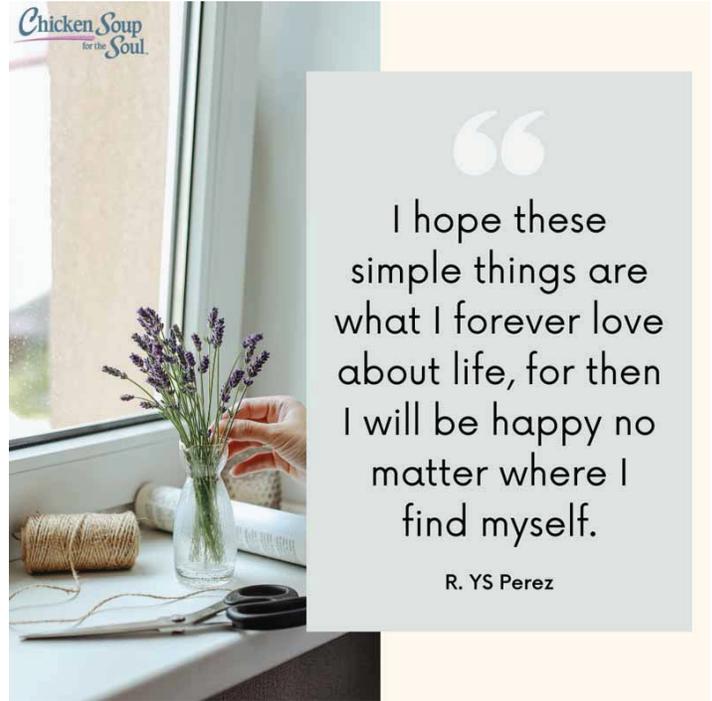


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## Help Wanted

Want a fun job with flexible hours? We're looking for 16 year olds and older with smiling faces! Free meals and we'll work around your schedule. Are you a mom wanting some hours while your kids are in school or a teenager wanting to earn some money or an adult looking for work? Daytime – evening – week-end hours are available and we'll make the hours work for you! Stop in for an application. Dairy Queen, 11 East Hwy 12 in Groton.

## CLEANER WANTED

**SATURDAY CLEANER NEEDED IN FERNEY, SD, 830 am to 130 pm. \$15 an hour. Must be dependable and be willing to work around customers coming into the family owned business. Please call Stephanie at 605-381-1758.**

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

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

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## Thrift Store coming to Downtown Groton

A thrift store is in the works for Groton. Nancy Larsen came before the Groton City Council Tuesday night to talk about the proposed Enrich Groton SoDak.

Larsen said, "After considerable thought we need to have some funding for the pantry and a steady stream of revenue. We can't expect our citizens and churches to be constantly donating to the pantry. Our cupboards are bare right now. We have a critical need. It is amazing. We have been limiting the food going out quite extensively."

Larsen said that the thrift stores in Aberdeen and Webster fund their respective pantries. In addition, she said that there is a need for used clothes and the current location of the pantry does not have room for them.

"People are excited about the idea of a thrift store," Larsen said. "I can't believe it." The pantry has seen an uptick in its usage. She said that people from Groton, rural Groton, Claremont, Andover and Ferney have used the facility. There were a couple from Aberdeen as well, but Larsen said they encouraged them to use the Aberdeen store. The Groton Pantry had about 75 visitors in July.

Larsen cited a story about an elderly lady to come to The Pantry. "She saw that we had toilet paper and she started to cry. People on food stamps cannot get paper products."

A new nonprofit corporation was formed to create Enrich Groton SoDak and to oversee the Pantry. Board members are Karen Babcock, Kari Bartling, April Abeln, Jason Hill, Lance Larsen, Topper Tastad and Nancy Larsen. The Groton Lions Club started The Pantry.

Mayor Scott Hanlon said, "It would be a great deal for the community." The council voted to allow Enrich Groton SoDak to use the available space at the old city hall at 209 N Main.

Darrell Hillestad came to talk during the public comments part of the meeting. He said that the airport has dried up and that packers would be coming out to do some work on the airport. He was also hoping that the survey work for the removal of water project would be done soon so work can proceed.

There was discussion on the \$150 deposit for the keys at the community center. There are a lot of keys that are lost at the baseball complex and so it was questioned if there is an issue of the community center key missing, which is much more rare. It was decided to keep the \$150 check deposit which will be returned when the keys are returned. There was also discussion on installing touch keypad locks at the ball field.

The intersection of N. Washington Street and West Fifth Avenue will become a four-way stop. In the past, east-west traffic had a stop sign, but then recently, it was converted to north-south traffic. The council approved putting the stop signs back up on the east-west route. It will be enforceable 20 days after the resolution is published. Tickets can be issued for not stopping on August 30th.

The council approved entering into an agreement with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture to receive an American Rescue Plan Act grant for water improvements. This will allow the Northeast Council of Governments the authority to apply for the grant on behalf of the City of Groton.

It was announced that the City of Groton has received the Secretary's Award for Drinking Water Excellence 2021 for the 21st consecutive year.

It was also announced that WEB Water will be increasing its rates starting in October. An adjustment in the city rates will be forthcoming.

The council authorized City Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich to attend the 2022 SD Municipal League Annual Conference October 4-7 in Watertown.

It was announced that there will be a Family Fun Fest on Main Street August 11th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The council authorized the closure of Main Street in the downtown district for the event.

## South Dakota Receives Presidential Disaster Declaration Approval For June Storm

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem announced today that South Dakota has received a Presidential Disaster Declaration that allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help South Dakota local governments in six counties statewide recover from public infrastructure damage sustained as a result of a tornado, severe storms, straight-line winds, flooding, and hail that occurred June 11-14, 2022.

Public infrastructure damage assistance will be provided to the counties of Butte, Haakon, Jackson, Jones, McPherson, and Spink. A preliminary damage assessment conducted by FEMA in early July indicated more than \$1.6 million in storm damage was done to public infrastructure in those counties.

In a letter requesting a disaster declaration, Noem wrote that the storm resulted in a tornado in Jones County, the first in that county since 1999; straight-line winds of more than 100 miles per hour; golf ball to grapefruit-sized hail; and heavy rains that led to flooding. More than 6,000 customers experienced power outages, and many customers were without power for up to four days.

FEMA staff was already in the state working on a Presidential disaster declaration that was approved for a May 12 storm that did public infrastructure damage in 20 counties and on two reservations. FEMA staff will begin work immediately to help governmental and certain private-non-profit entities with assistance efforts for this declaration. The Department of Public Safety's Office of Emergency Management will be the state agency assigned to help coordinate the assistance.

You can find the letter requesting the Presidential Disaster Declaration [here](#).

## The Life of LaVonne Raap



Memorial services for LaVonne Raap, 87, of Groton will be 10:00 a.m. Saturday, August 6th at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton. Pastor Kari Foss will officiate. Inurnment will follow in Groton Union Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation with family present will be held for one hour prior to services at the church on Saturday.

LaVonne passed away July 30, 2022 at Sun Dial Manor in Bristol.

LaVonne Cleo Kirschman was born on January 11, 1935 in Bristol, SD, the eldest daughter to Vern and Edna (Langager) Kirschman. LaVonne was raised in Pierpont and graduated from Pierpont High School in 1953. Following graduation, she attended the Aberdeen School of Commerce and worked for Aberdeen Monument. LaVonne married Chuck Raap of Andover on November 7, 1954 and together they raised four children. They farmed in the Andover area until moving to Aberdeen in 1960

where LaVonne was a homemaker. LaVonne and Chuck moved to Groton in 1967 where they operated the Circle Pines Motel together for five years. LaVonne later did home daycare, was an Avon representative for over 20 years and also was a Groton School 'lunch lady' for many years until retiring in 2019. She will be remembered for her Kumla dinners, homemade lefse, holiday gatherings for family and friends, and shopping for her granddaughters and great-grandchildren.

LaVonne was a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church. She was an active bowler nearly her entire life and won state championships several times. LaVonne was inducted into the South Dakota Women's Bowling Association Hall of Fame in 2000. She also enjoyed snowmobiling, golfing and camping with her family, along with good rummage sales and spending time with her six granddaughters.

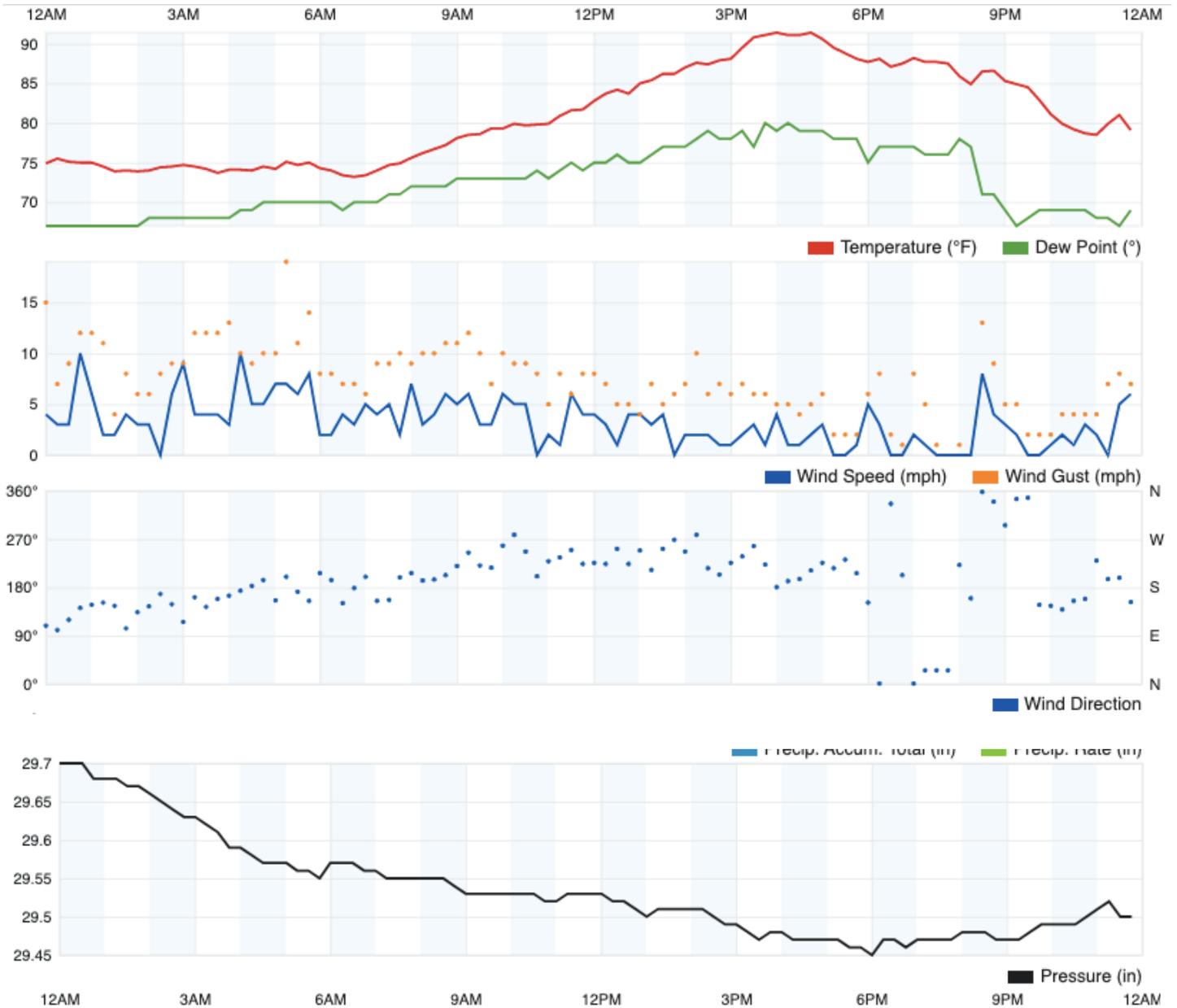
Grateful for sharing her life are her children: Kim (Dee Dee) Raap, Sioux Falls, Kris (Bob) Schneider, Pierre, Kevin (Marcia Hiles) Raap, Andover, and Koni (Seth) Sims, Sioux Falls; grandchildren: Jessica (Aaron) Johnson, Kelsey (Dave) Halpern, Sara (Matt) Odden, Kacie (Phil) Greenwood, Brittany (Ryan) Tennant, Melissa (Brandon) Spanier, Misty (Brandon) Heck, Chelsea (Bubba) Hildebrandt, and Taylor (Tracy) Johnson and 21 great-grandchildren. LaVonne is also survived by siblings: Karleen Holler, Yankton, Ruth Rademacher, Watertown, and Judy (Gary) McKiver, Shakopee, MN; sisters-in-law, Kay (Lyle) Kranzler, Sioux Falls, Laurel (Bob) Kost, Ft. Collins, CO, Allana Novotny, Wisner, NE; and brothers-in-law Jerry (Carol) Raap, Andover, and Tom Raap, Sioux Falls; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were her husband, Chuck, in 2020; her parents; brothers-in-law Bert Raap, Steven Raap, John Van Dyke, Wayne Holler, Burton Rademacher and Frank Novotny; sisters-in-law Darlene Raap, Patricia Jeter Lackey and Joan Van Dyke; and grandson-in-law Dale Olson.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 81 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 60 °F

Thursday



Hot and Breezy

High: 92 °F

Thursday Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 74 °F

Friday

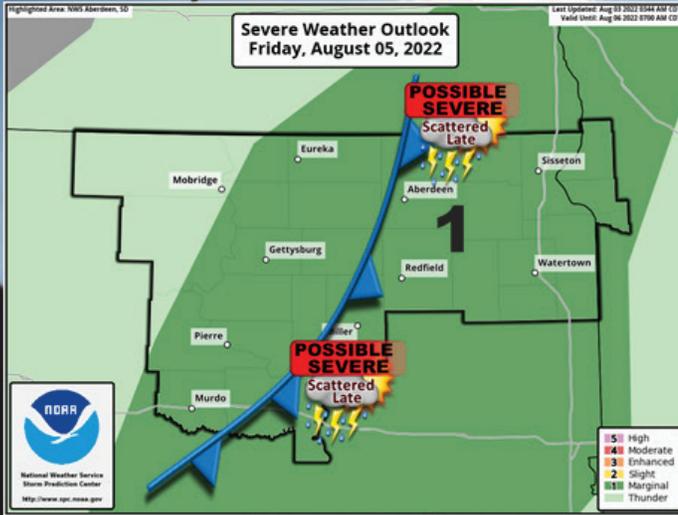


Breezy. Mostly Sunny then Chance T-storms

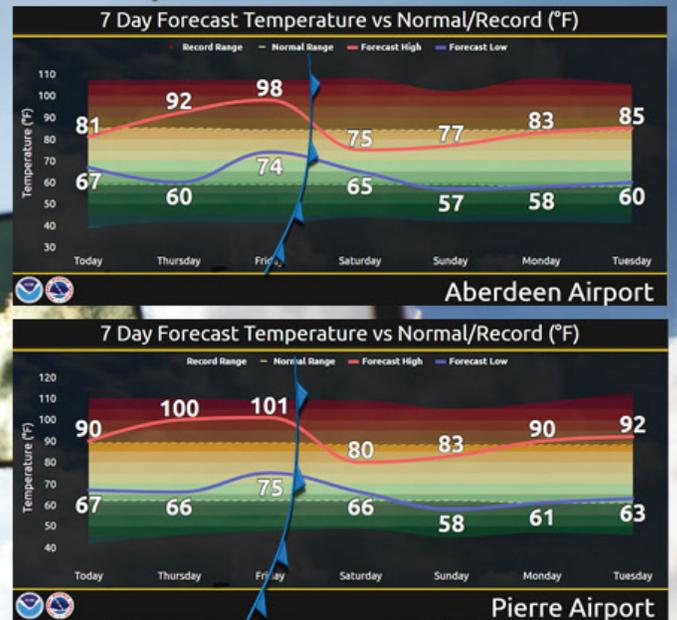
High: 98 °F

## A Temperature Roller Coaster

The Next Chance For Rain Friday And Friday Night Could Bring Severe Storms With It  
**Friday's Severe Weather Potential**



## Aberdeen And Pierre's 7-Day Temperature Forecasts At A Glance



Updated: 8/3/2022 4:07 AM CST

After Tuesday's extreme heat, cooler temperatures should abound today, before warmer air strikes back Thursday into Friday. But then, another cold front forecast to blast its way through the region Friday afternoon through Friday night, will set the stage for much cooler conditions over the weekend. Those cooler temperatures do not look to stick around long, as warmer air starts to creep back into the forecast by the middle of next week. The 7 day forecast does not have a lot of precipitation chances in it right now. But, the Friday afternoon through late Friday night timeframe could yield some scattered to numerous coverage of thunderstorms along that previously mentioned cold frontal passage at the end of the week.

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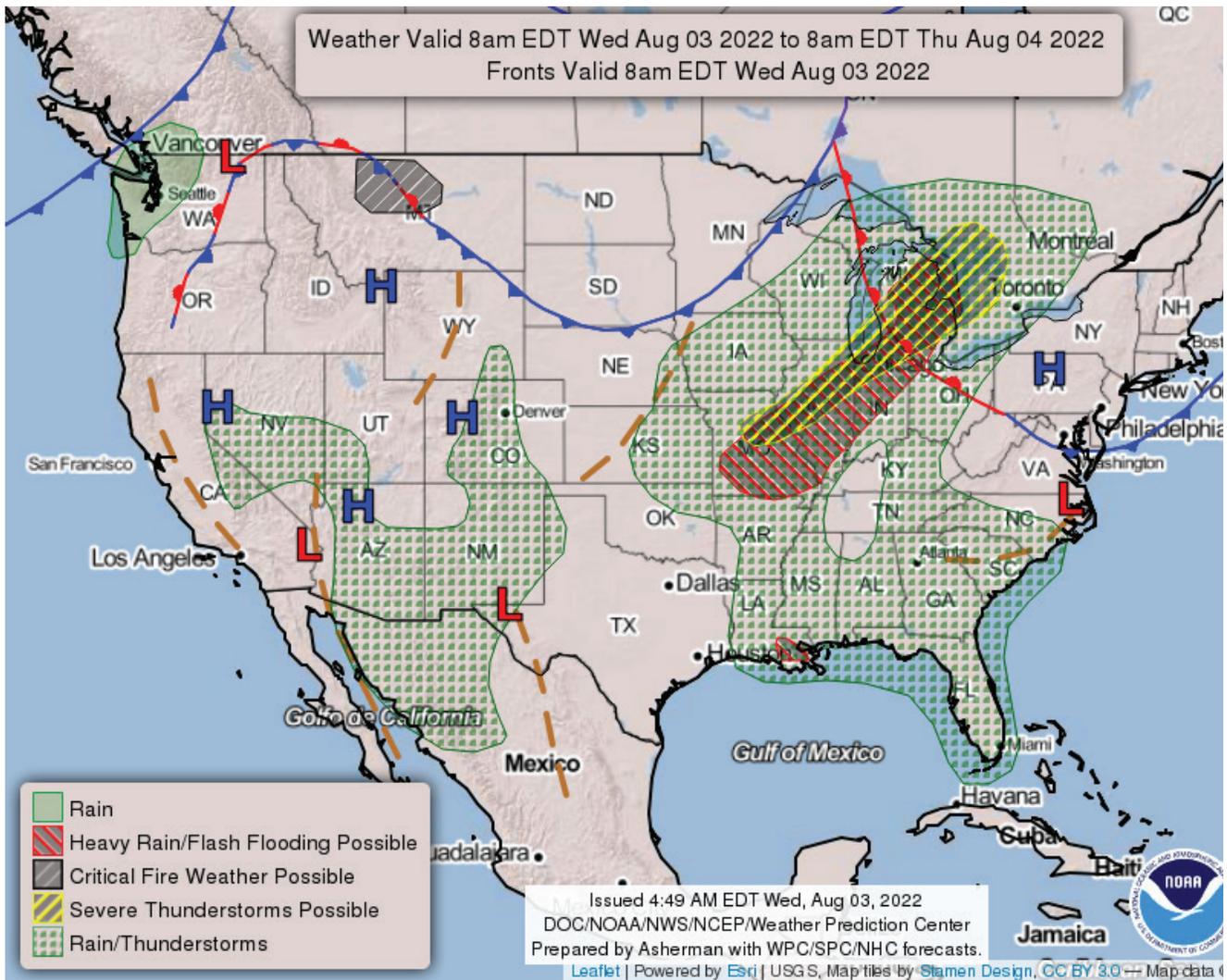
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 92 °F at 3:47 PM**  
**Low Temp: 73 °F at 6:39 AM**  
**Wind: 19 mph at 5:07 AM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

Day length: 14 hours, 41 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 107 in 1947  
Record Low: 39 in 1971  
Average High: 85°F  
Average Low: 59°F  
Average Precip in Aug.: 0.22  
Precip to date in Aug.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 14.32  
Precip Year to Date: 14.54  
Sunset Tonight: 8:59:32 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:18:47 AM



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## Today in Weather History

August 3, 1984: During the morning hours, estimated four to six inches of rain fell from west of Garden City in Clark County to north of Henry in Codington County. Low lying areas were flooded, and a potato field west of Garden City was washed out.

August 3, 1989: Strong thunderstorm winds gusted to 70 mph, driving golf ball size hail through most the windows on the west side of buildings in Amherst, Marshall County. Corn crops were stripped off their leaves with an estimated 1800 acres being severely damaged.

August 3, 1996: High winds up to 90 mph uprooted and damaged many trees in Mobridge. The roofs of two buildings were blown off while other roofs received some damage. Windows were broken out in eight vehicles at the South Dakota Winds up to 90 mph also caused damage in Herreid where doors on a concrete elevator were blown out.

August 3, 2008: Severe thunderstorms moved across north-central South Dakota during the early morning hours bringing large hail and damaging thunderstorm winds to the area. Isabel, Timber Lake, and Selby were among the hardest hit locations. Isabel in Dewey County saw eighty mph winds which damaged or downed several trees, damaged carnival equipment, destroyed some sheds, and rolled some large hay bales. High winds up to 80 mph severely damaged a barn, downed some power poles along with many trees and branches in and around Timber Lake. Also, several vehicles and many acres of crops were damaged by the hail and high winds. The Little Moreau Elk Lodge roof was destroyed, and some windows were broken. One-hundred mph winds downed six power poles and caused considerable damage to sunflowers, corn, wheat, and beans in and around Selby in Walworth County. Also, an empty grain bin was blown over and damaged. Numerous trees were snapped off. The coop seed building in Selby sustained considerable damage with many trees uprooted or damaged throughout town.

August 3, 2009: A cold front moving southeast across the area brought many severe thunderstorms to parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Large hail up to golf ball size along with wind gusts nearing 80 mph occurred across the area. Brown, Hyde, Lyman, and Gregory Counties were among the hardest hit locations. Hail and sixty mph winds significantly damaged many acres of soybeans and corn near Putney in Brown County. Seventy to 80 mph winds brought down several large trees along with many large tree branches in and around Highmore in Hyde County. The high winds also tipped over a semi, a gravity wagon, and a grain auger along with damaging several fences. There were also power outages in Highmore. Golf ball size hail combined with strong winds broke many windows in the house and dented several vehicles south of Kennebec in Lyman County. The house pet was also injured. Large hail, up to two inches in diameter, fell in a swath a few miles wide from northwestern to south-central Gregory County. The hail broke numerous windows, severely damaged siding and roofs of homes and other buildings, and severely damaged vehicles, while covering the ground in several places. Property damage has been particularly severe in the town of Gregory. Crop damage was also severe along the swath, with corn crops in some areas destroyed to the point of only small stubble left.

1885 - A tornado hit Philadelphia and Camden along its eight mile path. (David Ludlum)

1970: Hurricane Celia was the costliest tropical cyclone in Texas history until Hurricane Alicia in 1983. Hurricane Celia made landfall near Port Aransas as a major Hurricane, Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson scale with sustained winds of 130 mph.

1987 - A severe thunderstorm moved across Cheyenne, WY, during the mid afternoon. The thunderstorm produced hailstones up to two inches in diameter causing more than 37 million dollars damage. The eastern U.S. sweltered in the heat. A dozen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Paducah KY with a reading of 102 degrees. Beckley WV established an all-time record with an afternoon high of 93 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms representing what remained of Hurricane Chantal drenched Wichita, KS, with 2.20 inches of rain in four hours during the early morning. Thunderstorms developing in Minnesota produced wind gusts to 85 mph at Baudette during the afternoon, and softball size hail at Lake Kabetogama, during the evening. Jamestown, ND, reported a record hot afternoon high of 103 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



## ON BEING AN EXAMPLE

Gilbert Stewart was one of America's greatest artists. He became famous because of the magnificent portraits he painted. In fact, he painted the portraits of the first six presidents of the United States. His work was easily recognized because of its beautiful coloring. On one occasion, a group of his competitors stole his colors thinking that they could match his work if they had his paints.

When Benjamin West, another artist, heard that other artists stole his paints, he went to them and said, "It's no use to steal his colors. If you want to paint as he paints, you must steal his eyes."

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he challenged them to "follow my example and do as I do." This is a rather bold statement, and we may think he is better than us and is asking us to copy his lifestyle. Not so. Paul encouraged the Corinthian Christians, and us today, to do as he did: imitate Christ. He was willing and able and empowered to imitate Him because he read and meditated on God's Word, spent time with Him in prayer and worship. And if we, as His disciples, want to imitate Christ, we must do as Paul did: study, meditate, pray. Only as we come to know Him, love Him and worship Him will we be able to imitate Him. And, if we want to know Him as Paul knew Him, we spend time with Him.

Prayer: Lord, grant us a passion to want to love You, know You, serve You, and finally imitate You. May we willingly surrender our lives to You and become like You. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Scripture For Today: 1 Corinthians 4:14-16 For I became your father in Christ Jesus when I preached the Good News to you. So I urge you to imitate 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)

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## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:

Mega Millions

10-14-25-37-63, Mega Ball: 14, Megaplier: 3

(ten, fourteen, twenty-five, thirty-seven, sixty-three; Mega Ball: fourteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$36,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 202,000,000

### Biden declares South Dakota disaster for June storms

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — President Joe Biden on Tuesday granted South Dakota's request for a presidential disaster declaration to aid the recovery from June storms that included tornadoes and strong winds.

Gov. Kristi Noem requested the declaration, which allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist in recovery efforts in six counties: Butte, Haakon, Jackson, Jones, McPherson and Spink. A preliminary assessment estimated the storms caused more than \$1.6 million in damage.

From June 11 to June 14, Jones County recorded the first tornado in over two decades, straight-line winds of more than 100 miles per hour were recorded and hail the size of grapefruit fell, Noem wrote in a letter requesting the presidential disaster declaration.

### Pelosi says US will not abandon Taiwan as China protests

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi left Taiwan after a visit that heightened tensions with China, saying Wednesday that she and other members of Congress in her delegation showed they will not abandon their commitment to the self-governing island.

Pelosi, the first U.S. speaker to visit the island in more than 25 years, courted Beijing's wrath with the visit and set off more than a week of debate over whether it was a good idea after news of it leaked. In Taipei she remained calm but defiant.

"Today the world faces a choice between democracy and autocracy," she said in a short speech during a meeting with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen. "America's determination to preserve democracy, here in Taiwan and around the world, remains ironclad."

China, which claims Taiwan as its territory and opposes any engagement by Taiwanese officials with foreign governments, announced multiple military exercises around the island, parts of which will enter Taiwanese waters, and issued a series of harsh statements after the delegation touched down Tuesday night in the Taiwanese capital, Taipei.

Taiwan decried the planned actions, saying they violated the island's sovereignty.

"Such an act equals to sealing off Taiwan by air and sea, such an act covers our country's territory and territorial waters, and severely violates our country's territorial sovereignty," Capt. Jian-chang Yu said at a briefing by the National Defense Ministry.

The Chinese military exercises, including live fire, are to start Thursday and be the largest aimed at Taiwan since 1995, when China fired missiles in a large-scale exercise to show its displeasure at a visit by then-Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui to the U.S.

Taiwanese President Tsai responded firmly Wednesday to Beijing's military intimidation.

"Facing deliberately heightened military threats, Taiwan will not back down," Tsai said at her meeting with Pelosi. "We will firmly uphold our nation's sovereignty and continue to hold the line of defense for

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democracy.”

China’s official Xinhua News Agency announced the military actions Tuesday night, along with a map outlining six different areas around Taiwan. Arthur Zhin-Sheng Wang, a defense studies expert at Taiwan’s Central Police University, said three of the areas infringe on Taiwanese waters, meaning they are within 12 nautical miles (22 kilometers) of shore.

Using live fire in a country’s territorial airspace or waters is risky, said Wang, adding that “according to international rules of engagement, this can possibly be seen as an act of war.”

Pelosi’s trip has heightened U.S.-China tensions more than visits by other members of Congress because of her high-level position as leader of the House of Representatives. She is the first speaker of the House to visit Taiwan in 25 years, since Newt Gingrich in 1997. However, other members of Congress have visited Taiwan in the past year.

Tsai, thanking Pelosi for her decades of support for Taiwan, presented the speaker with a civilian honor, the Order of the Propitious Clouds.

China’s response has been loud and has come on multiple fronts: diplomatic, economic and military.

Shortly after Pelosi landed Tuesday night, China announced live-fire drills that reportedly started that night, as well as the four-day exercises starting Thursday.

The People’s Liberation Army Air Force also flew a contingent of 21 war planes Tuesday night, including fighter jets, toward Taiwan. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng also summoned the U.S. ambassador in Beijing, Nicholas Burns, to convey the country’s protests the same night.

On Wednesday, China also banned some imports from Taiwan, including citrus fruit and fish.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV published images of PLA drills and video Wednesday, although it was unclear where they were being conducted.

Pelosi addressed Beijing’s threats Wednesday morning, saying she hopes it’s clear that while China has prevented Taiwan from attending certain international meetings, “that they understand they will not stand in the way of people coming to Taiwan as a show of friendship and of support.”

She noted that support for Taiwan is bipartisan in Congress and praised the island’s democracy. She stopped short of saying that the U.S. would defend Taiwan militarily, emphasizing that Congress is “committed to the security of Taiwan, in order to have Taiwan be able to most effectively defend themselves.”

Her focus has always been the same, she said, going back to her 1991 visit to Beijing’s Tiananmen Square, when she and other lawmakers unfurled a small banner supporting democracy two years after a bloody military crackdown on protesters at the square. That visit was also about human rights and what she called dangerous technology transfers to “rogue countries.”

Pelosi visited a human rights museum in Taipei that details the history of the island’s martial law era and met with some of Taiwan’s most prominent rights activists, including an exiled former Hong Kong bookseller who was detained by Chinese authorities, Lam Wing-kee.

Pelosi, who is leading the trip with five other members of Congress, also met with representatives from Taiwan’s legislature.

“Madam Speaker’s visit to Taiwan with the delegation, without fear, is the strongest defense of upholding human rights and consolidation of the values of democracy and freedom,” Tsai Chi-chang, vice president of Taiwan’s legislature, said in welcome.

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has sought to tone down the volume on the visit, insisting there’s no change in America’s longstanding “one-China policy,” which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei.

Pelosi said her delegation has “heft,” including Gregory Meeks, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Raja Krishnamoorthi from the House Intelligence Committee. Reps. Andy Kim and Mark Takano are also in the delegation.

She also mentioned Rep. Suzan DelBene, whom Pelosi said was instrumental in the passage of a \$280 billion bill aimed at boosting American manufacturing and research in semiconductor chips — an industry that Taiwan dominates and is vital for modern electronics.

She departed Wednesday evening for South Korea, the next stop on an Asia tour that also included

Singapore, Malaysia and Japan.

## Takeaways: Abortion backlash in Kansas, Greitens' collapse

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In one of the biggest days of this year's primary campaign season, voters rejected a measure that would have made it easier to restrict abortion rights in red-state Kansas and repudiated a scandal-tarred former governor seeking a U.S. Senate seat in Missouri.

Meanwhile, a Republican congressman who voted to impeach then-President Donald Trump after the Jan. 6 insurrection lost to a Trump-backed opponent early Wednesday, while two other impeachment-supporting House Republicans awaited results in their primaries in Washington state.

In Michigan, a political newcomer emerged from the state's messy Republican gubernatorial primary, setting up a rare woman-vs.-woman general election matchup between conservative commentator Tudor Dixon and incumbent Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Takeaways from election results Tuesday night:

### RED-STATE KANSAS REJECTS ANTI-ABORTION AMENDMENT

Kansas may seem like an unlikely place for abortion rights supporters to notch a major victory.

But on Tuesday, voters in the conservative state resoundingly rejected a constitutional amendment that would have allowed the Legislature to ban abortion. It was the first major test of voter sentiment since the Supreme Court ruling in June to rescind the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationwide.

The amendment would have allowed the Legislature to overturn a 2019 state Supreme Court decision declaring access to abortion a "fundamental" right under the state constitution.

Its failure at the ballot in a state Donald Trump won by nearly 15 points issues a stark warning to Republicans, who have downplayed the political impact of the high court's ruling. It also hands a considerable win to Democrats, who are feeling newly energized heading into what was expected to be a tough midterm election season for them.

Kansas currently allows abortion until the 22nd week of pregnancy. After that, abortion is allowed only to save a patient's life or to prevent "a substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function."

Gov. Laura Kelly, a Democrat who supports abortion rights, has warned that the Republican-led Legislature's efforts to ban abortion would hurt the state. On Tuesday it became clear that many voters agree with her.

### TRUMP'S REVENGE

First-term Michigan Rep. Peter Meijer was one of 10 Republicans who joined Democrats to vote in favor of impeaching Trump after the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack. On Tuesday, he became the latest victim of the former president's revenge campaign.

Meijer, an heir to a Midwestern grocery store empire and a former Army reserve officer who served in Iraq, lost the GOP contest to former Trump administration official John Gibbs.

"I'm proud to have remained true to my principles, even when doing so came at a significant political cost," Meijer said in a statement.

In addition to having Trump's endorsement, Gibbs also shared Trump's penchant for conspiracy theories: He parroted Trump's lies about a stolen 2020 election and once spread false claims that Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign chair participated in a satanic ritual that involved bodily fluids.

Meijer is the second of the 10 impeachment-supporting Republicans to lose his primary, joining South Carolina Rep. Tom Rice, who was defeated by a Trump-backed challenger in June. Four others opted to retire rather than face voters' wrath. And so far, only California Rep. David Valadao has survived — just barely.

Also on the ballot Tuesday were Washington state Reps. Jaime Herrera Beutler and Dan Newhouse, who both faced Trump-backed challengers over their impeachment votes. But those contests were too early to

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call because Washington state conducts elections by mail, delaying the reporting of results.

Herrera Beutler's challengers include Joe Kent, a former Green Beret who has cultivated links to right-wing extremist groups and employs a campaign aide who was a member of the Proud Boys. Newhouse's opponents include Loren Culp, a former GOP gubernatorial nominee who falsely claimed that his 13-point loss to Democratic Gov. Jay Inslee in 2020 was the result of voter fraud.

## TRUMP'S SLATE

Most of the candidates on Trump's Arizona slate had a successful primary night.

Senate candidate Blake Masters, whose campaign was bankrolled by tech investor Peter Thiel, won his Republican primary after echoing Trump's lies of a stolen election and playing up cultural grievances that animate the right, including critical race theory and allegations of big tech censorship.

In the secretary of state race, Mark Finchem, an Arizona state lawmaker who worked to overturn Trump's 2020 loss in the state, won his primary.

In the state Legislature, Arizona House Speaker Rusty Bowers, who testified at a Jan. 6 hearing about Trump's pressure to overturn the 2020 election, lost his Republican primary for a state Senate seat to a Trump-backed former lawmaker, David Farnsworth.

The possible exception to Trump's streak of wins was Republican gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake. She was trailing the establishment-backed Karrin Taylor Robson, who was endorsed by Trump's estranged vice president, Mike Pence. That could still change. Election-day and late-arriving mail ballots that would likely favor Lake are still being counted.

Arizona has emerged as a key swing state. But it also carries significance to Trump after Joe Biden became the first Democratic presidential candidate in decades to carry what was once a reliably Republican state.

## GREITENS' COMEBACK COLLAPSES

Democratic hopes of picking up a U.S. Senate seat in deep-red Missouri faltered Tuesday after Republican voters selected Attorney General Eric Schmitt as their nominee over former Gov. Eric Greitens, who resigned in disgrace in 2018.

Greitens, they predicted, would be toxic in a general election. Democrats landed a strong recruit in beer heir Trudy Busch Valentine, who won her primary Tuesday. And the state's Republican establishment prepared to put millions of dollars behind an independent candidate in the general election, potentially fracturing the GOP vote.

But Greitens came up short Tuesday, finishing a distant third behind Schmitt and U.S. Rep. Vicky Hartzler. His campaign's tailspin can likely be traced back to March, when his ex-wife submitted a bombshell legal filing in the former couple's child custody case.

Sheena Greitens said in a sworn statement that Eric Greitens had abused her and one of their young sons. She also said he displayed such "unstable and coercive behavior" in the lead-up to his 2018 resignation that others took steps to limit his access to firearms.

At the time, Greitens faced potential impeachment after his former hairdresser testified that he blindfolded and restrained her in his basement, assaulted her and appeared to take a compromising photo to pressure her to keep quiet about an affair.

He resigned from office — and avoided testifying under oath about the affair.

He launched his comeback campaign for Senate last year, marketing himself as an unabashedly pro-Trump conservative. And while many in Missouri wrote him off, one important political figure didn't: Donald Trump, who mused publicly about Greitens' attributes.

But in the end, Trump stopped short of issuing an endorsement, instead issuing a vague statement this week throwing his support behind "ERIC."

And on Tuesday, the other "ERIC" in the race — Schmitt — won.

## MESSY RACE IN MICHIGAN

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At its essence, Michigan's raucous Republican gubernatorial primary was a contest of which candidate's personal baggage was the least disqualifying. On Tuesday, conservative media personality Tudor Dixon was the victor, setting up a November general election against Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in the battleground state.

Dixon's past as an actor in a series of vulgar and low-budget horror movies became a campaign issue. But her career moonlighting in titles such as "Buddy BeBop Vs. the Living Dead" and a vampire TV series called "Transitions" paled in comparison to her rivals' problems.

One rival, Ryan Kelley, faces federal misdemeanor charges after he was recorded on video in Washington during the Jan. 6 insurrection directing a mob of Trump supporters toward a set of stairs leading to the U.S. Capitol. Kelley has pleaded not guilty.

Another, Kevin Rinke, is a former car dealer who settled a series of lawsuits in the 1990s after he was alleged to have made racist and sexist comments, which included calling women "ignorant and stupid" and stating that they "should not be allowed to work in public."

A third, Garrett Soldano, is a chiropractor and self-help guru who has sold supplements he falsely claimed were a therapeutic treatment for the coronavirus.

Many in the state's Republican establishment, including billionaire former Trump education secretary Betsy DeVos, view Dixon as their best shot at defeating Whitmer. Trump endorsed Dixon in the race Friday, just a few days before the primary.

But her primary victory is an outcome few would have predicted months ago. In addition to the shortcomings of her rivals, her path was cleared when the two best-known candidates in the race were kicked off the ballot in May for submitting false petition signatures.

## China, US allies divided over Pelosi's Taiwan visit

BEIJING (AP) — U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan has drawn bipartisan support at home and backing among the world's democracies.

Meanwhile, China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory with no right to an independent identity, has rallied support among fellow authoritarian states. The divided opinions speak both to China's growing global influence and the backlash that has prompted among the world's liberal societies.

President Joe Biden's administration was not openly supportive of Pelosi's trip, with the president himself saying the military felt it was "not a good idea right now" amid heightened tensions between the sides.

China has responded to the visit by announcing a series of days-long military exercises surrounding Taiwan and issuing a stream of invective aimed at the U.S. and Taiwan governments, accusing them of colluding to undermine Chinese sovereignty and national security. China in 2016 severed contacts with independence-leaning Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen over her refusal to endorse its insistence that the island and mainland are part of a single Chinese nation.

"This action is a solemn deterrent against the recent major escalation of the negative actions of the United States on the Taiwan issue, and a serious warning to the 'Taiwan independence' forces seeking 'independence,'" the People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theater command said in a statement Tuesday.

Exercises will include air and sea drills and long-range missile targeting, the statement said. Operators are already bracing for disruptions to civil aviation and commercial shipping.

The Chinese response has sparked concerns about a new Taiwan Strait crisis, similar to that of 1995-96, when China held threatening military exercises and bracketed the island with missile strikes in waters north and south of its main ports. Despite their division amid civil war more than 70 years ago, China has maintained its threat to invade and has massively increased its capabilities through investments in missiles, navy ships and its air force.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, whose country's ties with China have nosedived in recent years, declined to comment specifically Wednesday on Pelosi's visit. However, he noted, "We live in an era where the strategic competition and increased tension in our region and where China has taken a more aggressive posture in the region."

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"But our position on Taiwan is clear," he added. "We don't want to see any unilateral change to the status quo and we'll continue to work with partners to promote peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait."

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno also avoided commenting on Pelosi's Taiwan visit, but raised concern about China's planned live-fire military exercises in the regional seas that encompass parts of Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone. Matsuno said Japan has conveyed Tokyo's "concerns" to Beijing about the exercise.

"The peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait is important not only for Japan's national security but also for the international community, and Japan's position is that we expect peaceful solution of the issues surrounding Taiwan through dialogue," Matsuno said.

Chinese ally North Korea, meanwhile, used the visit to accuse the U.S. of being "the root cause of harassed peace and security in the region," and said it supported Beijing in the confrontation surrounding Pelosi's visit.

"We vehemently denounce any external force's interference in the issue of Taiwan, and fully support the Chinese government's just stand to resolutely defend the sovereignty of the country and territorial integrity," a government spokesperson was quoted as saying. "The U.S. scheme to disturb the growth and development of China and its efforts for accomplishing the cause of reunification is bound to go bankrupt."

Russia — another Chinese ally and whose invasion of Ukraine has fueled concerns over China's own threat to annex Taiwan by force — called the visit a "clear provocation, which is in line with the United States' aggressive policy aimed at comprehensively containing China."

Beijing "has the right to take measures to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity in relation to the Taiwan issue," the government said in a statement.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov further criticized the visit in comments Wednesday during a stop in Myanmar, whose Moscow-backed military government is accused of widespread human rights abuses.

"It's an aspiration to prove to everyone their impunity and show lawlessness. 'It's my way only,' something like this," Lavrov said in reference to the U.S. "I see no other reason to create such an annoyance almost out of the blue."

China and Russia have closely aligned their foreign policies in recent years, with Moscow backing China over Taiwan and Beijing refusing to criticize Russia for invading Ukraine, while accusing the U.S. and NATO of provoking the conflict and leveling punishing economic sanctions against Russia.

China's official Xinhua News Agency also quoted the Chinese secretary general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as saying the China and Russia-dominated grouping of mainly Central Asia states "firmly opposes interference in the internal affairs of its member states by any external force."

"Pelosi visited China's Taiwan region in disregard of China's strong opposition and serious representations, and the Chinese government has expressed its firm opposition to and stern condemnation of the visit," Zhang Ming was quoted as saying.

Pelosi has made criticism of China and support for Taiwan a key focus in her more than three decades in Congress, famously unveiling a banner commemorating victims of the Chinese military's bloody 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square during a visit to the site in 1991.

In remarks at a meeting with Tsai on Wednesday, she said, "Today the world faces a choice between democracy and autocracy."

"America's determination to preserve democracy, here in Taiwan and around the world, remains ironclad," Pelosi said.

After Taiwan, she will visit South Korea and Japan, both major U.S. security partners in Asia.

## First ship with Ukraine grain cleared to sail on to Lebanon

By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — The first grain ship to depart Ukraine under a wartime deal was poised to cross through the Bosphorus Strait and sail to Lebanon after its cargo was checked and approved Wednesday, Turkish and Ukrainian authorities said.

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An inspection team spent about 90 minutes conducting checks aboard the Sierra Leone-flagged Razoni, which was carrying Ukrainian corn and anchored off Istanbul, Turkey's defense ministry said.

The team included officials from Ukraine, Russia, Turkey and the United Nations. The Razoni's horn rang out as the inspectors left the ship.

Pictures tweeted by the Turkish Ministry of Defense showed an inspector reaching into an open container on the Razoni and touching the grain.

The Razoni, which the United Nations says is carrying 26,527 tons of corn, set sail Monday from Odesa on Ukraine's Black Sea coast. It is bound for Lebanon, its final destination.

Ukraine's Ministry of Infrastructure confirmed the ship had passed the inspection and said 17 other vessels "are loaded and are awaiting permission to leave."

Inspectors, some wearing white helmets, headed out to the Razoni under rain in two boats, escorted by the Turkish coast guard. Turkish media said there were about 20 inspectors.

The checks aim to ensure that incoming vessels are not carrying weapons and that outgoing ones are bearing only grain, fertilizer or related food items, not any other commodities.

More ships from Ukraine are expected to set out in the coming days, raising hope that world food shortages can be alleviated. Some 27 vessels have been waiting in three Ukrainian ports with cargo and signed contracts, ready to go, according to U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric.

An estimated 20 million tons of grain have been stuck in Ukraine since the start of war. The U.N.-brokered agreement last month to release the grain calls for the establishment of safe corridors through the mined waters outside Ukraine's ports.

The holdup of shipments because of the war has worsened rising food prices worldwide and threatened hunger and political instability in developing nations.

Most of the grain stuck in Ukraine is to feed livestock, according to David Laborde, an expert at the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington. Only 6 million tons is wheat, and just half of that is for human consumption, Laborde said. He said the Razoni is loaded with chicken feed.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says the resumption of grain exports will reduce Russian authorities' ability to extract concessions from the West. "They are losing one of the opportunities to terrorize the world," he said in his nightly video address late Tuesday.

Russia's war against Ukraine has also disrupted energy supplies in western Europe, with Moscow drastically cutting how much it sends amid fears it could stop sending any at all.

Meanwhile, the U.N. nuclear chief warned that Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Ukraine "is completely out of control" and urgent steps are needed to avoid a nuclear accident.

Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said in an interview Tuesday with The Associated Press that the situation is getting more perilous every day at the Zaporizhzhia plant in the southeastern city of Enerhodar, which Russian troops seized in early March, soon after their Feb. 24. invasion of Ukraine.

"Every principle of nuclear safety has been violated" at the plant, he said. "What is at stake is extremely serious and extremely grave and dangerous."

He issued an urgent plea to Russia and Ukraine to quickly allow experts to visit the sprawling complex.

Meanwhile, Russian forces kept up their bombardment of the southern Ukrainian city of Mykolaiv, hitting it with shells twice over the past 24 hours — around 9 p.m. on Tuesday and 5 a.m. on Wednesday, governor of the Mykolaiv region Vitaliy Kim reported.

The shelling damaged a pier, an industrial enterprise, residential buildings, a garage cooperative, a supermarket and a pharmacy, Kim said. It wasn't immediately clear if there were any casualties.

Mykolaiv is a southern port city, somewhat on par with Odesa, and is located on the Black Sea. The Russians have said in April they want control over not just eastern, but southern Ukraine, too. Taking over Odesa and Mykolaiv in the south will give them control over the entire Black Sea coast and a land corridor to the breakaway Moldovan region of Transnistria.

Amid the relentless onslaught by Moscow's forces, Zelenskyy issued an order to all those remaining in

the country's embattled Donetsk region to evacuate as soon as possible.

The compulsory evacuation effort aims to take 200,000-220,000 people out of the eastern province by fall, officials say.

## **Inflation weighs on back-to-school buying for many families**

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and CLAIRE SAVAGE undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — To understand the impact of surging inflation on this year's back-to-school spending, look no further than children's rain boots with motifs like frogs and ladybugs made by Washington Shoe Co.

Spending held steady for these evergreen items even after the Kent, Washington-based business was forced to pass along 15% price increases in January to its retail clients because of soaring transportation costs. But by May, as gas and food prices also surged, shoppers abruptly shifted away from the \$35 higher-end rain boots to the no-frills versions that run \$5 to \$10 cheaper, its CEO Karl Moehring said.

"We are seeing consumers shift down," said Moehring, noting dramatic 20% sales swings in opposite directions for both types of products. "Wages are not keeping up with inflation."

This back-to-school shopping season, parents — particularly in the low to middle income bracket — are focusing on the basics while also trading down to cheaper stores amid surging inflation, which hit a new 40-year high in June.

Last week, Walmart noted higher prices on gas and food are forcing shoppers to make fewer purchases of discretionary items, particularly clothing. Best Buy, the nation's largest consumer electronics chain, cited that inflation has dampened consumer spending on gadgets. Both companies cut their profit forecasts as a result.

Such financial struggles amid the industry's second-most important shopping season behind the winter holidays mark a big difference from a year ago when many low-income shoppers, flush with government stimulus and buoyed by wage increases, spent freely.

Matt Priest, CEO of trade group Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America, noted that last year, the group's retail members saw a noticeable uptick in online sales mid-month when shoppers received their monthly child tax credit checks that amounted to a couple of hundred dollars. This season, without that bump, he expects shoppers will buy fewer shoes for their children and rely on private label brands.

Inflation has squeezed household finances for Jessica Reyes, 34, who took her daughters Jalysa, 7, and Jenesis, 5, to a "Back to School Bash" event last month in the Chicago's northside that offered free backpacks filled with supplies for students.

"I feel like everything is going up these days," she said at the event. "We're a one-income household right now ... so I think it's greatly affected us in all areas, in bills and in house necessities and school necessities."

Out shopping, her girls were drawn to the school supplies featuring TV characters and animals they love, but she'll focus on the plain versions.

"They want the cute ones, you know, the kitty ones. And those are always more expensive than the simple ones. And same thing with folders, or notebooks, or pencils," Reyes said.

Earlier, Manny Colon and his daughters Jubilee, 8, and Audrey, 5, stopped by the back-to-school event to pick out backpacks.

Colon, 38, works at his daughters' elementary school. He said his spouse has had to pick up extra work because of high prices for school supplies, groceries and gas.

"I think it's definitely impacted us," he said.

Multiple forecasts point to a solid back-to-school shopping season.

Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks spending across all payment forms including cash, forecasts back-to-school spending will be up 7.5% from July 14 through Sept. 5 compared with the year-ago period when sales rose 11%. For the 2020 back-to-school period, sales fell 0.8% as the pandemic wreaked havoc on schools' reopening plans and back-to-school shopping.

Still, higher prices are propping up much of the numbers.

A basket of roughly a dozen supply items showed a price increase of nearly 15% on average for this

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back-to-school season compared with a year ago, according to retail analytics firm DataWeave. The price of backpacks are up nearly 12% to an average of \$70, for example.

Back 2 School America, an Illinois-based nonprofit that distributes back-to-school kits to kids from low-income families, has seen "a significant increase in costs of supplies," including a 10% increase from their vendor with another possible mark-up on the way, said the organization's CEO Matthew Kurtzman. And shipping costs have also gone up.

Thanks to increased support this year, Back 2 School America will be able to cover the new costs and is on track to distribute more kits than ever before — 12,000 so far, and more than 30,000 by the end of August, Kurtzman said. But the funding isn't guaranteed in the future as worries about a recession increase.

Retailers face big challenges to get shoppers to spend, particularly on clothing.

Walmart said last week it was taking extra discounts on clothing to clear out inventory. Analysts believe those sales will exert more pressure on other rivals to discount more to stay competitive. However, Walmart said it's encouraged by the early signs for sales of school supplies.

Meanwhile, Gap's low-price Old Navy division is guaranteeing a price freeze on its denim from July 29 through the end of September.

As for Washington Shoe, Moehring said he's shifting production away from higher priced children's boots to more value-priced products in the months ahead. The company still sees annual sales ahead of last year, but he's being cautious.

"I believe it is a muddy outlook," he said.

## China blocks some Taiwan imports but avoids chip disruption

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — China blocked imports of citrus and fish from Taiwan in retaliation for a visit by a top American lawmaker, Nancy Pelosi, but has avoided disrupting one of the world's most important technology and manufacturing relationships.

The two sides, which split in 1949 after a civil war, have no official relations but multibillion-dollar business ties, especially in the flow of Taiwanese-made processor chips needed by Chinese factories that assemble the world's smartphones and other electronics.

They built that business while Beijing threatened for decades to enforce the ruling Communist Party's claim to the island by attacking.

Two-way trade soared 26% last year to \$328.3 billion. Taiwan, which produces half the world's processor chips and has technology the mainland can't match, said sales to Chinese factories rose 24.4% to \$104.3 billion.

"The global economy cannot function without chips that are made in either Taiwan or China," said Carl B. Weinberg of High-Frequency Economics in a report.

On Wednesday, Beijing blocked imports of citrus fruits and frozen mackerel from Taiwan after Pelosi, speaker of the House of Representatives, arrived in Taiwan. Those products are only a fraction of Taiwan's total exports to the Chinese mainland. The ruling party has avoided disrupting the flow of chips and other industrial components, a step that would send shock waves through the shaky global economy.

Beijing also announced four days of military exercises with artillery fire in waters around Taiwan. That might delay or disrupt shipping to and from the island, one of the biggest global traders.

The potential disruption adds to concerns over weakening global economic growth, but Asian stock markets rose Wednesday after there was no immediate sign of Chinese military action.

The Communist Party says Pelosi's visit might embolden Taiwan to make its decades-old de facto independence permanent. Beijing says that would lead to war.

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has sought to tone down the volume on the visit, insisting there's no change in America's longstanding "one-China policy," which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei.

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Meeting leaders in Taiwan, Pelosi said she and other members of Congress in a visiting delegation were showing they will not abandon their commitment to the self-governing island.

"America's determination to preserve democracy, here in Taiwan and around the world, remains ironclad," Pelosi said in a short speech during a meeting with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen.

"Facing deliberately heightened military threats, Taiwan will not back down," Tsai said.

The ban on imports of citrus fruits and frozen mackerel will hurt suppliers seen as Tsai's supporters.

Taiwan plays an outsize role in the chip industry for an island of 24.5 million people, accounting for more than half the global supply.

Its producers including Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. make the most advanced processors for smartphones, tablet computers, medical devices and other products. Taiwan says chip sales to China factories rose 24.4% last year to \$104.3 billion.

Beijing has invested billions of dollars in developing its own industry, which supplies low-end chips for autos and appliances but cannot support the latest smartphones, tablet computers, medical devices and other products.

Chips are China's biggest import at more than \$400 billion a year, ahead of crude oil.

That concentration has fueled concern in the United States and Europe about relying too heavily on supplies that might be disrupted by conflict. The U.S. government is trying to expand its domestic chip production capacity.

Overall, China is Taiwan's biggest trading partner, taking more than twice as much of its exports as the United States, the island's No. 2 foreign market.

Beijing has tried to use access to its markets to undermine Tsai and other Taiwanese leaders it accuses of pursuing independence.

The customs agency blocked imports of cookies and other food products from more than 100 Taiwanese suppliers on Monday ahead of Pelosi's visit, according to the Global Times and other Chinese news outlets. There was no official announcement.

The Communist Party also has used military action in the past to try to hurt Taiwanese leaders by disrupting the island's economy.

The mainland tried to drive voters away from then-President Lee Teng-hui ahead of the island's first direct presidential elections in 1996 by firing missiles into shipping lanes.

That forced shippers to cancel voyages and raised insurance costs but backfired by allowing Lee to brag about standing up to Beijing in front of cheering supporters. Lee won the four-way election with 54% of the vote.

## Arizona GOP primary tests power of Trump's election lies

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona Republicans were deciding Tuesday between a well-known former news anchor and a development attorney in the race for governor of a crucial battleground state.

Former President Donald Trump backed Kari Lake, who walked away from her nearly three-decade career in television news and embraced his lies about the 2020 election. She faced Karrin Taylor Robson, who was backed by prominent Republicans around the country looking to push their party to move on from Trump.

The race was too early to call, with Lake and Robson separated by a slim margin.

As the midterm primary season enters its final stretch this month, the Arizona races are poised to provide important clues about the GOP's direction. Victories by Trump-backed candidates could provide the former president with allies who hold sway over the administration of elections as he considers another bid for the White House in 2024. Defeats, however, might suggest openness in the party to a different path forward.

The former president endorsed and campaigned for a slate of contenders who support his falsehoods, including Lake, who says she would have refused to certify President Joe Biden's narrow Arizona victory. Robson said the GOP should focus on the future despite an election she called "unfair."

In the race to oversee elections as Arizona secretary of state, Trump also backed a state lawmaker who

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was at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 and claims the former president was cheated out of victory.

"I think the majority of the people, and a lot of people that are supporters of Trump, they want to move on," said former Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer, who is backing Robson. "I mean, that was two years ago. Let's go. Let's move."

The election is playing out on one of the biggest midterm primary nights of the year — one that had some warning signs for Republicans.

In Kansas, voters rejected a state constitutional amendment that would have allowed the Legislature to restrict or ban abortion. They were the first voters to weigh in on abortion rights since the U.S. Supreme Court revoked the constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy.

The rejection in a conservative state is a sign of potential energy for Democrats, who hope the anger at the court's abortion ruling will overcome inflation concerns and President Joe Biden's flagging popularity.

Tudor Dixon, a conservative commentator, won the GOP primary for Michigan governor, emerging atop a field of little-known conservatives days after Trump endorsed her. She will face Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in November.

Republican Rep. Peter Meijer lost to a Trump-backed challenger and a pair of Washington lawmakers were fighting to hang onto their seats after voting to impeach Trump following the Jan. 6 insurrection.

And in Missouri, Attorney General Eric Schmitt won the Republican nomination for senator and will face Democrat Trudy Busch Valentine, an heiress of the Anheuser-Busch beer fortune. And two Republican House members from Washington state who voted to impeach Trump are facing primary challengers.

But the contests are especially salient in Arizona, a longtime Republican stronghold that has become more favorable to Democrats in recent years because of explosive growth in and around Phoenix. The primary and the fall election will provide insight into whether Biden's success here in 2020 was a onetime event or the onset of a long-term shift away from the GOP.

With such high stakes, Arizona has been central to efforts by Trump and his allies to cast doubt on Biden's victory with false claims of fraud.

Federal and state election officials and Trump's own attorney general have said there is no credible evidence the election was tainted. The former president's allegations of fraud were also roundly rejected by courts, including by judges Trump appointed. A hand recount led by Trump supporters in Arizona's largest county found no proof of a stolen election and concluded Biden's margin of victory was larger than the official count.

Though Trump is still the most popular figure inside the GOP, his efforts to influence primary elections this year have yielded mixed results. His preferred candidates in states such as Ohio and Pennsylvania prevailed in their primaries.

But in Georgia, another state that is central to Trump's election lies, his handpicked candidate for governor was defeated by more than 50 percentage points. Georgia's Republican secretary of state was also renominated over a Trump-backed primary rival.

"You have entrusted me with your most sacred possession in a constitutional republic — your vote," Robson told supporters as she awaited election results.

The former president is hoping he'll have more success in Arizona, where the incumbent governor, Doug Ducey, can't run for reelection. That could give Trump a better opportunity than in Georgia to influence the winner.

Lake is well known in much of the state after anchoring the evening news in Phoenix for more than two decades. She ran as a fierce critic of the mainstream media, which she says is unfair to Republicans, and other enemies of Trump's Make America Great Again movement, including the late Sen. John McCain's family.

A vocal supporter of Trump's election lies, Lake said her campaign was "already detecting some stealing going on" in her own race, but she repeatedly refused to provide any evidence for the claim.

Robson, whose housing developer husband is one of the state's richest men, is mostly self-financing her campaign. The GOP establishment, growing increasingly comfortable creating distance from Trump, rallied around her over the past month with a series of endorsements from Ducey, former New Jersey Gov. Chris

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Christie and former Vice President Mike Pence.

The groundswell of establishment support for Robson drew national scrutiny to the race for what it says about the GOP base ahead of the crucial presidential primary in two years.

"Everyone wants to try to make this some kind of proxy for 2024," said Christie, who ran for president in 2016. "Believe me, I've been through enough of these to know that 2024 will be decided by the people who step up to the plate ... and how they perform or don't perform at that time."

Robson is running a largely old-school Republican campaign focused on cutting taxes and regulations, securing the border and advancing school choice. She has also emphasized Lake's prior support for Democrats, including a \$350 contribution to the last Democratic president.

"I can't vote for someone who supported Barack Obama," said Travis Fillmore, 36, a firearms instructor from Tempe who planned to vote for Robson. He said he remains a Trump backer and believes the 2020 election was stolen from him, but Lake's support for Obama was disqualifying.

On the Democratic side, Secretary of State Katie Hobbs defeated Marco Lopez, a former mayor of Nogales and border enforcement official during Obama's administration.

As Arizona's top elections official, Hobbs endeared herself to Democrats with an impassioned defense of the integrity of the 2020 election, a stance that has drawn death threats. However, she's been weighed down by a discrimination case won by a Black policy adviser from Hobbs' time in the Legislature.

Trump-backed Blake Masters won the Arizona GOP Senate race. He is a 35-year-old first-time candidate who has spent most of his career working for billionaire Peter Thiel, who is bankrolling his campaign. Masters emphasized cultural grievances that animate the right, including critical race theory and allegations of big tech censorship.

Until Trump's endorsement, the race had no clear front-runner among Masters, businessman Jim Lamon and Attorney General Mark Brnovich, all of whom jockeyed for his support.

Lamon said Trump made a mistake in endorsing Masters and dug into his own fortune to highlight Masters' ties to technology firms and his writings as a college student supporting open borders. Lamon signed a certificate falsely stating that Trump had won Arizona in 2020 and that he was one of the state's "duly elected and qualified" electors.

Trump soured on Brnovich and may have torpedoed his campaign when the attorney general's election fraud investigation failed to produce criminal charges against election officials.

Masters will take on incumbent Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly in the fall.

The Republican race for Arizona secretary of state was won by Mark Finchem, a Trump-backed candidate who was at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. His competition included Shawna Bolick, a state lawmaker who has pushed for legislation allowing the Legislature to overturn the will of the voters and decide which candidate gets the state's 11 electoral votes for president. The GOP establishment rallied around advertising executive Beau Lane, who says there were no widespread problems with the 2020 election.

Republican state House Speaker Rusty Bowers, who gave testimony to the House Jan. 6 committee about Trump's pressure campaign following the 2020 election, was defeated by a Trump-backed challenger in his bid to move up to the state Senate.

## Kansas voters resoundingly protect their access to abortion

By JOHN HANNA and MARGARET STAFFORD Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas voters on Tuesday sent a resounding message about their desire to protect abortion rights, rejecting a ballot measure in a conservative state with deep ties to the anti-abortion movement that would have allowed the Republican-controlled Legislature to tighten restrictions or ban the procedure outright.

It was the first test of voter sentiment after the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in June that overturned the constitutional right to abortion, providing an unexpected result with potential implications for the coming midterm elections.

While it was just one state, the heavy turnout for an August primary that typically favors Republicans

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was a major victory for abortion rights advocates. With most of the vote counted, they were prevailing by roughly 20 percentage points, with the turnout approaching what's typical for a fall election for governor.

The vote also provided a dash of hope for Democrats nationwide grasping for a game-changer during an election year otherwise filled with dark omens for their prospects in November.

"This vote makes clear what we know: the majority of Americans agree that women should have access to abortion and should have the right to make their own health care decisions," President Joe Biden said in a statement.

After calling on Congress to "restore the protections of Roe" in federal law, Biden added, "And, the American people must continue to use their voices to protect the right to women's health care, including abortion."

The Kansas vote also provided a warning to Republicans who had celebrated the Supreme Court ruling and were moving swiftly with abortion bans or near-bans in nearly half the states.

"Kansans bluntly rejected anti-abortion politicians' attempts at creating a reproductive police state," said Kimberly Inez McGuire, executive director of Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity. "Today's vote was a powerful rebuke and a promise of the mounting resistance."

The proposed amendment to the Kansas Constitution would have added language stating that it does not grant the right to abortion. A 2019 state Supreme Court decision declared that access to abortion is a "fundamental" right under the state's Bill of Rights, preventing a ban and potentially thwarting legislative efforts to enact new restrictions.

The referendum was closely watched as a barometer of liberal and moderate voters' anger over the Supreme Court's ruling scrapping the nationwide right to abortion. In Kansas, abortion opponents wouldn't say what legislation they'd pursue if the amendment were passed and bristled when opponents predicted it would lead to a ban.

Mallory Carroll, a spokesperson for the national anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, described the vote as "a huge disappointment" for the movement and called on anti-abortion candidates to "go on the offensive."

She added that after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, "We must work exponentially harder to achieve and maintain protections for unborn children and their mothers."

The measure's failure also was significant because of Kansas' connections to anti-abortion activists. Anti-abortion "Summer of Mercy" protests in 1991 inspired abortion opponents to take over the Kansas Republican Party and make the Legislature more conservative. They were there because Dr. George Tiller's clinic was among the few in the U.S. known to do abortions late in pregnancy, and he was murdered in 2009 by an anti-abortion extremist.

Anti-abortion lawmakers wanted to have the vote coincide with the state's August primary, arguing they wanted to make sure it got the focus, though others saw it as an obvious attempt to boost their chances of winning. Twice as many Republicans as Democrats have voted in the state's August primaries in the decade leading up to Tuesday's election.

"This outcome is a temporary setback, and our dedicated fight to value women and babies is far from over," said Emily Massey, a spokesperson for the pro-amendment campaign.

The electorate in Tuesday's vote wasn't typical for a Kansas primary, particularly because tens of thousands of unaffiliated voters cast ballots.

Kristy Winter, 52, a Kansas City-area teacher and unaffiliated voter, voted against the measure and brought her 16-year-old daughter with her to her polling place.

"I want her to have the same right to do what she feels is necessary, mostly in the case of rape or incest," she said. "I want her to have the same rights my mother has had most of her life."

Opponents of the measure predicted that the anti-abortion groups and lawmakers behind the measure would push quickly for an abortion ban if voters approved it. Before the vote, the measure's supporters refused to say whether they would pursue a ban as they appealed to voters who supported both some restrictions and some access to abortion.

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Stephanie Kostreva, a 40-year-old school nurse from the Kansas City area and a Democrat, said she voted in favor of the measure because she is a Christian and believes life begins at conception.

"I'm not full scale that there should never be an abortion," she said. "I know there are medical emergencies, and when the mother's life is in danger there is no reason for two people to die."

An anonymous group sent a misleading text Monday to Kansas voters telling them to "vote yes" to protect choice, but it was suspended late Monday from the Twilio messaging platform it was using, a spokesperson said. Twilio did not identify the sender.

The 2019 Kansas Supreme Court decision protecting abortion rights blocked a law that banned the most common second-trimester procedure, and another law imposing special health regulations on abortion providers also is on hold. Abortion opponents argued that all of the state's existing restrictions were in danger, though some legal scholars found that argument dubious. Kansas doesn't ban most abortions until the 22nd week of pregnancy.

The Kansas vote is the start of what could be a long-running series of legal battles playing out where lawmakers are more conservative on abortion than governors or state courts. Kentucky will vote in November on whether to add language similar to Kansas' proposed amendment to its state constitution.

Meanwhile, Vermont will decide in November whether to add an abortion rights provision to its constitution. A similar question is likely headed to the November ballot in Michigan.

In Kansas, both sides together spent more than \$14 million on their campaigns. Abortion providers and abortion rights groups were key donors to the "no" side, while Catholic dioceses heavily funded the "yes" campaign.

The state has had strong anti-abortion majorities in its Legislature for 30 years, but voters have regularly elected Democratic governors, including Laura Kelly in 2018. She opposed the proposed amendment, saying changing the state constitution would "throw the state back into the Dark Ages."

State Attorney General Derek Schmidt, a Republican hoping to unseat Kelly, supported the proposed constitutional amendment. He told the Catholic television network EWTN before the election that "there's still room for progress" in decreasing abortions, without spelling out what he would sign as governor.

Although abortion opponents pushed almost annually for new restrictions until the 2019 state Supreme Court ruling, they felt constrained by past court rulings and Democratic governors like Kelly.

## Clergy, bags of cash set off new sectarian brawl in Lebanon

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A Lebanese archbishop who carried more than \$460,000 from Israel to Lebanon is at the center of the latest sectarian showdown in crisis-hit Lebanon, and the case could even spill over into presidential politics.

The situation has ramped up discord between two powerful political camps: Lebanon's Shiite Muslim Hezbollah group and the Maronite Church.

The clergyman was briefly detained last month by Lebanese border agents who confiscated 20 suitcases stuffed with cash and medicine, arguing he violated Lebanon's strict laws against normalization with Israel.

Hezbollah's opponents say the Iran-backed group has sway over Lebanese institutions and security agencies, and have used them to target the Maronite Church. The archbishop, Moussa el-Hajj, is a senior member of the Maronite Church, whose patriarch has become increasingly critical of the Iran-backed Hezbollah and its growing influence in Lebanon.

Much of the Christian community saw the archbishop's detention as an attack on the church.

In a sermon late last month, Maronite Patriarch Beshara al-Rai denounced the legal proceedings against el-Hajj as a fabrication, arguing that the money was for charity. He demanded that the charges be dropped and that the military judge who presides over the case resign.

Al-Rai was met with a standing ovation and protesters gathered the following week at his summer residence to rally in support of the church.

Underlying the dispute are decades of hostile relations between Israel and Lebanon. The two countries

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have formally been at war since Israel's founding in 1948, and Lebanon has tough anti-normalization laws on the books. The border remains closed, though several top Lebanese Christian officials have permission to cross on occasion to visit their flock in Israel, the Palestinian territories and Jordan.

On July 20, Lebanese border agents held el-Hajj for eight hours after he returned from Israel with 20 suitcases of medicine and cash. El-Hajj said he was delivering money and assistance from Lebanese Christians in northern Israel to their relatives in the cash-strapped country. The agents confiscated the money, the medicine, el-Hajj's cellphone and passport.

Hezbollah officials saw el-Hajj's act as normalization with Israel and accused him of delivering money from Lebanese affiliated with a militia that once fought alongside Israel.

Thousands of Lebanese moved to Israel after it ended an 18-year occupation of parts of southern Lebanon in 2000. Many of those who fled to Israel were linked to the main pro-Israeli militia in the region, the South Lebanon Army, which collapsed after Israeli troops withdrew.

The case could have wider political implications.

The country for months has been without a fully functional government and is expected to hold presidential elections before the end of October.

Under Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing system, its president must always be a Maronite. Incumbent President Michel Aoun is an ally of Hezbollah, but the Maronite patriarch's increasingly vocal criticism of Hezbollah suggests there is no guarantee the next president will continue an alliance with the militia.

Lebanon's parliament once had a clear majority for Hezbollah and its allies but since elections in May it now stands neck and neck with some of its staunchest opponents, most notably the Christian Lebanese Forces party.

Most Christian members of parliament and legislators of other sects who oppose Hezbollah rallied to back the archbishop and the Maronite church.

"We agree with everything they have said, whether it's their calls for removing the judge, or the selectivity in how the archbishop was treated," said Elias Hankash, a Christian legislator of the Kataeb Party. "They (Hezbollah officials) shouldn't just take out their anger on a religious official to send their message to the patriarch."

Imad Salamey, a political science professor at the Lebanese American University in Beirut, said much is at stake for Hezbollah.

"We're coming to a presidential election and following that we have to form a new government, and set a government policy to negotiate with the IMF (International Monetary Fund)," he said. "I think Hezbollah wants to send all kinds of messages at the moment, and is determined to show it continues to be the major player among all."

Hezbollah's leadership didn't comment. Its leader Hassan Nasrallah in a recent interview denied the group's influence in security agencies and the judiciary. "In Lebanon there are laws, and the security agencies take action towards any collaborator or possible collaborator," he said.

The head of Hezbollah's block in parliament Mohammad Raad was more explicit, saying the archbishop's delivery of money and medicine was normalization, which he called a "national betrayal and a crime."

A person close to el-Hajj's case told The Associated Press that authorities offered to al-Rai to return the archbishop's confiscated passport and phone, but keep the bags of cash and medicine. Al-Rai reportedly refused and the archbishop will not attend any hearings.

Meanwhile, poverty deepens for millions of Lebanese, about three-quarters of its population. Rampant power cuts, breadlines and inflation plague households across the country's mosaic of 18 religious sects following decades of nefarious economic mismanagement and corruption from Lebanon's ruling parties.

People demand accountability and reform, so divisive political tension could be a good smokescreen, said Mohanad Hage Ali, research fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center.

"The political class is resorting to the old method of sectarian polarization," Hage Ali said. "It has been effective, and I think it will continue to be effective."

## Michigan GOP Rep. Meijer, who voted to impeach Trump, loses

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Michigan Republican Rep. Peter Meijer lost Tuesday to a primary challenger backed by former President Donald Trump as he and two other Republican U.S. House members who voted to impeach Trump fought to hang onto their seats.

"A Constitutional Republic like ours requires leaders who are willing to take on the big challenges, to find common ground when possible, and to put their love of country before partisan advantage," Meijer said in a statement before The Associated Press called the race for his challenger, John Gibbs. "Though this was not the outcome we hoped for, I will continue to do everything possible to move the Republican Party, West Michigan, and our country in a positive direction."

The primaries for the other two House Republicans who voted for impeachment, Washington state Reps. Jaime Herrera Beutler and Dan Newhouse, were too early to call Wednesday morning. The three races were the biggest test yet for GOP incumbents who broke with Trump after a mob of his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol in a bid to keep him in power on Jan. 6, 2021. Trump has vowed revenge against the 10 House Republicans who crossed party lines for the impeachment vote, and he endorsed GOP challengers to them in the midterm elections.

In other races, Rep. Haley Stevens ousted Rep. Andy Levin from Congress after prevailing in their Democratic primary in Michigan. Democratic Missouri Rep. Cori Bush and Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib, both members of the progressive "Squad" in Congress, sailed through their primary elections. In Arizona, a leading figure in the QAnon conspiracy movement was badly trailing in his Republican primary.

Some of the top elections:

### FACING VOTERS AFTER IMPEACHMENT VOTES

Meijer, a Michigan lawmaker who voted for impeachment just days after he was sworn into office for his first term, lost to the Trump-backed Gibbs, a businessman and missionary who served in the Trump administration under Housing Secretary Ben Carson.

Gibbs contended Meijer is not a true Republican because he voted to impeach Trump, and chastised Meijer for supporting bipartisan gun control legislation that President Joe Biden signed into law in June.

Gibbs will face Democrat Hillary Scholten in November in the state's Democratic-leaning 3rd Congressional District.

In Washington state, Herrera Beutler and Newhouse have an advantage over Meijer because their primaries are nonpartisan, and the top two vote-getters, regardless of political party, will move on to the general election in November. Each faces crowded fields with multiple Republican candidates, increasing the likelihood that their opponents will split the vote amongst themselves.

Herrera Beutler, who has been in Congress since 2011, was in second place Wednesday morning in early returns in the 3rd Congressional District, trailing Democrat Marie Perez but slightly ahead of fellow Republican Joe Kent. Kent, a former Green Beret whose wife was killed by a suicide bomber in 2019 in Syria, has been endorsed by Trump. He has heavily promoted the former president's lies that the 2020 election was stolen.

In a Zoom call with reporters after early returns posted, Herrera Beutler said she was "cautiously optimistic" about the results that indicate she could advance to November with Democratic opponent Marie Gluesenkamp Perez.

"If I get through this, I'm not going to change, I'm not going to be a different person," she said. "No one will work harder for this district than I will."

Newhouse had a narrow lead over Democrat Doug White in the 4th Congressional District, which Newhouse has represented since 2015. Republican Loren Culp, a former small-town police chief endorsed by Trump, was in third place in early returns.

Of the 10 House Republicans who voted for impeachment, four opted not to run for reelection in this year's midterm elections. As for the ones who did, Rep. Tom Rice of South Carolina lost to a Trump-endorsed challenger in June, while Rep. David Valadao of California survived a primary challenge. Rep. Liz Cheney

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of Wyoming is bracing for defeat in her Aug. 16 primary against a Trump-backed rival.

## CANDIDATE LINKED TO QANON

Ron Watkins, one of the most prominent figures in the QAnon conspiracy movement, will not be heading to Congress this year.

Watkins was in dead last in early returns in his Republican primary for Arizona's sprawling 2nd Congressional District. He served as the longtime administrator of online message boards that helped seed the conspiracy movement whose adherents believe a group of satanic, cannibalistic child molesters secretly runs the globe.

Watkins no longer runs the message boards and has denied fueling the QAnon movement. He said he was running for Congress because he hopes to "fix the machine from the inside."

He was considered a long shot in the crowded GOP field, having been outpaced in campaign fundraising by the other candidates.

State Rep. Walter Blackman and Eli Crane, a former Navy SEAL who owns a bottle opener business and was endorsed by Trump, were at the top of the field Tuesday night. The winner will take on Democratic U.S. Rep. Tom O'Halleran in November in a district that favors Republicans.

## FROM COLLEAGUES TO COMPETITORS

Stevens' victory over Levin came in a newly drawn 11th Congressional District in suburban Detroit that favors Democrats, which means Stevens will likely win the seat in November's general election.

Stevens got a financial boost from the United Democracy Project, a super PAC launched by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, commonly called AIPAC. Levin, a progressive member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, has been highly critical of Israel's record on human rights.

The congresswoman flipped a district in 2018 that was long held by Republicans. Before running for office, she led the auto bailout under President Barack Obama.

Levin also won his first term in 2018, taking over the seat long held by his father, Rep. Sander "Sandy" Levin. He had been endorsed by Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

## CHALLENGING THE 'SQUAD'

In Michigan, Tlaib defeated three Democratic challengers as she seeks a third term in office this year. Because of redistricting, she's running in a newly drawn Detroit-area district that favors Democrats, so she is expected to easily carry the 12th Congressional District seat in November. Tlaib's main competition was longtime Detroit City Clerk Janice Winfrey, who had strong name recognition in the city.

Bush's win in Missouri came as she makes her first reelection campaign in the state's 1st Congressional District. She defeated state Sen. Steve Roberts, who hedged his campaign on the idea that Bush, a vocal advocate for defunding the police and moving money to social services and mental health programs, was too liberal even for heavily Democratic St. Louis.

Bush touted her accomplishments, including persuading the Environmental Protection Agency to clean up radioactive waste near a St. Louis County creek, pushing for climate change action and standing against evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 10 YEARS AFTER TUCSON SHOOTING, INTERN SEEKS GIFFORDS' SEAT

Daniel Hernandez Jr., the hero intern credited with saving Rep. Gabrielle Giffords' life after an attempted assassination in 2011, was running for her former seat in Congress but lost a Democratic primary.

Hernandez was a 20-year-old college student in his first week interning for Giffords when he went to her "Congress on your corner" constituent event. A gunman there opened fire, killing six and injuring 13. Hernandez kept the Democratic congresswoman conscious and applied pressure to her head wound until paramedics arrived.

## Kenya's election rips open scars of inequality, corruption

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — In the shadow of a glossy, thousand-dollar campaign billboard, one of many across Kenya's capital, street vendors struggle to make even 200 shillings (\$1.68) a day and often pocket none.

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Kenya's Aug. 9 election is ripping open the scars of inequality and corruption as East Africa's economic hub chooses a successor to President Uhuru Kenyatta. The vastly rich son of the country's founding leader, Kenyatta has deflected graft allegations by calling for transparency but done little in a decade in power to enable it.

The vendors on a barren patch along Nairobi's Outer Ring Road can hardly grasp the enormous amounts of money spent on next week's election. Few can. In Kenya, candidates aren't required to publicly account for campaign donations or spending. But voters have watched the helicopters and long convoys that have whisked top candidates around the country for months.

"They're spending millions of dollars, but I'm not sure if it's their own money or the public's money," said Martin Wambua, who sells secondhand clothes and rarely is able to save anything from his earnings.

"I know the (election spending) can fund more than 10 people a day," estimated Joseph Kaguthi, who walks everywhere selling baked goods and says he often eats just one daily meal. "But I'm a poor man, and maybe the way I talk is distant from the way it is."

Rising prices for food and fuel, exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and following the economic pain of the COVID-19 pandemic, add to the traditional ethnic tensions in a vote called so closely contested that Kenya might go to a runoff election for the first time.

How the country of 56 million people will cope with extended uncertainty is a major question after a recent history of turbulent elections.

The 2017 vote saw results overturned by the courts, a first in Africa. Longtime opposition contender Raila Odinga boycotted the ordered re-vote and declared himself the "people's president" in a mock swearing-in that led to allegations of treason. The standoff ended when Kenyatta and Odinga, the son of Kenya's first vice president, shared a public handshake.

Now, in the latest twist of Kenya's shifting alliances, Kenyatta is backing former rival Odinga to succeed him after falling out with his deputy president, 55-year-old William Ruto, the other main presidential candidate and a former Odinga ally.

Ruto was indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity for his role in violence following the 2007 election that killed more than 1,000 people after Odinga alleged he had been cheated out of victory. An ICC indictment is hardly a bar to the presidency; Kenyatta was indicted over the turmoil, too. Both men saw their cases terminated amid allegations of witness tampering.

Said to be one of Kenya's richest men after a decade as deputy president, Ruto promotes himself to the young and poor as a "hustler" who rose from humble beginnings as a chicken seller in contrast to the elite backgrounds of Kenyatta and Odinga. Ruto says he seeks greater agricultural productivity and financial inclusion. Agriculture is a main driver of Kenya's economy and about 70% of the rural workforce is in farming, while informal street vendors make up the majority of non-farm work.

"Our economic system is rigged against small people," Ruto said in a campaign video that came out as his wealthy running mate Rigathi Gachagua was ordered by a court to repay about \$1.6 million to the state after the money was ruled to be the proceeds of corruption.

Ruto has said he will accept the election outcome "whichever way it goes."

The 77-year-old Odinga in his fifth and likely final try at the presidency is campaigning closely with running mate Martha Karua, a former justice minister who could become Kenya's first female deputy president. She has caught the attention of women in a country that still fails to meet a gender quota for elective bodies like Parliament and where female candidates commonly face harassment.

Odinga, famous for being jailed while fighting for multi-party democracy decades ago, has promised cash handouts to Kenya's poorest while saying "the middle class, of course, know how to look after themselves." He has said he'll accept election results "as long as they're free and fair."

When asked how much they were spending on the election, an Odinga spokesman told The Associated Press they will conduct a financial audit to find out at the end of the campaign. A spokesman for Ruto didn't respond.

Ruto and Odinga say they'll fight corruption, but non-governmental organizations sigh over Kenya's failure to address the graft that eats away at everyday lives. The vendors on Nairobi's Outer Ring Road described

having to bribe hospitals for timely treatment and the city's notorious inspection officers to avoid alleged petty offenses.

Corruption is said to be widespread among those running for office. Interior Minister Fred Matiangi has described Parliament candidates handing out as little as 100 shillings (84 cents) to win votes in villages.

The underfunded Independent and Electoral Boundaries Commission, which sought to cap presidential campaign spending at 4.4 billion shillings (\$36 million), has accused some politicians of buying people's identification cards to keep them from voting for rivals.

"Out of the 214 persons blacklisted by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission as morally and ethically unfit to hold public office, the (electoral commission) barred only six individuals," Transparency International Kenya and other watchdogs said in June. For the rest, "the commission seems to have thrown their hands in the air."

Kenyans want a peaceful election with results accepted by all sides.

"If we fight, it will basically backfire more on us than on them," said Andrew Atonya, part of a production company that staged a play in Nairobi asking voters to avoid falling prey to election divisions. "They abuse each other," he said of candidates, "but behind the curtain, they're friends."

## Atlanta's image challenged by facts of 1906 race massacre

By MICHAEL WARREN Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Everyone who moves through downtown Atlanta today passes places where innocent Black men and women were pulled from trolleys, shot in their workplaces, chased through the streets and beaten to death by a mob of 10,000 white men and boys.

But few have been taught about the 1906 Atlanta Race Massacre, which shaped the city's geography, economy, society and power structure in lasting ways. Much like the Red Summer of 1919 in the South and Northeast and the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 in Oklahoma would years later, the white-on-Black violence in Atlanta shattered dreams of racial harmony and forced thousands from their homes.

A grassroots coalition is working to restore Atlanta's killings and their legacy to public memory. Historic markers and tours are planned for this September's anniversary. A one-act play will be performed simultaneously at group dinners across the city. Organizers are seeking 500 hosts, with the ambitious goal of seating 5,000 people to discuss the lasting effects.

These activists say the massacre doesn't fit comfortably in Atlanta's "cradle of the civil rights movement" narrative, but they insist on truth-telling as some politicians push to ignore the nation's history of racial violence.

Mislabeled a riot, the killings of at least 25 Black people and the destruction of Black-owned businesses had a specific purpose: thwarting their economic success and voting power before African-Americans could claim equal status, said King Williams, a journalist who gives tours describing what happened.

"The mob began its work early in the evening, pulling negroes from street cars and beating them with clubs, bricks and stones," The Associated Press reported on Sept. 24, 1906, adding that "negroes were beaten, cut and stamped upon in an unreasoning, mad frenzy. If a negro ventured resistance or remonstrated, it meant practically sure death."

The violence began where Georgia State University's campus is now. Enraged by unsupported headlines about attacks on white women and the evils of "race-mixing," the mob set fire to saloons and pounced on Black men and women headed home from work, Williams explains on the tour.

Their next target was the "Crystal Palace," an opulent barbershop where Alonzo Herndon made his first fortune catering to white elites. Poorer white people couldn't stomach such success by a Black man and shattered the place, Williams says.

Bodies were stacked at the statue of newspaperman Henry Grady. Williams describes Grady as a post-Civil War "demagogue who championed Atlanta, but also championed a lot of the racial rhetoric that we still see echoing today." His statue is four blocks from CNN Center, and for most people "it's just a thing they walk by," Williams said.

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Steps from there, some Black people either jumped or were thrown from the Forsyth Street bridge onto the railroad tracks below. Others reached shelter inside the gates of the Gammon Theological Seminary in Brownsville, a thriving African American neighborhood 3 miles (5 kilometers) to the south.

That's where the mob, now "deputized" as law enforcers, came searching for weapons on the third day, ransacking businesses and pulling women and children from their homes. One white officer was killed and some 250 Black people were arrested, including 60 who were convicted. Not one white person was held responsible for any of the deaths, community organizer Ann Hill Bond said.

The cause was not in doubt. Atlanta Constitution editor Clark Howell and former Atlanta Journal publisher Hoke Smith had outdone each other vowing to disenfranchise Black voters while campaigning for governor. As Election Day approached, the papers printed baseless stories about attempted attacks on white women.

A Fulton County Grand Jury cited "inflammatory headlines" for fomenting the violence, but when "Voice of the Negro" publisher J. Maxwell Barber tied those articles to the racist campaigns, he was run out of town.

Once governor, Smith signed laws that kept most Black people from voting for another half-century. Thousands abandoned Atlanta, which became two-thirds white by 1910, the Census showed. City officials cited the need to avoid violence as they imposed segregation on neighborhoods, including "Sweet Auburn" Avenue, which became a model of African American economic self-sufficiency. Herndon gave up barbering to become one of the nation's leading insurers for Black families.

The "riot" label still stuck when the massacre was finally added to Georgia's eighth-grade curriculum in 2007.

"It is important for us to use correct language when we're speaking of and remembering and honoring the lives that were lost. This was a massacre. People were killed," said Bond, who leads a #changethename campaign. "And this is just the proper way to truth-tell in order to get to healing. If you don't rip the Band-Aid off, you never get to healing."

The massacre remains "terrifying" to playwright Marlon Burnley, whose one-act play will be performed by the Out of Hand Theater company at September's Equitable Dinners.

"The biggest through-line for me is the presence of fake news and just made-up stories and fearmongering. And I feel like that's just a constant in our history," Burnley said.

Williams gets a variety of reactions on his tours. For college students "it's like discovering fire," he says. Older Atlantans are surprised they never heard the details before. "People who have skin in the game in the city" — civic boosters and people who run non-profits or work in politics — often get squeamish, he says.

"When you talk about the history of what happened in 1906, a lot of that overlaps today," Williams says. "And a lot of people just don't like that. It really just doesn't shine on Atlanta when we try to present ourselves to be a respected city on a hill."

The violence doesn't match the image many Black people have of Atlanta as a kind of Wakanda, the highly advanced mythical African nation of "Black Panther" fame, said Allison Bantimba, who co-founded the Fulton County Remembrance Coalition.

"I do think that restoring this history to public knowledge will make a difference," Bantimba said. "The second we pull down the veil and acknowledge all of that, a lot of people will have to reorient themselves."

## Cold showers, no lights: Europe saves as Russian gas wanes

By JOHN LEICESTER and NICOLAS GARRIGA Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Fanning out like urban guerrillas through Paris' darkened streets well after midnight, the anti-waste activists shinny up walls and drain pipes, reaching for switches to turn off the lights.

Click. Click. Click.

One by one, the outdoor lights that stores had left on are extinguished. It's one small but symbolic step in a giant leap of energy saving that Europe is trying to make as it rushes to wean itself off natural gas and oil from Russia so factories aren't forced to close and homes stay heated and powered.

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Engineer Kevin Ha and his equally nimble friends had been acting against wasteful businesses in Paris long before Russia started cutting energy supplies to Europe in a battle of wills over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. As such, the campaigners were precursors of the energy economy drive becoming all the rage in France, Germany and elsewhere. Their message — that everyone can contribute — is almost word-for-word what public officials from cabinet ministers to mayors are saying now, too.

"Everyone can have a positive impact at their own level, by adopting good practices, by doing the right things to reduce their overall energy footprint," the 30-year-old Ha said on a recent night of light-extinguishing on the Champs-Élysées boulevard.

The stakes are high. If Russia severs the supplies of gas it has already drastically reduced, authorities fear Europe risks becoming a colder, darker and less-productive place this winter. It's imperative to economize gas now so it can be squirreled away for burning later in homes, factories and power plants, officials say.

"Europe needs to be ready," said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. "To make it through the winter, assuming that there is a full disruption of Russian gas, we need to save gas to fill our gas storages faster. And to do so, we have to reduce our gas consumption. I know that this is a big ask for the whole of the European Union, but it is necessary to protect us."

And although Europe is scrambling to get energy from elsewhere, any difficulties this winter could be a harbinger of worse to come if Russian gas supplies are completely severed and stay off through 2023, said France's minister overseeing energy, Agnès Pannier-Runacher.

"If gas deliveries are cut by the end of the year, that will mean we'll have a full year without Russian gas, so the following winter could be even harder," Pannier-Runacher told French senators.

Hence the mounting appeals — already familiar to exasperated parents of wasteful teenagers everywhere — for Europeans to take shorter showers, switch off power sockets and otherwise do what they can.

Germany had been getting about a third of its gas from Russia, making the EU's biggest economy and most populous nation conspicuously vulnerable. Energy saving is in full swing, with lights going off, public pools becoming chillier and thermostats being adjusted.

The glass dome of the Reichstag, the parliament building in Berlin, is going dark after it closes to visitors at midnight, and two facades will no longer be lit. Legislators' office temperatures will drop by 2 degrees to 20 Celsius (68 Fahrenheit) this winter. Berlin City Hall, the Jewish Museum, two opera houses and the landmark Victory Column with panoramic views are among about 200 sites in the German capital that will no longer be lit at night.

Saunas are closing in Munich's municipal swimming pools, which have chillier water now, too. There'll only be cold showers at public pools in Hannover, part of a plan by the northern city to cut its energy use by 15%.

"The sum of all the contributions will help us get through this winter and be prepared for the next one," said Robert Habeck, Germany's vice chancellor and economy minister. He also told news weekly *Der Spiegel* he has slashed the time he spends showering.

"It will be a demanding, stony road, but we can manage it," he said.

With a campaign dubbed "Flip the Switch," the Netherlands' government is urging showers of no more than five minutes, using sun shades and fans instead of air conditioning, and air-drying laundry.

Under a law passed Monday in often-sweltering Spain, offices, stores and hospitality venues will no longer be allowed to set their thermostats below 27 degrees Celsius (81 degrees Fahrenheit) in summer, nor raise them above 19 degrees Celsius in winter.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez asked office workers to ditch neckties, presumably to lessen the temptation to use air conditioning. He led by example, appearing at a news conference in an open-necked shirt.

The Italian government also is recommending limits on heating and cooling in public buildings.

In France, the government is targeting a 10% reduction in energy use by 2024, with an "energy sobriety" drive. Mayors are also waging their own war on waste, with fines introduced for air-conditioned or heated stores that leave front doors open; others are working to limit the pain of soaring energy prices.

The 8,000 residents of Aureilhan, in the foothills of the Pyrenees in southwestern France, have been adjusting to nights without street lights since July 11. Extinguishing all 1,770 of them from 11 p.m. to 6

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a.m. will save money that Mayor Yannick Boubée would rather spend on roads and other maintenance. Otherwise, he said, the town's 84,000-euro (\$86,000) lighting bill in 2021 was on course to nearly triple next year.

"When it comes down to it, there's no reason to keep the lights on at night," he said by phone. "It is shaking up our way of thinking."

Next will be convincing townspeople to agree to less-heated classrooms when schools reopen.

"We're going to ask parents to put a pullover on their children, all measures that don't cost anything," he said. "We have no choice, unfortunately."

## Vin Scully, Dodgers broadcaster for 67 years, dies at 94

By BETH HARRIS AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Hall of Fame broadcaster Vin Scully, whose dulcet tones provided the soundtrack of summer while entertaining and informing Dodgers fans in Brooklyn and Los Angeles for 67 years, died Tuesday night. He was 94.

Scully died at his home in the Hidden Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles, according to the team after being informed by family members. No cause of death was provided.

"He was the best there ever was," pitcher Clayton Kershaw said after the Dodgers game in San Francisco. "Just such a special man. I'm grateful and thankful I got to know him as well as I did."

As the longest tenured broadcaster with a single team in pro sports history, Scully saw it all and called it all. He began in the 1950s era of Pee Wee Reese and Jackie Robinson, on to the 1960s with Don Drysdale and Sandy Koufax, into the 1970s with Steve Garvey and Don Sutton, and through the 1980s with Orel Hershiser and Fernando Valenzuela. In the 1990s, it was Mike Piazza and Hideo Nomo, followed by Kershaw, Manny Ramirez and Yasiel Puig in the 21st century.

"You gave me my Wild Horse name. You gave me love. You hugged me like a father," tweeted Puig, the talented Cuban-born outfielder who burned brightly upon his Dodgers debut in 2013. "I will never forget you, my heart is broken."

The Dodgers changed players, managers, executives, owners — and even coasts — but Scully and his soothing, insightful style remained a constant for the fans.

He opened broadcasts with the familiar greeting, "Hi, everybody, and a very pleasant good evening to you wherever you may be."

Ever gracious both in person and on the air, Scully considered himself merely a conduit between the game and the fans.

After the Dodgers' 9-5 win, the Giants posted a Scully tribute on the videoboard.

"There's not a better storyteller and I think everyone considers him family," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "He was in our living rooms for many generations. He lived a fantastic life, a legacy that will live on forever."

Although he was paid by the Dodgers, Scully was unafraid to criticize a bad play or a manager's decision, or praise an opponent while spinning stories against a backdrop of routine plays and noteworthy achievements. He always said he wanted to see things with his eyes, not his heart.

"We have lost an icon," team president and CEO Stan Kasten said. "His voice will always be heard and etched in all of our minds forever."

Vincent Edward Scully was born Nov. 29, 1927, in the Bronx. He was the son of a silk salesman who died of pneumonia when Scully was 7. His mother moved the family to Brooklyn, where the red-haired, blue-eyed Scully grew up playing stickball in the streets.

As a child, Scully would grab a pillow, put it under the family's four-legged radio and lay his head directly under the speaker to hear whatever college football game was on the air. With a snack of saltine crackers and a glass of milk nearby, the boy was transfixed by the crowd's roar that raised goosebumps. He thought he'd like to call the action himself.

Scully, who played outfield for two years on the Fordham University baseball team, began his career by

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working baseball, football and basketball games for the university's radio station.

At age 22, he was hired by a CBS radio affiliate in Washington, D.C.

He soon joined Hall of Famer Red Barber and Connie Desmond in the Brooklyn Dodgers' radio and television booths. In 1953, at age 25, Scully became the youngest person to broadcast a World Series game, a mark that still stands.

He moved west with the Dodgers in 1958. Scully called three perfect games — Don Larsen in the 1956 World Series, Sandy Koufax in 1965 and Dennis Martinez in 1991 — and 18 no-hitters.

He also was on the air when Don Drysdale set his scoreless innings streak of 58 2/3 innings in 1968 and again when Hershiser broke the record with 59 consecutive scoreless innings 20 years later.

When Hank Aaron hit his 715th home run to break Babe Ruth's record in 1974, it was against the Dodgers and, of course, Scully called it.

"A Black man is getting a standing ovation in the Deep South for breaking a record of an all-time baseball idol," Scully told listeners. "What a marvelous moment for baseball."

Scully credited the birth of the transistor radio as "the greatest single break" of his career. Fans had trouble recognizing the lesser players during the Dodgers' first four years in the vast Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

"They were 70 or so odd rows away from the action," he said in 2016. "They brought the radio to find out about all the other players and to see what they were trying to see down on the field."

That habit carried over when the team moved to Dodger Stadium in 1962. Fans held radios to their ears, and those not present listened from home or the car, allowing Scully to connect generations of families with his words.

He often said it was best to describe a big play quickly and then be quiet so fans could listen to the pandemonium. After Koufax's perfect game in 1965, Scully went silent for 38 seconds before talking again. He was similarly silent for a time after Kirk Gibson's pinch-hit home run to win Game 1 of the 1988 World Series.

He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982, received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame that year, and also had the stadium's press box named for him in 2001. The street leading to Dodger Stadium's main gate was named in his honor in 2016.

That same year he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama.

"God has been so good to me to allow me to do what I'm doing," Scully, a devout Catholic who attended mass on Sundays before heading to the ballpark, said before retiring. "A childhood dream that came to pass and then giving me 67 years to enjoy every minute of it. That's a pretty large thanksgiving day for me."

In addition to being the voice of the Dodgers, Scully called play-by-play for NFL games and PGA Tour events as well as calling 25 World Series and 12 All-Star Games. He was NBC's lead baseball announcer from 1983-89.

While being one of the most widely heard broadcasters in the nation, Scully was an intensely private man. Once the baseball season ended, he would disappear. He rarely did personal appearances or sports talk shows. He preferred spending time with his family.

In 1972, his first wife, Joan, died of an accidental overdose of medicine. He was left with three young children. Two years later, he met the woman who would become his second wife, Sandra, a secretary for the NFL's Los Angeles Rams. She had two young children from a previous marriage, and they combined their families into what Scully once called "my own Brady Bunch."

He said he realized time was the most precious thing in the world and that he wanted to use his time to spend with his loved ones. In the early 1960s, Scully quit smoking with the help of his family. In the shirt pocket where he kept a pack of cigarettes, Scully stuck a family photo. Whenever he felt like he needed a smoke, he pulled out the photo to remind him why he quit. Eight months later, Scully never smoked again.

After retiring in 2016, Scully made just a handful of appearances at Dodger Stadium and his sweet voice was heard narrating an occasional video played during games. Mostly, he was content to stay close to home.

"I just want to be remembered as a good man, an honest man, and one who lived up to his own beliefs,"

he said in 2016.

In 2020, Scully auctioned off years of his personal memorabilia, which raised over \$2 million. A portion of it was donated to UCLA for ALS research.

He was preceded in death by his second wife, Sandra. She died of complications of ALS at age 76 in 2021. The couple, who were married 47 years, had daughter Catherine together.

Scully's other children are Kelly, Erin, Todd and Kevin. A son, Michael, died in a helicopter crash in 1994.

## Deadly California wildfire wipes out scenic river town

By HAVEN DALEY and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

KLAMATH RIVER, Calif. (AP) — Roger Derry, 80, and his son have lived together in the tiny scenic hamlet of Klamath River in Northern California for more than 40 years.

They know most of the town's 200 or so residents.

Now, they're one of the few families left after California's largest and deadliest wildfire of the year raged through the modest homes and stores of the riverside town.

"It's very sad. It's very disheartening," Derry said. "Some of our oldest homes, 100-year-old homes, are gone. It's a small community. Good people, good folks, for the most part, live here and in time will rebuild. But it's going to take some time now."

The McKinney Fire that erupted last Friday remained out of control, despite some progress as firefighters took advantage of thunderstorms that dumped rain that temporarily took a bit of heat out of the parched, scorched region not far from the Oregon border.

The area saw another thunderstorm Tuesday that dumped heavy rain and swelled rivers.

The fire has burned more than 88 square miles (228 square kilometers), and is the largest of several wildfires burning in the Klamath National Forest.

The fire didn't grow on Tuesday, and fire officials said crews were able to use bulldozers to carve firebreaks along a ridge to protect homes and buildings in the county seat of Yreka.

But several thousand people remained under evacuation orders, 100 buildings ranging from homes to greenhouses have burned and at least four bodies have been found in the region.

The destruction of a small community has sadly become a real possibility as wildfires become fiercer in the Western United States.

Wildfires in Montana, Idaho and Nebraska have destroyed some homes and continue to threaten communities.

Just four years ago, a massive blaze in the Sierra Nevada foothills of California virtually razed the Butte County town of Paradise, killing 85 people.

Scientists have said climate change has made the West warmer and drier over the last three decades and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

When it began, the McKinney Fire was only a couple hundred acres and firefighters thought they would quickly have it under control. But then, a thunderstorm cell came in with ferocious wind gusts that within hours had pushed it into an unstoppable conflagration.

Roger Derry and his son, whose name is spelled Rodger Derry, decided not to evacuate when the fire broke out and said their home, which they'd tried to safeguard by trimming away nearby bushes, survived. Firefighters also showed up and dug firebreaks around the neighborhood.

But they could see the fire as it tore its way through the places around them.

"When that fire came over that ridgeline, it had 100-foot flames for about 5 miles and the wind was blowing. It was coming down like a solid blowtorch," Roger Derry said. "There was nothing to stop it,"

The fire destroyed most of the homes, including those in a trailer park, along with the post office, community hall and other scattered businesses.

The cause hasn't been determined.

In northwestern Montana, a fire that started Friday near the town of Elmo on the Flathead Indian Reservation has burned some structures, but authorities said they didn't immediately know if any were homes. The blaze measured 25 square miles (66 square kilometers) on Tuesday, with 10% containment,

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fire officials said. Some residents were forced to flee Monday as gusting afternoon winds drove the fire. The Moose Fire in Idaho has burned more than 85 square miles (220 square kilometers) in the Salmon-Challis National Forest while threatening homes, mining operations and fisheries near the town of Salmon. It was 23% contained Tuesday, according to the National Interagency Coordination Center. And a wildfire raging in northwestern Nebraska led to evacuations and destroyed or damaged several homes near the small city of Gering. The Carter Canyon Fire began Saturday as two separate fires that merged. It was more than 30% contained by Tuesday.

## **EXPLAINER: A look at the missile that killed al-Qaida leader**

By NOMAAN MERCHANT and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For a year, U.S. officials have been saying that taking out a terrorist threat in Afghanistan with no American troops on the ground would be difficult but not impossible. Last weekend, the U.S. did just that — killing al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri with a CIA drone strike.

Other high-profile airstrikes in the past had inadvertently killed innocent civilians. In this case, the U.S. carefully chose to use a type of Hellfire missile that greatly minimized the chance of other casualties. Although U.S. officials have not publicly confirmed which variant of the Hellfire was used, experts and others familiar with counterterrorism operations said a likely option was the highly secretive Hellfire R9X — know by various nicknames, including the “knife bomb” or the “flying Ginsu.”

That potential use of the R9X, said Klon Kitchen, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a former intelligence analyst, suggests the U.S. wanted to kill al-Zawahri with “limited likelihood of collateral death and destruction and for other relevant political reasons.”

A look at the Hellfire, and how al-Zawahri likely was killed:

### WHAT IS A HELLFIRE MISSILE?

Originally designed as an anti-tank missile in the 1980s, the Hellfire has been used by military and intelligence agencies over the last two decades to strike targets in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen and elsewhere.

The precision-guided missiles can be mounted on helicopters and unmanned drones and are used widely in combat around the world. More than 100,000 Hellfire missiles have been sold to the U.S. and other countries, according to Ryan Brobst, an analyst at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a Washington think tank.

“It can do enough damage to destroy most targets such as vehicles and buildings while not doing enough damage to level city blocks and cause significant civilian casualties,” Brobst said.

The U.S. military has routinely used Hellfire missiles to kill high-value targets, including a senior al-Qaida leader in Syria last year, and al-Qaida propagandist Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen in 2011.

### WHAT KILLED AL-ZAWAHRI?

The U.S. had multiple options for the attack. It could have used a traditional Hellfire, a bomb dropped from an manned aircraft, or a far more risky assault by ground forces. U.S. Navy SEALs, for example, flew into Pakistan on helicopters and took out Osama bin Laden in a raid.

In this case, the CIA opted for a drone strike. And while the CIA generally doesn’t confirm its counterterrorism missions and closely guards information about strikes it conducts, U.S. government officials have said that two Hellfire missiles were fired at the balcony of the building where al-Zawahri was living in Kabul.

Online images of the building show damage to the balcony, where the U.S. says al-Zawahri was, but the rest of the house is standing and not badly damaged.

Unlike other models of the Hellfire, the R9X doesn’t carry an explosive payload. Instead, it has a series of six rotating blades that emerge on its final approach to a target, Kitchen said. “One of their utilities is in opening up vehicles and other obstructions to get to the target without having to use an explosive warhead,” he said.

### AVOIDING CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

U.S. officials and experts made clear this week that avoiding civilian casualties was a crucial element in the choice of weapon.

Less than a year ago, a U.S. drone strike — using a more conventional Hellfire missile — struck a white

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Toyota Corolla sedan in a Kabul neighborhood and killed 10 civilians around and near the car, including seven children. In the midst of the chaotic U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan, American forces believed there were explosives in the car and that it posed an imminent threat to troops on the ground. It was, military leaders said, a "tragic mistake"

One former U.S. official said the likely choice of an R9X is an example of the administration's effort to find ways to minimize collateral damage and prevent the loss of innocent life. That missile is a very accurate weapon that strikes in a very small area, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss counterterrorism operations.

An administration official said Monday that the U.S. investigated the construction of the house where al-Zawahri was staying in order to ensure that the operation could be done without threatening the structural integrity of the building and also minimizing the risks of killing civilians, including members of his family who were in other parts of the house.

The choice of missile is ultimately one part of reducing the possibility of killing civilians or causing other collateral damage.

"I would say this is by far a lower-risk option," said Tom Karako, an expert on missile defense at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. Using the Hellfire, he said, "reflects a high degree of caution as opposed to a riskiness."

**IS THE US PROVIDING UKRAINE WITH DRONES THAT CAN FIRE HELLFIRE MISSILES?**

No. While the U.S. has delivered billions of dollars in military assistance to help Ukraine fight the invading Russian troops, it is wary of providing weapons that could fire deep into Russia, potentially escalating the conflict or drawing the U.S. into the war.

As a result, the U.S. so far has not provided Hellfire missiles or drones that could fire them. Instead, the U.S. has delivered smaller, so-called kamikaze drones, such as the Switchblade and Phoenix Ghost, which instead of firing missiles, explode when they hit a target.

## **US seeks possession of Venezuelan 747 grounded in Argentina**

By DANIEL POLITI and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — The U.S. Justice Department said Tuesday it is seeking possession of a Venezuelan cargo jet that has been grounded in Argentina since early June because it was previously owned by an Iranian airline that allegedly has ties to terror groups.

The request to Argentina was revealed a day after an Argentine judge allowed 12 of the 19 crewmembers of the plane to leave the country as authorities continue to investigate possible terror ties of those traveling in the Boeing 747. Federal Judge Federico Villena said late Monday that the remaining four Iranians and three Venezuelans must stay.

The U.S. request sent to Argentina on Tuesday followed the unsealing of a warrant in federal court in the District of Columbia that was issued last month and that argues the U.S-made plane should be forfeited because of violations of U.S. export control laws.

The plane, according to the Justice Department, was transferred from Iranian airline Mahan Air — which officials have alleged provides support for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force — to Emtrasur, a subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned Consorcio Venezolano de Industrias Aeronáuticas y Servicios Aéreos, or CONVIASA. CONVIASA is under U.S. sanctions.

By transferring the airplane to the Venezuelan firm in October without prior U.S. government authorization, Mahan Air violated a 2008 order issued by the Department of Commerce that has since been periodically renewed, the U.S. says. The Justice Department says Emtrasur subsequently re-exported the plane between Caracas, Tehran and Moscow -- also without U.S. government approval.

"The Department of Justice will not tolerate transactions that violate our sanctions and export laws," Matthew Olsen, the head of the Justice Department's national security division, said in a statement. "Working with our partners across the globe, we will give no quarter to governments and state-sponsored entities looking to evade our sanctions and export control regimes in service of their malign activities."

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The moves marked the latest development in the saga of the mysterious plane, which landed June 6 at Ezeiza International Airport outside Buenos Aires and was grounded two days later.

The case has raised attention in several South American countries as well as the United States and Israel amid allegations that the plane was a cover for Iranian intelligence operations in the region. Iran and Venezuela vehemently deny those claims.

The issue has caught the attention of members of U.S. Congress. On July 26, a dozen U.S. Republican senators wrote a letter to U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland accusing the Justice Department of failing to assist Argentine authorities in its investigation of the Venezuelan plane.

Rep. Darrell Issa, a California Republican, pressed Olsen about it at a hearing last week and lamented that in his view Iran was not receiving the scrutiny it deserved. Olsen said he was aware of the case but added: "This is an ongoing matter. I can't talk about the specifics."

The U.S. Commerce Department took its own action Tuesday, announcing it had suspended for 180 days the export privileges of Emtrasur.

The Israeli government has praised Argentina for grounding the plane and contends at least some of the Iranian crew members "were involved directly in the trafficking of weapons to Syria and the terrorist organization Hezbollah of Lebanon."

Among those who will continue to be prohibited from leaving Argentina is the Iranian pilot of the plane, Gholamreza Ghasemi.

Ghasemi is a former commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard and is a shareholder and board member of Iran's Qeshm Fars Air, which the U.S. Treasury Department has said is controlled by Mahan Air and provides material support to the Quds Force.

The other crew members required to remain in Argentina are Abdolbaset Mohammadim, Mohammad Khosraviaragh and Saeid Vali Zadeh of Iran and Mario Arraga, Víctor Pérez Gómez and José García Contreras of Venezuela.

"What is being investigated is whether, under the appearance of legal activity, they are financing terrorism operations (specifically with Hezbollah) or whether they are part of a plan that has ties with" Hezbollah, the judge wrote.

Villena emphasized that connections with Iran's Revolutionary Guard are not under investigation because Argentina does not consider it to be a terrorist organization.

Mahan Air has denied any ties to the aircraft and Venezuela has demanded that Argentine authorities release the plane.

Yet Argentine authorities who searched the plane found a Mahan Air flight log documenting the aircraft's flights after the transfer to Emtrasur, including a flight to Tehran in April, the Justice Department said.

The plane was carrying cargo for several Argentine auto parts companies that it loaded in Mexico before stopping in Caracas and arriving in Argentina.

The plane is also under investigation in Paraguay, where the plane landed in May and spent three days in Ciudad del Este, near the border with Argentina, where it loaded cigarettes to transport to Aruba, according to Paraguayan authorities.

There are suspicions the plane's cargo was "a facade" that hid the real reason for its time in Paraguay, says René Fernández, a former prosecutor who leads Paraguay's National Anticorruption Secretariat.

Villena said the plane's stopover in Paraguay was "at least striking" and added that further investigation was needed.

## Sandy Hook parents: Alex Jones claims created 'living hell'

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Fighting back tears and finally given the chance to confront conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, the parents of a 6-year-old killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting described being put through a "living hell" of death threats, harassment and ongoing trauma over the last decade caused by Jones using his media platforms to push claims that it was all a hoax.

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The parents led a day of charged testimony that included the judge scolding the bombastic Jones for not being truthful with some of what he said under oath.

Neil Heslin and Scarlett Lewis, whose son Jesse was killed at Sandy Hook, took the witness stand Tuesday on the final day of testimony in the two-week defamation damages trial against Jones and his media company Free Speech Systems. They are seeking at least \$150 million in damages.

In a gripping exchange, Lewis spoke directly to Jones, who was sitting about 10 feet away. Earlier that day, Jones was on his broadcast program telling his audience that Heslin is "slow" and being manipulated by bad people.

"I am a mother first and foremost and I know you are a father. My son existed," Lewis said to Jones. "I am not deep state... I know you know that... And yet you're going to leave this courthouse and say it again on your show."

At one point, Lewis asked Jones: "Do you think I'm an actor?"

"No, I don't think you're an actor," Jones responded before the judge admonished him to be quiet until called to testify.

Lewis continued trying to impress on Jones that the Sandy Hook shooting and trauma inflicted in the decade since then were real.

"It seems so incredible to me that we have to do this — that we have to implore you, to punish you — to get you to stop lying," Lewis said. "I am so glad this day is here. I'm actually relieved. And grateful... that I got to say all this to you."

Jones visibly shook his head several times while Scarlett Lewis was addressing him.

Heslin and Lewis are among several Sandy Hook families who have filed several lawsuits alleging that Sandy Hook hoax claims pushed by Jones have led to years of abuse by Jones and his followers.

Heslin and Lewis both said they fear for their lives and have been confronted by strangers at home and on the street. Heslin said his home and car have been shot at. The jury heard a death threat sent via telephone message to another Sandy Hook family.

"I can't even describe the last nine and a half years, the living hell that I and others have had to endure because of the recklessness and negligence of Alex Jones," Heslin said.

Scarlett Lewis also described threatening emails that seemed to have uncovered deep details of her personal life.

"It's fear for your life," Scarlett Lewis said. "You don't know what they were going to do."

Heslin said he didn't know if the Sandy Hook hoax conspiracy theory originated with Jones, but it was Jones who "lit the match and started the fire" with an online platform and broadcast that reached millions worldwide.

"What was said about me and Sandy Hook itself resonates around the world," Heslin said. "As time went on, I truly realized how dangerous it was."

Jones skipped Heslin's morning testimony while he was on his show — a move Heslin dismissed as "cowardly" — but arrived in the courtroom for part of Scarlett Lewis' testimony. He was accompanied by several private security guards.

"Today is very important to me and it's been a long time coming... to face Alex Jones for what he said and did to me. To restore the honor and legacy of my son," Heslin said when Jones wasn't there.

Heslin told the jury about holding his son with a bullet hole through his head, even describing the extent of the damage to his son's body. A key segment of the case is a 2017 Infowars broadcast that said Heslin didn't hold his son.

The jury was shown a school picture of a smiling Jesse taken two weeks before he was killed. The parents didn't receive the photo until after the shooting. They described how Jesse was known for telling classmates to "run!" which likely saved lives.

An apology from Jones wouldn't be good enough, the parents said.

"Alex started this fight," Heslin said, "and I'll finish this fight."

Jones later took the stand himself, initially being combative with the judge, who had asked him to answer

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his own attorney's question. Jones testified he had long wanted to apologize to the plaintiffs.

"I never intentionally tried to hurt you. I never said your name until this came to court," Jones said. "The internet had questions, I had questions."

Later, the judge sent the jury out of the room and strongly scolded Jones for telling the jury he complied with pretrial evidence gathering even though he didn't, and that he is bankrupt, which has not been determined. Plaintiff's attorneys were furious about Jones mentioning he is bankrupt, which they worry will taint a jury decision about damages.

"This is not your show," Judge Maya Guerra Gamble told Jones. "Your beliefs do not make something true. You are under oath."

Last September, Guerra admonished Jones in her default judgment over his failure to turn over documents requested by the Sandy Hook families. A court in Connecticut issued a similar default judgment against Jones for the same reasons in a separate lawsuit brought by other Sandy Hook parents.

Heslin and Lewis suffer from a form of post-traumatic stress disorder that comes from constant trauma, similar to that endured by soldiers in war zones or child abuse victims, a forensic psychologist who studied their cases and met with them testified Monday.

Jones has portrayed the lawsuit against him as an attack on his First Amendment rights.

At stake in the trial is how much Jones will pay. The parents have asked the jury to award \$150 million in compensation for defamation and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The jury will then consider whether Jones and his company will pay punitive damages.

The trial is just one of several Jones faces.

Courts in Texas and Connecticut have already found Jones liable for defamation for his portrayal of the Sandy Hook massacre as a hoax. In both states, judges issued default judgements against Jones without trials because he failed to respond to court orders and turn over documents.

Jones has already tried to protect Free Speech Systems financially. The company filed for federal bankruptcy protection last week. Sandy Hook families have separately sued Jones over his financial claims, arguing that the company is trying to protect millions owned by Jones and his family through shell entities.

## Senate approves bill to aid vets exposed to toxic burn pits

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bill enhancing health care and disability benefits for millions of veterans exposed to toxic burn pits won final approval in the Senate on Tuesday, ending a brief stalemate over the measure that had infuriated advocates and inspired some to camp outside the Capitol.

The Senate approved the bill by a vote of 86-11. It now goes to President Joe Biden's desk to be signed into law. Biden described the legislation as the biggest expansion of benefits for service-connected health issues in 30 years and the largest single bill ever to address exposure to burn pits.

"I look forward to signing this bill, so that veterans and their families and caregivers impacted by toxic exposures finally get the benefits and comprehensive health care they earned and deserve," Biden said.

The Senate had overwhelmingly approved the legislation back in June, but a do-over was required to make a technical fix. That process derailed when Republicans made a late attempt to change another aspect of the bill last week and blocked it from advancing.

The abrupt delay outraged veterans groups and advocates, including comedian Jon Stewart. It also placed GOP senators in the uncomfortable position of delaying the top legislative priority of service organizations this session of Congress.

A group of veterans and their families have been camping out at the Capitol since that vote. They had endured thunderstorms and Washington's notorious summer humidity, but they were in the galleries as senators cast their votes.

"You can go home knowing the good and great thing you have done and accomplished for the United States of America," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., told them.

The legislation expands access to health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs for millions

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who served near burn pits. It also directs the VA to presume that certain respiratory illnesses and cancers were related to burn pit exposure, allowing veterans to obtain disability payments to compensate for their injury without having to prove the illness was a result of their service.

Roughly 70% of disability claims related to burn pit exposure are denied by the VA due to lack of evidence, scientific data and information from the Defense Department.

The military used burn pits to dispose of such things as chemicals, cans, tires, plastics and medical and human waste.

Hundreds of thousands of Vietnam War era veterans and survivors also stand to benefit from the legislation. The bill adds hypertension, or high blood pressure, as a presumptive disease associated with Agent Orange exposure.

The Congressional Budget Office projected that about 600,000 of 1.6 million living Vietnam vets would be eligible for increased compensation, though only about half would have severe enough diagnoses to warrant more compensation.

Also, veterans who served in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Guam, American Samoa and Johnston Atoll will be presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange. That's another 50,000 veterans and survivors of deceased veterans who would get compensation for illnesses presumed to have been caused by their exposure to the herbicide, the CBO projected.

The bill also authorizes 31 major medical VA health clinics and research facilities in 19 states.

The bill is projected to increase federal deficits by about \$277 billion over 10 years.

The bill has been a years-long effort begun by veterans and their families who viewed the burn pits used in Iraq and Afghanistan as responsible for respiratory problems and other illnesses the veterans experienced after returning home. It was named after Sgt. First Class Heath Robinson from Ohio, who died in 2020 from cancer he attributed to prolonged exposure to burn pits. His widow, Danielle Robinson, was first lady Jill Biden's guest at the president's State of the Union address earlier this year.

Stewart, the former host of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," also brought increased exposure to the burn pit maladies veterans were facing. He also was in the gallery watching the vote Tuesday. He wept and held his head in his hand as the final vote began.

"I'm not sure I've ever seen a situation where people who have already given so much had to fight so hard to get so little," he said after the vote. "And I hope we learn a lesson."

The House was the first to act on the burn pits legislation. An earlier version the House approved in March was expected to increase spending by more than \$320 billion over 10 years, but senators trimmed some of the costs early on by phasing in certain benefit enhancements. They also added funds for staffing to help the VA keep up with the expected increase in demand for health care and an increase in disability claims.

Some GOP senators are still concerned that the bill will increase delays at the VA because of an increased demand for veterans seeking care or disability compensation.

"What we have learned is that the VA cannot deliver what is promised because it does not have the capacity to handle the increase," said Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn.

Sens. Jon Tester, D-Mont., and Jerry Moran, R-Kan., led the effort to get the bill passed in the Senate. After passage, Tester told reporters he received a call from Biden, thanking him for "taking a big weight" off his shoulder.

For Biden, the issue is very personal. He has raised the prospect that burn pits in Iraq were responsible for the death of his son Beau.

"We don't know for sure if a burn pit was the cause of his brain cancer, or the diseases of so many of our troops," Biden said at his State of the Union speech. "But I'm committed to finding out everything we can."

Moran said that when the bill failed to pass last week, he was disappointed but remembered the strength of the protesters who had sat outside in the scorching heat for days.

"Thanks to the United States Senate for demonstrating when there's something good and a good cause, this place still works," Moran said.

## Guatemala arrests migrant smugglers wanted by the US

By SONIA PÉREZ D. Associated Press

HUEHUETENANGO, Guatemala (AP) — At dawn, police and federal agents with cover from helicopters flying overhead raided a large ranch nestled among the mountains of northern Guatemala, not far from the border with Mexico.

Unlike the ranch's impoverished neighbors, inside authorities found horse stables, a swimming pool, late model vehicles, guns and a still drunk Felipe Diego Alonso, the alleged leader of a smuggling ring that moved migrants from Guatemala north to the United States.

The raid was part of several carried out Tuesday in four Guatemalan provinces against a migrant smuggling ring, for which authorities say they've documented \$2 million in revenue since 2019.

Alonso and three others arrested Tuesday were targets of U.S. prosecutors, wanted in connection with the death of a Guatemalan migrant in Texas last year. In total, authorities nabbed 19 alleged members of the smuggling ring.

The arrests came a month after 53 migrants, including 21 Guatemalans, died in a failed smuggling attempt when they were abandoned inside a sweltering trailer in San Antonio, Texas. There was no indication those arrested Tuesday were involved in the San Antonio tragedy.

The extradition of alleged migrant smugglers known as "coyotes" has been rare and these would be the first known cases in Guatemala of smugglers allegedly pursued for the death of a migrant in the United States.

Prosecutions of migrant smugglers in Guatemala have proven exceedingly difficult because migrants are almost never willing to identify or testify against their smugglers. In some cases they hope for another chance to migrate to the United States with the smuggler's help and in others they are afraid of the smugglers or their organized crime connections.

Alonso, appearing groggy in blue jeans and a white golf shirt, said he was an onion grower who also sometimes sold land and automobiles.

Some of the detainees were flown to Guatemala City for their initial court appearances.

The arrests come at a time of heightened tensions between Guatemala's President Alejandro Giammattei and Washington.

The Biden administration has been outspoken in its criticism of perceived backsliding on corruption prosecutions. The U.S. government sanctioned Guatemala's Attorney General Consuelo Porras, alleging she was an obstacle to anti-corruption work and was now pursuing judges and prosecutors who had worked on corruption cases.

It was the Attorney General's Office backed by National Police that carried out the raids near the northern town of Huehuetenango at dawn Tuesday.

"This was an organized group dedicated to getting migrants with the proposal of transporting them to Mexico and then to the United States," said Stuardo Campo, Guatemala's prosecutor for migrant trafficking.

He said that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security had supported the operation. Guatemalan authorities had documented 11 operations by the smuggling network to move migrants since last October, but Campo did not say how many migrants were smuggled.

The four people arrested at the request of U.S. authorities are allegedly linked to the death of Marta Raymundo Corio who was found dead near Odessa, Texas after being smuggled through Mexico in early 2021.

Campo said the woman had died in a warehouse in Texas due to a lack of food and water and her relatives had requested the help of authorities in determining what had happened.

As Alonso was led away Tuesday, he told authorities to take care of his animals. Speaking Kanjobal, an Indigenous language, he said "I'd rather they eat than I eat."

## The downside: US strike shows Afghanistan still terror base

By AAMER MADHANI, ZEKE MILLER, NOMAAN MERCHANT and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

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WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is holding out the CIA operation that killed al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri as a monumental strike against the global terror network responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks of 2001. But there's a downside, too.

The drone strike also is putting into stark relief the mounting evidence that after 20 years of America's military presence — and then sudden departure — Afghanistan has once again become an active staging ground for Islamic terror groups looking to attack the West.

The operation, carried out over the weekend after at least six months spent monitoring movements by al-Zawahri and his family, came just weeks before the one-year anniversary of the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from the country.

The Biden administration is making the case that the operation shows Americans at home and allies abroad that the United States hasn't lost focus — or the ability to strike terrorists in the region — and validates its decision to end two decades of fighting in Afghanistan with its withdrawal.

Announcing the strike from the White House, President Joe Biden said Monday night that "justice" had been exacted on a leader who in recent weeks had recorded videos calling for his followers to attack the United States and allies. And the White House on Tuesday framed the operation as an enormous counterterrorism win.

"The president has made good on his word when we left," National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on NBC's "Today" show. "After 20 years of war to keep this country safe, he said we would be able to continue to target and take out terrorists in Afghanistan without troops on the ground."

But as details of the operation continue to emerge, the administration has also revealed troubling evidence of al-Qaida's presence and of the Taliban once again offering refuge to the group that was behind the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

White House officials believe that senior members of the Haqqani Network, an Islamist terror group with strong ties to the Taliban, were aware that al-Zawahri was in Kabul. Sullivan said that while al-Zawahri wasn't involved in day-to-day planning at the time of his killing, he continued to play an active role in directing al-Qaida and posed "a severe threat" against the U.S. and American citizens.

On Tuesday, the State Department updated its Worldwide Caution, warning U.S. citizens traveling abroad that "there is a higher potential for anti-American violence given the death of Ayman al-Zawahri."

Concerns about al-Qaida efforts to regroup inside Taliban-controlled Afghanistan are hardly new.

Before the strike, U.S. military officials, including Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had said al-Qaida was trying to reconstitute in Afghanistan, where it faces limited threats from the now-ruling Taliban. Military leaders have warned that the group still aspired to attack the U.S.

Al-Qaida leadership has reportedly played an advisory role since the Taliban returned to power in the leadup up to the U.S. withdrawal, according to a U.N. Security Council report last month.

The U.N. report also noted that ISIS-K — the group that carried out a massive attack that killed 13 U.S. troops and dozens of Afghans near the Kabul International Airport just days before the U.S. completed its withdrawal last year — has become increasingly active in northern and eastern Afghanistan. That's a worry for the West though ISIS-K and the Taliban espouse different ideologies and interests, with ISIS-K carrying out a bloody insurgency against the Taliban and religious minorities across Afghanistan.

"Zawahri's presence in post-withdrawal Afghanistan suggests that, as feared, the Taliban is once more granting safe haven to the leaders of al-Qaida — a group with which it has never broken," said Nathan Sales, ambassador-at-large and coordinator for counterterrorism during the Trump administration who is now a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.

Frank McKenzie, the retired Marine general who until earlier this year was the top American military officer in the Middle East, said the U.S. has noted an effort by al-Qaida to restore training camps in Afghanistan.

"I see nothing happening in Afghanistan now that tells me that the Taliban are determined to prevent that from happening," he said in an interview.

Since the American troop withdrawal, U.S. military leaders have said America's ability to monitor and strike a target in the country would be difficult but not impossible.

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The strike on Zawahri proved both, said McKenzie, who is now executive director of the Global and National Security Institute at the University of South Florida.

But he cautioned not to draw broad conclusions from this one drone strike.

"This was a unique circumstance," he said. "You had a target that didn't move, and they had the opportunity to get a good look at pattern of life. That's not always going to be the case. In fact, typically, that is not the case."

That al-Zawahri was living in a Kabul neighborhood and not in rural Afghanistan as previously believed, "tells you that he got really comfortable" under the protection of the Taliban, said Colin Clarke, director of research at The Soufan Group, a global intelligence and security firm.

"These entities work hand in glove," Clarke said of the Taliban and al-Qaida.

The Taliban had promised in the 2020 Doha Agreement on the terms of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan that they would not harbor al-Qaida members or those seeking to attack the U.S.

The Taliban were quick to condemn the U.S. strike as a "a clear violation of international principles and the Doha Agreement," though they did not acknowledge that al-Zawahri was killed. The U.S. gave no forewarning to the Taliban government, which the United States does not recognize, that it was carrying out the operation.

"Such actions are a repetition of the failed experiences of the past 20 years and are against the interests of the United States of America, Afghanistan, and the region," the Taliban statement said.

White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby declined to comment on how, or if, the U.S. would hold the Taliban responsible for sheltering al-Zawahri.

"The Taliban have a choice now," Kirby said. "And that is they can comply with their agreement under the Doha agreement ... or they can choose to be going down a different path. And if they go down a different path, it's going to lead to consequences not just from the United States but from the international community."

Kirby said the U.S. had already engaged with the Taliban about al-Zawahri's presence following Sunday's strike.

The Taliban remain sanctioned by the U.S. government for their role harboring al-Qaida before the 9/11 attacks. After the collapse of the U.S.-backed government in Kabul last summer, the Biden administration froze billions of dollars in assets belonging to Afghanistan's central bank to prevent the assets from falling under Taliban control. Some of that money has since been freed for humanitarian aid to address the country's dire hunger crisis.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell was quick to congratulate Biden on the operation, but also made the case that it "further indicates that Afghanistan is again becoming a major thicket of terrorist activity following the president's decision to withdraw U.S. forces."

"Killing al-Zawahri is a success, but the underlying resurgence of al-Qaida terrorists into Afghanistan is a growing threat that was foreseeable and avoidable," McConnell said. "The administration needs a comprehensive plan to rebuild our capacity to combat it."

## US House Speaker Pelosi arrives in Taiwan, defying Beijing

By HUIZHONG WU, EILEEN NG and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi arrived in Taiwan late Tuesday, becoming the highest-ranking American official in 25 years to visit the self-ruled island claimed by China, which quickly announced that it would conduct military maneuvers in retaliation for her presence.

Pelosi flew in aboard a U.S. Air Force passenger jet and was greeted on the tarmac at Taipei's international airport by Taiwan's foreign minister and other Taiwanese and American officials. She posed for photos before her motorcade whisked her unseen into the parking garage of a hotel.

Her visit ratcheted up tension between China and the United States because China claims Taiwan as part of its territory, and it views visits by foreign government officials as recognition of the island's sovereignty.

The Biden administration, and Pelosi, say the United States remains committed to the so-called one-China

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policy, which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei.

The speaker framed the trip as part of a broader mission at a time when "the world faces a choice between autocracy and democracy." Her visit comes after she led a congressional delegation to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv in the spring, and it serves as a capstone to her many years of promoting democracy abroad.

"We must stand by Taiwan," she said in an opinion piece published by The Washington Post on her arrival in Taiwan. She cited the commitment that the U.S. made to a democratic Taiwan under a 1979 law.

"It is essential that America and our allies make clear that we never give in to autocrats," she wrote.

Taiwan and China split during a civil war in 1949, but China claims the island as its own territory and has not ruled out using military force to take it.

The Biden administration did not explicitly urge Pelosi to call off her plans. It repeatedly and publicly assured Beijing that the visit did not signal any change in U.S. policy toward Taiwan.

Soon after Pelosi's arrival, China announced a series of military operations and drills, which followed promises of "resolute and strong measures" if Pelosi went through with her visit.

The People's Liberation Army said the maneuvers would take place in the waters and skies near Taiwan and include the firing of long-range ammunition in the Taiwan Strait.

"This action is a solemn deterrent against the recent major escalation of the negative actions of the United States on the Taiwan issue, and a serious warning to the 'Taiwan independence' forces seeking 'independence.'"

China's official Xinhua News said the army planned to conduct live-fire drills from Aug. 4 to Aug. 7 across multiple locations. An image released by the news agency indicated that the drills were to take place in six different areas in the waters surrounding Taiwan.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Washington's betrayal "on the Taiwan issue is bankrupting its national credibility."

"Some American politicians are playing with fire on the issue of Taiwan," Wang said in a statement that referred to the U.S. as "the world's biggest saboteur of peace."

Back in the United States, 26 Republican lawmakers issued a statement of rare bipartisan support for the Democratic speaker. The statement called trips by members of Congress to Taiwan routine.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell backed Pelosi's visit as a display of support for Taiwan's democracy and said any allegations that her itinerary was provocative were "utterly absurd."

"I believe she has every right to go," McConnell said in a Senate speech.

Senators are considering legislation to bolster Taiwan's defense as direct response to China's rhetoric. The Taiwan Policy Act, which has support from both parties, will be discussed Wednesday by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The package would bolster Taiwan's defense capabilities with nearly \$4.5 billion in security assistance over the next four years and provide other support for Taiwan's democratic government and civil society. The measure would also designate Taiwan as a "major non-NATO ally," which opens the door to more security and trade benefits.

Backers call it the most comprehensive restructuring of U.S. policy toward Taiwan since the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979.

Pelosi's trip was not officially announced ahead of time.

Barricades were erected outside the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Taipei. Journalists and onlookers thronged the streets just outside and pressed against the hotel's lobby windows as they awaited Pelosi's motorcade. Two buildings in the capital lit up LED displays with words of welcome, including the iconic Taipei 101 building, which said "Welcome to Taiwan, Speaker Pelosi."

China has stepped up overflights and other provocative moves toward Taiwan and neighboring territory in recent years, asserting broad claims of its rights around the region.

China's military threats have driven concerns about a new crisis in the 100-mile-wide (140-kilometer) Taiwan Strait that could roil global markets and supply chains.

The White House insisted that China had no valid cause for anger.

"The United States will not seek, and does not want, a crisis," John Kirby, spokesman for the National

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Security Council, told a White House briefing Tuesday. "At the same time, we will not engage in saber-rattling."

U.S. officials have said the American military will increase its movements in the Indo-Pacific region during Pelosi's visit. The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its strike group were in the Philippine Sea on Monday, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations.

The Reagan, the cruiser USS Antietam and the destroyer USS Higgins left Singapore after a port visit and moved north to their home port in Japan.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said early Wednesday that China had sent 21 planes flying toward Taiwan, 18 of them fighter jets. The rest included an early warning plane and an electronic warfare plane.

Beijing sees official American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make the island's decades-old de facto independence permanent, a step U.S. leaders say they don't support. Pelosi, head of one of three branches of the U.S. government, is the highest-ranking elected American official to visit Taiwan since then-Speaker Newt Gingrich in 1997.

Pelosi's aircraft, an Air Force version of the Boeing 737, took a roundabout route, flying east over Indonesia rather than directly over the South China Sea.

The speaker has long challenged China on human rights, including traveling to Tiananmen Square in 1991, two years after China crushed a wave of democracy protests.

In 2009, she hand-delivered a letter to then-President Hu Jintao calling for the release of political prisoners. She had sought to visit Taiwan's island democracy earlier this year before testing positive for COVID-19.

China has been steadily ratcheting up diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan. China cut off all contact with Taiwan's government in 2016 after President Tsai Ing-wen refused to endorse its claim that the island and mainland together make up a single Chinese nation, with the communist regime in Beijing being the sole legitimate government.

Pelosi kicked off her Asian tour Monday in Singapore. She is to travel to Japan and South Korea later this week.

## US sues Idaho over abortion law, cites medical treatment

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The Justice Department on Tuesday filed a lawsuit that challenges Idaho's restrictive abortion law, arguing that it conflicts with a federal law requiring doctors to provide pregnant women medically necessary treatment that could include abortion.

The federal government brought the lawsuit seeking to invalidate the state's "criminal prohibition on providing abortions as applied to women suffering medical emergencies," Attorney General Merrick Garland said.

The announcement is the first major action by the Justice Department challenging a state trigger law since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June. The court's decision has led some states to enact restrictive abortion laws and is likely to lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states in the U.S.

The Justice Department brought the suit because federal prosecutors believe Idaho's law would force doctors to violate the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, a federal law that requires anyone coming to a medical facility for emergency treatment to be stabilized and treated, Garland said.

"Idaho's law would make it a criminal offense for doctors to provide the emergency medical treatment that federal law requires," Garland said.

Idaho, like many Republican-led states, has several anti-abortion laws on the books, creating a legal quagmire now that the U.S. Supreme Court has overturned the landmark abortion rights case *Roe v. Wade*.

The law targeted by the Justice Department criminalizes all abortions, subjecting anyone who performs or attempts to perform an abortion to a felony punishable by between two and five years in prison.

People who are charged under the law could defend themselves against the criminal allegations by arguing that the abortion was done to save a pregnant person from death, or that it was done after the pregnant person reported that they were a victim of rape or incest to a law enforcement agency — and

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provided a copy of that report to the abortion provider.

"Under the Idaho law, once effective, any state or local prosecutor can subject a physician to indictment, arrest, and prosecution merely by showing that an abortion has been performed, without regard to the circumstances," the Department of Justice wrote in the lawsuit. "The law then puts the burden on the physician to prove an 'affirmative defense' at trial."

Advocates for sexual assault survivors have said the rape and incest exception is essentially useless, because Idaho's public record law doesn't allow law enforcement agencies to release reports when a case is still under investigation — a process that generally takes weeks or months.

Dr. Caitlin Gustafson, a family physician, and a regional Planned Parenthood organization have already sued over the abortion ban and two other anti-abortion laws in the Idaho Supreme Court, which is expected to hear arguments in the case on Wednesday. In the lawsuit, Gustafson contends that the exception for medical emergencies is vague and impossible to interpret.

"It would be very difficult, if not impossible, for me to implement the medical exception and provide care to a pregnant person whose life may be at risk," wrote Gustafson, noting that some serious pregnancy-related medical conditions like preeclampsia can cause death though it is not guaranteed to do so.

Idaho Gov. Brad Little, a Republican, said the U.S. Supreme Court gave states the ability to regulate abortion, "end of story." He promised to work with the state's attorney general, Lawrence Wasden, to defend the law.

"The U.S. Justice Department's interference with Idaho's pro-life law is another example of Biden overreaching yet again," Little said in a prepared statement.

Wasden, also a Republican, said the lawsuit was "politically motivated" and said the Justice Department should have reached out to Idaho some time over the past six weeks work out the issue.

"Instead of complying with the requirements of this provision," Wasden said, referencing the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, "or even attempting to engage Idaho in a meaningful dialogue on the issue, the federal government has chosen to waste taxpayer dollars on an unnecessary lawsuit."

Idaho Democratic Party Chair Lauren Necochea praised the Justice Department's lawsuit in a prepared statement, saying the state's Republican politicians "would rather let a pregnancy kill a person than allow them to receive an abortion."

"Idaho's radical abortion ban gives health care providers an impossible choice: withhold medically necessary care or face prison time," Necochea said. "In states where these bans have gone into effect, providers are waiting for medical conditions to worsen before assisting their pregnant patients, increasing the risk of sepsis and other life-threatening complications. This is immoral."

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services last month informed hospitals that they must provide abortion services if the life of the mother is at risk, saying federal law on emergency treatment guidelines preempt state abortion bans if the bans don't have adequate exceptions for medical emergencies.

In response, the state of Texas sued the federal government, contending that the guidance from the Biden administration is unlawful and that the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act does not cover abortions. That case is still pending.

## Polio virus found in New York wastewater, but no new cases

By MICHAEL HILL Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — The polio virus was detected in wastewater samples from the suburban county near New York City where an unvaccinated adult recently contracted the life-threatening disease, but health officials said Tuesday they have not identified any additional cases.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the presence of the virus was detected in wastewater samples collected in early June from Rockland County, where officials on July 21 announced the first case of polio in the United States in nearly a decade.

The unidentified young adult had a strain of the virus that has since been genetically linked to samples found in Rockland County wastewater, as well to samples in London and the Jerusalem area.

The CDC said in a prepared statement said that the New York wastewater sample shows there may be more people in the community shedding the virus.

"However, it's important to note that we don't have enough information at this time to determine if the virus is actively spreading in New York or elsewhere in the U.S., and no additional cases have been identified," according to the CDC.

Health officials have said the patient had acquired a "vaccine-derived" strain of the virus, meaning it probably originated in someone who had been inoculated with a live vaccine — available in other countries, but not the U.S. In rare instances, people given the live virus can spread it to other people who haven't been vaccinated.

New York health officials said they could not conclusively say whether the Rockland County samples came from the patient, who developed symptoms in June.

As to the wider implications, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative said in a statement Friday that genetic and epidemiological investigations are attempting "to determine possible spread of the virus and potential risk associated with these various isolates detected from different locations around the world."

Polio, once one of the nation's most feared diseases, was declared eliminated in the United States in 1979, more than two decades after vaccines became available.

Its discovery in the populous suburbs north of New York City prompted a local vaccination drive.

"Given how quickly polio can spread, now is the time for every adult, parent, and guardian to get themselves and their children vaccinated as soon as possible," said New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett.

## Grieving father erupts at Parkland school shooter's trial

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — A grieving father erupted in anger Tuesday as he told jurors about the daughter Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz murdered along with 16 others four years ago, his voice rising as he recounted her "infectious laugh that I can only get to watch now on TikTok videos."

Dr. Ilan Alhadeff's emotional testimony about his 14-year-old daughter Alyssa marked a second day of tears as families, one after another, took the witness stand to give heartrending statements about their loved ones who died at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Feb. 14, 2018.

He and his wife, Lori, described Alyssa's role as captain of her soccer team, the friend others always turned to for advice or a shoulder to cry on, and her plans to become a business lawyer. He cried as he recounted how he will not dance with his daughter at her wedding or see the children she would have had.

"My first-born daughter, daddy's girl was taken from me!" yelled Alhadeff, an internal medicine physician. "I get to watch my friends, my neighbors, colleagues spend time enjoying their daughters, enjoying all the normal milestones, taking in the normal joys and I only get to watch videos or go to the cemetery to see my daughter."

He said one of Alyssa's two younger brothers was too young to comprehend her death when it happened, but now "asks to go see his sister at the cemetery from time to time."

"This is not normal!" he said angrily.

Cruz, 23, pleaded guilty to 17 counts of first-degree murder in October; the trial is only to determine whether he is sentenced to death or life without parole. Over the two days of family statements, he has shown little emotion, even as several of his attorneys wiped away tears and Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer's voice broke when she gave directions. He mostly stares straight ahead or looks down at the table where he sits.

As one family testifies, others sob in the gallery while awaiting their turn. When finished, they stay to lend support. They exchange packets of tissues, shoulder rubs and, when breaks come, hugs. Some jurors wipe away tears, but most sit stoically.

Some families had statements read for them. The mother of 14-year-old Martin Duque wrote that while he was born in Mexico, he wanted to become a U.S. Navy Seal. The wife of assistant football coach Aaron Feis wrote that he was a doting father to their young daughter and a mentor to many young people.

The mother of 16-year-old Carmen Schentrup wrote that she was a straight-A student whose letter announcing she was a semifinalist for a National Merit Scholarship arrived the day after she died. She wanted to be a doctor who researched amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Shara Kaplan sobbed as she told the jurors of her two sons' sadness that they weren't there to protect their little sister, 18-year-old Meadow Pollack.

Luke Hoyer's mom, Gina, said the 15-year-old was her "miracle baby," her "Lukey Bear." She said he yelled down that Valentine's Day morning to thank her for the card and Skittles she'd placed in his bathroom. The gifts stayed there for a year. His father, Tom, said he never saw his son that morning, but yelled up "Have a good day" as he hurried to work. "That is the kind of exchange you have when you think you have tomorrow," he said.

Fred Guttenberg, who has become a national advocate for tighter gun laws, said he regrets that the last words he said to his 14-year-old daughter Jaime weren't "I love you" but instead, "You gotta go, you are going to be late" as he pushed her and her older brother out the door that morning. He said his son is angry with him for telling him to run when he called in a panic to say there was a gunman at the school instead of having him find his sister, even though it would have made no difference.

His wife, Jennifer Guttenberg, said that while her daughter was known for her competitive dancing, she volunteered with the Humane Society and with special needs children. She planned to be a pediatric physical therapist.

Annika Dworet, her husband Mitch sitting somberly at her side, told the jurors about their son Nick, who was 17 when he died. A star swimmer, he had accepted a scholarship to the University of Indianapolis and was training in hopes of competing for his mother's native Sweden in the 2020 Olympics. His younger brother, Alex, was wounded in the shooting.

"He was always inclusive of everyone. On his last evening with us, he spent time speaking to the younger kids on the swim team, giving them some pointers," she said.

But now, she said, "our hearts will forever be broken."

"We will always live with excruciating pain. We have an empty bedroom in our house. There is an empty chair at our dining table. Alex will never have a brother to talk or hang out with. They will never again go for a drive, blasting very loud music. We did not get to see Nick graduate from high school or college. We will never see him getting married.

"We will always hesitate before answering the question, 'How many kids do you have?'"

## Uvalde rekindles school police officers' looming fears

By COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

AURORA, Colo. (AP) — Tony Ramaeker averages around 14,000 steps a day as he walks around the Nebraska high school where he is assigned to work as a sheriff's deputy, greeting students arriving in the morning, wandering the hallways to talk to them and watching out for those who might be eating alone in the cafeteria.

The former Marine and longtime youth pastor keeps his office in suburban Omaha stocked with treats such as Little Debbie snacks and Pop-Tarts because eating helps kids in crisis calm down and talk.

But in the back of his mind, a thought always looms: What would he do if a gunman attacked the school?

The latest reminder of that danger came in May when 19 children and two teachers were killed in a fourth-grade classroom in Uvalde, Texas. The fear that the next shooting could happen in their hallways hangs over school resource officers across the United States, exacerbating an already difficult job: They're called on to be battle-ready officers whom parents and students can trust to protect them while not making students feel uncomfortable or targeted.

Reminders of the threat of school shootings were omnipresent at a recent National Association of School Resource Officers conference in Colorado where hundreds of officers gathered for training.

An exhibit hall featured booths with businesses selling ideas to stop the next school shooter, like door locks, and simulation machines to mimic shootings. One business showed off foldable semi-automatic rifles

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it said one school resource officer takes in a Hello Kitty backpack to his school in Alabama.

"Mom and Dad don't want to see this weapon in their school, but it's got to be there," said Dan Pose, CEO of Gulf Coast Tactical, which sells the rifles.

Officers also sat in on sessions to learn about what went right and wrong at past school shootings. In one of those, they heard about the failure by a school safety monitor to send out an alert when he initially spotted the Parkland school shooter walking onto the campus. The armed school resource officer accused of hiding during the shooting was later charged with being criminally negligent.

In another, they got a briefing on a 2019 school shooting in Colorado, in which a private security guard who was secretly armed accidentally wounded two students.

A Colorado county sheriff also pointed to a more subtle failure in the response to that fatal 2019 shooting: Officers unnecessarily traumatized evacuated elementary students by having them line up with their hands on their heads even though authorities knew the gunmen involved were either teens or adults.

"That right there will last a lifetime," Douglas County Sheriff Tony Spurlock said, pointing to the photo of the children, one of whom has her hands folded in prayer instead. Later, he explained that he wanted to encourage school resource officers to use their discretion and find ways to minimize trauma to children.

Officer Roy Mitchell Jr. said he tries not to let preparing for a shooting rule his thoughts, but he watches out at entrances and windows for anyone unfamiliar headed into the suburban Baltimore high school where he works. He also considers where he would try to move students to should there be an attack.

"I try to always have some type of a game plan in my head," he said.

Ramaeker said he believes he wouldn't hesitate to do whatever he could to protect his students and staff. He has even thought through how he would use the handgun he has holstered to his hip if he didn't have time get a rifle he has kept secured in the building since the 2018 Parkland school shooting.

They and other officers in Colorado for the conference stressed that building relationships and getting to know what's going on in the lives of students is vital for all aspects of the job — whether they're acting as confidants or cops.

Some offer to help make waffles and pancakes in cooking class or fill-in to serve lunch when cafeteria workers are out sick. Others squeeze into desks in the back row to observe what students are learning. They're encouraged to teach a class, on topics such as citizens' civil rights and the legal process. They keep an eye out for who drives what cars, who is dating whom and who might be eating lunch in the bathroom because they have no friends.

It's an intense version of community policing that they hope will make them positive role models while also helping them learn about any kinds of threats that emerge in their schools.

Lt. Sandra F. Calloway-Crim, who has been a school resource officer in Valley, Alabama, for 18 years, said she got a call late one night after patrol officers found a 13-year-old student at one of her schools wandering outside alone in his pajamas. She knew the boy's father would be working the night shift but that his mother would be at home, and directed the officers to take the boy there.

Still, some activists say police don't belong in a school at all. Some districts got rid of police officers in schools during the protests over racial injustice following the murder of George Floyd in 2020 amid criticism that they have disproportionately arrested Black students, sweeping them into the criminal justice system.

Officers from Fremont, California, were removed from schools but brought back a year later after negotiating terms of a new agreement with officials. They spoke at the recent conference, encouraging supervisors to keep track of all the positive interactions they have with students to help balance the reports about investigations and arrests that police normally only document.

Don Bridges, who started a school resource officer program in suburban Baltimore in 1989, bristles at the "school to prison pipeline" criticism. Bridges, who is Black, saw the program as a way to build relationships between students and law enforcement after seeing too many people who looked like him getting arrested when he worked in patrol. He said having police in schools does not lead to Black students being targeted when officers are properly trained.

Detective Beth Sanborn drops what she is doing at home and heads into work whenever her phone

explodes with messages from students at the campus where she works in suburban Philadelphia about a social media post seen as threatening.

She feels guilty sometimes for putting the needs of her "school kids" ahead of her own children. Emotional crises, fights and the fallout from failed relationships tend to be more at the front of her mind than the possibility of a shooting but she said building relationships with her students is the key to preventing all kinds of problems.

"While it always has the potential to be there, what we hope is that by stressing that sense of community, that we can avert any kind of violence," she said.

After Parkland's school resource officer failed to intervene when a student opened fire in 2018, students at a high school in Cullman, Alabama, asked Officer Seth Sullivan if he would promise to protect them.

"You're damn skippy I'm going to be in there. Those are my kids," Sullivan said.

## Boy wounded in parade attack moves to rehab-focused hospital

By KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — An 8-year-old boy whose spine was severed in the shooting at a parade on July 4 has moved to a rehabilitation-focused hospital after spending nearly a month in a Chicago pediatric intensive care unit.

Cooper Roberts' family said the boy was moved Sunday to the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab from the University of Chicago's Comer Children's Hospital. The family's statement released Monday said Cooper's medical team will focus on physical and occupational therapy along with other rehabilitation and mental health services.

Cooper was among the 48 people wounded when a gunman opened fire on the Highland Park Independence Day parade. His twin brother, Luke, was hit by shrapnel, and his mother was wounded in the leg.

Seven people were killed.

Since the shooting, Cooper has undergone at least seven surgeries and is paralyzed from the waist down. In previous statements, his family said he required time on a ventilator and breathing tube after some of those procedures, and he experienced high fevers and other complications.

Each sign of progress has been celebrated in the family's public updates: Cooper's first time consuming liquids, the first trip outside the hospital doors in a wheelchair, trips to the hospital's play room and a reunion with the family's French bulldog, George.

Word of Cooper's move to the rehabilitation hospital this week sparked another burst of financial support for the Roberts family. An online fundraiser reported more than \$1.7 million has been raised toward Cooper's care.

In a statement last week, their mother Keely asked people to continue praying for Cooper and Luke.

"Their lives are so much more and better than this terrible thing than was done to them," she said. "Their lives are not a tragedy, they are a triumph."

Lake County prosecutors have charged Robert E. Crimo III with 21 counts of murder, 48 counts of attempted murder and 48 counts of aggravated battery, representing the seven people killed and dozens wounded in the attack.

## Some flee eastern Ukraine, others defy govt order to leave

By JUSTIN SPIKE Associated Press

KRAMATORSK, Ukraine (AP) — Maryna Havrysh struggled to hold back her tears as she helped a group of volunteers load her elderly parents into an evacuation van in Kramatorsk, near the front line of Russia's war on Ukraine.

Her 84-year-old father, Viktor Mariukha, was carried by stretcher out of the house, while her mother Lidia, 79, held a cane as volunteers held her under each arm. As the couple left the home they had shared for nearly 70 years to begin a journey to a nursing home in western Ukraine, their daughter offered them words of comfort.

But when the van's sliding door closed, Maryna burst into sobs.

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"I understand that this will be the last time that I ever see them," said Maryna, who decided to remain in Kramatorsk with her husband to continue working. "You see their age, I can't give them the proper care."

The evacuation of Maryna's parents, carried out by volunteers with a Ukrainian aid group, came days after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy issued an order to all those remaining in the country's embattled Donetsk region to evacuate as soon as possible as Russian forces press deeper into the region.

"The more people leave Donetsk region now, the fewer people the Russian army will have time to kill," Zelenskyy said.

Even as the August weather remains warm in eastern Ukraine, authorities are preparing for the cold months of fall and winter, when they fear that many of the roughly 350,000 residents still inside Donetsk may not have access to heat, electricity or even clean water.

On Tuesday, Ukraine's deputy prime minister, Iryna Vereshchuk, said a train carrying evacuees from Donetsk had arrived in central Ukraine, representing the start of what authorities are describing as a compulsory evacuation effort that would take 200,000-220,000 people out of the eastern province by fall.

On the outskirts of Kramatorsk, which has undergone frequent Russian shelling, volunteers have set up a collection point for gathering evacuees who are then transported to the nearest working train station in Pokrovsk, 50 miles (85 kilometers) to the southwest.

As she struggled to board the van bound for the train station, Valentyna Abramovska, 87, carried only a black-and-white photograph of her mother and sister taken nearly 50 years ago on the Sea of Azov, a memento of her life to carry with her.

"God help me, God help me," she repeated as she crossed herself with trembling hands. "I think I'm going crazy."

Abramovska said she'd been terrified after the bombings in her village became "a nightmare," and was persuaded by her daughter to leave.

She still has childhood memories, she said, of German soldiers who occupied Ukraine during World War II. But for her, the experience of Russian bombardment has been far worse.

"They are beasts, jackals. God forgive me for what I'm saying," she said. "How is it possible? They are killing children."

While the government's order to evacuate has convinced some of those left in the Donetsk region to flee, others are resistant.

Nina Grandova's third-floor apartment in Kramatorsk was damaged by Russian shelling in July, and her disabled husband, Yurii, has been living in the building's dingy basement since the Russian invasion began on Feb. 24.

Yet she said they have no plans to leave, and has been collecting firewood in the yard of her building to cook with over in winter. She is willing to sign a document required by authorities declaring that those who stay take responsibility for their own lives, she said.

"I have nowhere to go. I have to take care of my husband," she said. "What will happen will happen."

After being transported to the train station in Pokrovsk, hundreds of evacuees climbed onto the sweltering train for the several-hour journey west to the city of Dnipro.

Standing on the platform with her young daughter, Viktoria, a young mother from the eastern city of Bakhmut said the danger posed by shelling and the prospect of a winter without heat had convinced her to flee.

"We already have problems with electricity and no gas, so I think families with children will be the first to leave," she said.

Moments before the train lurched into motion toward the west, an air raid siren pierced the air.

## Africa lays out goals ahead of UN climate summit

By WANJOHI KABUKURU Associated Press

MOMBASA, Kenya (AP) — African officials outlined their priorities for the upcoming U.N. climate summit, including a push to make heavily polluting rich nations compensate poor countries for the environmental

damage done to them.

The continent will also focus on how countries can adapt to global warming and how the continent can best halt further climate-related disasters. Africa has seen debilitating droughts in the east and Horn of Africa and deadly cyclones in the south.

Other key areas for discussion include moving from high-carbon energy sources like oil and gas to renewables, and "carbon credit" schemes, where foreign governments and companies pay for tree planting in exchange for producing greenhouse gases.

The U.N. climate conference, known as COP27, will be held in Egypt in November.

How much funding Africa gets is the biggest factor for how prepared it will be for a hotter future, said Harsen Nyambe, the director of sustainable environment at the African Union Commission.

"We recall the \$100 billion that was promised has never been fulfilled and current assessments show that even that amount is not enough," Nyambe said, referring to a 12-year-old pledge by rich nations to provide climate funding for poorer nations.

"Africa must be given adequate time to transition and transform its energy infrastructure. We cannot transform abruptly. We need resources, capacity, technology transfer and finance to power our development," he added.

A commitment made in the previous international summit in Glasgow to spend half of climate funds on helping developing nations adapt to the effects of a warming world by having infrastructure and agriculture that's resilient to more volatile weather systems, must be followed through, said Jean-Paul Adam, director of climate change for the U.N.'s Economic Commission for Africa.

He added the continent only received about 7.5% of its promised \$70 billion in climate funding between 2014 and 2018.

Africa needs around \$3 trillion to fulfill its self-determined emissions targets, known as nationally determined contributions, that each country is required to submit as part of the 2015 Paris agreement on climate, according to U.N. and Africa Development Bank estimates.

More meetings between the continent's climate leaders are set to follow ahead of COP27.

## Even simple exercise may help aging brain, study hints

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

New research hints that even a simple exercise routine just might help older Americans with mild memory problems.

Doctors have long advised physical activity to help keep a healthy brain fit. But the government-funded study marks the longest test of whether exercise makes any difference once memory starts to slide — research performed amid a pandemic that added isolation to the list of risks to participants' brain health.

Researchers recruited about 300 sedentary older adults with hard-to-spot memory changes called mild cognitive impairment or MCI -- a condition that's sometimes, but not always, a precursor to Alzheimer's. Half were assigned aerobic exercises and the rest stretching-and-balance moves that only modestly raised their heart rate.

Another key component: Participants in both groups were showered with attention by trainers who worked with them at YMCAs around the country -- and when COVID-19 shut down gyms, helped them keep moving at home via video calls.

After a year, cognitive testing showed overall neither group had worsened, said lead researcher Laura Baker, a neuroscientist at Wake Forest School of Medicine. Nor did brain scans show the shrinkage that accompanies worsening memory problems, she said.

By comparison, similar MCI patients in another long-term study of brain health -- but without exercise -- experienced significant cognitive decline over a year.

Those early findings are surprising, and the National Institute on Aging cautioned that tracking non-exercisers in the same study would have offered better proof.

But the results suggest "this is doable for everybody" -- not just seniors healthy enough to work up

a hard sweat, said Baker, who presented the data Tuesday at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference. "Exercise needs to be part of the prevention strategies" for at-risk seniors.

Previous research has found regular physical activity of any sort may reduce damaging inflammation and increase blood flow to the brain, said Alzheimer's Association chief scientific officer Maria Carrillo.

But the new study is especially intriguing because the pandemic hit halfway through, leaving already vulnerable seniors socially isolated -- something long known to increase people's risk of memory problems, Carrillo said.

It's a frustrating time for dementia research. Doctors are hesitant to prescribe a high-priced new drug called Aduhelm that was supposed to be the first to slow progression of Alzheimer's -- but it's not yet clear if it really helps patients. Researchers last month reported another drug that works similarly -- by targeting amyloid plaques that are an Alzheimer's hallmark -- failed in a key study.

While amyloid clearly plays a role, it's important that drugmakers increasingly are targeting many other factors that can lead to dementia, Carrillo said, because effective treatment or prevention likely will require a combination of customized strategies.

One example of a new approach: Sometimes in dementia, the brain has trouble processing blood sugar and fats for the energy it needs, John Didsbury of T3D Therapeutics told the Alzheimer's meeting. His company is testing a pill that aims to rev up that metabolism, with results expected next year.

Meanwhile, there's growing urgency to settle whether steps people could take today -- like exercise -- might offer at least some protection.

How much and what kind of exercise? In Baker's study, seniors were supposed to get moving for 30 to 45 minutes four times a week, whether it was on a vigorous turn on the treadmill or the stretching exercises. That's a big ask of anyone who's sedentary, but Baker said MCI's effects on the brain make it even harder for people to plan and stick with the new activity.

Hence the social stimulation — which she credited with each participant completing over 100 hours of exercise. Baker suspects that sheer volume might explain why even the simple stretching added up to an apparent benefit. Participants were supposed to exercise without formal support for an additional six months, data Baker hasn't yet analyzed.

"We wouldn't have done the exercise on our own," said retired agriculture researcher Doug Maxwell of Verona, Wisconsin, who joined the study with his wife.

The duo, both 81, were both assigned to the stretching classes. They felt so good afterward that when the study ended, they bought electric bikes in hopes of even more activity -- efforts Maxwell acknowledged are hard to keep up.

Next up: Baker is leading an even larger study of older adults to see if adding exercise to other can't-hurt steps such as a heart-healthy diet, brain games and social stimulation together may reduce the risk of dementia.

## Ukrainian officials press for information on prison attack

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian officials say they are struggling to establish the truth surrounding an explosion in a prison that killed dozens of Ukrainian prisoners of war captured by the Russians following the fall of Mariupol.

Ukraine's human rights chief, Dmytro Lubinets, told The Associated Press he has tried to establish a direct link with his Russian counterpart in order to arrange a joint visit to the prison in Olenivka, a town in eastern Ukraine held by Russian-backed separatists.

"Dialogue is when there is a conversation between two parties. At this moment, this is an official request from me, which remains unanswered," Lubinets said.

Separatist authorities and Russian officials say 53 Ukrainian POWs were killed and a further 75 were wounded Friday in the blast that ripped through a building at the prison. Both sides have blamed the other for the attack, saying it was premeditated with the aim of covering up atrocities.

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Moscow opened a probe, sending a team to the site from its Investigative Committee, the country's main criminal investigation agency. The state-run RIA Novosti agency claimed that fragments of U.S.-supplied precision High Mobility Artillery Rocket System rockets were found at the site.

The Ukrainian military, however, denied conducting any rocket or artillery strikes in Olenivka, and it accused the Russians of attacking the prison to cover up the torture and execution of Ukrainians there.

"Based on the analysis of the photos and videos that we have access to, we can say that it was an explosion from the inside of this barrack," Lubinets said.

He said images from the scene show damage to only one building and not all the windows were blown out — something he says would not be possible if the complex was shelled.

Ukraine has appealed to the United Nations and to the International Committee of the Red Cross for help in investigating the blast and to find out more about the condition of the injured.

ICRC spokesman Oleksandr Vlasenko told the AP that the organization was currently negotiating with the Russians regarding visiting Olenivka. ICRC staff want to see everyone held there, make sure those wounded in the blast get proper medical treatment, and look at the bodies of the dead.

Russian officials on Saturday issued a list of the Ukrainian soldiers they said who had been killed or wounded in the attack, but the Ukrainians say they have been unable to verify the list while there is no access for the ICRC.

More than 2,400 soldiers from the Azov Regiment of the Ukrainian national guard and other military units defending the city of Mariupol surrendered under orders from Ukraine's military in May.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has called upon the U.N. and the Red Cross, which acted as guarantors during the withdrawal of the Ukrainian military from the giant Azovstal steel mill in Mariupol, to preserve the lives of Ukrainian prisoners of war.

Olena Tolkachova, who is in charge of support services for the Azov Regiment, said she had received little information about the fate of the captured soldiers.

"According to the terms (of the withdrawal), the International Committee of the Red Cross had to visit our POWs every week and check the conditions of our soldiers. They were supposed to provide contact with relatives," she said.

She said she believed the ICRC had only visited the prison once and she only discovered this from the Russian media. The support service is in touch with the ICRC seeking information about those who were killed or wounded in Olenivka.

"They do not give specific answers. They cannot explain to us why they cannot get there," Tolkachova said, adding that relatives are desperate to know what happened to their loved ones and are calling every number they can find for any shred of information.

Vlasenko of the Red Cross said negotiations with the Russians are delicate.

"Any leak of information can be harmful. We inform about our actions only when they have taken place," he added.

Russia's Supreme Court on Tuesday declared Ukraine's Azov Regiment a terrorist organization, a designation that could lead to terror charges against some of the captured fighters. Tolkachova said up to 1,000 soldiers from the Azov Regiment alone are currently in Russian captivity and the attack at Olenivka has raised concerns that no one can guarantee their safety.

"They were simply blown up. And this public execution, which was shown all over the world, isn't that enough for the world to understand that they are in mortal danger?" Tolkachova said.

Lubinets hoped that at least the process of returning the bodies of those killed in Olenivka will begin soon.

"I can only hope that the principles of humanitarian law remain among the Russian Federation's leaders," Lubinets said.

## Watching al-Qaida chief's 'pattern of life' key to his death

By ZEKE MILLER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the sun was rising in Kabul on Sunday, two Hellfire missiles fired by a U.S.

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drone ended Ayman al-Zawahri's decade-long reign as the leader of al-Qaida. The seeds of the audacious counterterrorism operation had been planted over many months.

U.S. officials had built a scale model of the safe house where al-Zawahri had been located, and brought it into the White House Situation Room to show President Joe Biden. They knew al-Zawahri was partial to sitting on the home's balcony.

They had painstakingly constructed "a pattern of life," as one official put it. They were confident he was on the balcony when the missiles flew, officials said.

Years of efforts by U.S. intelligence operatives under four presidents to track al-Zawahri and his associates paid dividends earlier this year, Biden said, when they located Osama bin Laden's longtime No. 2 — a co-planner of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the U.S. — and ultimate successor at the house in Kabul.

Bin Laden's death came in May 2011, face to face with a U.S. assault team led by Navy SEALs. Al-Zawahri's death came from afar, at 6:18 a.m. in Kabul.

His family, supported by the Haqqani Taliban network, had taken up residence in the home after the Taliban regained control of the country last year, following the withdrawal of U.S. forces after nearly 20 years of combat that had been intended, in part, to keep al-Qaida from regaining a base of operations in Afghanistan.

But the lead on his whereabouts was only the first step. Confirming al-Zawahri's identity, devising a strike in a crowded city that wouldn't recklessly endanger civilians, and ensuring the operation wouldn't set back other U.S. priorities took months to fall into place.

That effort involved independent teams of analysts reaching similar conclusions about the probability of al-Zawahri's presence, the scale mock-up and engineering studies of the building to evaluate the risk to people nearby, and the unanimous recommendation of Biden's advisers to go ahead with the strike.

"Clear and convincing," Biden called the evidence. "I authorized the precision strike that would remove him from the battlefield once and for all. This measure was carefully planned, rigorously, to minimize the risk of harm to other civilians."

The consequences of getting it wrong on this type of judgment call were devastating a year ago this month, when a U.S. drone strike during the chaotic withdrawal of American forces killed 10 innocent family members, seven of them children.

Biden ordered what officials called a "tailored airstrike," designed so that the two missiles would destroy only the balcony of the safe house where the terrorist leader was holed up for months, sparing occupants elsewhere in the building.

A senior U.S. administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the strike planning, said al-Zawahri was identified on "multiple occasions, for sustained periods of time" on the balcony where he died.

The official said "multiple streams of intelligence" convinced U.S. analysts of his presence, having eliminated "all reasonable options" other than his being there.

Two senior national security officials were first briefed on the intelligence in early April, with the president being briefed by national security adviser Jake Sullivan shortly thereafter. Through May and June, a small circle of officials across the government worked to vet the intelligence and devise options for Biden.

On July 1 in the White House Situation Room, after returning from a five-day trip to Europe, Biden was briefed on the proposed strike by his national security aides. It was at that meeting, the official said, that Biden viewed the model of the safe house and peppered advisers, including CIA Director William Burns, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines and National Counterterrorism Center director Christy Abizaid, with questions about their conclusion that al-Zawahri was hiding there.

Biden, the official said, also pressed officials to consider the risks the strike could pose to American Mark Frerichs, who has been in Taliban captivity for more than two years, and to Afghans who aided the U.S. war efforts who remain in the country. U.S. lawyers also considered the legality of the strike, concluding that al-Zawahri's continued leadership of the terrorist group and support for al-Qaida attacks made him a lawful target.

The official said al-Zawahri had built an organizational model that allowed him to lead the global network

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even from relative isolation. That included filming videos from the house, and the U.S. believes some may be released after his death.

On July 25, as Biden was isolated in the White House residence with COVID-19, he received a final briefing from his team.

Each of the officials participating strongly recommended the operation's approval, the official said, and Biden gave the sign-off for the strike as soon as an opportunity was available.

That unanimity was lacking a decade earlier when Biden, as vice president, gave President Barack Obama advice he did not take — to hold off on the bin Laden strike, according to Obama's memoirs.

The opportunity came early Sunday — late Saturday in Washington — hours after Biden again found himself in isolation with a rebound case of the coronavirus. He was informed when the operation began and when it concluded, the official said.

A further 36 hours of intelligence analysis would follow before U.S. officials began sharing that al-Zawahri was killed, as they watched the Haqqani Taliban network restrict access to the safe house and relocate the dead al-Qaida leader's family. U.S. officials interpreted that as the Taliban trying to conceal the fact they had harbored al-Zawahri.

After last year's troop withdrawal, the U.S. was left with fewer bases in the region to collect intelligence and carry out strikes on terrorist targets. It was not clear from where the drone carrying the missiles was launched or whether countries it flew over were aware of its presence.

The U.S. official said the Taliban was provided with no forewarning of the attack. In an interview with ABC's "Good Morning America" on Tuesday, Sullivan said that no uniformed personnel had been on the ground when the strike happened and that "we are in direct communication with the Taliban on this."

In remarks 11 months ago, Biden had said the U.S. would keep up the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and other countries, despite pulling out troops. "We just don't need to fight a ground war to do it."

"We have what's called over-the-horizon capabilities," he said.

On Sunday, the missiles came over the horizon.

## Feds target US companies caught in lucrative shark fin trade

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — It's one of the seafood industry's most gruesome hunts.

Every year, the fins of as many as 73 million sharks are sliced from the backs of the majestic sea predators, their bleeding bodies sometimes dumped back into the ocean where they are left to suffocate or die of blood loss.

But while the barbaric practice is driven by China, where shark fin soup is a symbol of status for the rich and powerful, America's seafood industry isn't immune from the trade.

A spate of recent criminal indictments highlights how U.S. companies, taking advantage of a patchwork of federal and state laws, are supplying a market for fins that activists say is as reprehensible as the now-illegal trade in elephant ivory once was.

A complaint quietly filed last month in Miami federal court accused an exporter based in the Florida Keys, Elite Sky International, of falsely labeling some 5,666 pounds of China-bound shark fins as live Florida spiny lobsters. Another company, south Florida-based Aifa Seafood, is also under criminal investigation for similar violations, according to two people on the condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing probe. The company is managed by a Chinese-American woman who in 2016 pleaded guilty to shipping more than a half-ton of live Florida lobsters to her native China without a license.

The heightened scrutiny from law enforcement comes as Congress debates a federal ban on shark fins — making it illegal to import or export even foreign-caught fins. Every year, American wildlife inspectors seize thousands of shark fins while in transit to Asia for failing to declare the shipments.

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While not all sharks are killed just for their fins, none of the other shark parts harvested in the U.S. and elsewhere — such as its meat, jaws or skin — can compete with fins in terms of value. Depending on the type of shark, a single pound of fins can fetch hundreds of dollars, making it one of the priciest seafood products by weight anywhere.

“If you’re going out of business because you can no longer sell fins, then what are you actually fishing for?” said Whitney Webber, a campaign director at Washington-based Oceana, which supports the ban.

Since 2000, federal law has made it illegal to cut the fins off sharks and discard their bodies back into the ocean. However, individual states have wide leeway to decide whether or not businesses can harvest fins from dead sharks at a dock, or import them from overseas.

The legislation working its way through Congress would impose a near-total ban on trade in fins, similar to action taken by Canada in 2019. The legislation, introduced in 2017 by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, has majority support in both the House and Senate.

Among those opposing the proposed ban is Elite, which has hired lobbyists to urge Congress to vote against the bill, lobbying records show.

It’s not known where Elite obtained its fins. But in the criminal complaint, the company was also accused of sourcing lobster from Nicaragua and Belize that it falsely stated was caught in Florida. The company, affiliated with a Chinese-American seafood exporter based in New York City, was charged with violating the Lacey Act, a century-old statute that makes it a crime to submit false paperwork for any wildlife shipped overseas.

An attorney for Elite wouldn’t comment nor did two representatives of Aifa when reached by phone.

Overfishing has led to a 71% decline in shark species since the 1970s. The International Union for Conservation of Nature, a Switzerland-based group that tracks wildlife populations, estimates that over a third of the world’s 500-plus shark species are threatened with extinction.

Contrary to industry complaints about excessive regulations, the U.S. is hardly a model of sustainable shark management, said Webber. She pointed to a recent finding by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that less than 23% of the 66 shark stocks in U.S. waters are safe from overfishing. The status of more than half of shark stocks isn’t even known.

The situation in Europe is even worse: a new report from Greenpeace, called “Hooked on Sharks,” revealed what it said is evidence of the deliberate targeting of juvenile blue sharks by fishing fleets from Spain and Portugal. The report found that the U.S. is the world’s fourth-largest shark exporter behind Spain, China and Portugal, with exports of 3.2 million kilograms of meat — but not fins — worth over \$11 million in 2020.

Webber said rather than safeguard a small shark fishing industry, the U.S. should blaze the trail to protect the slow-growing, long-living fish.

“We can’t ask other countries to clean up their act if we’re not doing it well ourselves,” said Webber.

She said the current laws aren’t enough of a deterrent in an industry where bad actors drawn by the promise of huge profits are a recurrent problem.

Case in point: Mark Harrison, a Florida fisherman who in 2009 pleaded guilty to three criminal counts tied to his export of shark fins, some of them protected species. He was ordered to pay a \$5,000 fine and was banned from having anything to do with the shark fin trade for five years.

But federal prosecutors allege that he reconnected to associates of his former co-conspirators in 2013 in violation of the terms of his probation. He was arrested in 2020 on mail and wire fraud conspiracy charges as part of a five-year investigation, called Operation Apex, targeting a dozen individuals who also allegedly profited from drug trafficking. Prosecutors allege Harrison’s Florida-based Phoenix Fisheries was a “shell company” for individuals based in California, where possession of fins has been illegal since 2011.

As part of the bust, the Feds found documents about some 6 tons of shark fin exports and seized 18 totoaba fish bladders, a delicacy in Asia taken from an endangered species. They also seized 18,000 marijuana plants, multiple firearms and \$1 million in diamonds — pointing to a criminal enterprise that transcended illegal seafood and stretched deep into the Mexican and Chinese mafia underworlds.

“This operation is about much more than disrupting the despicable practice of hacking the fins off sharks

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and leaving them to drown in the sea to create a bowl of soup," Bobby Christine, then U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, said at the time.

An attorney for Harrison declined to comment on the case, which has yet to go to trial. But unlike his co-defendants, Harrison isn't implicated in any drug-related or weapons offenses. Supporters say he has complied with all laws and is being unfairly targeted by bureaucrats overlooking the key role he played in the 1980s, when sharks were even more threatened, developing the U.S. shark fishery.

"They appear to be using the current widespread empathy toward sharks for publicity and career advancement in what would otherwise be a very routine matter," reads a website run by supporters seeking to raise \$75,000 for a "Shark Defense Fund" to help Harrison fight the charges.

"In the process, they are seeking to tarnish Mark's reputation and deal a blow to the American shark fishery," according to the website, which was taken down after the AP started making inquiries.

Demian Chapman, who heads shark research at the Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Florida, said that the push to ban commercial fishing of sharks could backfire.

"If you subtract the U.S. from the fin trade entirely, it won't do anything to directly affect international demand and it's likely that other countries, with far less regulation of their fisheries, will fill the void," said Chapman.

He said the bill introduced by Sen. Cory Booker, a Democrat of New Jersey, appears to be driven by "shark fans" — not "shark fins" — and those who want to see the fish species afforded the same very high level of protection afforded to marine mammals and sea turtles. He said few in the U.S. are involved in the cruel, wasteful practice of shark finning and that the U.S.' role as a transit hub for fins can be remedied without punishing American fishers.

"There's a disconnect between perceptions and reality," said Chapman. "In the 25 years I've been studying sharks, they've gone from demon fish to a group of species that many people want to protect. This is great but we have to support science-based management measures that address the real problems."

## **Biden: Killing of al-Qaida leader is long-sought 'justice'**

By MATTHEW LEE, NOMAAN MERCHANT and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden announced Monday that al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Kabul, an operation he said delivered justice and hopefully "one more measure of closure" to families of the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

The president said in an evening address from the White House that U.S. intelligence officials tracked al-Zawahri to a home in downtown Kabul where he was hiding out with his family. The president approved the operation last week and it was carried out Sunday.

Al-Zawahri and the better-known Osama bin Laden plotted the 9/11 attacks that brought many ordinary Americans their first knowledge of al-Qaida. Bin Laden was killed in Pakistan on May 2, 2011, in operation carried out by U.S. Navy SEALs after a nearly decade-long hunt.

As for Al-Zawahri, Biden said, "He will never again, never again, allow Afghanistan to become a terrorist safe haven because he is gone and we're going to make sure that nothing else happens."

"This terrorist leader is no more," he added.

The operation is a significant counterterrorism win for the Biden administration just 11 months after American troops left the country after a two-decade war.

The strike was carried out by the CIA, according to five people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Neither Biden nor the White House detailed the CIA's involvement in the strike.

Biden, however, paid tribute to the U.S. intelligence community in his remarks, noting that "thanks to their extraordinary persistence and skill" the operation was a success.

Al-Zawahri's death eliminates the figure who more than anyone shaped al-Qaida, first as bin Laden's deputy since 1998, then as his successor. Together, he and bin Laden turned the jihadi movement's guns to target the United States, carrying out the deadliest attack ever on American soil — the Sept. 11 suicide hijackings.

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The house Al-Zawahri was in when he was killed was owned by a top aide to senior Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani, according to a senior intelligence official. The official also added that a CIA ground team and aerial reconnaissance conducted after the drone strike confirmed al-Zawahri's death.

On Tuesday morning, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told ABC's "Good Morning America" that "there was nobody on the ground in uniform when this strike occurred." Sullivan added that the U.S. government is "in direct communication with the Taliban on this, and I'm not going to telegraph our next moves, but the Taliban well understand the United States is going to defend its interests."

Over the 20-year war in Afghanistan, the U.S. targeted and splintered al-Qaida, sending leaders into hiding. But America's exit from Afghanistan last September gave the extremist group the opportunity to rebuild.

U.S. military officials, including Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have said al-Qaida was trying to reconstitute in Afghanistan, where it faced limited threats from the now-ruling Taliban. Military leaders have warned that the group still aspired to attack the U.S.

After his killing, the White House underscored that al-Zawahri had continued to be a dangerous figure. The senior administration official said al-Zawahri had continued to "provide strategic direction," including urging attacks on the U.S., while in hiding. He had also prioritized to members of the terror network that the United States remained al-Qaida's "primary enemy," the official said.

The 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon made bin Laden America's Enemy No. 1. But he likely could never have carried it out without his deputy. Bin Laden provided al-Qaida with charisma and money, but al-Zawahri brought tactics and organizational skills needed to forge militants into a network of cells in countries around the world.

U.S. intelligence officials have been aware for years of a network helping al-Zawahri dodge U.S. intelligence officials hunting for him, but didn't have a bead on his possible location until recent months.

Earlier this year, U.S. officials learned that the terror leader's wife, daughter and her children had relocated to a safe house in Kabul, according to the senior administration official who briefed reporters.

Officials eventually learned al-Zawahri was also at the Kabul safe house.

In early April, White House deputy national security adviser Jon Finer and Biden's homeland security adviser Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall were briefed on this developing intelligence. Soon the intelligence was carried up to national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

Sullivan brought the information to Biden as U.S. intelligence officials built "a pattern of life through multiple independent sources of information to inform the operation," the official said.

Senior Taliban figures were aware of al-Zawahri's presence in Kabul, according to the official, who added the Taliban government was given no forewarning of the operation.

Inside the Biden administration, only a small group of officials at key agencies, as well as Vice President Kamala Harris, were brought into the process. Through May and June, Biden was updated several times on the growing mound of intelligence that confirmed al-Zawahri was hiding out in the home. Over the last few weeks, Biden brought together several Cabinet officials and key national security officials to scrutinize the intelligence findings.

On July 1, Biden was briefed in the Situation Room about the planned operation, a briefing in which the president closely examined a scale model of the home al-Zawahri was hiding out in. He gave his final approval for the operation on Thursday. Al-Zawahri was on the balcony of his hideout on Sunday when two Hellfire missiles were launched from an unmanned drone, killing him.

Al-Zawahri's family was in another part of the house when the operation was carried out, and no one else was believed to have been killed in the operation, the official said.

"We make it clear again tonight: That no matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide, if you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out," Biden said.

Al-Zawahri was hardly a household name like bin Laden, but he played an enormous role in the terror group's operations.

The two terror leaders' bond was forged in the late 1980s, when al-Zawahri reportedly treated the Saudi millionaire bin Laden in the caves of Afghanistan as Soviet bombardment shook the mountains around them.

Al-Zawahri, on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorist list, had a \$25 million bounty on his head for any infor-

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mation that could be used to kill or capture him.

Al-Zawahiri and bin Laden plotted the 9/11 attacks that brought many ordinary Americans their first knowledge of al-Qaida.

Photos from the time often showed the glasses-wearing, mild-looking Egyptian doctor sitting by the side of bin Laden. Al-Zawahiri had merged his group of Egyptian militants with bin Laden's al-Qaida in the 1990s.

"The strong contingent of Egyptians applied organizational know-how, financial expertise, and military experience to wage a violent jihad against leaders whom the fighters considered to be un-Islamic and their patrons, especially the United States," Steven A. Cook wrote for the Council on Foreign Relations last year.

When the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan demolished al-Qaida's safe haven and scattered, killed and captured its members, al-Zawahiri ensured al-Qaida's survival. He rebuilt its leadership in the Afghan-Pakistan border region and installed allies as lieutenants in key positions.

He also reshaped the organization from a centralized planner of terror attacks into the head of a franchise chain. He led the assembling of a network of autonomous branches around the region, including in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, North Africa, Somalia, Yemen and Asia. Over the next decade, al-Qaida inspired or had a direct hand in attacks in all those areas as well as Europe, Pakistan and Turkey, including the 2004 train bombings in Madrid and the 2005 transit bombings in London.

More recently, the al-Qaida affiliate in Yemen proved itself capable of plotting attacks against U.S. soil with an attempted 2009 bombing of an American passenger jet and an attempted package bomb the following year.

But even before bin Laden's death, al-Zawahiri was struggling to maintain al-Qaida's relevance in a changing Middle East.

He tried with little success to coopt the wave of uprisings that spread across the Arab world starting in 2011, urging Islamic hard-liners to take over in the nations where leaders had fallen. But while Islamists gained prominence in many places, they have stark ideological differences with al-Qaida and reject its agenda and leadership.

Nevertheless, al-Zawahiri tried to pose as the Arab Spring's leader. America "is facing an Islamic nation that is in revolt, having risen from its lethargy to a renaissance of jihad," he said in a video eulogy to bin Laden, wearing a white robe and turban with an assault rifle leaning on a wall behind him.

Al-Zawahiri was also a more divisive figure than his predecessor. Many militants described the soft-spoken bin Laden in adoring and almost spiritual terms.

In contrast, al-Zawahiri was notoriously prickly and pedantic. He picked ideological fights with critics within the jihadi camp, wagging his finger scoldingly in his videos. Even some key figures in al-Qaida's central leadership were put off, calling him overly controlling, secretive and divisive.

Some militants whose association with bin Laden predated al-Zawahiri's always saw him as an arrogant intruder.

"I have never taken orders from al-Zawahiri," Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, one of the network's top figures in East Africa until his 2011 death, sneered in a memoir posted on line in 2009. "We don't take orders from anyone but our historical leadership."

There had been rumors of al-Zawahiri's death on and off for several years. But a video surfaced in April of the al-Qaida leader praising a Indian Muslim woman who had defied a ban on wearing a hijab, or headscarf. That footage was the first proof in months that he was still alive.

A statement from Afghanistan's Taliban government confirmed the airstrike, but did not mention al-Zawahiri or any other casualties.

It said the Taliban "strongly condemns this attack and calls it a clear violation of international principles and the Doha Agreement," the 2020 U.S. pact with the Taliban that led to the withdrawal of American forces.

"Such actions are a repetition of the failed experiences of the past 20 years and are against the interests of the United States of America, Afghanistan, and the region," the statement said.

**Jill Biden on teaching as first lady: 'Knew I could do both'**

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By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jill Biden says she didn't doubt that she could keep teaching as first lady and overcame the skepticism that she could handle both jobs by instructing her staff to "figure it out."

In a new interview in the September issue of Real Simple magazine, the first lady describes how she uses Post-it notes to manage her large family, and offers marriage advice to newlyweds hoping to celebrate 45 years of marriage as she and President Joe Biden did on June 17.

Biden is the first first lady to continue her career outside the White House.

"I think people were a little skeptical. Could I truly do it, since I was the first one to try it?" she said. "But I knew I wanted to teach."

She said she told her staff, "This is what I want to do. We have to figure it out."

Biden continues to teach English and writing at Northern Virginia Community College, which is where she taught during the eight years her husband was vice president. Her staff back then also doubted that she could teach and serve as second lady, but she managed.

"I saw it work then, and I knew we could figure out how to do it now," she said.

Biden doesn't like to use "juggling" or "balancing" to describe how she handles her responsibilities.

"You can't do anything in a haphazard way," she said. "You have to have purpose while you're doing it, and it has to be organized. That's the key to it."

To that end, she relies on Post-it notes to manage her family gatherings and save herself from having to explain things over and over. She sticks instructions — like "fill glasses with ice" or "light candles" — to her kitchen cabinets so family arriving will know right away how to help.

"Everything is set up so when somebody comes in, they do what they want to do," she said.

The first lady also uses Post-it notes to communicate with the president.

"If I want to get a message to Joe, I put one on his mirror," she said. "It may be a nice 'I missed you' or 'I hope you get whatever it is you're working on.'"

She said it's taken a lot of work for her and the president to get to 45 years of marriage. Both were married previously.

Joe Biden, 79, lost his first wife and infant daughter when the car she was driving collided with a truck in Delaware just before Christmas 1972. His two young sons were gravely injured. Jill Biden, 71, was divorced from her first husband.

"You have to work in any relationship, but especially in marriage. It's not always 50/50," she said. "Sometimes you lean on him, sometimes he leans on you. Sometimes he's super busy and I have to pick up a lot of it, or vice versa."

"The goal is that we're not in the same place at the same time, so we can count on one another when we need to," she added.

## Today in History: Aug. 3, deadly Walmart shooting in Texas

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 3, the 215th day of 2022. There are 150 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 3, 2019, a gunman opened fire at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, leaving 22 people dead; prosecutors said Patrick Crusius targeted Mexicans in hopes of scaring Latinos into leaving the U.S., and that he had outlined the plot in a screed published online shortly before the attack. (A man who was wounded in the shooting died in April 2020 after months in the hospital, raising the death toll to 23. Crusius has pleaded not guilty to state murder charges; he also faces federal hate crime and gun charges.)

On this date:

In 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos, Spain, on a voyage that took him to the present-day Americas.

In 1916, Irish-born British diplomat Roger Casement, a strong advocate of independence for Ireland,

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was hanged for treason.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the United States won the first of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he took the 100-meter sprint.

In 1949, the National Basketball Association was formed as a merger of the Basketball Association of America and the National Basketball League.

In 1966, comedian Lenny Bruce, whose raunchy brand of satire and dark humor landed him in trouble with the law, was found dead in his Los Angeles home; he was 40.

In 1972, the U.S. Senate ratified the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union. (The U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the treaty in 2002.)

In 1981, U.S. air traffic controllers went on strike, despite a warning from President Ronald Reagan they would be fired, which they were.

In 1993, the Senate voted 96-to-three to confirm Supreme Court nominee Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

In 1994, Arkansas carried out the nation's first triple execution in 32 years. Stephen G. Breyer was sworn in as the Supreme Court's newest justice in a private ceremony at Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist's Vermont summer home.

In 2005, fourteen Marines from a Reserve unit in Ohio were killed in a roadside bombing in Iraq.

In 2014, Israel withdrew most of its ground troops from the Gaza Strip in an apparent winding down of a nearly monthlong operation against Hamas that had left more than 1,800 Palestinians and more than 60 Israelis dead.

In 2018, Las Vegas police said they were closing their investigation into the Oct. 1, 2017, shooting that left 58 people dead at a country music festival without a definitive answer for why Stephen Paddock unleashed gunfire from a hotel suite onto the concert crowd.

Ten years ago: The U.N. General Assembly overwhelmingly denounced Syria's crackdown on dissent in a symbolic effort meant to push the deadlocked Security Council and the world at large into action on stopping the country's civil war. Michael Phelps rallied to win the 100-meter butterfly for his third gold of the London Games and No. 17 of his career. Missy Franklin set a world record in the 200 backstroke for the 17-year-old's third gold in London.

Five years ago: Senators introduced two bipartisan bills aimed at protecting Special Counsel Robert Mueller from being fired by President Donald Trump. (Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the effort was unnecessary, and that he wouldn't let the legislation reach the floor.) West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice said he was switching parties to join the Republicans, a move that came as President Donald Trump visited his increasingly conservative state.

One year ago: New York's state attorney general said an investigation into Gov. Andrew Cuomo found that he had sexually harassed multiple current and former state government employees; the report brought increased pressure on Cuomo to resign, including pressure from President Joe Biden and other Democrats. (Cuomo resigned a week later.) New York became the nation's first big city to announce it would require proof of COVID-19 vaccination at restaurants, shows and gyms. The Taliban pressed ahead with their advances in southern Afghanistan, capturing most of the Helmand provincial capital. After taking herself out of several competitions at the Tokyo Games to focus on her mental health, U.S. gymnast Simone Biles returned to win a bronze medal in the balance beam.

Today's Birthdays: Football Hall of Fame coach Marv Levy is 97. Singer Tony Bennett is 96. Actor Martin Sheen is 82. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Lance Alworth is 82. Lifestyle guru Martha Stewart is 81. Singer Beverly Lee (The Shirelles) is 81. Movie director John Landis is 72. Actor JoMarie Payton is 72. Actor Jay North (TV: "Dennis the Menace") is 71. Hockey Hall-of-Famer Marcel Dionne is 71. Actor Philip Casnoff is 68. Actor John C. McGinley is 63. Rock singer-musician Lee Rocker (The Stray Cats) is 61. Actor Lisa Ann Walter is 61. Rock singer James Hetfield (Metallica) is 59. Rock singer-musician Ed Roland (Collective Soul) is 59. Actor Isaiah Washington is 59. Country musician Dean Sams (Lonestar) is 56. Rock musician Stephen Carpenter (Deftones) is 52. Hip-hop artist Spinderella (Salt-N-Pepa) is 51. Actor Brigid Brannagh is 50. Actor Michael Ealy is 49. Country musician Jimmy De Martini (Zac Brown Band) is 46. NFL

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quarterback Tom Brady is 45. Actor Evangeline (ee-VAN'-gel-eeen) Lilly is 43. Actor Mamie Gummer is 39. Olympic gold medal swimmer Ryan Lochte is 38. Country singer Whitney Duncan is 38. Actor Jon Foster is 38. Actor Georgina Haig is 37. Pop-rock musician Brent Kutzle (OneRepublic) is 37. Rapper Shelley FKA DRAM is 34.