his office.

After Wednesday's vote, Wickremesinghe called for politicians to work together and pleaded for the country to move on. But protesters flocked to the presidential office instead, chanting, "Ranil, go home!"

Protest leaders told reporters on Wednesday they don't accept Wickremesinghe's appointment and urged him to step down immediately.

Parliament's selection goes against the "will of the people," said Jeewantha Peiris, a protest leader and Catholic priest, adding that demonstrations against Wickremesinghe would continue.

"We are the people who sent Gotabaya home, and it's not a difficult task for us to send you (Wickremesinghe) home," said Tampitiye Sugathananda, a Buddhist monk and protest leader who was outside

the presidential office.

Wickremesinghe took his oath as the country's 8th executive president Thursday morning before Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya at a ceremony held in Parliament in the capital, Colombo. He now can choose a new prime minister.

In an example of the troubles caused by the economic crisis, a power outage hampered live coverage of the swearing-in ceremony at Parliament. An official at Parliament who spoke on condition of anonymity as he is not authorized to speak to the media said the live coverage was to be done by the state-owned Independent Television Network.

In some areas, Wickremesinghe's supporters lit firecrackers and distributed sweets to celebrate his appointment as president, local media reported.

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Julie Chung wrote on Twitter that she looks forward to working with Wickremesinghe, adding, "In these challenging times, it will be essential for all parties to redouble efforts to work together to tackle the economic crisis, uphold democracy & accountability, and build a stable & secure future for all Sri Lankans."

Wickremesinghe said Monday the negotiations with the IMF were near a conclusion and talks on help from other countries had also progressed. He also said the government has taken steps to resolve shortages of fuel and cooking gas.

On Wednesday, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva told financial magazine Nikkei Asia that the organization hoped to complete the rescue talks "as quickly as possible."

On Monday, in his role as acting president, Wickremesinghe declared a state of emergency that gave him broad authority to act in the interest of public security and order. Authorities can carry out searches and detain people, and Wickremesinghe can also change or suspend any law. Parliament can regularly review the law and it will expire without its approval.

Presidents in Sri Lanka are normally elected by the public. The responsibility falls to Parliament only if the presidency becomes vacant before the term officially ends. It has happened once before, in 1993, when then-Prime Minister Dingiri Banda Wijetunga was chosen by Parliament uncontested after former President Ranasinghe Premadasa, father of the current opposition leader, was assassinated.

Vatican says they're gifts; Indigenous groups want them back

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican Museums are home to some of the most magnificent artworks in the world, from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel to ancient Egyptian antiquities and a pavilion full of papal chariots. But one of the museum's least-visited collections is becoming its most contested before Pope Francis' trip to Canada.

The Vatican's Anima Mundi Ethnological Museum, located near the food court and right before the main exit, houses tens of thousands of artifacts and art made by Indigenous peoples from around the world, much of it sent to Rome by Catholic missionaries for a 1925 exhibition in the Vatican gardens.

The Vatican says the feathered headdresses, carved walrus tusks, masks and embroidered animal skins were gifts to Pope Pius XI, who wanted to celebrate the Church's global reach, its missionaries and the lives of the Indigenous peoples they evangelized.

But Indigenous groups from Canada, who were shown a few items in the collection when they traveled to the Vatican last spring to meet with Francis, question how some of the works were actually acquired and wonder what else may be in storage after decades of not being on public display.

Some say they want them back.

"These pieces that belong to us should come home," said Cassidy Caron, president of the Metis National Council, who headed the Metis delegation that asked Francis to return the items.

Restitution of Indigenous and colonial-era artifacts, a pressing debate for museums and national collections across Europe, is one of the many agenda items awaiting Francis on his trip to Canada, which begins Sunday.

The trip is aimed primarily at allowing the pope to apologize in person, on Canadian soil, for abuses Indigenous people and their ancestors suffered at the hands of Catholic missionaries in notorious residential schools.

More than 150,000 Native children in Canada were forced to attend state-funded Christian schools from the 19th century until the 1970s in an effort to isolate them from the influence of their homes and culture. The aim was to Christianize and assimilate them into mainstream society.

Official Canadian policy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries also aimed to suppress Indigenous spiritual and cultural traditions at home, including the 1885 Potlatch Ban that prohibited the integral First Nations ceremony.

Government agents confiscated items used in the ceremony and other rituals, and some of them ended up in museums in Canada, the U.S. and Europe, as well as private collections.

It is possible Indigenous peoples gave their handiworks to Catholic missionaries for the 1925 expo or that the missionaries bought them. But historians question whether the items could have been offered freely given the power imbalances at play in Catholic missions and the government's policy of eliminating Indigenous traditions, which Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called "cultural genocide."

"By the power structure of what was going on at that time, it would be very hard for me to accept that there wasn't some coercion going on in those communities to get these objects," said Michael Galban, a Washoe and Mono Lake Paiute who is director and curator of the Seneca Art & Culture Center in upstate New York.

Gloria Bell, a fellow at the American Academy in Rome and assistant professor in McGill University's department of art history and communication studies, agreed.

"Using the term 'gift' just covers up the whole history," said Bell, who is of Metis ancestry and is completing a book about the 1925 expo. "We really need to question the context of how these cultural belongings got to the Vatican, and then also their relation to Indigenous communities today."

Katsitsionni Fox, a Mohawk filmmaker who served as spiritual adviser to the spring First Nations delegation, said she saw items that belong to her people and need to be "rematriated," or brought back home to the motherland.

"You can sense that that's not where they belong and that's not where they want to be," she said of the wampum belts, war clubs and other items she documented with her phone camera.

The Inuit delegation, meanwhile, inquired about an Inuit kayak in the collection.

The Vatican Museums declined repeated requests for an interview or comment.

Opening the revamped Anima Mundi gallery space in 2019 with artifacts from Oceania as well as a temporary Amazon exhibit, Francis said the items were cared for "with the same passion reserved for the masterpieces of the Renaissance or the immortal Greek and Roman statues."

You might miss the Anima Mundi if you were to spend the day in the Vatican Museums. Official tours don't include it and the audio guide, which features descriptions of two dozen museums and galleries, ignores it entirely. Private guides say they rarely take visitors there because there is no explanatory signage on display cases or wall text panels.

Margo Neale, who helped curate the Vatican's 2010 Aboriginal exhibition at the Anima Mundi as head of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledges at the Australian National Museum, said it is unacceptable for Indigenous collections today to lack informational labels.

"They are not being given the respect they deserve by being named in any way," said Neale, a member of the Kulin and Gumbaingirr nations. "They are beautifully displayed but are culturally diminished by the lack of acknowledgement of anything other than their 'exotic otherness.'"

In Victoria, British Columbia, Gregory Scofield has amassed a community collection of about 100 items of Metis beadwork, embroidery and other workmanship that he tracked down and acquired via online auctions and through travel and made available to Metis scholars and artists.

Scofield, a Metis poet and author of the forthcoming book "Our Grandmother's Hands: Repatriating Metis Material Art," said any discussion with the Vatican should focus on granting Indigenous scholars full access

to the collection and, ultimately, bringing items home.

"These pieces hold our stories," he said. "These pieces hold our history. These pieces hold the energy of those ancestral grandmothers."

HIMARS and howitzers: West helps Ukraine with key weaponry

By The Associated Press undefined

The message to U.S. lawmakers from Ukraine's first lady, delivered amid stark and graphic images of civilian bloodshed, couldn't have been clearer: After nearly five full months since Russia launched its invasion, Olena Zelenska said that her country needs more Western weapons.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy sent her to Washington to appeal directly to U.S. Congress for air defense systems.

The appeal Wednesday came as Russia suggested it plans to grab broader areas beyond the industrial region of eastern Ukraine known as the Donbas, with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasizing that Moscow also claims the Kherson region and part of Zaporizhzhia and will "continuously and persistently" expand its gains elsewhere.

The billions of dollars in Western military assistance have been crucial for Ukraine's efforts to fend off Russian attacks, but officials in Kyiv say the numbers are still too small to turn the tide of the war.

A look at what Ukraine has received so far:

HIMARS ROCKET LAUNCHERS

The HIMARS systems supplied by the U.S. and similar M270s from Britain have significantly bolstered the Ukrainian military's precision-strike capability.

The HIMARS and M270 have a longer range, a much better precision and a faster rate of fire compared with Soviet-designed Smerch, Uragan and Tornado multiple rocket launchers used by both Russia and Ukraine.

The truck-mounted HIMARS launchers fire GPS-guided missiles capable of hitting targets up to 80 kilometers (50 miles) away, a distance that puts them out of reach of most Russian artillery systems. The mobile launchers are hard for the enemy to spot and can quickly change position after firing to escape airstrikes.

The Ukrainian military so far has received a dozen HIMARS and several M270 systems, but it already has used them to successfully target Russian ammunition and fuel depots in eastern Ukraine, essential for supporting Moscow's offensive. On Wednesday, Ukrainian forces reportedly used HIMARS to hit a strategic bridge in the Russia-occupied southern region of Kherson.

"HIMARS have hardly had any rest during the day or at night. Their potential has been used to the maximum," Ukrainian military experts Oleh Zhdanov told The Associated Press. "The results have been impressive. Over 30 important Russian targets have been hit with high precision over the past two weeks."

U.S. authorities so far have refrained from providing Ukraine with longer-range missiles for HIMARS launchers that can reach targets up to 300 kilometers (186 miles), allowing the military to hit areas deep inside Russian territory.

HEAVY ARTILLERY

Ukraine has taken deliveries of more than 200 heavy artillery systems from the U.S. and its NATO allies. They have included the U.S. M777, French CAESAR, German PzH 2000 and a few other towed and self-propelled long-range artillery systems.

The Western howitzers have some advantages over older Soviet-designed systems in the Russian and Ukrainian arsenals, but it takes time for Ukrainian crews to learn how to operate them. Their wide assortment poses obvious logistical challenges.

"Ukraine has been given a tremendous amount ... of artillery equipment that's very diverse," said Michael Kofman, an expert on the Russian military and program director at the Virginia-based CNA think tank. "What they've ended up with is a petting zoo of artillery, and it's very hard to do maintenance, sustainment and logistics."

A more serious problem is that the numbers of Western weapons are still far too small.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said last month that the country needs at least 1,000 heavy howitzers, 300 multiple rocket launchers, 500 tanks and 2,000 armored vehicles — much more than the West has provided.

"Western weapons are superior to Soviet-era analogues, but the numbers have been too small to turn the tide of the war," Zhdanov said.

ARMOR

Ukraine has asked the West for more armor to replenish its heavy battlefield losses. The country has reportedly received over 300 Soviet-built T-72 tanks from Poland and the Czech Republic, and already has used them in combat.

The long-promised delivery of German Leopard tanks is on hold, however, a delay that has drawn an angry response in Ukrainian media and social networks.

Ukraine has taken delivery of several hundred armored personnel carriers from the U.S. and a few NATO allies, a motley collection of vehicles that hasn't fully compensated for what it already has lost.

Western allies also have provided Ukraine with big numbers of portable anti-tank weapons, which played a key role in helping Ukrainian soldiers to decimate Russian armored convoys.

DRONES

In the early part of the war, Ukraine extensively used its inventory of Turkish-made Bayraktar TB-2 laser-guided, bomb-dropping drones to hit long convoys of Russian troops and supply columns. Bayraktars, however, have become less effective in the face of denser Russian air and electronic defenses in eastern Ukraine.

Since the war began, the U.S. and Western allies have shipped hundreds of other drones, including an unspecified number of "kamikaze" Switchblade 600s that carry tank-piercing warheads and use artificial intelligence to track targets. But their range is limited, and they can only stay aloft for about 40 minutes.

Ukraine has pushed strongly for more advanced long-range drones that can survive radio interference and GPS jamming and rely on satellite communications for control and navigation.

AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS

The U.S. and other NATO allies have provided Ukraine with over 2,000 portable air defense missile systems, or MANPADS, such as Stingers and other similar weapons.

Such compact systems are efficient against combat helicopters and low-flying jets, and the Ukrainian military has used them to inflict significant losses on the Russian air force, restricting its capability to provide close air support to ground forces and helping slow the pace of Moscow's offensive.

At the same time, Ukraine also has prodded the West to supply it with medium- and long-range air defense systems that would be capable of downing cruise missiles and high-flying aircraft.

It has received several Soviet-built S-300 long-range air defense systems from Slovakia, the type of weapons the Ukrainian military has long operated.

The U.S. also has pledged to give Ukraine two NASAMS mid-range air defense systems.

Germany has promised to supply Ukraine with 30 Gepard self-propelled anti-aircraft guns, but they have yet to arrive.

WARPLANES

Since the start of the invasion on Feb. 24, Ukraine has urged Western allies to provide it with warplanes to challenge Russia's air superiority.

However, the U.S. and its allies have been reluctant to give Ukraine the fighter jets it asks for, fearing it would provoke an escalatory response from Moscow, which has warned NATO that supplying Ukraine with combat aircraft could be tantamount to joining the conflict.

In March, the Pentagon rejected Poland's proposal for handing over its Soviet-built MiG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine by transferring them through a U.S. base in Germany, citing a high risk of triggering a Russia-NATO escalation. Ukraine has its own fleet of MiG-29s, but it's unclear how many of those and other jets are still in service.

Earlier this month, Slovakia announced an intention to give its MiG-29 fleet to Ukraine as it awaits delivery of U.S. F-16 figter jets, but no action has been taken.

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Syrian refugees anxious over Lebanon's plans to deport them

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BAR ELIAS, Lebanon (AP) — Sitting outside her tent in a camp in eastern Lebanon, a 30-year-old Syrian refugee contemplated the sunset and her worsening options.

Umm Jawad fled to Lebanon in 2011 to escape a Syrian government siege of her hometown of Homs. She managed to survive over the past decade, despite Lebanon's devastating economic meltdown and souring attitudes toward Syrian refugees.

But now Lebanon wants to send her and a million other refugees back to Syria, claiming that much of the war-shattered country is safe. She is terrified. Life in Lebanon is difficult, but she fears returning to Syria could be fatal.

She's considering a risky escape to Europe by sea with her husband and their children, ages 11 and six. There, she could complete her accounting degree, put the children back in school and secure a steady supply of medication for her epilepsy.

"They (the Europeans) live a better quality of life," said Umm Jawad, who asked to be identified by her nickname, which means mother of Jawad in reference to her older son's first name, to speak freely about her family and plans. "But here, my children, husband, and I live in a tent."

Lebanon's economic meltdown -– one of the worst in modern history -- has pushed a growing number of Lebanese and Syrians to attempt the perilous journey by sea to Europe.

The Lebanese government's recently announced plan to deport 15,000 refugees per month to Syria appears set to push more people to make that journey, at a time when Europe is struggling with millions of Ukrainian refugees fleeing the months-long war in their country.

The Lebanese Army and other security agencies report foiled migration attempts off the coast of the northern coasts on a weekly basis. At least seven migrants drowned following a confrontation between a boat of Lebanese and Syrian migrants and the Lebanese Army in April.

"The Lebanese are not happy with their life here and are trying to leave, so what does that mean for Syrians?" said Umm Jawad. "May God help both the Lebanese and Syrians out of this crisis."

Umm Jawad lives in a Syrian refugee camp near Lebanon's eastern border crossing with Syria, On a recent day, children played soccer in the camp's labyrinth of alleys, while some residents bartered with a street vendor who passed by with his cart carrying produce. One man set up a makeshift barbershop inside a tent.

Life in the camp has been getting harder. Donor fatigue, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Lebanon's crippling economic crisis have forced more refugees to go into debt to afford food, medicine, and rent.

Lebanon, a country of five million people, says it can no longer afford to host more than a million Syrian refugees, and is adamant to start deporting them within months, despite opposition from the United Nations and rights groups.

The Lebanese authorities have supported forced refugee returns for years but had not come up with a comprehensive plan until recently. In justifying such measures, they say Syrian officials have assured them there are now many safe areas refugees can return to.

In a Lebanese government document obtained by The Associated Press, Damascus assured Beirut in April that returnees would be able to secure identification cards, birth certificates, social services, temporary housing, and a viable infrastructure. Syrian officials also wrote that returnees would benefit from Syrian President Bashar Assad's pardons of political opponents and military draft evaders.

In reality, the Assad government has struggled to rebuild areas it has reclaimed through devastating sieges and air raids, and Syria's economy, like that of Lebanon, is in tatters. Western-led sanctions on Damascus following the government's brutal crackdown on political opposition in 2011 have further exacerbated the economic downturn.

Many Syrian refugees fear for their safety if forced to return, including the oppressive omnipresence of their country's notorious security services.

Human Rights Watch has documented cases of Syrian refugees facing detention, torture, and a host of human rights violations upon their return, even with security clearances from the Syrian government, said Lama Fakih, the Middle East and North Africa director at the watchdog group.

Umm Jawad worries her husband could be forced to return to the military. "You have check points every few hundred meters, between every neighborhood, and crime is rampant. You just can't feel safe even in your own home," she said.

Hassan Al-Mohammed, who works in the fields of Lebanon's lush Bekaa Valley, along with several of his 12 children, said he dreams of going home, but that now is not the time. He said his hometown southwest of the city of Aleppo is still a frontline. "Should I flee an economic crisis just to have my family slaughtered?" he said, sitting in his tent.

At the same time, many Lebanese feel that sending the Syrians home would ease the economic crisis in Lebanon, wherethree out of four people now live in poverty.

Tensions between Lebanese and Syrians are increasingly palpable.

Al-Mohammed says bakeries would sometimes prioritize Lebanese nationals for their bundle of bread and make Syrians and non-Lebanese wait for hours. He is frustrated by claims that refugees have been benefitting economically at the expense of Lebanese. "They reduced aid, so we're working to eat. The money we make is to buy bread," he said.

Lebanese ministers in recent months have proposed that the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees redirect refugee aid to Syria, as a way of improving the situation there and encouraging returns.

But those calls have so far fallen on deaf ears. The U.N. refugee agency, along with Europe, the United States and several rights groups, say that Syria simply isn't safe yet.

Lebanese officials expressed their frustration.

The U.N.'s refusal to redirect aid deters refugees from returning, Issam Charafeddine, the Cabinet minister dealing with refugee issues, said in an interview earlier this month. He also said reports of an imminent start of deportations amount to an unfounded "fear campaign."

Maj. Gen. Abbas Ibrahim, a member of the Lebanese government's refugee returns committee, told reporters last week that "it seems the international community doesn't want the Syrians to return to their country."

Tokyo Olympic aftermath still being untangled a year later

By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The Tokyo Olympics survived the COVID-19 postponement, soaring expenses and some public opposition. A year later, the costs and benefits remain as difficult to untangle as the Games were to pull off.

In his speech at the closing ceremony, IOC President Thomas Bach said a major accomplishment of the Games was simply reaching the end.

"We did it," Bach said. "We did it together," he repeated, crediting the athletes, Japanese government officials, and deep-pocketed broadcasters for refashioning the Games despite no fans, disappointed sponsors, and no buzz around the city.

Organizers said the Games would drive tourism, showcase Japan's technological prowess, and create memories similar to the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The pandemic erased that.

Japan's goal after the postponement was to get through it, mindful that Beijing was holding the Winter Olympics in China just six months after Tokyo's close. For the International Olympic Committee, it was a priority to get the Games on television and keep big sponsors — the sources of 90% of IOC income — happy.

"I think what the Games meant more than anything else was simply not having to deal with a cancellation," David Leheny, a political scientist at Japan's Waseda University, told The Associated Press. "There were no public health disasters associated with it. I do think officials would like to have run a victory lap — if the public had been more enthusiastic about it."

"If Japan had cancelled," Leheny added, "there would have been a lot of discussion, particularly in the

conservative media, about what it meant that we couldn't pull it off."

As a final act before legally dissolving the organizing committee on June 30, President Seiko Hashimoto and CEO Toshiro Muto said the price tag for the Tokyo Games was $13 billion — almost 60% public money. This was twice the estimated cost when the IOC awarded Tokyo the Games, but less than the $25 billion some predicted.

How to judge? Legacy or costly hangover? Is there success to celebrate, or is it simply rejoicing over not having failed?

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government, on the hook for $5.4 billion in Games expenses, has campaigned to persuade the public that a half-dozen new venues have post-Games uses. Typical is a reopening ceremony next week at the canoe-slalom venue, featuring a paddling parade for elementary-school students.

A center dedicated to the LGBTQ community was championed during the Games, and the Paralympics pushed Tokyo to improve accessibility around town.

The city government is holding a 1-year anniversary event Saturday at the $1.4 billion National Stadium to mark the date of the opening ceremony. Athletes, high school and junior high school marching bands, and cheerleaders are to appear.

Tokyo was initially billed as the "Recovery Olympics," but this got little play after the delay. Government officials promised before the postponement that the Games would focus attention on an area of northeastern Japan devastated in 2011 by an earthquake, tsunami, and the meltdown of three nuclear reactors.

Japan's Kyodo news agency published a survey of 4,000 people, compiled by a government agency, that showed only 29.8% said they were grateful for government reconstruction support. Many in the region believe the Olympics sapped resources from recovery efforts.

"I almost get the impression that the Olympics have come to that very quiet period where people don't want to talk about it or even think about it," Aki Tonami, a political economist at Japan's University of Tsukuba, told AP. "Any analysis of what the Olympics meant is still in the symbolic phase. We don't really have the capacity or the bandwidth to really dig down for a more long-lasting meaning."

Kyodo has also reported this week that an executive board member of the organizing committee received $326,000 from a Games sponsor. As a quasi-civil servant, Kyodo said he was not allowed to receive such payments.

The board member, Haruyuki Takahashi, is a former director at Japanese advertising agency Dentsu, Inc, which helped land $3 billion in local sponsorship for the Tokyo Games.

Amid uncertainty, there is one clear legacy. Despite scandals, bloated costs, and lukewarm public support, Japan is pursuing the 2030 Winter Olympics for Sapporo. And it's trying to use the Tokyo Games to drive the bid.

Sapporo places the price tag at $2.6 billion, likely an underestimate since Tokyo expenses were at least twice the initial estimate. And it's impossible to estimate accurately eight years in advance.

"We're already working toward that," Seiko Hashimoto, the head of the Tokyo Games, said last month. "The significance of the Tokyo Games should be communicated thoroughly, otherwise the people in Sapporo and Hokkaido will not support this initiative."

Sapporo is believed to be the front-running candidate competing with Vancouver and Salt Lake City. Salt Lake officials have suggested they may focus on 2034. The IOC is expected to name the host in May 2023 and IOC President Bach, in an interview with Kyodo, seemed to rule out awarding 2030 and 2034 at the same time.

Neither of the three cities requires citizens to approve the bid in a public referendum, which have consistently been rejected when tied to funding the Olympics.

"Previously, there was no question about whether it was the right thing to do to bring the Olympics to Japan," Tonami said. "But I think what's different now is that people are starting to ask if it's really the right thing to do."

Barbara Holthus, the deputy director of the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo, worked as a volunteer during the Olympics and got a feel for the street.

"People were so upset that (IOC president) Thomas Bach pushed the Olympics down everybody's throat

without consideration for Japanese sentiments," she said. "And now they want to it again without asking the people of Sapporo, which they would have to do in Germany."

Holthus, who grew up in Hamburg, Germany, pointed out that in 2015, local voters there turned down a referendum to hold the 2024 Olympics in the northern German city. Like Holthus, IOC President Bach is also a German.

Working as an Olympic volunteer, Holthus said she saw other volunteers decline to wear their uniforms on public transportation as they traveled to the venue during the pandemic. She said volunteers were told to wear the uniforms because there was no provision for storing street clothing at venues, but some didn't want to be identified with Games.

She said it was different recently when volunteers gathered to clean some Tokyo beaches.

"My colleagues last year, lots of them didn't want to be seen in their neighborhood with the uniform on. People were thinking, maybe you'll bring the virus back to the office or into the neighborhood. But at the recent event we were asked to wear our uniform. Of course, not everybody did, but some did — and they were really proud now to wear it. So I think this bad taste of the uniform now is kind of gone."

EXPLAINER: Foot-and-mouth disease and the efforts to stop it

By VICTORIA MILKO AP Science Writer

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Thousands of cattle are covered in blisters from highly infectious foot-and-mouth disease in Indonesia, sounding the alarm for the country, its Southeast Asian neighbors and Australia. The virus found in two provinces in May has now infected several hundred-thousand animals across multiple provinces, including the popular tourist destination of Bali.

Indonesia is now taking measures to curb the spread of the disease. Australia has offered assistance in hopes of preventing the disease and its economic and environmental consequences from crossing its borders.

Here's a look at the disease and what's happening in Indonesia.

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WHAT IS FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE?

Foot-and-mouth disease is caused by a virus that infects cattle, sheep, goats, swine and other cloven-hoofed animals. While death rates are typically low, the disease can make animals ill with fever, decreased appetite, excessive drooling, blisters and other symptoms.

The disease was once found worldwide but has since been erased from some regions, including western Europe and North America. Parts of Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia and Thailand, have had regular outbreaks, but Indonesia until now had been free from the disease since 1986.

The ongoing outbreak is concentrated in dairy and beef cattle, but the spread to other susceptible animals can't be ruled out.

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HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

The virus spreads easily through contact and airborne transmission and can quickly infect entire herds. People can spread the disease though things like farming equipment, shoes, clothing, vehicle tires and more that have come in contact with the virus. Though it's considered rare, humans can also carry the virus in their nose for short periods of time, infecting animals, said Michael Ward, chair of the Veterinary Public Health & Food Safety at the University of Sydney.

Livestock feed and animal products such as meat and hides can also carry and spread the virus.

More than 300,000 livestock in Indonesia had foot-and-mouth disease by the first week of July. In the same month, the Eid al-Adha festival — a Muslim holiday marked with ritual animal sacrifice — resulted in large movement of animals around the country, which is considered to have accelerated the spread of the disease.

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WHY ARE OFFICIALS WORRIED?

Because it is so easily spread, the virus can be incredibly difficult to get rid of once there is an outbreak.

In poorer countries, sick animals affect people's access to food. In middle-income and richer countries, the disease affects the livestock trade and related industries. One paper estimated that foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks can cost billions of dollars, highlighting the damage to governments and farmers.

Australia, which is currently free of foot-and-mouth disease, has expressed particular worry about the spread from Indonesia. The resort island of Bali is a popular tourist destination for Australians and has confirmed cases of the disease.

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WHAT IS BEING DONE TO COMBAT THE OUTBREAK?

Indonesia is using animal testing, vaccination, treatment, and conditional slaughter to try to curb the outbreak. The Ministry of Agriculture launched a vaccination program for livestock in mid-June, prioritizing doses for healthy animals at high risk of infection, such as those at crowded places such as livestock breeding centers, community-owned dairy farms, dairy cooperatives, and beef cattle farms.

The Australian government has offered financial and vaccine assistance for Indonesia's response to the recent outbreak. The vaccination program is likely to focus on support for the small-holder farm sector, which accounts for 90% of Indonesia's cattle industry.

In Australia, the government announced it would install disinfectant mats at airports that are intended to capture potentially contaminated dirt from the shoes of those returning from overseas. Government officials also promised more stringent biosecurity checks, such as sniffing detector dogs, for those returning from overseas.

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CAN PEOPLE GET FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE?

No. Foot-and-mouth disease is often confused with hand, foot and mouth disease, which is caused by a different virus and mostly infects young children. People do not get the animal disease, and animals do not get the human disease, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

What to watch as Jan. 6 panel returns to prime time

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Jan. 6 committee is headed back to prime time for its eighth hearing — potentially the final time this summer that lawmakers will lay out evidence about the U.S. Capitol insurrection and President Donald Trump's efforts to overturn his 2020 election defeat.

Thursday's hearing is expected to focus on what Trump was doing in the White House as the violence unfolded on Jan. 6, 2021. Rep. Adam Kinzinger, an Illinois Republican who is one of two members leading the hearing, said he expects it will "open people's eyes in a big way."

This will be the panel's second hearing in prime time. The first, on June 9, was watched by more than 20 million people.

What to watch for in Thursday's hearing:

TRUMP IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Committee members have said the hearing will be an in-depth look at what Trump was doing in the White House that day as hundreds of his supporters violently pushed past police and broke into the building.

The panel has already revealed some of the Trump evidence in previous hearings, showing clips of multiple White House aides who tried to pressure the president to act, or to publicly call on the rioters to leave, as he watched television in a West Wing dining room.

But there are still questions about what the president was doing, especially because official White House records of Trump's phone calls included an eight-hour gap, from a little after 11 that morning to about 7 that evening.

The committee has tried to fill in that gap with witness interviews and other sources, such as subpoenaing private phone records. A panel member, Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-Calif., said Trump could have called off the rioters at any time, but he did not. More than three hours, or 187 minutes, passed before he finally did.

"The consequences we're still dealing with today," Aguilar said.

"You will hear that Donald Trump never picked up the phone that day to order his administration to help," Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the committee's Republican vice chairwoman, said as she previewed the hearing last week.

NEW WITNESSES

Two former White House aides who resigned immediately after the insurrection will testify at the hearing. Former deputy press secretary Sarah Matthews and former deputy national security adviser Matthew Pottinger will talk about what they saw and heard in the White House as Trump learned about the insurrection and waited hours to tell the rioters to leave the Capitol.

Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., who will lead the hearing with Kinzinger, said the two witnesses "believed in the work they were doing, but didn't believe in the stolen election."

The committee will be "hearing from people who were in the White House, what they observed, what their reactions were," Luria said.

THE WHOLE STORY

The finale in the committee's summer series of hearings will seek to wrap up the story the panel has been telling from the start — that Trump was told his claims of widespread fraud were false but pushed them anyway, without regard for democracy or the people who were affected, and that his words and actions incited the riot at the Capitol.

The lawmakers are expected to give a minute-by-minute description of what happened the day of Jan. 6, a capstone to previous hearings that examined the weeks running up to the insurrection.

A Democratic member of the committee, Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, said the hearing will be about what happened in three different places on Jan. 6: The White House, inside the Capitol and outside the Capitol, where police officers were beaten and overwhelmed by the rioters.

CLIFFHANGERS

As the committee wraps up this "season" of hearings, like a television show, there are likely to be some cliffhangers.

Among the questions the committee may leave unanswered: Will the committee call Trump to testify? Or his vice president, Mike Pence? Will there be more hearings? Are they holding back any information for their final report?

At least one hearing is expected in the fall, when the nine-member panel is expected to issue a report on its findings, but more hearings are possible. If Republicans take control of the House in November's midterm elections, they are expected to shut down the committee.

The panel's work will also continue to reverberate through other investigations, including at the Justice Department, which has arrested more than 800 suspected rioters and has seized or sought information from some of the politicians and others who were allied with Trump as he tried to overturn the vote. The Justice Department has asked the committee for some of its interview transcripts.

Raskin said before the hearings began that the measure of success would be "whether we are able to preserve American democracy and our institutions — it's a long-term test."

AP-NORC poll: Majority want Congress to keep abortion legal

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A majority of Americans say Congress should pass a law guaranteeing access to legal abortion nationwide, according to a new poll that finds over half say they feel at least somewhat "sad" or "angry" about the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

The high court's decision asserted that abortion is not a constitutional right and handed states the authority to severely restrict or ban abortion. The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll shows many Americans back some restrictions on abortion, especially after the first trimester, but the most extreme measures introduced in some Republican-led states are at odds with the public — and with many of the people who live in them.

Faith Murphy, a 41-year-old in Coshocton, Ohio, said she was "quite upset" that the court overruled

Roe and wants to see abortion access federally protected. While she's voted across the aisle, Murphy considers herself a Republican and doesn't want to see Republican leaders in her state and others push for restrictions.

"I don't trust who we have in government here in Ohio ... to keep women's rights or the right to an abortion for any reason whatsoever intact," Murphy said.

Polling ahead of the June 24 decision suggested that overturning Roe would be unpopular with a majority of Americans who wanted to see the court uphold the 50-year precedent. The new poll, roughly three weeks after the decision, finds 53% of U.S. adults say they disapprove of the court's decision, while 30% say they approve. An additional 16% say they neither approve nor disapprove.

Sixty percent think Congress should pass a law guaranteeing access to legal abortion nationwide. The House last Friday voted to restore abortion rights in the U.S., though the bill will likely stall in the Senate.

Overwhelming majorities also think their state should generally allow abortion in specific cases, including if the health of the pregnant person is endangered or if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. Few think abortion should always be illegal, and most Americans support their state generally allowing abortion six weeks into the pregnancy.

Those patterns persist even in the 23 states in which laws banning or tightening access to abortion have taken effect, will soon take effect or are being debated in court.

Blake Jones thinks six weeks "is far too early to be able to make a decision like that," and while he personally doesn't approve of abortion, the 28-year-old Democrat in Athens, Georgia, said he's pro-choice because he doesn't believe "that my views should affect other people."

Jones said he thinks the point of viability is more appropriate for restrictions on abortion, but even then, there should be exceptions if the pregnant person's health is at risk or the baby would be born with a severe health issue.

Views about abortion at the 15-week mark are muddled. The poll shows Americans in states that have deepened restrictions on abortion are closely divided over abortion at 15 weeks into a pregnancy. That compares with about 6 in 10 Americans in other states saying abortion should be allowed at that point. That gap is similar on allowing abortion for "any reason."

Support dwindles across the board at 24 weeks into the pregnancy, with only about a third saying their state should generally allow for that.

While only about a third approve of the Supreme Court's decision, the poll finds about half of Americans think states should be responsible for establishing abortion laws.

Jeffrey Bouchelle agreed with the court because "it should've been a states' rights issue in the first place." The 57-year-old Republican in Farmers Branch, Texas, believes abortion is wrong, but as a state issue. Bouchelle accepted some states may allow abortion if that's what the majority prefers.

"There should be access to abortion," he said. "I just don't think it should be in Texas."

Overall, about a third of U.S. adults say they feel at least somewhat proud, relieved or excited about the court's decision, a reflection that the decades-long effort to overturn Roe resonates with a sizable segment of the population.

"I'm happy with it," Tammy Rardain said about the court's decision. The 54-year-old Republican in Logan, Ohio, said her views on abortion are defined by her Christian faith. She wants to see a ban on abortion in Ohio at any point in the pregnancy.

More Americans — 55% — say they feel at least somewhat angry or sad about the decision, including about 4 in 10 who feel so strongly. Half say they feel at least somewhat anxious or hopeless — a sign that Democrats may struggle to turn feelings of anger into motivation to turn out to vote in this year's midterm elections.

"I was really disappointed, and I felt as though our judicial system had failed us all," said 41-year-old Democrat Candice Lampkin. "I truly believe that they're infringing upon our civil rights and liberties."

The Chicago resident said she wants abortion to be a federally protected right and is concerned about what health care, like birth control, might be targeted next. She hopes the issue will be top of mind for voters this fall.

"We have to do more during election season and make sure we hold our politicians accountable," she said.

House Dems move to protect contraception from Supreme Court

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The right to use contraceptives would be inscribed into law under a measure Democrats are pushing through the House, their latest campaign-season response to worries that a conservative Supreme Court that's erased federal abortion rights could go further.

The House planned to vote Thursday on the legislation and send it to the Senate, where its fate seemed uncertain. The push underscored that Democrats are latching onto their own version of culture-war battles to appeal to female, progressive and minority voters by casting the court and Republicans as extremists intent on obliterating rights taken for granted for years.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said now that the "radical, Republican-stacked Supreme Court" overturned the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, GOP lawmakers want to do more than ban abortion.

"Those of us who've been in Congress a while can tell you that they have been against contraception, family planning, birth control the entire time," said Pelosi, D-Calif. "This is their moment. Clarence Thomas has made that clear. They're right down to the fundamentals of privacy that they want to erase."

In his opinion overturning Roe v. Wade last month, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the court should now review other precedents. He mentioned rulings that affirmed the rights of same-sex marriage in 2015, same-sex intimate relationships in 2003 and married couples' use of contraceptives in 1965.

Thomas did not specify a 1972 decision that legalized the use of contraceptives by unmarried people as well, but Democrats say they consider that at risk as well.

Thomas and congressional Republicans "are about one thing, control," said Rep. Kathy Manning, D-N.C., chief sponsor of the contraception bill, which has around 150 co-sponsors, all Democrats.

"These extremists are working to take away the rights of women, to take away our right to decide when to have children, to take away our right to control our own lives and our own bodies. And we will not let this happen," she said.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who is close to GOP leaders, said he doubted the legislation could win the Republican support it will need to survive in the Senate. Democrats there have introduced a contraception bill similar to the House version.

"I think it's pure hysteria" by Democrats, Cornyn said of the contraception rights bill. "It's not in jeopardy" of being repealed, he said.

House Democrats have begun forcing votes on these and other issues related to privacy rights, hoping for long-shot victories or to at least energize sympathetic voters and donors and force Republicans from competitive districts in difficult spots. The House voted last week to revive a nationwide right to abortion, with every Republican voting no, and voted largely along party lines to bar prosecuting women traveling to states where abortion remains legal.

The House voted Tuesday to keep same-sex marriage legal, with 47 Republicans joining all Democrats in backing the measure. Though 157 Republicans voted no, that tally raised expectations that the bill could win support from at least 10 GOP senators and get the 60 votes needed to clear the 50-50 Senate, sending it to President Joe Biden for his signature.

The contraception bill explicitly allows the use of contraceptives and gives the medical community the right to provide them, covering "any device or medication used to prevent pregnancy." Listed examples include oral contraceptives, injections, implants like intrauterine devices and emergency contraceptives, which prevent pregnancy several days after unprotected sex.

The bill lets the federal and state government, patients and health care providers bring civil suits against states or state officials that violate its provisions.

Same-sex marriage may have such broad public acceptance that growing numbers of Republicans are willing to vote for it. But anti-abortion groups oppose the contraception legislation, and it remains to be seen if significant numbers of GOP lawmakers are willing to make that break.

Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America said the legislation "seeks to bail out the abortion industry, trample conscience rights, and require uninhibited access to dangerous chemical abortion drugs." The National Right to Life Committee said it "goes far beyond the scope of contraception" and would cover abortion pills like RU486, which supporters said was incorrect.

Spokespeople for House GOP leaders did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the legislation.

The measure drew a mixed reaction from two of the Senate's more moderate Republicans.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she was "most likely" to support the measure. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, demurred, saying she was working on bipartisan legislation that she said would codify the rights to abortion and perhaps for contraception.

There are few state restrictions on contraceptive use, said Elizabeth Nash, who studies state reproductive health policies for the Guttmacher Institute, a research organization that supports abortion rights.

Nash said she was concerned that there will be efforts to curb emergency contraceptives and intrauterine devices and to help providers and institutions refuse to provide contraceptive services.

2 indicted in migrant death-trailer case that left 53 dead

By TERRY WALLACE Associated Press

Two men were indicted Wednesday in the case of a hot, airless tractor-trailer rig found last month with 53 dead or dying migrants in San Antonio, officials said.

A federal grand jury in San Antonio indicted Homero Zamorano Jr., 46, and Christian Martinez, 28, both of Pasadena, Texas, on counts of transporting and conspiring to transport migrants illegally resulting in death; and transporting and conspiring to transport migrants illegally resulting in serious injury.

Both remain in federal custody without bond pending trial. Martinez's attorney, David Shearer of San Antonio, declined to comment on the indictments. A message to Zamorano's attorney was not immediately returned.

Conviction on the death counts could result in life sentences, but the Attorney General's Office could authorize prosecutors to seek death penalties. The serious bodily injury counts carry sentences of up to 20 years in prison.

It was the deadliest tragedy to claim the lives of migrants smuggled across the border from Mexico. The truck had been packed with 67 people, and the dead included 27 from Mexico, 14 from Honduras, seven from Guatemala and two from El Salvador, said Francisco Garduño, chief of Mexico's National Immigration Institute.

The incident happened on a remote San Antonio back road on June 27. Arriving police officers detained Zamorano after spotting him hiding in some nearby brush, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office. A search of Zamorano's cellphone revealed calls with Martinez concerning the smuggling run.

Surveillance video of the 18-wheeler passing through a Border Patrol checkpoint showed the driver matched Zamorano's description, according to the indictment. One survivor of the journey, a 20-year-old from Guatemala, told The Associated Press that smugglers had covered the trailer's floor with what she believes was powdered chicken bouillon, apparently to throw off any dogs at the checkpoint.

The tragedy occurred at a time when huge numbers of migrants have been coming to the U.S., many of them taking perilous risks to cross swift rivers and canals and scorching desert landscapes. Migrants were stopped nearly 240,000 times in May, up by one-third from a year ago.

Of the 73 people in the truck, those who died included people from the Mexican states of Guanajuato, Veracruz, Oaxaca, Mexico, Zacatecas, Queretaro, Morelos and Mexico City. Migrants from Honduras and Guatemala also were among those who died in the deadliest known smuggling attempt in the United States.

In 2017, 10 people died after being trapped inside a truck parked at a San Antonio Walmart. In 2003, the bodies of 19 migrants were found in a sweltering truck southeast of the city.

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Funeral held for Ivana Trump; ex-president pays tribute

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ivana Trump, the 1980s style icon and businesswoman who helped Donald Trump build the empire that put him on a road toward the White House, lived a "beautiful life," the former president recalled as loved ones paid final respects to her Wednesday.

The ex-president joined all his children, an array of other relatives and friends at a Manhattan church for Ivana Trump's funeral Mass.

"A very sad day, but at the same time a celebration of a wonderful and beautiful life," he wrote on his social media platform, Truth Social, before he, former first lady Melania Trump and their son Barron headed to St. Vincent Ferrer Roman Catholic Church, located just a few blocks from Ivana Trump's home near Central Park.

Ivana and Donald Trump's three children — Donald Jr., Ivanka and Eric — stood with their father and their families as the gold-toned casket was carried from the church. Eric Trump briefly put an arm around his sister's shoulders as she held the hand of one of her small children, who clutched a red flower.

Tiffany Trump, the daughter of the former president and his second wife, Marla Maples, also attended the service, as did family friends including Jeanine Pirro, co-host of Fox News' "The Five," and Charles Kushner, a real estate developer and the father of Ivanka Trump's husband, Jared Kushner. Fashion designer Dennis Basso, a longtime friend of Ivana Trump's, was also among the mourners.

The Mass was "an elegant, wonderful send-off for Ivana Trump," another longtime friend, R. Couri Hay, said as he emerged.

Trump's family announced Thursday that the 73-year-old had died at her home. Authorities said the death was an accident, with blunt impact injuries to her torso as the cause.

Ivana and Donald Trump met in the 1970s and were married from 1977 to 1992. In the 1980s, they were a power couple, and she became well known in her own right, instantly recognizable with her blond hair in an updo and her glamorous look.

Ivana Trump also took part in her husband's businesses, managing one of his Atlantic City casinos and picking out some of the design elements in New York City's Trump Tower.

Their very public divorce was ugly, but in recent years, they were friendly. Ivana Trump was an enthusiastic supporter of Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and said they spoke on a regular basis.

'The mouth of a bear': Ukrainian refugees sent to Russia

By LORI HINNANT, CARA ANNA, VASILISA STEPANENKO and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

NARVA, Estonia (AP) — For weeks Natalya Zadoyanova had lost contact with her younger brother Dmitriy, who was trapped in the besieged Ukrainian port city of Mariupol.

Russian forces had bombed the orphanage where he worked, and he was huddling with dozens of others in the freezing basement of a building without doors and windows. When she next heard from him, he was in tears.

"I'm alive," he told her. "I'm in Russia."

Dmitriy Zadoyanov was facing the next chapter of devastation for the people of Mariupol and other occupied cities: Forcible transfers to Russia, the very nation that killed their neighbors and shelled their hometowns almost into oblivion.

Nearly 2 million Ukrainians refugees have been sent to Russia, according to both Ukrainian and Russian officials. Ukraine portrays these journeys as forced transfers to enemy soil, which is considered a war crime. Russia calls them humanitarian evacuations of war victims who already speak Russian and are grateful for a new home.

An Associated Press investigation based on dozens of interviews has found that while the picture is more nuanced than the Ukrainian government suggests, many refugees are indeed forced to embark on a surreal trip into Russia, subjected along the way to human rights abuses, stripped of documents and left confused and lost about where they are.

The abuses start not with a gun to the head, but with a poisoned choice: Die in Ukraine or live in Russia. Those who leave go through a series of what are known as filtration points, where treatment ranges from interrogation and strip searches to being yanked aside and never seen again. Refugees told the AP of an old woman who died in the cold, her body swollen, and an evacuee beaten so severely that her back was covered in bruises.

Those who "pass" the filtrations are invited to live in Russia, and often promised a payment of about 10,000 rubles ($170) that they may or may not get. Sometimes their Ukrainian passports are taken away, and the chance of Russian citizenship is offered instead. And sometimes, they are pressured to sign documents denouncing the Ukrainian government and military.

Those with no money or contacts in Russia — the majority, by most accounts — can only go where they are sent, eastward, even to the sub-Arctic. More than 1,000 are as far away as Khabarovsk and Vladivostok, a 10-day train journey to the edge of the Pacific Ocean, according to people the AP spoke with who saw multiple trains arrive over the weeks of the war.

However, the AP investigation also found signs of clear dissent within Russia to the government narrative that Ukrainians are being rescued from Nazis. Almost all the refugees the AP interviewed spoke gratefully about Russians who quietly helped them escape through a clandestine network, retrieving documents, finding shelter, buying train and bus fare, exchanging Ukrainian hryvnia for Russian rubles and even lugging the makeshift baggage that holds all that remains of their pre-war lives.

The investigation is the most extensive to date on the transfers, based on interviews with 36 Ukrainians mostly from Mariupol who left for Russia, including 11 still there and others in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Georgia, Ireland, Germany and Norway. The AP also drew on interviews with Russian underground volunteers, video footage, Russian legal documents and Russian state media.

The story of Zadoyanov, 32, is typical. Exhausted and hungry in the basement in Mariupol, he finally accepted the idea of evacuation. The Russians told him he could board a bus to either Zaporizhzhia in Ukraine or Rostov-on-Don in Russia.

They lied. The buses went only to Russia.

Along the way, Russian authorities searched his phone and interrogated him on why he was baptized and whether he had sexual feelings toward a boy in the camp. A man from Russian state television wanted to bring him to Moscow and pay him to denigrate the Ukrainians, an offer he declined. People with video cameras also asked arriving children to talk about how Ukraine was bombarding its own citizens.

"It was 100 percent a tactical pressure," Zadoyanov said. "Why children? Because it is much easier to manipulate them."

Then he, five children and four women were taken to the train station and told their destination would be Nizhny Novgorod, even deeper into Russia, 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) from the Ukrainian border. From the train, Zadoyanov called his sister Natalya in Poland. Her panic rose.

Get off the train, she told him. Now.

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A DELIBERATE STRATEGY

The transfer of hundreds of thousands of people from Ukraine is part of a deliberate and systemic strategy, laid out in Russian government documents.

An "emergency mass order" describes the "distribution" of 100,000 Ukrainians to some of the most remote and impoverished regions of Russia. None was to be sent to the capital, Moscow.

The AP verified through interviews with refugees, media reports and official statements that Ukrainians have received temporary accommodation in more than two dozen Russian cities and localities, and were even taken to an unused chemical plant in the Bashkortistan region, 150 kilometres (100 miles) from the nearest major town. One refugee, Bohdan Honcharov, told the AP that about 50 Ukrainians he traveled with were sent to Siberia, so far away that they effectively disappeared with little chance of escape.

A Ukrainian woman also said her elderly parents from Mariupol were sent to Russia and told to move to Vladivostok, at the other end of the country. Russian border authorities did not let her father out of Rus-

sia because he still had Soviet citizenship from the old times, along with Ukrainian residency documents.

Many Ukrainians stay in Russia because while they are technically free to leave, they have nowhere to go, no money, no documents or no way to cross the distances in a sprawling country twice the size of the United States. Some fear that if they return, Ukraine will prosecute them for going to the enemy — a fear encouraged by Russian officials.

Others speak Russian, with family there and ties that they feel are stronger even than their links to Ukraine. One woman told the AP that her husband was Russian and she felt more welcome in Russia.

Lyudmila Bolbad's family walked out of Mariupol and ended up in Taganrog in Russia. The family speaks Russian, and the city of Khabarovsk, nearly 10,000 kilometers from Ukraine, was offering jobs, special payments for moving to the Far East and eventual Russian citizenship. With nothing left to lose, they took the 9-day train trip across some of the world's most deserted territory to a city far closer to Japan than Ukraine.

Bolbad and her husband found work in a local factory, much as she was doing in the Azovstal steel mill back in Mariupol. Little else has gone as they'd hoped.

They handed over their Ukrainian passports in exchange for promises of Russian citizenship without hesitation, only to discover that landlords would not rent to Ukrainians without a valid identity document. The promised payments to buy a home are slow to come, and they are stranded with hundreds of others from Mariupol in a rundown hotel with barely edible food. But Bolbad plans to stay in Russia, and thinks Ukraine would label her a traitor if she went back.

"Now we are here ... we're trying to return to a normal life somehow, to encourage ourselves to start our life from scratch," she said. "If you survived (the war), you deserve it and need to move forward, not stop."

Russia's reasons for deporting Ukrainians are not entirely clear, according to Oleksandra Matviichuk, the head of the Center for Civil Liberties in Ukraine. One goal appears to be to use the refugees in propaganda to sell Russians on the Ukraine war by pressuring them to testify against Ukraine.

"(Ukrainians in) the Russian Federation are extremely vulnerable," she said. "Russia tries to use these people in a quasi-legal war against Ukraine to collect some testimonies from people who have no right to say no because they are afraid for their safety."

The deportation of local civilians from occupied territories also clears the way for Russians to replace them with loyalists, as was the case in Crimea, Matviichuk said. And Russia may want Russian-speaking Ukrainians to populate its own isolated regions with depressed economies.

Ivan Zavrazhnov describes the terror of being in Russia and not knowing where he would wind up. A producer for a pro-Ukrainian television network in Mariupol, he made it through filtration only because officials never bothered to plug in his dead cell phone. He managed to escape, and ended up on the docked ferry Isabelle in the city of Tallinn in Estonia with about 2,000 other Ukrainians.

"This is some kind of incomprehensible lottery – who decides where and what," he said. "You understand that you are going, as it were, into the mouth of a bear ... an aggressor state, and you end up on this territory. ... I did not have the feeling that I was safe in Russia."

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STOPPED FOR FILTRATION

Refugees on the way to Russia are interrogated at multiple stops, in what both Russians and Ukrainians call "filtration." Each time, some are weeded out.

They are fingerprinted and photographed, which the Ukrainian government calls the collection of biological information. Some are stripped of their clothing, and those with tattoos, wounds or bruises from munitions come under special scrutiny. Phones are confiscated and sometimes connected to computers, raising fears that tracking software is installed.

The Kovalevskiy family left Mariupol after eating cold scraps of food in an unlit basement and watching sores fester on their unwashed skin. At their first filtration, they held their breaths and thought fearfully of the photo and video the eldest daughter had transferred from her phone to a flash drive hidden among their belongings.

It never crossed her mind to delete her contacts. When a Russian soldier searched her phone, he stopped at the one listed as "Commander" and pulled her aside.

She explained that the "commander" was not a military connection but the head of the youth camp where she worked for two years. The explanation was satisfactory — this time. But they did not know how many more times they would be interrogated — Human Rights Watch has identified 14 filtration points in Ukrainian territory controlled by Russian forces.

The next stop was Vynohradne, named for its vineyards but now one of the mass grave sites established by Russia for Mariupol's thousands of dead. The tent there was freezing and suffocatingly crowded, and the smell of rotting flesh clung to their nostrils. An old woman died overnight in the minus 9-degree (15 degrees Fahrenheit) temperatures, her body swelling.

The mother, Viktoria Kovalevska, peered outside to the tent next door and saw a wooden crate that a soldier had dropped to the ground. Inside were severed limbs.

Finally, the family reached the Russian city of Taganrog. When questioned by Russian officials about why they had left their hometown, the mother could no longer restrain herself.

"We did not leave; we were deported," she replied testily. "We were loaded into cars by the military and taken away."

Dozens of people from Mariupol were then given free train passage to two Russian cities: Volgograd, about 600 kilometers (370 miles) to the east, or Penza, twice as far.

"You go where you're told," they heard.

The Kovalevskiy family was among the lucky ones – they made it through the filtrations.

At an interrogation in Donetsk, a Mariupol policewoman was blindfolded and taken to Yolonevska, she told the AP. There, she saw military personnel and civilians taken for reasons that ranged from taking photographs of military equipment to running down the street in a panic. Some were beaten, and one woman's back was covered with bruises. She heard others died.

She was blindfolded again, handcuffed and taken to the Rostov region in Russia. She asked where they were going. "Somewhere," they said, and ordered her to be silent.

She was told that evacuees in Russia would be seen as traitors and get a prison term of 10 years if they returned to Ukraine. She was finally set free in a prisoner exchange, and found her way back to Ukraine anyway.

"They psychologically influence people," she said. "Many of the detainees who are released are simply afraid to return to Ukraine after hearing such stories."

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IDENTITIES IN QUESTION

The Ukrainian refugees in Russia sometimes lose their identities along with their homes.

Some leave their Ukrainian documents behind. Others have their Ukrainian passports confiscated and are offered Russian citizenship or refugee status. Many end up in limbo without paperwork, and only 55,502 have received temporary asylum, according to Russia's human rights ombudsman, Tatiana Moskalkova. The others have uncertain legal standing in a country where they are often seen as the enemy.

Along with giving up their own documents, Ukrainian refugees are sometimes pressured to sign papers holding the Ukrainian government or military responsible for the war.

Eighty-year-old Valentina Bondarenko still doesn't know what she signed. When soldiers in white armbands burst into the Mariupol basement, she climbed out of the window, kicking over the cup holding her dentures.

She was taken with a few other elderly women on a bus through filtration in three Ukrainian towns, and then to Taganrog in Russia. Her next stop, she was told, would be Perm, 2,100 kilometers (1,300 miles) away.

There were only enough Ukrainian passengers that day to fill four of the train's 10 cars. So the train was cancelled. She ended up in a town near the Georgia border that her family had never heard of, in a dormitory with 50 others from Mariupol.

She called her adult children still in Ukraine, coughing every few minutes. They were frantic. Increasingly distraught, Bondarenko asked migration officials how she could get out.

"There's only one way open, which is to apply for Russian citizenship, submit an application, receive all the documents and when you get your passport you can go wherever you want," they told her.

They asked everyone with Ukrainian passports to hand them over to start the process. So she did. Then came a residency application and a document that an official would not let her examine.

"There's nothing to read here, and we're running late," he told her.

"What is written here?" Bondarenko persisted.

"Everything we talked about," came the reply. She signed. Her passport was returned to her a few days later.

Many evacuees don't realize they have the right to refuse to sign documents and the right to leave Russia, according to Tanya Lokshina, author of an upcoming Human Rights Watch report on forced deportations. HRW and the Ukrainian Center for Civil Liberties documented multiple cases where Ukrainians like Bondarenko were pressured into signing paperwork, including documents accusing Ukraine's military of war crimes.

"When you are there and they have the power and you're basically in their hands, you don't know what's going to happen," Lokshina said. "So many people sign just because they are afraid."

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ANGELS WHO CAME FROM HEAVEN

For Ukrainians trying to escape, help often comes from an unexpected source: Russians.

On a recent day in Estonia, a Russian tattoo artist easily hefted the suitcases of a Mariupol family into the trunk of a waiting car. The matriarch sat in front, seemingly oblivious to the car's Russian license plates or unsurprised at underground help from another Russian.

The tattoo artist, who asked that his name be withheld because he still lives in Russia, was the last in a chain of volunteers that stretched 1,900 kilometers (1,100 miles) from Taganrog and Rostov to Narva, the Estonian border town. He boards in St. Petersburg a couple of times a week to accompany refugees to Finland and sometimes Estonia. There is always at least one Ukrainian family that needs an extra pair of strong arms, if nothing else.

"They are disoriented. ... You need to meet them at one station and take them to another station, because otherwise people get lost," he said. "It's clear they're not psychologically equipped."

He said Russians involved in helping Ukrainians leave know each other only through Telegram, nearly all keeping anonymous "because everyone is afraid of some kind of persecution." Some of the loose groups are set up with chatbots to protect identities.

"I can't stop it," he said of the war and the forcible transfers of Ukrainians to Russia. "This is what I can do. ... Shooting at people, this is normal in the 21st century, with old Soviet pieces of iron? This is utter nonsense."

The volunteers face a slew of challenges. Those in Penza in Russia shut down their efforts because of anonymous threats that included slashed tires, the Russian symbol Z painted in white on a windshield and graffiti on doors and gates calling them the likes of "Ukro-Nazi" helpers.

Another Russian volunteer, who also communicated with The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, said they faced logistical and bureaucratic hurdles thrown up by the Russian government, such as travel documents lost or taken by administrators.

"They had organizational problems, but they created an amazing chain to help Ukrainian refugees," she wrote in a message to AP.

Leaving Russia is still often dependent on luck and an official's whims. Some Russian border guards let people through with just their Ukrainian national identity; others insist upon an international passport. In at least one case, a family wasn't allowed to travel without a Russian passport. Armed men search the refugees in a final "filtration" and disembark a passenger or two.

For Zadoyanov, Bondarenko, Kovalevska and many others, the lifeline out of Russia was Russians.

After talking with his sister Natalya, Zadoyanov got off the train to Nizhny Novgorod. Natalya Zadoyanova found local people through church contacts inside Russia to take her brother and the others away from the station. They ended up at a church where they got food, shelter and eventually the first steps in finding a way out of Russia. Zadoyanov is now in the country of Georgia.

For Bondarenko, the elderly woman from Mariupol who signed unknown papers, her children in Ukraine found volunteers to help. One arrived at Bondarenko's dormitory and demanded her release, saying the law protected a refugee's freedom of movement. He took her to a hotel, with the room pre-paid for two nights. The third night, she stayed at the home he shared with his Ukrainian wife.

The couple bought her sneakers, clothes and food for the trip to come.

"We are against the war, against Putin," they told her.

In St. Petersburg, another volunteer met her at the train, took her to his apartment for the night and helped her get to the bus station.

"At the Russian border, no matter what, do not tell them you want to return to Ukraine," he warned her. "Say you are going to Estonia to visit family."

It took about 90 minutes to pass the Russian side of the border. At one point, guards checked passports. Bondarenko's noted Mariupol as her hometown, and they pulled her aside and asked what her destination was.

"I won't lie. I want to return to Ukraine, to my children," she answered, torn between defiance and fear. She was asked to wait and imagined the worst.

She didn't know it, but she was already in Estonia. The guard returned with a giant smile and an even bigger box filled with food and water.

Bondarenko finally joined her children in the western Ukrainian city of Uzhhorod on May 20, having paid nothing for a 4,300-kilometer (2,600-mile) journey organized from start to finish by volunteers.

Viktoria Kovalevska persuaded a bus driver at a detention center in Russia to hide the family on board.

"We sat like mice. ... I closed the curtains," she said.

After about an hour, the driver said, "Let's go." When the family emerged from their hiding spot in Rostov, two taxis arrived for them and their bags. They were given hot soup and a way to finally wash their stained, charred clothes, and stayed up until 3 a.m. doing laundry.

Train tickets materialized to St. Petersburg, where other volunteers bought a suitcase to replace their fraying bags. Then it was a near-seamless trip to Estonia. Kovalevska warned her daughters to say nothing when they were roughly asked at the crossing why they wanted to leave Russia.

"You can get a bullet in the forehead and not tell the whole truth about what happened, or you can wait and later say everything as it was," she told the girls.

The whole journey took four days.

Her memories of Mariupol are a nightmare — the torso of a woman in the street, her daughter stepping in human brains smeared on the ground, the hunger and cold that she feared would kill them more painfully than bombs. But her memories of Russia are laced with the unexpected, surreptitious kindness they received from Russian volunteers.

"I would love to say their names," said Kovalevska, her face lighting up. "And I would tell them all, you are like angels who came from heaven and sheltered us with your wings. ... Because there was no hope. None."

Biden announces modest climate actions; pledges more to come

By SEUNG MIN KIM and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

SOMERSET, Mass. (AP) — President Joe Biden on Wednesday announced modest new steps to combat climate change and promised more robust action to come, saying, "This is an emergency and I will look at it that way."

The president stopped short, though, of declaring a formal climate emergency, which Democrats and environmental groups have been seeking after an influential Democratic senator quashed hopes for sweep-

ing legislation to address global warming. Biden hinted such a step could be coming.

"Let me be clear: Climate change is an emergency," Biden said. He pledged to use his power as president "to turn these words into formal, official government actions through the appropriate proclamations, executive orders and regulatory power that a president possesses."

When it comes to climate change, he added, "I will not take no for an answer."

Biden delivered his pledge at a former coal-fired power plant in Massachusetts. The former Brayton Point power plant in Somerset, Massachusetts, is shifting to offshore wind power manufacturing, and Biden chose it as the embodiment of the transition to clean energy that he is seeking but has struggled to realize in the first 18 months of his presidency.

Executive actions announced Wednesday will bolster the domestic offshore wind industry in the Gulf of Mexico and Southeast, as well as spend $2.3 billion to help communities cope with soaring temperatures through programs administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies.

The trip comes as historic temperatures bake Europe and the United States. Wildfires raged in Spain and France, and Britain on Tuesday shattered its record for highest temperature ever registered. At least 100 million Americans face heat advisories in the next few days as cities around the U.S. sweat through more intense and longer-lasting heat waves that scientists blame on global warming.

Calls for a national emergency declaration to address the climate crisis have been rising among activists and Democratic lawmakers after Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., last week scuttled talks on a long-delayed legislative package.

Biden said Wednesday the option remains under consideration. "I'm running the traps on the totality of the authority I have," he told reporters after returning to Washington. "Unless Congress acts in the meantime, I can do more" on climate, he said. "Because not enough is being done now."

Biden said he's been told that some of his legislative proposal on climate remains "in play," but he acknowledged he has not spoken to Manchin.

Gina McCarthy, Biden's climate adviser, said Biden is not "shying away" from treating climate as an emergency. "The president wants to make sure that we're doing it right, that we're laying it out, and that we have the time we need to get this worked out," she told reporters on Air Force One.

Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., who attended Wednesday's event, said he was "confident that the president is ultimately ready to do whatever it takes in order to deal with this crisis."

Environmental groups were less hopeful. "The world's burning up from California to Croatia, and right now Biden's fighting fire with the trickle from a garden hose," said Jean Su, energy justice program director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

An emergency declaration on climate would allow Biden to redirect federal resources to bolster renewable energy programs that would help accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels such as coal and oil. The declaration also could be used as a legal basis to block oil and gas drilling or other projects, although such actions would likely be challenged in court by energy companies or Republican-led states.

Such a declaration would be similar to the one issued by Biden's Republican predecessor, Donald Trump, who declared a national emergency to build a wall on the southern border when lawmakers refused to allocate money for that effort. A federal appeals court later ruled Trump's action was illegal.

Some legal scholars said an emergency order on climate could face a similar fate. The Supreme Court last month limited the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants that contribute to global warming.

Declaring a climate emergency "is a way to get around Congress and specifically Joe Manchin. That's not what emergency powers are for," said Elizabeth Goitein, co-director of the liberty and national security program at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law.

Biden pledged last week to take significant executive actions on climate after months-long discussions between Manchin and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., came to a standstill. The West Virginia senator cited stubbornly high inflation as the reason for his hesitation, although he has long protected energy interests in his coal- and gas-producing state.

For now, Manchin has said he will only agree to a limited legislative deal on health care and prescription drugs. The White House has indicated it wants Congress to take that deal, and Biden will address the climate issue on his own.

Biden visited the dusty grounds of the former Brayton Point power plant, which closed in 2017 after burning coal for more than five decades. The plant will now make subsea transmission cables to bring power generated by offshore wind to the electrical grid.

A few dozen people listened in the blazing sun as Biden spoke, including McCarthy, members of Congress and Biden's climate envoy, John Kerry, a former Massachusetts senator.

A new report says the U.S. and other major carbon-polluting nations are falling short on pledges to fight climate change. Among the 10 biggest carbon emitters, only the European Union has enacted polices close to or consistent with international goals to limit warming to just a few more tenths of a degree Celsius, scientists and experts say.

Outcry after Uvalde pressures schools to keep kids safe

By CAROLYN THOMPSON, ANNIE MA and JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

UVALDE, Texas (AP) — When the shooting began at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Mario Jimenez's son was in the classroom next door. The 10-year-old saw his teacher and a friend hit by bullets that passed through the wall. Now, Jimenez worries the boy will never again feel secure in a classroom.

"I don't think these kids are going to feel safe going back to school no matter what they do. They're supposedly protected by the system, and they know the system failed them," he said.

In the aftermath of the May shooting that killed 19 children and two teachers, poor decisions by law enforcement have attracted widespread criticism, but the Uvalde school system is also taking its share of the blame for basic failures — unlocked doors, a spotty alert system and lax enforcement of rules. Now, incensed parents and politicians want concrete safety solutions as the attack becomes part of a larger conversation about how to prepare students for emergencies without potentially inflicting an emotional toll with active-shooter drills.

An investigative report released Sunday by the Texas Legislature found the district did not treat maintenance issues like broken doors and locks with urgency. For instance, the lock on the door to one of the classrooms where the shooting occurred was known to be faulty, and the House committee concluded the shooter likely entered the room through that unlocked door.

The House committee found "a regrettable culture of noncompliance by school personnel who frequently propped doors open and deliberately circumvented locks" at Robb Elementary. The report said school administrators and district police tacitly condoned the behavior, noting that the school suggested the practice "for the convenience of substitute teachers and others who lacked their own keys."

At an Uvalde school board meeting this week, parents and families were outraged at the oversights. Jazmin Cazares, whose younger sister Jacklyn was killed, asked what the school district would do to make students feel safe returning.

"How am I supposed to come back here? I'm a senior. How am I supposed to come back to this school?" Cazares asked the school board Monday. "How are you going to make sure I don't have to spend 77 minutes bleeding out on the school floor like my little sister did?"

At the same meeting, Rachel Martinez declared herself unwilling to send her daughter, Layla, back to school after the armed intruder snuffed out 21 lives — and any confidence she had that Layla would be safe.

"This failure falls on all of you," Martinez told the board at the three-hour meeting. "When you go home and lock your doors tonight, remember: That shouldn't be a luxury."

The vast majority of U.S. school systems conduct lockdowns and active-shooter drills that, in some cases, include simulated gunfire and blood as children crouch quietly out of sight. But the drills are only one part of the equation, according to experts.

Amy Klingman, founder of the Educator's School Safety Network, said the impulse to double-down on simulations or buy the latest gadgets is understandable, but those responses can be part of larger plans

that include enforcing the basics, like locking doors and training staff. Drills can emphasize securing a classroom or quickly evacuating children in a variety of scenarios, such as a parent without legal custody attempting to take a child.

"Why does history keep repeating itself? Because we keep doing the same thing," Klingman said. "We keep emphasizing only active-shooter response, and we don't make daily operational safety a part of what we do."

The Uvalde report exposed another potential flaw: Sounding the alarm too regularly can diminish vigilance and lull schools into a false sense of security.

The school's proximity to the border with Mexico meant frequent lockdowns whenever Border Patrol agents or state police troopers were in the area attempting to apprehend migrants. Between February and May, the school experienced nearly 50 lockdowns or security alerts.

"After a period of time, you would have that diminished expectation of vigilance … 'Oh, here's another. We're doing it again,'" said Mo Canady, executive director of the National Association of School Resource Officers. Schools with that many alerts might consider a tiered system that distinguishes between threat levels, he said.

But not all employees even received alerts because of poor Wi-Fi or phones that were turned off or in a drawer. Some employees would have had to log in to a computer to get the message, the report found. Others didn't understand how to use the system, said Ben Adams, a Uvalde coach.

"It was introduced to us in a short, 10-minute presentation before school started," Adams said at the meeting.

Elizabeth Ruiz, the mother of three children in the Uvalde schools, said the students at Robb Elementary did "so many, so, so many" lockdowns this year but believes improving the physical safety of the building — having a single point of entry and requiring scannable identification — would do more than potentially frightening drills.

"Yes, the kids needs to have the drills, but it needs to be more than, 'Go under a table,'" Ruiz said.

For years, some parents and teachers have warned that the drills are traumatic for students, whose mental health has become even more of a concern on the rebound from COVID-19 disruptions.

"It's not about trying to scare people straight," Klingman said. "It's about doing the right things that make a difference."

Jimenez worries that continuing to practice active-shooter drills will further traumatize his son and other children who lived through the shooting, "because in their minds they're probably already thinking, 'This isn't going to protect me.'"

Jimenez isn't impressed by the school district's plans to fix locks and install cameras. He'd like to see the buildings change to key-card access and for the schools to "hire actual security — people who will do their job."

He hopes teachers and administrators at schools across the country see what happened in Uvalde and improve security before tragedy strikes again.

"None of the parents here want to send their kids to school," Jimenez said.

Man saves 5 from house fire; jumps out window to save girl

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (AP) — An Indiana man who ran into a burning home and saved five people, including a 6-year-old girl he jumped out of a second-floor window with, says he's no hero and that the serious injuries he suffered were "all worth it."

Nick Bostic, 25, of Lafayette, was driving early on July 11 in the northwestern Indiana city when he saw a house in flames. He stopped and ran inside to alert its residents.

"I slammed on the brakes, I turned the steering wheel, I did a 180. I ran into the back of the house and I was yelling for anybody. Four faces, three or four faces, came out the top," he told WLFI-TV.

An 18-year-old woman was in the home babysitting her three siblings, ages 1, 6 and 13, along with a 13-year-old friend of the 13-year-old sibling, while the four siblings' parents were out playing darts, The

Washington Post reported.

Bostic said the 18-year-old was able to get three of the children out, but she told him one child was still missing, prompting him to search the smoke-filled home for that child.

"I heard a faint whine, a faint crying noise and I went down there till I found that baby," he said.

Because of the dense smoke, he said his only option was to exit through a second-floor window. Bostic punched out the glass and jumped to safety with the 6-year-old girl in his arms. He suffered multiple injuries but the girl only suffered a minor cut to her foot.

Police body camera video captured the aftermath of the jump, with Bostic backlit by the burning home and walking toward first responders, the girl in his arms.

In the video, a police officer takes the crying child while Bostic — who is winded and wheezing, with a wounded right arm and blood on his clothes — sits down on the curb, saying, "I need oxygen."

After an officer helps Bostic to a safer spot across the street, a tourniquet is applied to his arm after he lies down in the grass. Bostic then asks, "Is the baby OK? Please tell me the baby's OK" before someone off camera assures him the child is fine.

"You did good dude, OK?" an officer tells Bostic.

Bostic, who suffered smoke inhalation in addition to his arm injury and other wounds, was airlifted to an Indianapolis hospital and discharged two days later.

He said he's not a hero, and just did what he would have wanted someone to do for him and his family if their home was on fire.

"It was all worth it. I kept reminding myself what a small sacrifice. This temporary pain ... it's so worth it," he told WLFI-TV.

A GoFundMe page set up for Bostic to help pay his hospital and medical bills had raised more than $470,000 by Wednesday afternoon, far surpassing its $100,000 goal.

David Barrett, the four siblings' father, told The Washington Post, that his family feels "very blessed for what Nick did."

"He's a real hero, and my daughter's a real hero for waking the kids up. I don't like to think about what might have happened if Nick hadn't shown up. I'm grateful beyond words," he said.

Lafayette Fire Investigation Chief Brian Alkire told the (Lafayete) Journal & Courier that the fire started on the front porch of the home in the city about 65 miles (105 kilometers) northwest of Indianapolis. Police said the fire remains under investigation.

Indiana Republicans propose banning abortion with exceptions

By TOM DAVIES Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Leaders of Indiana's Republican-dominated Senate on Wednesday proposed banning abortion with limited exceptions — a move that comes amid a political firestorm over a 10-year-old rape victim who came to the state from neighboring Ohio to end her pregnancy.

The proposal will be taken up during a special legislative session that is scheduled to begin Monday, making Indiana one of the first Republican-run states to debate tighter abortion laws following the U.S. Supreme Court decision last month overturning Roe v. Wade. The Supreme Court ruling is expected to lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states.

The Indiana proposal would allow exceptions to the ban, such as in cases of rape, incest or to protect a woman's life.

Republican state Sen. Sue Glick, who is sponsoring the bill, said the proposal would not limit access to emergency contraception known as the morning-after pill or limit doctors from treating miscarriages or ectopic pregnancies.

The bill would prohibit abortions from the time an egg is implanted in a woman's uterus.

"Being pro-life is not about criminalizing women," Glick said. "It's about preserving the dignity of life and helping mothers bring new happy, healthy babies in the world."

Planned Parenthood's Indiana affiliate criticized the bill, saying in a news release that "a complete ban

on abortion is on its way to Indiana."

"Even the bill's limited exemptions would leave providers risking investigations, and even criminalization, making them exceptions in name only," said the organization, which operates four abortion clinics in the state.

Ohio's so-called fetal heartbeat law, which bans abortions after cardiac activity can be detected — typically in around the sixth week of pregnancy — led the 10-year-old rape victim to go to Indiana to get a medication-induced abortion on June 30, according to the girl's doctor.

Indiana Republicans have pushed through numerous anti-abortion laws over the past decade and the vast majority signed a letter in March supporting a special session to further tighten those laws. But legislative leaders and Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb had been tightlipped since the Supreme Court decision over whether they would push for a full abortion ban or allow exceptions.

The proposal unveiled Wednesday faces at least a couple of weeks of debate. Republican House Speaker Todd Huston didn't endorse the bill, saying in a statement that, "Our caucus will take time to review and consider the details of the Senate bill, and continue to listen to thoughts and input from constituents across the state."

Current Indiana law generally prohibits abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy and tightly restricts it after the 13th week. Nearly 99% of abortions in the state last year took place at 13 weeks or earlier, according to a state Health Department report.

Elsewhere Wednesday, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court and said Georgia's restrictive 2019 abortion law should be allowed to take effect. The law bans most abortions once a "detectable human heartbeat" is present, though it does include some limited exceptions.

The appeals court also rejected arguments that a "personhood" provision in the law is unconstitutionally vague. The provision grants a fetus the same legal rights that people have after they're born.

In Michigan, meanwhile, Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Wednesday vetoed portions of a state budget proposal that would have sent nearly $20 million in state funding to anti-abortion causes, including groups that run "pregnancy resource centers" focused on persuading pregnant women to give birth.

Before Indiana lawmakers announced their proposal, the leader of the state's most prominent anti-abortion group told reporters that the group would pressure legislators to advance a bill "that affirms the value of all life including unborn children" while not taking questions on whether any exceptions would be acceptable.

Indiana Right to Life President Mike Fichter said the vast majority of Indiana lawmakers have "campaigned as pro-life, they've run multiple election cycles as being pro-life."

"This is not the time when legislators should be drafting legislation that would appear that Roe versus Wade is still in place," Fichter said. "Roe is no longer in place. The Roe shield is no longer there."

The state's debate comes as an Indiana doctor has been at the center of a political fracas after speaking out about the 10-year-old Ohio rape victim.

A 27-year-old man was charged in Columbus, Ohio, last week with raping the girl, confirming the existence of a case that was initially met with skepticism by some media outlets and Republican politicians. The pushback grew after Democratic President Joe Biden expressed sympathy for the girl during the signing of an executive order aimed at protecting some abortion access.

Indiana Republicans have passed several laws on social issues in recent years that made headlines. In May, they overrode a veto by Holcomb of a bill that banned transgender women and girls from participating in school sports that match their gender identity.

That came seven years after Indiana faced a national uproar over a religious objections law signed by then-Gov. Mike Pence that opponents maintained could be used to discriminate against gays and lesbians. The Republican-dominated Legislature quickly made revisions blocking its use as a legal defense for refusing to provide services and preventing the law from overriding local ordinances with LGBTQ protections.

As recruiters struggle, Air Force seeks lift from 'Top Gun'

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When "Top Gun: Maverick" roared into theaters in late May, the Air Force was ready.

The smash hit movie may feature Tom Cruise as Pete "Maverick" Mitchell, a hotshot Navy aviator, but to much of the movie-going public, the distinction between Air Force and Navy fighter jets is lost. So Air Force recruiters struggling to meet their enlistment goals took boxes of free mugs and lanyards, and fanned out to movie theaters for the premiere, determined to capitalize on the jet-fueled excitement surrounding the film.

These are tough times for military recruiters. With COVID-19 complicating their work and low unemployment reducing the number of potential recruits, all services are having problems finding young people who want to join and can meet the physical, mental and moral requirements.

The Army especially is struggling. On Tuesday, it said it will cut the total number of soldiers it expects to have in the force over the next two years. If those trends continue, that could present challenges as it tries to meet future national security and warfighting missions.

The situation is somewhat less dire for the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. Leaders of those branches say they hope to meet or just slightly miss their recruiting goals for this year. But they say they will have to dip into their pool of delayed entry applicants, which will put them behind as they begin the next recruiting year.

So recruiters are offering bigger bonuses and other incentives to those who sign up. And they are seizing on the boost that Hollywood may offer – such as the buzz over the sequel to the 1986 hit "Top Gun."

"When the original 'Top Gun' was released, the Navy and Air Force received a pretty good recruiting bump," said Maj. Gen. Edward Thomas, head of Air Force Recruiting Service. "Frankly, we hope people get excited all over again about what we do. Whether they want to aim high or fly Navy, we just want them to come join us. We want them to be excited about military service."

The Air Force said it usually goes into each year with about 25% of its recruiting goal already locked in, but this year will have about half of that. The Navy and Marine Corps often have as much as 50% of their goals at the start of the year, but also will see their percentage slashed.

Gen. Eric Smith, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps., said the Marines are focusing more on retention than recruiting. He said the Marine Corps "will make or come very close to making" its recruiting goals this year, but at the expense of the 2023 pool. And when recruits have less time to prepare before reporting to boot camp, more fail to complete their training, he said.

The situation is more dire for the Army, which a top general says faces "unprecedented challenges" in recruitments.

Gen. Joseph Martin, vice chief of staff for the Army, said the service will have a total force of 466,400 this year, down from the expected 476,000. It could end 2023 with between 445,000 and 452,000 soldiers, depending on how well recruiting and retention go.

With just 2 1/2 months to go in the budget year ending Sept. 30, the Army has met just 50% of its recruiting goal of 60,000 soldiers, and based on those trends will likely miss that goal by nearly 25% as of Oct. 1.

An array of factors has made recruiting more difficult across the services.

Two years of the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered schools and other large public events that the military relies on to meet young people face to face.

The low unemployment rate means fewer people are looking for jobs. Private companies often pay more and are more nimble in responding to a tight labor market by raising salaries. Military salaries vary widely and are determined by Congress.

Across the country, fewer people are familiar with the military. Many do not know anyone who served and do not have bases in their regions. As political and cultural divisions over race, abortion, vaccines and other issues tear through the nation, trust in the government — including the military — has declined.

At the same time, only about 23% of young adults are physically, mentally and morally qualified to serve without receiving some type of waiver. Moral behavior issues include drug use, gang ties or a criminal record.

"We look at it as the toughest recruiting environment that we've had in decades," said Rear Adm. Lex Walker, who heads Navy Recruiting Command. "Companies are also offering great pay, they're offering

sign-on bonuses, help with college. They're offering many of the same benefits the Navy has historically used to recruit."

One short-term solution is money. The Air Force and Navy commanders both said they had to request more money for bonuses this year as they began to see the recruiting struggle worsen.

For the first time in a decade, the Air Force approved two rounds of additional bonuses this budget year. Last October the service budgeted $17.5 million for enlistment bonuses, but in April service leaders added another $14 million, and in July they put in $7 million more.

The Navy, said Walker, has also increased bonuses by about $100 million. It also has also relaxed some restrictions to make it possible to enlist some who may not have qualified before. He said the Navy expanded its waiver policy for some prior marijuana use and for tattoos — allowing recruits to have visible ones in more places, such as the neck. A new pilot program allows single parents with up to two children over a year old to seek a waiver to enlist as long as the recruits have someone who can care for the children in case of a deployment.

The recruiting officials also said it's crucial to increase the public's awareness of the military and the benefits available for serving. They said recruiters and all members of the military need to get out into their communities, connect with people and tell their stories.

Air Force Sgt. Eric Way did just that at the Regal Cinema in Waterford, Connecticut, during the premiere of "Top Gun: Maverick." Standing in the lobby, surrounded by Air Force swag and banners, he captured the attention of a 22-year-old from Old Lyme, who later told him the movie convinced him that he should enlist.

Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Gervacio Maldonado, who helped organize the New England recruiting campaign centered on the movie's premiere, said recruiters spoke to the young man before the film and gave him social media information to contact them later.

It worked. The man has already done his first interview.

Maldonado said the man later told a recruiter that he had been debating the enlistment idea for some time and said that "after watching the movie, that was my tipping point and I want to start the process."

Pressure on Senate GOP after same-sex marriage passes House

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate unexpectedly launched a new push Wednesday to protect same-sex marriage in federal law after a surprising number of Republicans helped pass landmark legislation in the House. Some GOP senators are already signaling support.

The legislation started as an election-season political effort to confront the new Supreme Court majority after the court overturned abortion access in Roe v. Wade, raising concerns that other rights were at risk. But suddenly it has a shot at becoming law. Pressure is mounting on Republicans to drop their longstanding opposition and join in a bipartisan moment for gay rights.

"This legislation was so important," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said as he opened the chamber Wednesday.

The Democratic leader marveled over the House's 267-157 tally, with 47 Republicans — almost one-fifth of the GOP lawmakers — voting for the bill late Tuesday.

"I want to bring this bill to the floor," Schumer said, "and we're working to get the necessary Senate Republican support to ensure it would pass."

Political odds are still long for the legislation, the Respect for Marriage Act, which would enshrine same-sex and interracial marriages as protected under federal law. Conservatives, including House GOP leaders, largely opposed the bill, and the vast majority of Republicans voted against it.

But in a sign of shifting political attitudes and a need for an election-year win, some Republicans are signaling there may be an opening. Few Republicans spoke directly against gay marriage during Tuesday's floor debate in the House. And Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell was notably silent when asked about the bill, saying he would take a look if it comes to the Senate.

"I'm going to delay announcing anything on that issue," McConnell said, adding he would wait to see if

Schumer brings it forward.

President Joe Biden wants Congress to send him the bill to sign as soon as possible.

"This is something that's personal to the president," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters traveling with the president.

Biden is "a proud champion of the right for people to marry whom they love and is grateful to see bipartisan support for that right," she said. "He believes it is non-negotiable and that the Senate should act swiftly to get this to the president's desk. He wants to sign it, so we need this legislation and we urge Congress to move as quickly as possible."

So far, the legislation has just two Senate Republican co-sponsors, Susan Collins of Maine and Rob Portman of Ohio. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Thom Tillis of North Carolina are among others closely watched for possible support.

In all 10 Republican senators would need to join with all Democrats to reach the 60 vote threshold to overcome a GOP filibuster.

"We're seeing progress on this, and I'll take progress," Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., the bill's chief sponsor, told reporters at the Capitol.

The No. 2 Republican, Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, was doubtful Tuesday, calling the proposed legislation little more than a political message.

Social issues including same-sex marriage and abortion have sprinted to the top of the congressional agenda this summer in reaction to the Supreme Court's action overturning Roe v. Wade, a stunning ruling that ended the nearly 50-year-old constitutional right to abortion access. It set off alarms that other rights conservatives have targeted could be next.

While Justice Samuel Alito, writing for the majority, insisted the Roe v. Wade ruling pertained only to abortion access, it demonstrated the new conservative muscle with three Trump-era justices tipping the court's balance. A concurring opinion by Justice Clarence Thomas, who has gained stature in the new majority, raised questions about gay marriage and other rights.

"We take Justice Thomas — and the extremist movement behind him — at their word," said Speaker Nancy Pelosi during the House debate. "This is what they intend to do."

Both Pelosi and Schumer criticized Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, who said over the weekend that the Supreme Court's 2015 Obergefell vs. Hodges decision upholding gay marriage was "clearly wrong."

The Respect for Marriage Act was rushed to the House floor in an election year with polling showing a majority of Americans favor preserving rights to marry, regardless of sex, gender, race or ethnicity, a long-building shift in modern mores toward inclusion.

A Gallup poll in June showed broad and increasing support for same-sex marriage, with 70% of U.S. adults saying they think such unions should be recognized by law. The poll showed majority support among both Democrats (83%) and Republicans (55%).

Approval of interracial marriage in the U.S. hit a six-decade high at 94% in September, according to Gallup.

McConnell, the Republican leader, is eager to regain control of the Senate, now evenly split 50-50, and his views on whether his party should support or oppose the same-sex marriage protections will almost certainly be viewed through that political lens.

Unlike the abortion issue, where views are deeply held with little room for Congress to find common ground, attitudes toward same-sex continue to evolve and shift among lawmakers.

Incumbent Republican senators seeking to win reelection and GOP candidates running for office may want a chance to support the gay marriage issue that is popular with many voters. Strong Republican-led opposition could be seen as detrimental to the party's candidates in swing states that McConnell needs to win to regain control.

One Republican hopeful, Joe O'Dea, who is challenging incumbent Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet in Colorado, said he was glad to see the same-sex marriage bill pass in the House.

"You've got a lot of politicians in both political parties who spend way too much time trying to tell people how to live their lives. That's just not me. I live my life. You live yours," O'Dea said. "Let's get on with solving the huge challenges facing the American people."

Still, some vocal leaders in the Republican Party, including Cruz and Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, both potential presidential candidates, have indicated likely opposition to the legislation.

The Respect for Marriage Act would repeal the Clinton-era Defense of Marriage Act, which put into federal law the definition of marriage as a heterosexual union between a man and woman. That 1996 law was largely overshadowed by subsequent court rulings, including Obergefell vs. Hodges in 2015, legalizing gay marriage nationwide.

Secret memo links citizenship question to apportionment

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

Trump officials tried to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census in a move experts said would benefit Republicans despite initial doubts among some in the administration that it was legal, according to an investigative report released Wednesday by a congressional oversight committee.

The report offers a smoking gun of sorts — a secret memo the committee obtained after a two-year legal battle — showing that a top Trump appointee in the Commerce Department explored apportionment as a reason to include the question.

"The Committee's investigation has exposed how a group of political appointees sought to use the census to advance an ideological agenda and potentially exclude non-citizens from the apportionment count," the report released by the House Committee on Oversight and Reform said.

It has long been speculated that the Trump administration wanted the citizenship question in order to exclude people in the country illegally from apportionment numbers.

The report includes several drafts showing how the memo evolved from recognizing that doing so would likely be unconstitutional to coming up with other justifications for adding the citizenship question.

The apportionment process uses state population counts gathered during the once-a-decade census to divide up the number of congressional seats each state gets.

Experts feared a citizenship question would scare off Hispanics and immigrants from participating in the 2020 census, whether they were in the country legally or not. The citizenship question was blocked by the Supreme Court in 2019. In the high court's decision, Chief Justice John Roberts said the reason the Commerce Department had given for the citizenship question — it was needed for the Justice Department's enforcement of the Voting Rights Act — appeared to be contrived.

The Commerce Department oversees the Census Bureau, which conducts the count used to determine political power and the distribution of $1.5 trillion in federal funding each year. Then-Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross testified before the oversight committee that apportionment wasn't the reason for the citizenship question, even though the Commerce Department memo suggests otherwise, the House report said.

"I have never intentionally misled Congress or intentionally said anything incorrect under oath," Ross said during a 2019 hearing before the oversight committee.

According to the House committee report, during planning for the citizenship question, an adviser to the Commerce Department reached out to a Republican redistricting expert who had written that using citizen voting-age population instead of the total population for the purpose of redrawing of congressional and legislative districts could be advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites.

The August 2017 memo prepared by senior political appointee James Uthmeier went to the heart of interactions by the Commerce and Justice departments to come up with a contrived reason for the citizenship question, the House report said.

An initial draft of the memo raised doubts that a citizenship question would be legal since it can only be added to the once-a-decade census if the Commerce Secretary concludes that gathering that information in survey sampling is not feasible. But a later draft removed that concern and added that the Commerce Secretary had the discretion to add a citizenship question for reasons other than apportionment.

An even later draft removed apportionment as an exception to the Commerce Secretary's discretion and added "there is nothing illegal or unconstitutional about adding a citizenship question."

An early draft of the memo also noted that using a citizenship data for apportionment was likely uncon-

stitutional and went against 200 years of precedent, but that language also was removed in later drafts.

The Founding Fathers' "conscious choice" not to exclude people in the U.S. illegally from the count "suggests the Founders did not intend to distinguish between citizens and non-citizens" for apportionment," Uthmeier wrote in the early draft.

The House report says Uthmeier researched using Voting Rights Act enforcement as a reason for the citizenship question three months before the Justice Department requested it, and hand-delivered his memo with that suggestion to the Justice Department in order to avoid a digital fingerprint.

Uthmeier, who now is chief of staff to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, didn't immediately respond to an email inquiry Wednesday.

In an effort to prevent future attempts at politicizing the census, members of the oversight committee on Wednesday debated a bill introduced by U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., that would require new questions for the head count to be vetted by Congress, prohibit a Census Bureau director from being fired without cause and limit the number of political appointees at the Census Bureau to three.

Even though many of the Trump administration's political efforts ultimately failed, some advocates believe they did have an impact, resulting in significantly larger undercounts of most racial and ethnic minorities in the 2020 census compared to the 2010 census.

Republican lawmakers said the bill would make the Census Bureau director unaccountable and limit the ability to add important questions to the census form. They offered an amendment that would add a citizenship question to the next census and exclude people in the U.S. illegally from the apportionment count, claiming their inclusion dilutes the political power of citizens. The Fourteenth Amendment requires that all people in each U.S. state be counted for apportionment.

Committee members voted down the amendment and passed the bill Wednesday afternoon.

"What this bill does, it more completely delegates Census Bureau activity to the bureaucracy," said U.S. Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz. "When you delegate to the bureaucracy, you are taking away the power of the American people."

Senators propose changes to electors law after Capitol riot

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bipartisan group of senators agreed Wednesday on proposed changes to the Electoral Count Act, the post-Civil War-era law for certifying presidential elections that came under intense scrutiny after the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol and Donald Trump's effort to overturn the 2020 election.

Long in the making, the package introduced by the group led by Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Joe Manchin of West Virginia is made up of two separate proposals. One would clarify the way states submit electors and the vice president tallies the votes in Congress. The other would bolster security for state and local election officials who have faced violence and harassment.

"From the beginning, our bipartisan group has shared a vision of drafting legislation to fix the flaws of the archaic and ambiguous Electoral Count Act of 1887," Collins, Manchin and the other 14 senators said in a joint statement.

"We have developed legislation that establishes clear guidelines for our system of certifying and counting electoral votes," the group wrote. "We urge our colleagues in both parties to support these simple, commonsense reforms."

Both Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell have signaled support for the bipartisan group, but the final legislative package will undergo careful scrutiny.

Votes are not likely before fall. But with broad support from the group of 16 senators, seven Democrats and nine Republicans, who have worked behind closed doors for months with the help of outside experts, serious consideration is assured.

In a statement, Matthew Weil, executive director of the Democracy Program at the Bipartisan Policy Center, called the framework a "critical step" in shoring up ambiguities in the Electoral Count Act.

After Trump lost the 2020 election, the defeated president orchestrated an unprecedented attempt to challenge the electors sent from battleground states to the joint session of Congress on Jan. 6, when the vice president presides over certification.

Under the proposed changes, the law would be updated to ensure the governor from each state is initially responsible for submitting electors, as a way to safeguard against states sending alternative or fake elector slates.

Additionally, the law would spell out that the vice president presides over the joint session in a "solely ministerial" capacity, according to a summary page. It says the vice president "does not have any power to solely determine, accept, reject, or otherwise adjudicate disputes over electors."

That provision is a direct reaction to Trump's relentless efforts to pressure then Vice President Mike Pence to reject the electors being sent from certain battleground states as a way to halt the certification or tip it away from Joe Biden's victory.

The bill also specifies the procedures around presidential transitions, including when the election outcome is disputed, to ensure the peaceful transfer of power from one administration to the next.

That's another pushback to the way Trump blocked Biden's team from accessing some information for his transition to the White House.

The second proposal, revolving around election security, would double the federal penalties to up to two years in prison for individuals who "threaten or intimidate election officials, poll watchers, voters or candidates," according to the summary.

It also would seek to improve the way the U.S. Postal Service handles election mail and "provide guidance to states to improve their mail-in ballot processes." Mail-in ballots and the role of the Postal Service came under great scrutiny during the 2020 election.

An Associated Press review of potential cases of voter fraud in six battleground states found no evidence of widespread fraud that could change the outcome of the election. A separate AP review of drop boxes used for mailed ballots also found no significant problems.

The need for election worker protections was front and center at a separate hearing Wednesday of the House Committee on Homeland Security. Election officials and experts testified that a rise in threats of physical violence is contributing to staffing shortages across the country and a loss of experience at local boards of elections.

"The impact is widespread," said Neal Kelley, a former registrar of voters in Orange County, California, who now chairs the Committee for Safe and Secure Elections. "And, while the effects on individuals are devastating, the potential blow to democracy should not be dismissed."

Elizabeth Howard, senior counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice, told the committee that Congress needs to direct more money and support toward protecting election workers' personal safety, including by funding local and federal training programs and providing grants to enhance security at election directors' personal residences.

Democratic New Mexico Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver, who recently reported a series of threats, told the panel the situation has become worse after former President Donald Trump's attacks against the 2020 election result.

"Unfortunately, we are still on a daily basis, in my state and across the country, living with the reverberating effects of the 'Big Lie' from 2020," she said. "And, as we all know, when it comes to leadership, what you say from the very highest echelons of government power in this country do have those reverberating effects."

Some Republican members of the committee condemned violence against election workers — and also drew a parallel to recent threats and intimidation directed toward some Supreme Court justices after their decision to overturn constitutional protections for abortion.

GOP Rep. Clay Higgins of Louisiana rejected the notion that Trump and other election skeptics were solely responsible for the "atmosphere of mistrust" that grew up around the 2020 election.

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Luria, Kinzinger put careers on line in Jan. 6 investigation

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Reps. Elaine Luria and Adam Kinzinger, who will lead questioning in the closing summer hearing of the Jan. 6 committee on Thursday night, are from different parties but agree emphatically on one thing: The investigation into the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol is worth sacrificing their political careers.

Luria, a Democrat first elected in 2018, is facing a difficult reelection in a Virginia swing district that was redrawn to be more Republican. Kinzinger, a Republican who's a pariah to some in his party because of his condemnation of former President Donald Trump, decided not to seek another term in his Illinois district.

The two also are military veterans and have invoked their service oaths as part of their reason for pressing the inquiry. Luria is a Naval Academy graduate who served 20 years, including as a nuclear-trained surface warfare officer who commanded 400 crewmembers in the Persian Gulf. Kinzinger flew combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq and remains a lieutenant colonel in the Air National Guard.

"You're going to see the fulfillment of the meaning of the sacred oath that all of us take that have served in government, to preserve and protect the Constitution and the United States," said Norm Eisen, who served as special counsel to the House Judiciary Committee from 2019 to 2020, during Trump's first impeachment trial.

"But it's one that — particularly those who serve in the military, like the two of them, and put their lives on the line — take to heart," Eisen said.

The most prominent and imperiled committee member is Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., the vice chair, who has been unsparing in her criticism of Trump. She was removed by her own party as the No. 3 House Republican and now faces a potentially uphill primary battle for reelection in her deeply red home state.

Cheney's immediate political fortune, as well as that of Kinzinger and Luria, may provide the most direct answers to larger questions about whether the hearings into the mob attack on Jan. 6, 2021, will chip away at Trump's continued hold of the national Republican Party. They could also offer clues about whether efforts to fully make public the former president's responsibility in helping spark the mob attack can be a boon to front-line Democrats during November midterm elections that could otherwise be brutal for their party.

"Mr. Kinzinger and I, who are both veterans leading this committee, I think, as veterans of the military, understand what action looks like in a time of crisis," Luria told CNN last weekend. She added of Trump's actions: "I look at it as a dereliction of duty. He didn't act. He had a duty to act."

The hearing on Thursday will focus on Trump's actions as rioters overran the Capitol. Witnesses will describe what occurred during the 187 minutes between when the then-president addressed supporters who had gathered in Washington by imploring, "We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore," and his releasing a video in which he praised the rioters as "very special" while also asking them to disperse.

Luria has said repeatedly that the committee's work defending American democracy is more important than her prospects for reelection in her district. During an interview last summer, shortly after she was appointed to the committee, Luria also argued that her serving on it bolstered her credibility as a pragmatic moderate in a centrist district.

"I think it's incredibly important for the American people to understand what happened, why it happened and what we can do to prevent something like that from happening in the future," Luria said then. While campaigning, she has referred to the insurrection as a dry run, saying such an attack might happen again unless the root causes of the first one are fully exposed — and that voters have expressed gratitude about that effort.

Republican Virginia state Sen. Jen Kiggans, who is trying to unseat Luria in November, said the election won't be decided by the Jan. 6 committee.

"I have never had a single voter, or person (whose) door I've knocked on, or civic league I've visited or event I've attended, I've never had a single person come up to me and say that this is the main issue they're focused on," Kiggans said. "On a daily basis, I hear over and over and over again about gas prices

and grocery prices and grocery shortages and how much everything is costing them from their home repair projects to their kids' school supplies to going out to eat at a restaurant."

Kinzinger has represented his Illinois district since 2013. He voted to impeach Trump and announced last fall that he wasn't seeking another term in Congress after the Democrat-controlled Illinois Legislature approved new congressional maps that would have forced Kinzinger and another Republican incumbent who has more reliably defended Trump, Rep. Darin LaHood, into a primary matchup.

Still, Kinzinger hasn't ruled out seeking elective office in the future.

"When you fight for your nation and you fight for people, it makes you believe in something bigger," Kinzinger said in an interview last summer.

Eisen, a former Obama administration ambassador to the Czech Republic and senior governance studies fellow at the Brookings Institution, said that the political stakes are real for Luria and Kinzinger, adding that "losing an election is never pleasant" but "they all understand that might be a consequence."

"In some ways, their willingness to take that risk actually enhances the power of the example that they set," Eisen said. "History's going to be kind to them. I don't think any of them will have regrets."

UK weather turmoil spurs calls to adapt to climate change

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's record-breaking heatwave has spurred calls for the government to speed up efforts to adapt to a changing climate, especially after wildfires created the busiest day for London firefighters since bombs rained down on the city during World War II.

The country got a break Wednesday from the dry, hot weather that is gripping much of Europe as cooler air moved in from the west. Forecasters predict London will reach a high of 26 degrees Celsius (79 Fahrenheit) on Wednesday, down from the national record 40.3 C (104.4 F) set Tuesday at Coningsby in eastern England.

Even so, travel was disrupted for a third day as rail operators repaired damage caused by the heat, and firefighters continue to mop up hotspots at the scene of Tuesday's fires.

Britain needs to prepare for similar heatwaves in the future because manmade carbon emissions have already changed the climate, said Professor Stephen Belcher, chief scientist at the Met Office, the U.K.'s national weather service. Only aggressive emissions reductions will reduce the frequency of such events, he said.

"Everything is still to play for, but we should adapt to the kind of events we saw yesterday as an occasional extreme event," Baker told the BBC.

Climate scientists have been surprised by the speed at which temperatures in Britain have risen in recent years and the widespread area affected by this week's event. Thirty-four locations around the U.K. on Tuesday broke the country's previous record-high temperature of 37.8 C (100 F), set in 2019.

The weather walloped a country where few homes, schools or small businesses have air conditioning and infrastructure such as railroads, highways and airports aren't designed to cope with such temperatures. Thirteen people, including seven teenage boys, are believed to have died trying to cool off after getting into difficulty in rivers, reservoirs and lakes.

Fifteen fire departments declared major incidents as more than 60 properties around the country were destroyed on Tuesday, Cabinet Office Minister Kit Malthouse told the House of Commons.

One of the biggest fires was in Wennington, a village on the eastern outskirts of London, where a row of houses was destroyed by flames that raced through tinder-dry fields nearby. Resident Tim Stock said he and his wife fled after the house next door caught fire and the blaze rapidly spread.

"It was like a war zone," he said. "Down the actual main road, all the windows had exploded out, all the roofs had caved, it was like a scene from the Blitz."

The London Fire Brigade received 2,600 calls Tuesday, compared with the normal figure of about 350, Mayor Sadiq Khan said, adding that it was the department's busiest day since the World War II. Despite lower temperatures on Wednesday, the fire danger remains high because hot, dry weather has parched

grasslands around the city, Khan said.

"Once it catches fire it spreads incredibly fast, like wildfires like you see in movies or in fires in California or in parts of France," Khan told the BBC.

Phil Gerigan, leader of the National Fire Chiefs Council's resilience group, said wildfires are an emerging threat tied to climate change that is stretching the capacity of fire departments. Britain may need to expand its capacity to fight wildfires, adding more aerial tankers and helicopters, he told the BBC.

"As we look towards the future, it's certainly something that the U.K. government and fire and rescue services need to consider," he said. "Have we got the capability, the assets, to be able to meet what is a significantly emerging demand?"

Wildfires continue to spread destruction in other parts of Europe. Nearly 500 firefighters struggled to contain a large wildfire that threatened hillside suburbs outside Athens for a second day as fires burned across a southern swath of the continent.

A respite from the severe heat helped improve conditions in France, Spain and Portugal, countries that have battled blazes for days.

Britain's travel network also suffered during the hot weather, with Luton Airport briefly shut down by a heat-damaged runway and trains forced to run at reduced speeds because of concerns the heat would warp rails or interrupt power supplies.

Some disruptions remained Wednesday as crews worked to repair power lines and signaling equipment damaged by fire. Passengers were advised to check before traveling and only travel when necessary.

Among those struggling was Lee Ball, 46, who was trying to travel with his wife, Libby, and 10-year-old daughter, Amelie, from Worcestershire to London to get to Brussels for an Ed Sheeran concert. Their train was cancelled with less than 30 minutes notice, so they drove to another station — and waited.

"I've been up since 4:30 a.m., anxious, trying to get an answer from anywhere we can," he said.

Communication from the train companies has been "appalling," he said.

US rabbi reviving Jewish roots in her family's Italian town

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

SERRASTRETTA, Italy (AP) — From a rustic, tiny synagogue she fashioned from her family's ancestral home in this mountain village, an American rabbi is keeping a promise made to her Italian-born father: reconnect people in this southern region of Calabria to their Jewish roots, links nearly severed five centuries ago when the Inquisition forced Jews to convert to Christianity.

In the process, Rabbi Barbara Aiello is also helping to revive Serrastretta, one of many small southern towns struggling with dwindling population, as young people leave in droves to find work and where each year deaths far outnumber births.

Besides the chatter of visitors who come to her synagogue, curious to learn about Judaism in predominantly Catholic Italy, the laughter of newly arrived children resounds in the town. This spring, the rabbi helped bring Ukrainian refugees, including some with Jewish roots, to live here for now, and — Serrastretta's mayor hopes — maybe permanently.

On a small wooden table near the synagogue's entrance sits a yellowed family portrait. In the photograph, is the rabbi's father, Antonio Abramo Aiello, as a child. Born in Serrastretta, he was studying for his bar mitzvah, the rabbi said, but before that religious coming-of-age ritual could take place, the young Aiello left with his family for the United States in 1923.

His daughter, Barbara, would be born in Pittsburgh and ordained a rabbi at the Rabbinical Seminary International in New York at age 51. Her synagogue is a recognized affiliate of the Reconstructionist movement, a small branch of American Judaism.

Before studying to become a rabbi, Aiello taught special needs children for many years, creating a puppet show to help teach kids about tolerance. After being ordained, she served at a synagogue in Florida for a few years before moving to Italy, where she first worked as a rabbi in Milan from 2004-2005. Then she realized her passion in serving as a rabbi in her late father's native town.

When visitors arrive from abroad for ceremonies at her synagogue, Rabbi Aiello, who is 74, shows them the house in what had been the Jewish quarter in the nearby city of Lamezia Terme, where her father had been learning about his Jewish faith.

She points out a plaque which reads: "In this quarter was active an industrious community" of Jews from the 13th till the 16th centuries.

One recent summer evening, as Aiello, who wears a yarmulke and necklace with a small Star of David, walked by en route to the ancient neighborhood, a local resident, Emilio Fulvo, 73, leaped up from a bench to greet her. When he was 15, Fulvo recounted, genealogical research discovered that his family has Jewish roots.

Learning about his background "made me feel free," Fulvo said. "I knew something was missing" while raised as a Catholic in southern Italy.

Families like his are known as B'nai Anusim, descendants, of "those who were forced to accept Christian baptism and to publicly renounce their Judaism," the rabbi said.

In her family, "legends were passed along that we were Jews, and we were expelled from Spain in 1492," as the Inquisition gathered steam, Aiello said. Eventually, the Aiellos made their way to the southern end of the Apennine mountains, where Serrastretta sits, perched atop a road winding through slopes thickly forested with beech, pine and chestnut trees.

The remoteness of many villages in Calabria, coupled with Italians' tendencies to live in the same places for generations and the strength of oral traditions, helped keep alive what Roque Pugliese, a Jew in Calabria, calls the "spark of Judaism" even among those who don't realize they have Jewish heritage.

A physician who emigrated from Argentina, Pugliese recalled once hearing residents of a care home in Calabria sing an ancient song about Passover, softly, as if afraid to be overheard.

On a stone wall along a walkway that leads to Aiello's home and synagogue is a Star of David.

On a recent Friday afternoon, she set out a bowl of cherries and a tray of miniature pastries for those coming for a bat mitzvah sought by the Blum family of Parkland, Florida. They chose Aiello despite the great distance because, before becoming a rabbi, she had worked as a special needs educator, and their daughter, Mia, has autism.

Pushing a child's stroller up the steep street that leads to the synagogue was Vira, one of five Ukrainian mothers, who, with nine children among them, were brought to Serrastretta thanks to efforts by Aiello and logistical help from a Serrastretta native. Transportation and housing costs have been paid by donors, most of them Jewish, in Britain, the United States, Australia and Canada, the rabbi said.

Two of the women have since returned to Ukraine, including the wife of an Orthodox Christian priest. But Vira, who asked that her surname not be published because her husband, still in Ukraine, works for a government ministry, said she is considering settling in Serrastretta.

"The first thing is my son, my only son, his life, his future, his safety," Vira said of 2½-year-old Platon. "Barbara invited us to a safe place. It was like really a miracle."

Vira is also grateful for the opportunity to learn about Judaism. Her grandmother, born in Crimea, is Jewish. But her father, a Russian, would take her to church, so she had never gone to a Jewish house of worship, she said. Aiello "invited me to a bar mitzvah. It was a very beautiful experience that she opened her house to me."

The rabbi said she tells those curious about their past to "embrace those (traditions) that make sense to you — embrace all, embrace some, but understand that you were once Jewish (in your family) and we can connect you, reconnect you, if you so choose."

Mayor Antonio Muracca hopes at least some Ukrainians stay. "These guests have created in a certain sense more vitality in our town," he said. Serrastretta has seen "a shocking depopulation," the mayor said. "There are so many old people, few children."

The town's population shrank from 4,000 in 2001 to 2,900 in 2020.

Serrastretta was long called "the city of chairs," because generations of artisans handcrafted furniture from beech wood with seats fashioned from woven reeds. But demand for cheaper, mass-produced fur-

niture decimated the trade.

Serrastretta's parish pastor, the Rev. Luigi Iuliano, invited Aiello to read a Psalm at Easter vigil services in April. With the rabbi there is no "competition, jealousy."

"We brought the First Communion kids to show them the Torah, the synagogue, to become aware that our faith in a certain way comes from the Hebrew faith," said Iuliano, a Serrastretta native.

Aiello, who describes herself as the first female rabbi in Italy and who runs Calabria's only synagogue, relies on destination weddings and bat and bar mitzvahs to boost her synagogue's finances.

She is cut off from funding that derives from taxpayer donations in Italy. The Italian government only recognizes the Orthodox Jewish communities in Italy, whose official members number about 23,000, nearly half of those living in Rome and barely 200 living in southern Italy.

Sunak, Truss in runoff to replace Boris Johnson as UK leader

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's Conservative Party on Wednesday chose former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak and Foreign Secretary Liz Truss — a fiscal moderate and a low-tax crusader — as the two finalists in a party election to replace departing Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The result came just after the divisive, unrepentant Johnson, who has plunged his party into turmoil, ended his final appearance in Parliament as prime minister with the words "Hasta la vista, baby."

Sunak and Truss came first and second respectively in a secret vote by Conservative lawmakers. Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt came in third and was eliminated.

The race, which has already produced bitter Conservative infighting, pits Sunak, who steered Britain's economy through the pandemic before quitting Johnson's government this month, against Truss, who has led the U.K.'s response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The two contenders will spend the next few weeks campaigning for the votes of about 180,000 Conservative Party members around the country, who will vote by postal or online ballot. The winner of the party leadership vote will be announced Sept. 5 and will automatically become Britain's next prime minister.

Sunak won all four rounds of elimination votes by lawmakers, but is less popular with the party's grassroots, partly because of his previous job as Britain's chief taxman.

Truss, who has taken a tough line against Russian President Vladimir Putin — and with the European Union — is a favorite of the Conservatives' right wing.

Truss said if she becomes prime minister "I would hit the ground running from day one, unite the party and govern in line with Conservative values."

Sunak's campaign said "the choice for members is very simple: who is the best person to beat Labour at the next election? The evidence shows that's Rishi."

The winner of the Tory contest will not have to face British voters until 2024, unless they choose to call an early general election.

The campaign has already exposed deep divisions in the Conservative Party at the end of Johnson's scandal-tarnished three-year reign. Truss has branded Sunak a "socialist" for raising taxes in response to the economic damage wrought by the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Sunak has hit back, saying that rivals including Truss were peddling economic "fairy tales" to British voters as the country faces soaring inflation and economic turbulence.

Johnson allies have been accused of lobbying against Sunak, whose resignation helped bring the prime minister down, and in favor of Truss, who remained loyal. That impression was cemented Wednesday when Johnson said his advice to his successor would be not always to listen to the Treasury.

All the contenders —- there were 11 to start — sought to distance themselves from Johnson, whose term in office began boldly in 2019 with a vow to "get Brexit done" and a resounding election victory, but is now ending in disgrace.

Johnson quit July 7 but remains caretaker leader until the party elects his successor.

On Wednesday, he faced derisive opposition politicians and weary Conservatives at his last Prime Minis-

ter's Questions session in the House of Commons, which adjourns for the summer on Thursday.

It was a downbeat departure, with supportive Conservative lawmakers lobbing praise and opposition politicians offering variations on "good riddance."

Johnson extolled what he called his accomplishments — leading Britain out of the EU and through COVID-19, and supporting Ukraine against Russia's invasion — and declared: "Mission largely accomplished, for now," before departing with Arnold Schwarzenegger's "hasta la vista" catchphrase from "Terminator 2."

Opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer said: "I will miss the delusion."

Johnson clung to office through months of scandals over his finances and his judgment, refusing to resign when he was fined by police over government parties that broke COVID-19 lockdown rules. He finally quit after one scandal too many — appointing a politician accused of sexual misconduct — drove his ministers to resign en masse.

Despite remaining prime minister, he has largely disappeared from the scene, even as Britain faces a summer cost-of-living crisis and labor discontent as inflation hits 9.4%.

Johnson did not attend any government emergency meetings about the heat wave that brought record temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) to Britain this week. Last week he took a ride in a Royal Air Force Typhoon fighter jet, with "Top Gun"-style footage released by his office, then threw a weekend party at Chequers, the country house that comes with the prime minister's job.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan accused Johnson of wanting to "become Tom Cruise" and urged him to resign immediately.

"We need a full-time prime minister looking after our country rather than somebody who's checked out," Khan said.

Officials: Starvation threat not over for Florida manatees

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Fewer manatee deaths have been recorded so far this year in Florida compared to the record-setting numbers in 2021, but wildlife officials cautioned Wednesday that chronic starvation remains a dire and ongoing threat to the marine mammals.

Between Jan. 1 and July 15, about 631 manatee deaths have been confirmed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. That compares with 864 during the same period last year, when a record number of manatees died mainly from a lack of seagrass food, which was decimated by water pollution. The five-year average of manatee deaths in that time frame is 481.

Despite some glimmers of hope, wildlife officials said during a news conference Wednesday that manatees continue to face dwindling food options and many survivors have been severely weakened by malnutrition, which leaves them more vulnerable once cold weather sets in.

How manatees fare this summer when more food is available will determine how they survive in winter, said Martine de Wit, a veterinarian overseeing necropsies and coordinating rescues of ill manatees for the state wildlife commission.

"There is not enough high-quality food for the animals," de Wit said, showing slides of necropsied animals with severe internal damage from starvation. "It's going to be long lasting. It's going to be years before you can measure the real effect."

Manatees, the large, round-tailed mammals also known as sea cows, were already listed as a threatened species when the unprecedented die-off became apparent about a year ago. The main cause is pollution from agriculture, septic tanks, urban runoff and other sources that is killing the coastal seagrass on which the marine mammals rely.

That led to an experimental feeding program last year in which more than 202,000 pounds (91,600 kilograms) of lettuce funded mainly by donations was fed to manatees that traditionally gather during winter in the warm waters near a power plant on Florida's east coast. Officials say they are still studying the impact of that feeding program and weighing whether to do it again as temperatures drop this winter.

"Did it have an effect? I'd like to think that it did," said Tom Reinert, a regional director for the wildlife commission. "We're working day in and day out to make sure we're prepared for next winter."

There are about 7,500 manatees in the wild in Florida, according to wildlife commission figures. They have long struggled to coexist with humans. Seagrass-killing pollution and boat strikes are now the main threats facing the beloved creatures.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently agreed in a court settlement to publish a proposed manatee critical habitat revision by September 2024. The agreement came in a long-running court case involving the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife and the Save the Manatee Club.

The rule would bring enhanced federal scrutiny to projects that might affect the manatee in waterways in which the marine mammals are known to concentrate, such as the Indian River Lagoon on Florida's east coast. In addition, the state is spending $8.5 million on a variety of manatee projects, such as restoration of seagrass and improvements in water quality.

Anyone who sees a sick or dead manatee should call the wildlife commission hotline at at 888-404-FWCC (888-404-3922).

Giuliani ordered to testify in Georgia 2020 election probe

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A judge in New York has ordered Rudy Giuliani to appear next month before a special grand jury in Atlanta that's investigating whether former President Donald Trump and others illegally tried to interfere in the 2020 general election in Georgia.

New York Supreme Court Justice Thomas Farber on July 13 issued an order directing Giuliani, a Trump lawyer and former New York City mayor, to appear before the special grand jury on Aug. 9 and on any other dates ordered by the court in Atlanta, according to documents filed Wednesday in Fulton County Superior Court.

Giuliani's lawyer did not immediately return a call and email seeking comment Wednesday.

Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis began her investigation early last year, and a special grand jury with subpoena power was seated in May at her request. In a letter requesting the special grand jury, she said her team was looking into "any coordinated attempts to unlawfully alter the outcome of the 2020 elections in this state."

Earlier this month, she filed petitions to compel seven Trump associates, including Giuliani and U.S. Sen Lindsey Graham, to testify before the special grand jury.

Because they don't live in Georgia, she had to use a process that involves getting a judge in the state where they live to order them to appear.

Giuliani had been summoned to appear in court in New York on July 13 to present any reasons why a subpoena should not be issued for him to testify in Atlanta, but he failed to show up for the hearing, Farber wrote in his order.

In a court filing Wednesday, Willis informed the judge overseeing the special grand jury that Giuliani had been served with Farber's final order instructing him to appear before the special grand jury.

It's possible that Giuliani could file a motion with the court in Atlanta to try to avoid testifying. Others who have been subpoenaed have already filed challenges seeking to get out of appearing before the special grand jury.

In the petition for Giuliani's testimony, Willis identified him as both a personal attorney for Trump and a lead attorney for his campaign.

She wrote that he and others presented a Georgia state Senate subcommittee with a video recording of election workers that Giuliani alleged showed them producing "suitcases" of unlawful ballots from unknown sources, outside the view of election poll watchers.

Within 24 hours of the hearing on Dec. 3, 2020, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger's office had debunked the video and said that it had found that no voter fraud had taken place at the site. Nevertheless, Giuliani continued to make statements to the public and in subsequent legislative hearings claiming

widespread voter fraud using that debunked video, Willis wrote.

"There is evidence that (Giuliani's) appearance and testimony at the hearing was part of a multi-state, coordinated plan by the Trump Campaign to influence the results of the November 2020 election in Georgia and elsewhere," the petition says.

Spanish worker's death shows need to adapt to climate change

By RAQUEL REDONDO and BARRY HATTON Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — When José Antonio González started his afternoon shift sweeping the streets of Madrid, the temperature was 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) amid a heat wave gripping Spain.

After a long time without a job, González couldn't afford to pass up a one-month summer contract to sweep the city, where he lived in a working-class neighborhood. Three hours later, the 60-year-old collapsed with heat stroke and was found lying in the street he was cleaning.

An ambulance took the father of two to the hospital, where he died on Saturday.

His death is driving a debate in Spain about the need to adapt labor arrangements to climate change. The poorest in society, often the elderly and the low-paid such as construction workers and delivery riders for whom heat stress is a workplace hazard, have long been identified as being at a disadvantage in attempts to adjust to rising temperatures.

"It's obvious that social inequalities play a part" in how much people suffer during heat waves, says Júlio Díaz of Spain's Carlos III Health Institute.

"Enduring a heat wave in an air-conditioned house with a swimming pool is not the same as five people in the same room with a window as the only source of fresh air," he told Spanish public broadcaster RTVE.

The recent torrid weather in Europe, which has seen a spike in the number and size of wildfires, is forcing the issue to the forefront.

France has already taken some steps to alleviate heat inequality after a 2003 heat wave caused 15,000 heat-related deaths, many of them older people left in city apartments and retirement homes without air conditioning.

Ahead of France's latest heat wave, which set some record temperatures this week, the government reminded employers of their legal obligation to protect workers in extreme heat. That includes free drinking water, ventilation and, if possible, changing working hours and providing extra breaks.

And as Britain prepared for this week's heat wave, which saw temperatures hit a national record of 40.3 degrees Celsius (104.5 Fahrenheit) on Tuesday, labor unions urged the government to impose maximum workplace temperatures for the first time. Many homes, small businesses and even public buildings in Britain do not have air-conditioning.

Unite, the country's biggest union, is pushing for a maximum workplace temperature of 27 C (80.6 F) for "strenuous" jobs and 30 C (86 F) for sedentary jobs. The union also says employers should be required to take steps to reduce indoor temperatures and impose strict protections for outdoor workers whenever temperatures reach 24 C (75.2 F).

"As the climate changes, it is vital that health and safety law is updated in line with the serious challenges this presents for workers," said Rob Miguel, Unite's national adviser on health and safety.

In Madrid, González's 21-year-old son, Miguel Ángel, says his father, days before he died, had searched on the internet for "how to deal with heat stroke." The evening before he died, he had arrived home from his cleaning shift gasping for air.

Scientists say the worsening of pre-existing illnesses, not heat strokes themselves, are the main cause of deaths linked to the high temperatures.

The Carlos III Health Institute estimates that 150 deaths in Spain were somehow linked to the heat wave on the day that González died. The following day, the institute attributed 169 deaths to the heat, bringing a total of 679 cases during just the first week of the heat wave.

Ramming home the danger, another Madrid street sweeper was hospitalized with heat stroke on Tuesday.

In places accustomed to high temperatures, such as Spain's southern Andalusia region, construction

workers already work only morning hours during the summer.

Three days after González's death, Madrid officials agreed with labor groups that street cleaners could postpone their afternoon shift and work instead amid cooler evening temperatures.

EU draws up energy plan in case of Russian gas cutoff

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union's head office on Wednesday proposed that member states cut their gas use by 15% over the coming months as the bloc braced for a possible full Russian cutoff of natural gas supplies that could add a big chill to the upcoming winter.

While the initial cuts would be voluntary, the Commission also asked for the power to impose mandatory reductions across the bloc in the event of an EU-wide emergency caused by what Commission President Ursula von der Leyen saw as a deliberate attempt by President Vladimir Putin to weaponize gas exports.

"Russia is blackmailing us. Russia is using energy as a weapon. And therefore, in any event, whether it's a partial major cutoff of Russian gas or total cutoff of Russian gas, Europe needs to be ready," von der Leyen said.

EU member states will discuss the measures at an emergency meeting of energy ministers next Tuesday. For them to be approved, national capitals would have to consider yielding some of their powers over energy policy to Brussels.

"We have to be proactive. We have to prepare for a potential full disruption of Russian gas. And this is a likely scenario. That's what we've seen in the past," von der Leyen said, adding that Kremlin-controlled Gazprom showed scant interest in market forces and instead played a political game to choke off the EU.

Saving 15% on gas use between August and next March will not come all that easy. The European Commission signaled its proposed target would require EU countries as a whole to triple the rationing achieved to date since the Russian invasion of Ukraine started Feb. 24.

"EU-level savings so far have been equal to 5%," EU Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson said. "This is clearly not enough."

Wednesday's proposal comes at a time when a blog post from the International Monetary Fund has warned about the weaknesses of the 27-nation bloc.

"The partial shutoff of gas deliveries is already affecting European growth, and a full shutdown could be substantially more severe," the IMFBlog warned. It added that gross domestic product in member nations like Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic could shrink by up to 6%.

Italy, a country already facing serious economic problems, "would also face significant impacts."

EU economic forecasts last week showed that Russia's war in Ukraine is expected to wreak havoc with economic recovery for the foreseeable future, with lower annual growth and record-high inflation. The disruptions in Russian energy trade threaten to trigger a recession in the bloc just as it is recovering from a pandemic-induced slump

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, the EU has approved bans on Russian coal and most oil to take effect later this year, but it did not include natural gas because the 27-nation bloc depends on gas to power factories, generate electricity and heat homes. Now, von der Leyen is convinced Putin will cut off gas anyway to try to wreak economic and political havoc in Europe this winter.

"Putin is trying to push us around this winter and this he will dramatically fail if we stick together," said von der Leyen.

There are fears that the energy crisis will get worse if Moscow does not restart the key Nord Stream pipeline to Germany after scheduled maintenance ends Thursday. And Putin left everyone second-guessing on Wednesday.

The Russian leader questioned the quality of the repair work done on the Nord Stream 1 turbine. "They say that they will return these machines — one, in any case — but in what capacity they will return, what are the technical parameters after leaving this scheduled repair? Maybe they will take it and turn it off at some point, and Nord Stream 1 will stop," he said.

The aim of von der Leyen's plans is to ensure essential industries and services like hospitals can function, while others would have to cut back. That could include lowering heat in public buildings and enticing families to use less energy at home.

EU nations and the Commission have gone on a buying spree to diversify its natural gas sources away from Russia, but they are still expected to fall far short of providing businesses and homes with enough energy in the cold months.

Russia has cut off or reduced gas to a dozen EU countries, and there are fears that the energy crisis will get worse if Moscow does not restart a key pipeline to Germany after scheduled maintenance ends Thursday.

The energy squeeze is also reviving decades-old political challenges for Europe. While the EU has gained centralized authority over monetary, trade, antitrust and farm policies, national capitals have jealously guarded their powers over energy matters.

The European Commission has spent decades chipping away at this bastion of national sovereignty, using previous supply disruptions to secure gradual gains in EU clout. The five-month-old Russian invasion of Ukraine is now the starkest test of whether member countries are willing to cede more of their energy powers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, member states did join in common action to help develop and buy vaccines in massive quantities in an unprecedented show of common resolve in the health sector.

"We have learned our lesson from the pandemic. We know that in such kind of a crisis, our worst enemy is fragmentation," said von der Leyen.

Sky-high diesel prices squeeze truckers, farmers, consumers

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ AP Energy Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When long-haul trucker Deb LaBree sets out on the road to deliver pharmaceuticals, she has strategies to hold down costs. She avoids the West Coast and the Northeast, where diesel prices are highest. She organizes her delivery route to minimize "deadheading" — driving an empty truck in between deliveries.

And if a customer's load is too far away or they can't pay more for fuel? She turns the job down.

"It breaks my heart because I either have to say, 'No, I can't afford to,' or 'I can, but you're going to have to pay some of my fuel to get me there,' " LaBree said. "I hate doing both of those things because it's not the customer's fault. It's not our fault."

The price of diesel fuel has skyrocketed in recent months — much more even than regular gasoline — especially after Russia invaded Ukraine in February. Moscow's attack led numerous nations to spurn Russian fuel, removing from the market a major source of oil, the main component of diesel fuel, and driving prices drastically up.

For months, motorists have felt the pain of high gasoline prices. Many may not know that they're also absorbing the impact of much costlier diesel fuel. That's because the goods consumers buy — from cereal and orange juice to Amazon deliveries of diapers — are delivered by trucks, trains or ships that run on diesel. Those inflated prices are then passed on from company to company until they reach consumers in the form of costlier goods.

"People pay less attention to diesel prices because people aren't going to the pump and using it," said Matt Smith, lead oil analyst at Kpler, a research firm. "But diesel has a more far-reaching impact and is already having a real big impact across the economy."

Diesel fuel is averaging $5.50 a gallon nationally — up a scorching 68% from a year ago, when it was selling for just $3.27. By comparison, a gallon of regular gasoline is averaging $4.47, up 41% from a year ago.

High gasoline prices have eased somewhat in recent weeks. But diesel has remained chronically high, with American refineries operating near capacity. Unless prices ease, the ripple effects of high diesel fuel could worsen because the costs are deterring some truck companies from accepting jobs unless they can

persuade their customers to pay more for fuel.

"There will be more logistical shortages," said Phil Verleger, a longtime energy economist. "Americans will find more empty shelves and higher prices."

If they're not rejecting jobs, many truckers are choosing lighter loads or working longer hours to make up for money lost on fuel, according to interviews with truckers and industry executives. Farmers harvesting hay and planting corn with diesel-fired tractors are absorbing a financial hit. Delivery companies are installing their own fueling pumps to cut costs. Ultimately, consumers are left bearing the burden.

"If you're a farmer, then your energy costs are higher, and therefore it's costing more to produce grain, and that's pushing the price of grain up, and that's pushing the price of food up," said Smith, the analyst at Kpler.

Even more than gasoline, high diesel prices are magnifying the costs of goods because the delivery cost has risen so much. Consumer prices soared 9.1% in June compared with 12 months earlier, the government reported last week. The fuel oil portion of the consumer price index nearly doubled from the same time last year.

"Those energy costs are working their way into products, all manner of different consumer products," Smith noted.

One reason why diesel prices haven't yet declined as gasoline has is that OPEC nations have slowed their supply of oil, and Middle East oil typically produces more diesel fuel than, say, parts of Texas do. Another factor is that China has reduced its diesel exports, presumably to help achieve its net-zero greenhouse gas emissions goals.

And within the United States, refineries that produce diesel from crude oil are essentially maxed out. The nation has 11 fewer refineries operating today than before the pandemic, according to the American Petroleum Institute. One refinery that had served the East Coast closed after an explosion in 2019 and never re-opened. And some refineries in California are closed for retrofitting to process renewable fuel.

"We use a lot of diesel, probably more than what these refineries can produce," said Bob Costello, chief economist of the American Trucking Associations.

President Joe Biden's visit last week to Saudi Arabia was intended, in part, to encourage OPEC to produce more oil, which would mean more diesel fuel globally. Though no major deal was announced, Prince Mohammed bin Salman hinted that Saudi Arabia could potentially produce more oil.

But expecting OPEC to export more oil during high-demand summer months might be unrealistic, said Amy Myers Jaffe, an energy expert at Tufts University.

"The important thing," she said, "is to make sure that our allies, together with OPEC, don't decrease any flows to the market at any junction, especially if we have some kind of disruption."

Even if American oil and gas producers increase production, tough challenges would remain — namely, finding additional refinery space and then enough pipeline capacity to transport any additional diesel.

In the meantime, some truckers are struggling to adjust while keeping goods moving. Sherri Brumbaugh, who runs a fleet of 90 trucks as head of Garner Trucking, has installed more fuel pumps on-site in Findlay, Ohio, because she can obtain diesel more cheaply than her truckers can on the road.

She also monitors where her drivers are buying fuel to make sure they're making wise decisions. And she tries to absorb the higher fuel costs herself as much as possible.

But "at some point," she said, "you've got to go to the customer and say, 'I've got to increase this rate.' "

Brumbaugh declined to say how much she's raised rates on her customers, which range from bottled beverage companies to dishwasher manufacturers.

Lately, she said, there's been less retail freight to haul. "It may be an indication of a recession," she said. "I hope not."

Cargo Transporters, which runs 470 trucks and 1,800 trailers, raised its rates, too, and has been turning down some jobs to Florida, where trucks often must return without a load, said Shawn Brown, a company executive. When there's no cargo on a truck, no one pays the trucking company. But the driver still has to be paid, and fuel is still burned.

"When that trailer's not loaded and there's no revenue being generated and a mile is run, we're eating that," Brown said.

UPS and FedEx have more than doubled their fuel surcharges on ground deliveries year-over-year, according to calculations by Cowen Research and AFS Logistics.

Farmers also face higher costs. But they can't easily raise prices, because they often don't control the price of their goods. Milk and grain prices, for example, are set by the market.

"It's costing us more for freight to get things delivered to the farm, and it's costing more to haul things away," said David Fisher, a dairy farmer in Madrid, New York, who is president of the New York Farm Bureau, which lobbies governments on behalf of farmers. "We're planting crops and harvesting crops, and the cost of those are going to be higher, but we don't know if we can recoup those costs."

To burn less fuel, he's considered skipping a tillage pass, a maneuver whereby a tractor manipulates soil to enhance crop growth. But doing so would risk having fewer crops to harvest.

A year ago, Fisher was spending $8,000 a week on fuel. This year, he said, the figure reached around $20,000.

"Everybody I talk to has quite a bit of anxiety over these fuel prices," Fisher said.

Biden has called on Congress and states to suspend their gasoline or diesel taxes for a few months to help alleviate pain for drivers, but Congress appears unwilling to enact a tax holiday. Some states temporarily suspended some taxes on diesel and other motor fuels.

With high diesel prices persisting, LaBree and her husband are working more hours to manage costs. They used to stay on the road for four days and come home to Missouri for three. Now, she said, "we have to stay out for five — sometimes six — days to make up for what we've lost from fuel."

"Most truckers like to think of ourselves as, we're serving our country, moving goods around to keep America going," LaBree said. "But at what point are we doing it for free? I can't run a business that way."

From the college dorm trenches: What to bring, leave at home

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For the uninitiated, outfitting a college dorm room can be a dizzying experience. Doing it at a time of high inflation can make it even more daunting.

The first step: Meticulously go over what the school allows and provides. If you want a microwave and minifridge, are the energy-saving combo models required? Do you need foam pool noodles to avoid hitting your head under an upper bunk, and if so, might the school provide them? Exactly how thick can a mattress topper be?

"You can see the look of terror on parents' faces," said Marianne Szymanski, an independent product researcher who has sent two kids to college. "You know, did I get the right mattress pad? It's crazy."

Etsy's trend expert, Dayna Isom Johnson, said self-expression is top of mind for dorm-bound kids in such things as faux headboards and unique dresser knobs.

"Two of my favorite dorm trends right now are mood-boosting hues that incorporate bright and energetic colors like neon tones, and heritage styles, a nostalgic trend that embodies the traditional collegiate look with items like plaid linens, wood-toned furniture and monograms," she said.

There's no end to help out there, from parents swapping tips in social media groups to seasoned college students offering hacks on TikTok.

Some suggestions:

LIGHTING & CHARGING

Dorm rooms have notoriously bad light, and notoriously few electrical outlets in convenient spots. Many schools don't allow extension cords. For power strips, which are almost always permitted, consider going vertical with a tower that offers surge protection, USB ports and outlets that can accommodate a range of differently shaped plugs.

It may be time to get a three-way charger. Storage carts, headboards and stands with charging capability are plentiful.

Use double-sided tape or hook-and-loop strips to fasten a power strip to the frame of an elevated bed for easy access.

For students so inclined, putting on makeup can be a problem that a lighted makeup mirror can solve. A desk or clip-on lamp is a must for studying. Consider a shared floor lamp. Neon signs are also popular as decorative lighting.

BEDDING & LAUNDRY

Think extra-long twin sheets, mattress protector and thick, cozy mattress pad, but do know some schools don't allow certain types of gel toppers, Szymanski said. As for all those throw pillows, where do they go when it's time to sleep? Usually on the perhaps-not-so-clean floor, so maybe buy fewer. Better yet, take along a body pillow.

Buying two or three sets of sheets does mean using up some already limited storage, but students not terribly laundry-responsible won't go into crisis when the dirties pile up. And if beds are elevated for storage, get curtains to cover the clutter.

What type of laundry hamper to get is a hot topic, and depends on how far from the room the washers and dryers live. There are rolling hampers, compact mesh hampers and all manner of bags. For trekking up and down stairs, huge laundry backpacks (some with padded shoulder straps) are perfect.

A hack: Invest in a clothing steamer or wrinkle release fabric spray rather than an iron.

SHELVING & HOOKS

Extending storage with shelving is a dorm-size jigsaw puzzle. Is there room for over-the-bed shelving? Does the school permit hutches on top of desks, or provide them?

Pro tip: Not a great idea to swap sturdy shelving for an over-the-toilet bathroom version that might not be able to handle something heavy, like a microwave. Also, if a bed will be elevated but not all the way up, a tall bedside stand with extra shelves or drawers might be useful.

Ask the school: Can shelving or stands of any kind be placed in front of windows?

And remember those locker shelves from high school? Use them to extend space in a nightstand or desk.

Those Command stick-on hooks? Bring oh so many, along with the removable poster strips made not to damage walls. Also pick up a couple of over-the-door hangers for bags, coats, robes and hoodies.

CLOSETS & OTHER STORAGE

For the closet, consider sturdy vertical hanger extenders and hanging shoe and clothing storage. Yes, such storage takes up space and adds weight. Can an extra rod be installed?

Storage cubes can triple as seating and step stool, as opposed to a decorative pouf that is simply pretty and comfy.

Under-bed or in-closet storage drawers are essential, along with extra baskets, or at least a bowl for random, easily lost smaller items. Medium plastic baskets for scarves, socks and the like can be used on the top closet shelf.

CLEANING & COOLING

Vacuum cleaners are often available, but they're usually heavy and must be lugged back and forth. Szymanski has a hack for that. Not your run-of-the-mill portable vacuum but an ultra-mini handheld and battery-operated version called the Ayla. It's tube-like and just 11 inches tall.

Some students recommend a duster with cling power, along with a dehumidifier or air purifier.

Portable fans are tiny but mighty. Woozoo, a cult favorite, makes oscillating and remote-controlled versions.

Another Szymanski hack: A roll of Rakot75 towels for cleaning. They're 100% bamboo, come in a 75-count roll, and each sheet can be reused up to six months. Just rinse and reuse.

Don't forget small trash cans for the bathroom and sleeping area, after coordinating with roommates, of course, on this and other shared items.

DECOR & STYLE

Style is everything for some dorm dwellers.

"People really take pride and they really strive for a sophisticated, grown-up space," said Adar Kirkham,

a DIY designer and star of the new digital series "Freestyled" on HGTV.com. "It's now considered cool to decorate your room."

The pros are mixed on whether removable, peel-and-stick wallpaper is a good idea. Some schools may not allow it and it might not adhere to textured walls. Kirkham suggests using it to decorate desk drawers or other storage units.

Some kids bring along decorative mirrors to hang, rather than the usual all-body vertical kind, or they hang strings of twinkle lights.

The site Dormify.com is full of design inspiration and products. This year's freshmen are more confident than last year's about personalizing their dorm room, said Amanda Zuckerman, Dormify's co-founder and CEO.

"More saturation and color is really popular, so bringing in bright pink, bright orange, bright green and turquoise," she said.

According to Pinterest, searches are up for hippy and preppy dorm styles.

"People are increasingly searching for things like funky mirror ideas, which have tripled since last year. Indoor plant styling is also on the rise. Searching for preppy dorm room has increased 80%. Pink and blue are some really strong colors for that preppy aesthetic," said Pinterest's data insights lead Swasti Sarna.

BATHROOM & MISCELLANEOUS

Consider getting some scented Steripod toothbrush protectors. Dorms are dusty. Bathrooms get gross. Toothbrushes might have to be toted around. It should be changed every three months.

Bathrooms are often shared, and stuff gets mixed up. An organizer is essential. Pro tip from the trenches: Use an over-the-door organizer for bathroom stuff. Dormify sells one with a small face mirror built in.

Kirkham suggests a rolling bathroom caddy with just the essentials for quick trips in and out.

Minifridge tip: If allowed leeway on what kind to use, pick one with a separate freezer compartment. It might just guard against freezing food below. Some kids forgo the freezer completely to get more fridge space.

Kirkham, whose show premieres July 24, suggests a minifridge stand that elevates the unit and includes additional storage.

"Everything in a dorm room has to have multiple functions," she said.

A small, portable, battery-operated blender could be useful. It doesn't take up a lot of space and it helps students eat healthy options stored in room fridges. Szymanski likes the Blendi.

A tool kit comes in handy, as does a first aid kit. To help elevate a bed, Szymanski said, bring along a rubber mallet.

And rather than a bedside canvas caddy, try an attachable bunk bed tray table. It can hold a drink, a phone and more.

Last but not least: a permanent marker good for labeling fabric as well as plastic.

Elevator project in Old Jerusalem leads to surprising finds

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Installing an elevator doesn't normally involve a 2,000-year plunge into an ancient city's history. But in Jerusalem, even seemingly simple construction projects can lead to archaeological endeavors.

Archaeologists from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem say they have made numerous discoveries, including an ornate first-century villa with its own ritual bath, after a project began to increase access for disabled people to Jerusalem's Western Wall.

The villa, located footsteps from where the biblical Jewish Temples stood, was uncovered during several years of salvage excavations in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's historic Old City. Archaeologists perform salvage excavations to make a scientific study of ancient artifacts and buildings before they are removed to make way for modern construction.

Jerusalem's Western Wall is the holiest site where Jews can pray and millions of worshipers and tourists

visit it each year. But to get to the site from the adjacent Jewish Quarter, visitors typically have to descend 142 steps, or take a long detour around the city walls to one of the nearby gates.

In 2017, the Jewish Quarter Reconstruction and Development Company got the green light to begin construction of two elevators to let visitors make the 26-meter (85-foot) descent with greater ease. The location was a narrow sliver of largely undeveloped slope abutting the existing staircase on the eastern edge of the Jewish Quarter.

"The Western Wall is not a privilege, it's elemental for a Jew or for any person from around the world who wants to come to this holy place," said Herzl Ben Ari, CEO of the development group. "We have to enable it for everybody."

However, like modern development projects in other ancient cities, such as Istanbul, Rome, Athens and Thessaloniki, archaeological finds slowed progress to a crawl.

"This plot of land where the elevator is going to be built remained undisturbed, giving us the great opportunity of digging through all the strata, all the layers of ancient Jerusalem," said Michal Haber, an archaeologist from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Five years into the undertaking, the archaeological work is nearing completion, but the elevators are only expected to be brought online in 2025.

During their dig, the archaeologists carefully peeled back successive layers of construction and debris that had accumulated over two millennia, over 9 meters (30 feet) in total. Historical waypoints included Ottoman pipes built into a 2,000-year-old aqueduct that supplied Jerusalem with water from springs near Bethlehem; early Islamic oil lamps; bricks stamped with the name of the 10th Legion, the Roman army that besieged, destroyed and was afterwards encamped in Jerusalem two millennia ago; and the remains of the Judean villa from the final days before the ancient Jewish Temple's destruction in the year 70.

Archaeologist Oren Gutfeld said they were surprised to uncover traces from Jerusalem's reconstruction as the Roman city of Aelia Capitolina in the 2nd century.

Fragments of frescoes and intricate mosaics from the villa indicated the wealth of the home's occupants. But upon reaching bedrock, Gutfeld and Haber's team made one last find: a private Jewish ritual bath hewn into the limestone mountainside and vaulted with enormous dressed stones.

Haber said the most significant thing about the bath, known as a mikveh, was its location overlooking the Temple esplanade.

"We are in the wealthy neighborhood of the city on the eve of its destruction," she said.

While the elevator project is less contentious, development or archaeology excavations in Jerusalem, a city is holy to three faiths, often take on a political dimension. The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem as the capital of their hoped-for state, while Israel considers the entire city as its eternal, undivided capital.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, which includes the Old City and holy sites to Jews, Christians and Muslims, in the 1967 war. It later annexed east Jerusalem in a move unrecognized by most of the international community.

Today in History: July 21, guilty verdict in "Monkey Trial"

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, July 21, the 202nd day of 2022. There are 163 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 21, 1925, the so-called "Monkey Trial" ended in Dayton, Tennessee, with John T. Scopes found guilty of violating state law for teaching Darwin's Theory of Evolution. (The conviction was later overturned on a technicality.)

On this date:

In 1861, during the Civil War, the first Battle of Bull Run was fought at Manassas, Virginia, resulting in a Confederate victory.

In 1944, American forces landed on Guam during World War II, capturing it from the Japanese some