

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, Sept. 26

- School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.
- School Lunch: Chicken legs, mashed potatoes.
- Senior Menu: Sloopy joe on wheat bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit salad.
- Noon: Senior Citizens Potluck at Groton Community Center
- Boys Region 1A Golf Tournament - site and time to be determined
- 4 p.m.: Cross Country meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 4 p.m.: Combined 7th/8th Grade FB game at Aberdeen Roncalli
- 5:15 p.m.: JV Football game at Aberdeen Roncalli
- Volleyball at Faulkton: C match at 5:15 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity.
- 7 p.m.: School Board Meeting
- Pantry at Community Center open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- UMC: The Walk Bible Study by Pastor Brandon, 7 p.m.
- Emmanuel: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

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

Tuesday, Sept. 27

- School Breakfast: French toast.
- School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn.
- Senior Menu: Hot turkey combos, mashed potatoes with gravy, 7 layer salad, fruit.
- 6 p.m.: Youth Football at Redfield
- Volleyball hosts Florence/Henry: C and 7th grade at 5 p.m., JV and 8th grade at 6 p.m. with varsity to follow. JH matches in GHS Gym.
- Pantry at Community Center open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Common Cents Community Thrift Store Open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at 209 N Main.
- UMC: Bible Study at 10 a.m.; The Walk Bible Study by Pastor Brandon in Conde, 7 p.m.

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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Transferrable Skills: teaching resilience, humility and self confidence through youth sports



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Kelly Evans-Hullinger, M.D..

I love sports. I have enjoyed playing and watching sports for as long as I can remember. And as someone who participated in a sport year-round in high school and continued in athletics (golf) in college, I am constantly grateful for the large impact being able to play competitive sports has had in my life.

Now I am a parent, a proud coach of a young girls soccer team, and a more casual observer of youth athletics. I see youth sports through the lens of how they can impact our kids. Statistically, most children who try a sport or activity while young will not compete in that activity in high school; still fewer will go on to college athletics, and of course hardly any will play a sport professionally. But I still think, if done with the right goals in mind, prioritizing fun and learning, sports can do amazing things for children as they develop.

All sports can teach resilience and humility. Learning a new skill - walking on a balance beam or hitting a fast ball - is difficult but can be done with effort and persistence. Children can learn to manage their emotions and actions when things are not easy, because running a mile or making a putt takes persistence. They can learn to accept coaching and constructive criticism, skills we can all use as adults. They can quite literally fall down on the field or the court and learn to get back up and try again.

Another influential facet of sports is social. Being on a team teaches kids valuable social skills. Each child in a team sport will take a turn on the bench or sideline and learn to cheer on their teammates. They can encourage their teammate having a difficult time at practice. They can learn to offer a hand to an opponent who has fallen down. And they can learn how to respectfully shake their rival's hand after losing, winning, or playing for fun.

Finally, sports can help shape our children's views of themselves and their bodies. Youth sports make exercise and activity fun, potentially affecting their view of exercise as an adult. Playing a sport helps young people focus on what their body can do and how it can feel, rather than how it looks or how someone judges it. Numerous studies have associated participation in sports with self-confidence. I think about that a lot with my own daughters.

I did not become a Sue Bird or a Serena Williams, and my kids probably won't either. But I hope all the kids in my life can experience fun and learn some lessons by being included in sports. It sure made a difference for me.

Kelly Evans-Hullinger, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices internal medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust, broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

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Weekly Vikings Recap - Week 2

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

The Vikings came into Sunday's game against the Detroit Lions looking to get back on track after a disaster of a game last Monday night. However, it seemed like the same Vikings from Monday night showed up in the first quarter. The Vikings' offense could not find its groove and their defense seemed to be giving up easy plays to wide-open wide receivers again. Although it has only been three games into the season, I think there is cause for concern that the Vikings' cornerbacks lack the speed needed to keep up with the short crossing routes in the middle of the field.

The Lions took full advantage of the Vikings' soft defensive coverage in the 1st quarter by scoring two touchdowns to go up 14-0 on the Vikings. However, as the game moved to the 2nd quarter, the Vikings started to get it going on offense, thanks to the running of Dalvin Cook. Cook, who has not been the major factor he is used to being in the Vikings' offense so far this season, found some nice running lanes outside the tackles today and ended up with 96 yards and one touchdown. Nonetheless, the concern for the Vikings might be Cook's health as he left the game with a shoulder injury.

The other concern for the Vikings might be the lack of production from Justin Jefferson over the last two games. Today, Jefferson seemed off the whole game. First, he dropped a couple of contested catches, and then was a complete non-factor in the second half, ending the game with only three catches and 14 yards receiving. Perhaps teams have started to key in on Jefferson after watching him destroy the Packers in week 1. However, if O'Connell is as good of a coach as people think he is, he will have to start creating more opportunities for Jefferson to get involved in the game.

Despite Jefferson's lack of production, Adam Thielen and KJ Osborn were both able to pick up the slack for him. Coming into the game, neither Thielen nor Osborn had caught a touchdown for the Vikings this season. That changed today as both Thielen and Osborn found the endzone, Thielen with a 1-yard touchdown catch in the 1st quarter and Osborn with the game-winning 28-yard touchdown in the 4th quarter.

Overall, the game was not a well-played game on the Vikings' part. With just 1:00 remaining in the 4th quarter, the Vikings still had been unable to hold a lead at any point over the Lions. However, the Vikings never quit. They fought back from a 14-0 deficit in the first half to tie the game 14-14. And, when they found themselves down 24-14 with 10:47 remaining in the 4th quarter, the Vikings managed to fight their way back to take the lead 28-24 with 0:45 left in the game. The Vikings would go on to clinch the victory thanks to a Josh Metellus interception.

Although it's unfair to give hindsight to a coach's decisions after the game, the Lions' head coach, Dan Campbell, might be regretting some of his late-game decisions after the loss. Campbell's first mistake came when he elected to attempt a field goal on 4th & 4 at the Vikings' 36-yard line. Coming into that play, the Lions had converted 4/6 of their 4th down attempts. However, Campbell decided to go with his kicker, who would miss the 54-yard field goal attempt. Campbell's other mistake was the decision to call his final timeout on the Vikings' game-winning drive. The timeout came after the Vikings completed a 28-yard pass to KJ Osborn to put the Vikings in field-goal range. The timeout, in my opinion, gave the Vikings time to reset and draw up the game-winning touchdown pass to KJ Osborn, which would come on the next play.

Now, the 2-1 Vikings will head to London next week to play the 1-2 New Orleans Saints. The Vikings have found success playing in London over the years, beating the Steelers in 2013 and the Browns in 2017. Let's hope that "London luck" continues.

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

September 26, 2022 – 7:00 PM – GHS Library Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Program Overview Presentations
 - a. K-12 Special Education...J. Erdmann, D. Vogel, C. Weisenburger, S. Kurtz, T. Peterson, R. Fuhrman
 - b. K-15 Title/Rtl...A. Schuring, L. Grieve
3. Continued discussion and/or action on HVAC work proposal.
4. Continued discussion regarding Middle/High School facility.
5. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve auxiliary staff assignment changes for 2022-2023.
2. Approve FY2023 district budget with amendments and authorize Business Manager to file tax request with county auditors.
3. Appoint Delegate to ASBSD Delegate Assembly scheduled for Friday, November 18 at 1:00 PM in Pierre, SD.
4. Approve request from James Valley Thunder for facilities use, Summer 2023.
5. Approve hiring Reilly Fuhrman as JH Girls Basketball Coach for 2022-2023 at 5% of base salary.
6. Approve hiring Madisen Bjerke as Assistant Cheer Coach for the 2022-2023 winter season 2% of base salary and amend Aubray Miller's coaching agreement.
7. Act on Open Enrollment #23-17.

ADJOURN

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ANOTHER JARK/WORLIE AUCTION



RETIREMENT CEMENT TOOLS & EQUIPMENT AUCTION

Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022
Sale Time: 10:00 AM

507 E. RR Ave, Groton, SD



SKID STEER – WHEEL LOADER

• Mustang 2056 Turbo w/2 speed Cab, AC/Heat, Hydr. Tach, 6' Bucket, 2302 hours, ('10) • 5' Mustang Skid Steer Bucket (cement) • Kobelco LK300A Wheel Loader w/Bucket, Forks, 16.9-24 Tires, Eng. Overhauled 4084 hrs ago (\$23,000)– Runs/Works.

GUN SAFE - TOOLS – EQUIP – TANKS

- Safari 24 Gun Safe (NIB)
- Husqvarna FS309 Cement Saw -Nice
- Subaru Robin Ex17 Cement Saw
- DP-75ASB Diesel Generator (New)
- Wen 5500 Generator (New)!
- Screeds w/Honda & B&S Motors
- BNT-40 14.4v Lithium Rebar Cutter
- Honda Drive Motor w/Vibrating Cable & Water Pump
- Impala 30 ton Hydr. Press
- Mikasa MVC-88GH Packer (Honda)
- Wacker VPA1750 Packer (Honda)
- Wacker Power Float (Honda)
- DeWalt & Jet Table Saws
- Insulated Concrete Blankets
- 8 Sets of Scaffolding
- Bosch Elec. Jack Hammer
- Stihl TS 400 & TS 500 Cement Saws
- Weldmark 135+ Welder
- DP Air Compressor
- Older Floats, Packers & Screeds
- Hammer Drills
- Hand Tools, Trowels, Air Hose Reel
- 5/8" Rod (4', 8', 20')
- 4) 6"x6"x15' St. Tubes (1/4")
- 90) 4x8 Wall Forms
- 4' & 8' Corner Forms
- Newer 2' Forms
- Stakes & Wire Ties
- 2x4's, 2x6's, 2x10's,
- Several 2x12's (15' & 20')
- 500 gal. Propane Tank (needs valve)
- 500 gal. Diesel Tank (1/2 full)
- Lots of Hand Tools

TRACTOR – LOADER – SNOWMOBILE

Case IH 50 CVT FWA Tractor w/L350 Loader, Bucket, Forks, 3 pt, PTO, 2 Hydr, 575 hours! • Case IH BS172H 6' Snow Blower (Nice) • Case IH TLX180H 80" 3 pt. Tiller • Farm King 847 7' Leveler • Fimco 3 pt. Sprayer w/ 50 gal. Tank, Folding Booms • King Kutter 3 pt. 6' Disk • Field Svc Tank • '08 Polaris RMK 700 Snowmobile w/155" Track/ 2 1/4" Lugs (all consigned)



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Groton Area students painted a memorial for Ava Tunheim, who had died from a battle with cancer. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Preschool Developmental Screening

Groton Area Schools #06-6

Preschool Developmental Screening is for children ages 3-4 who reside in the Groton Area School District. The child needs to be 3 years of age before the screening date/day. This screening is not required to enter Kindergarten.

The screening consists of adaptive, personal/social, communicating/speaking, motor, and concepts skills. If you believe your child has difficulties in any of these areas please contact the school.

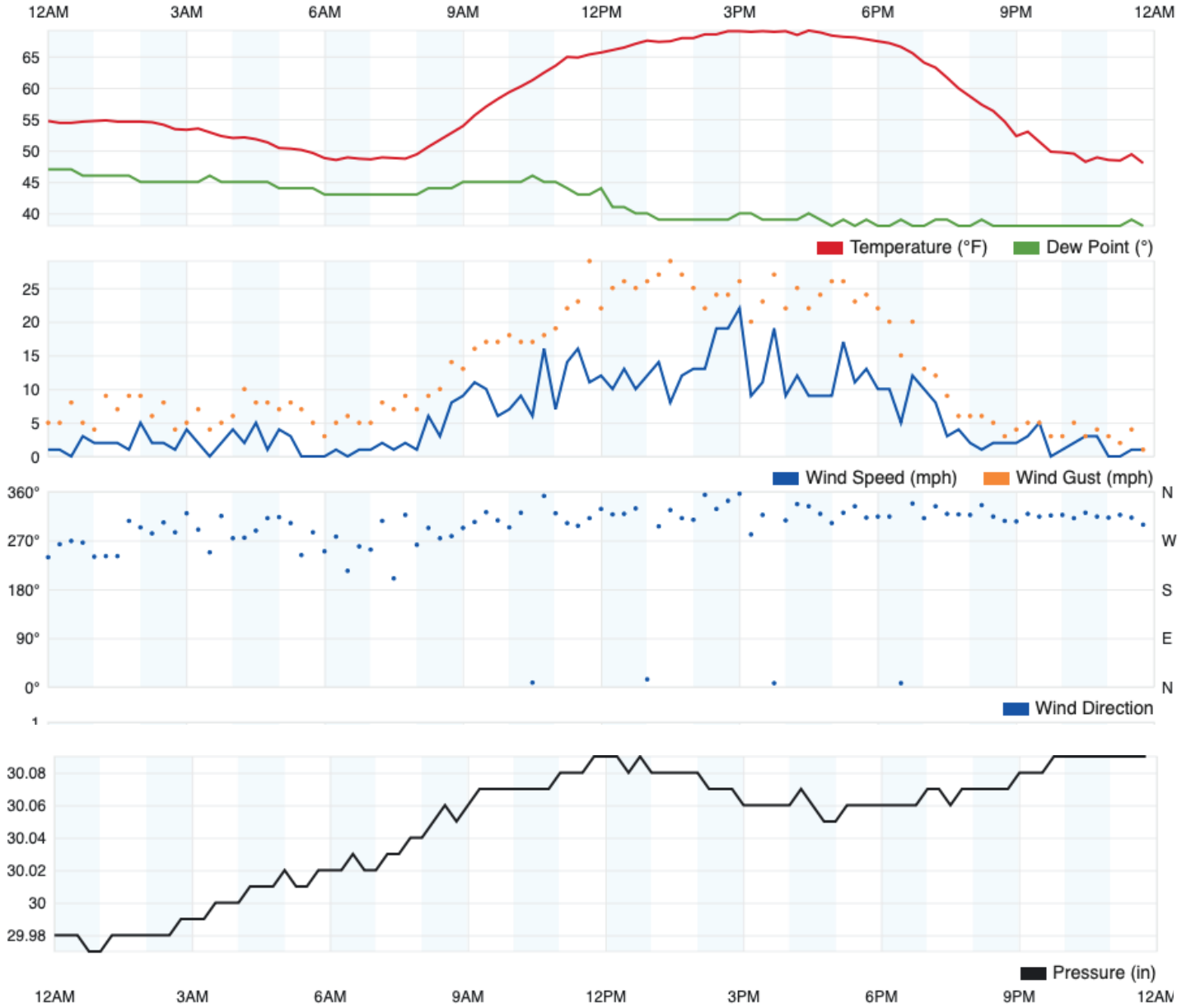
If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened. If your child has already been screened but you have concerns please contact the elementary school. If you are new to the district and have a child under the age of 5, we also ask you to contact the elementary school.

Screenings will be held on Friday, September 30 8:00-3:30. Information will be sent to families who have already been identified. Please contact Heidi Krueger at 605-397-2317 to schedule a screening time.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 72 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 39 °F

Tuesday



Sunny

High: 66 °F

Tuesday Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 38 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy

High: 70 °F



Mild This Work Week

September 26, 2022
2:36 AM



High Temperature Forecast

	9/26	9/27	9/28	9/29	9/30
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Aberdeen	73	67	70	77	75
Britton	69	63	68	74	74
Eagle Butte	77	70	77	82	75
Eureka	73	65	70	78	74
Gettysburg	74	67	72	79	74
Kennebec	78	72	77	84	78
McIntosh	75	67	73	80	73
Milbank	68	63	67	73	74
Miller	76	69	73	80	78
Mobridge	78	71	77	84	78
Murdo	78	72	80	85	77
Pierre	79	73	79	85	79
Redfield	75	68	71	78	76
Sisseton	70	64	68	75	75
Watertown	68	63	66	72	73
Webster	67	63	65	72	71
Wheaton	67	63	65	73	74



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A ridge of high pressure aloft will keep temperatures mild to warm, and conditions mostly dry this week.
#sdwx #mnwx

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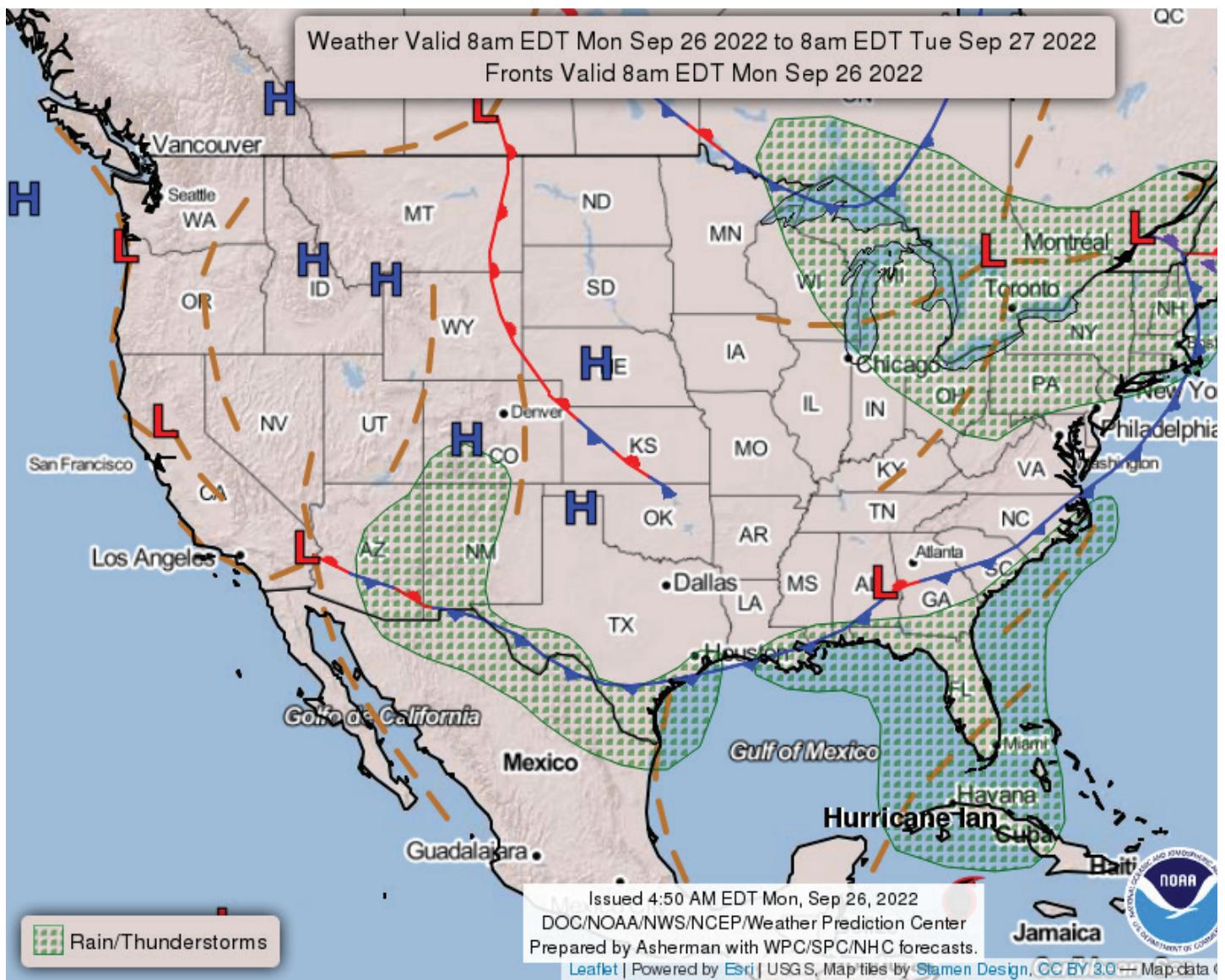
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 70 °F at 2:42 PM
Low Temp: 47 °F at 11:58 PM
Wind: 29 mph at 11:40 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 12 hours, 00 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1974
Record Low: 17 in 1939
Average High: 71°F
Average Low: 43°F
Average Precip in Sept.: 1.72
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.07
Average Precip to date: 18.06
Precip Year to Date: 16.05
Sunset Tonight: 7:23:59 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:24:30 AM



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Today in Weather History

September 26, 1965: A hard freeze hit most of Minnesota in the early morning causing the loss of millions of bushels of corn and soybeans. Temperatures fell below 20 degrees in the northern part of the state.

September 26, 1981: A tornado touched down in the early morning hours several times east of Vermillion. Two barns received extensive damage.

1898: A school teacher saved 32 children from death in Merritton, Ontario, when she spotted an approaching tornado and led her students to a safe corner. Unfortunately, falling debris killed one of the children and injured several others.

1926 - A hurricane came inland near Daytona Beach, FL. The hurricane caused 2.5 million dollars damage in eastern Florida, including the Jacksonville area. (David Ludlum)

1936: A forest fire burned several miles east of the town of Brandon, Oregon. The fire was far enough away that residents were not particularly worried. A sudden shift in the winds drove the flames westward and through town. The fire, caused by summer drought and fueled by the abundant Gorse Weed found in many of the empty spaces between buildings in Brandon, caused so much destruction that only a handful of structures were left standing when the fire finally died down.

1936: The heaviest snowfall ever recorded in September and the heaviest snowfall ever recorded so early in the season dumped a total of 16.5 inches of snow on downtown Denver and 21.3 inches at Denver Municipal Airport. The 15.0 inches of snow measured from 6:00 PM on the 27th to 6:00 PM on the 28th is the greatest 24-hour snowfall ever recorded in September. This was the first snow of the season. The snow was intermittent on the 26th, but continuous from early afternoon on the 27th to around midnight on the 28th, except for a period of rain during the afternoon of the 28th.

1939 - The temperature at Lewiston, ID, hit 117 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1943 - On a whim, and flying a single engine AT-6, Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair and Colonel Duckworth were the first to fly into a hurricane. It started regular Air Force flights into hurricanes. (The Weather Channel)

1955: On this date, the Atlantic reconnaissance aircraft, "Snowcloud Five" went down while investigating Hurricane Janet and was never heard from again. Lt. Comdr. Windham with a crew of 8 and two newspapermen reported that they were about to begin penetrating the central core of the hurricane. Hurricane Janet made landfall at peak intensity near Chetumal, Mexico on September 29th. Janet's landfall as a Category 5 hurricane on the Yucatán Peninsula was the first recorded instance that a storm of such intensity in the Atlantic made landfall on a continental mainland; prior to Janet, landfalls of Category 5 intensity were only known to have taken place on islands.

1971: Project Stormfury was an attempt to weaken tropical cyclones by flying aircraft into them and seeding with silver iodide. The project was run by the United States Government from 1962 to 1983. Hurricane Ginger in 1971 was the last hurricane Project Stormfury seeded.

1987 - Thunderstorms in Minnesota spawned a tornado which moved in a southwesterly direction for a distance of thirty miles across Rice County and Goodhue County. Trees were uprooted and tossed about like toys, and a horse lifted by the tornado was observed sailing horizontally through the air. Thunderstorms drenched La Crosse, WI, with 5.26 inches of rain, their second highest 24 hour total of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Hot weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Williston, ND, reported a record high of 108 degrees. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the eastern U.S., and in southeastern Texas. Richland County, SC, was soaked with up to 5.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, AZ, experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong thunderstorm winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is normally received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24 hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions. (Storm Data)

1998: There were four hurricanes were spinning simultaneously in the Atlantic basin: Georges, Ivan, Jeanne, and Karl. That was the first time this had happened since 1893.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

“TEACHABLE MOMENTS”

There are various ways to recognize those moments when students are “open” to learning. On the other hand, there are many times when students are unwilling to learn no matter who the teacher may be.

Recently the phrase, “teachable moments” has become popular. While there are constant opportunities for teaching and learning, many times neither the pupil nor teacher take advantage of the moment.

“A wise son,” wrote Solomon, “heeds (or accepts) his father’s instruction; but a mocker does not listen to rebuke (or correction).” Obviously, Solomon knew something about the teaching process, learner readiness, and pupil attitudes. But that is not enough. Perhaps that is why God inspired him to use the word “instruction.” That word was wisely chosen for its true meaning: “education through correction.” At the heart of each of the Proverbs is the fact that we, in and of ourselves, do not know the ultimate answers to life. We all have the basic need for our Father to teach us His truth and His ways for our lives. And that begins with “the fear of the Lord.”

This proverb places the responsibility of learning on the pupil - the son. But, it also places the responsibility to teach on the father. Yet, to teach the son, the father needs wisdom and fear. We “recycle” back to the truth that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!”

Fathers are both responsible and accountable to God to teach their sons His wisdom. Yes, there are many things that fathers must teach their sons and daughters, but none as important as teaching them God’s wisdom.

Prayer: We pray, Lord, that all fathers will realize their obligation to You: to instill Your wisdom in their hearts. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: A wise son heeds his father’s instruction; but a mocker does not listen to rebuke. Proverbs 13:1



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God’s grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God’s Word and we pray this good “seed” finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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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)
09/11/2022: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
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
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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
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- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

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News from the Associated Press

Ian strengthens into a hurricane, heads toward Cuba, Florida

By CRISTIANA MESQUITA Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Hurricane Ian moved near the Cayman Islands and closer to western Cuba early Monday on a track to hit Florida as a major hurricane this week.

Ian was forecast to intensify rapidly and become a major hurricane as soon as late Monday before becoming an even stronger Category 4 hurricane over warm Gulf of Mexico waters before striking the west central coast of Florida on Wednesday.

Authorities in Cuba suspended classes in Pinar del Rio province and planned evacuations Monday as Ian gained strength on approach to Grand Cayman and the Cuban provinces of Isla de Juventud, Pinar del Rio and Artemisa.

"Cuba is expecting extreme hurricane force winds, also life threatening storm surge and heavy rainfall," U.S. National Hurricane Center senior specialist Daniel Brown told The Associated Press early Monday.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Ian should reach far-western Cuba late Monday or early Tuesday, hitting near the country's most famed tobacco fields. Cuba state media outlet Granma said authorities would begin evacuating people from vulnerable areas early Monday in Pinar del Rio. Classes there have been suspended.

At 5 a.m. EDT on Monday, Ian was moving northwest at 13 mph (20 kph), about 90 miles (150 kilometers) southwest of Grand Cayman, according to the center. It had maximum sustained winds of 75 mph (120 kph).

"Ian is not expected to spend much time over western Cuba, and additional strengthening is likely over the southeastern Gulf of Mexico on Tuesday," the hurricane center said. "Ian is likely to have an expanding wind field and will be slowing down by that time, which will have the potential to produce significant wind and storm surge impacts along the west coast of Florida."

Florida residents were getting ready, lining up for hours in Tampa to collect bags of sand and clearing store shelves of bottled water.

A hurricane watch was issued for Florida's central western coast including the Tampa Bay area, where Hillsborough County suspended classes through Thursday to prepare schools to serve as shelters for evacuees. Additional watches for more northern areas along the peninsula's west coast may be issued, Brown said.

Gov. Ron DeSantis has declared a state of emergency throughout Florida and urged residents to prepare for the storm to lash large swaths of the state with heavy rains, high winds and rising seas.

"We're going to keep monitoring the track of this storm. But it really is important to stress the degree of uncertainty that still exists," DeSantis said at a news conference Sunday, cautioning that "even if you're not necessarily right in the eye of the path of the storm, there's going to be pretty broad impacts throughout the state."

Flash and urban flooding is possible in the Florida Keys and Florida peninsula through midweek, and then heavy rainfall was possible for north Florida, the Florida panhandle and the southeast United States later this week.

The agency has advised Floridians to have hurricane plans in place and monitor updates of the storm's evolving path.

President Joe Biden also declared an emergency, authorizing the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, to coordinate disaster relief and provide assistance to protect lives and property. The president postponed a scheduled Sept. 27 trip to Florida because of the storm.

Lights out, ovens off: Europe preps for winter energy crisis

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By DAVID McHUGH, JUSTIN SPIKE, KAREL JANICEK and VESELIN TOSHKOV Associated Press
FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — As Europe heads into winter in the throes of an energy crisis, offices are getting chillier. Statues and historic buildings are going dark. Bakers who can't afford to heat their ovens are talking about giving up, while fruit and vegetable growers face letting greenhouses stand idle.

In poorer eastern Europe, people are stocking up on firewood, while in wealthier Germany, the wait for an energy-saving heat pump can take half a year. And businesses don't know how much more they can cut back.

"We can't turn off the lights and make our guests sit in the dark," said Richard Kovacs, business development manager for Hungarian burger chain Zing Burger. The restaurants already run the grills no more than necessary and use motion detectors to turn off lights in storage, with some stores facing a 750% increase in electricity bills since the beginning of the year.

With costs high and energy supplies tight, Europe is rolling out relief programs and plans to shake up electricity and natural gas markets as it prepares for rising energy use this winter. The question is whether it will be enough to avoid government-imposed rationing and rolling blackouts after Russia cut back natural gas needed to heat homes, run factories and generate electricity to a tenth of what it was before invading Ukraine.

Europe's dependence on Russian energy has turned the war into an energy and economic crisis, with prices rising to record highs in recent months and fluctuating wildly.

In response, governments have worked hard to find new supplies and conserve energy, with gas storage facilities now 86% full ahead of the winter heating season — beating the goal of 80% by November. They have committed to lower gas use by 15%, meaning the Eiffel Tower will plunge into darkness over an hour earlier than normal while shops and buildings shut off lights at night or lower thermostats.

Europe's ability to get through the winter may ultimately depend on how cold it is and what happens in China. Shutdowns aimed at halting the spread of COVID-19 have idled large parts of China's economy and meant less competition for scarce energy supplies.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said this month that early preparations mean Europe's biggest economy is "now in a position in which we can go bravely and courageously into this winter, in which our country will withstand this."

"No one could have said that three, four, five months ago, or at the beginning of this year," he added.

Even if there is gas this winter, high prices already are pushing people and businesses to use less and forcing some energy-intensive factories like glassmakers to close.

It's a decision also facing fruit and vegetable growers in the Netherlands who are key to Europe's winter food supply: shutter greenhouses or take a loss after costs skyrocketed for gas heating and electric light.

Bosch Growers, which grows green peppers and blackberries, has put up extra insulation, idled one greenhouse and experimented with lower temperatures. The cost? Smaller yields, blackberries taking longer to ripen, and potentially operating in the red to maintain customer relationships even at lower volumes.

"We want to stay on the market, not to ruin the reputation that we have developed over the years," said Wouter van den Bosch, the sixth generation of his family to help run the business. "We are in survival mode."

Kovacs, grower van den Bosch and bakers like Andreas Schmitt in Frankfurt, Germany, are facing the hard reality that conservation only goes so far.

Schmitt is heating fewer ovens at his 25 Cafe Ernst bakeries, running them longer to spare startup energy, narrowing his pastry selection to ensure ovens run full, and storing less dough to cut refrigeration costs. That might save 5-10% off an energy bill that is set to rise from 300,000 euros per year, to 1.1 million next year.

"It's not going to shift the world," he said. The bulk of his costs is "the energy required to get dough to bread, and that is a given quantity of energy."

Schmitt, head of the local bakers' guild, said some small bakeries are contemplating giving up. Government help will be key in the short term, he said, while a longer-term solution involves reforming energy markets themselves.

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Europe is targeting both, though the spending required may be unsustainable. Nations have allocated 500 billion euros to ease high utility bills since September 2021, according to an analysis from the Bruegel think tank in Brussels, and they are bailing out utilities that can't afford to buy gas to fulfill their contracts.

Governments have lined up additional gas supply from pipelines running to Norway and Azerbaijan and ramped up their purchase of expensive liquefied natural gas that comes by ship, largely from the U.S.

At the same time, the EU is weighing drastic interventions like taxing energy companies' windfall profits and revamping electricity markets so natural gas costs play less of a role in determining power prices.

But as countries scramble to replace Russian fossil fuels and even reactivate polluting coal-fired power plants, environmentalists and the EU itself say renewables are the way out long term.

Neighbors in Madrid looking to cut electricity costs and aid the energy transition installed solar panels this month to supply their housing development after years of work.

"I have suddenly reduced my gas consumption by 40%, with very little use of three radiators strategically placed in the house," neighbor Manuel Ruiz said.

Governments have dismissed Russia as an energy supplier but President Vladimir Putin still has leverage, analysts say. Some Russian gas is still flowing and a hard winter could undermine public support for Ukraine in some countries. There have already been protests in places like Czechia and Belgium.

"The market is very tight and every molecule counts," said Agata Loskot-Strachota, senior fellow for energy policy at the Center for Eastern Studies in Warsaw. "This is the leverage that Putin still has — that Europe would have to face disappointed or impoverished societies."

In Bulgaria, the poorest of the EU's 27 members, surging energy costs are forcing families to cut extra spending ahead of winter to ensure there is enough money to buy food and medicine.

More than a quarter of Bulgaria's 7 million people can't afford to heat their home, according to EU statistics office Eurostat, the highest in the 27-nation bloc due to poorly insulated buildings and low incomes. Nearly half of households use firewood in winter as the cheapest and most accessible fuel, but rising demand and galloping inflation have driven prices above last year's levels.

In the capital, Sofia, where almost half a million households have heating provided by central plants, many sought other options after a 40% price increase was announced.

Grigor Iliev, a 68-year-old retired bookkeeper, and his wife decided to cancel their central heating and buy a combined air conditioner-heating unit for their two-room apartment.

"It's a costly device, but in the long run, we will recoup our investment," he said.

Meanwhile, businesses are trying to stay afloat without alienating customers. Klara Aurell, owner of two Prague restaurants, said she's done all she can to conserve energy.

"We use LED bulbs, we turn the lights off during the day, the heating is only when it gets really cold and we use it only in a limited way," she said. "We also take measures to save water and use energy-efficient equipment. We can hardly do anything else. The only thing to remain is to increase prices. That's how it is."

The gourmet Babushka Artisanal Bakery in an affluent district of Budapest has had to raise prices by 10%. The bakery used less air conditioning despite Hungary's hottest summer on record and is ensuring the ovens don't run without bread inside.

While it has enough traffic to stay open for now, further jumps in energy costs could threaten its viability, owner Eszter Roboz said.

"A twofold increase in energy costs still fits into the operation of our business and into our calculations," she said. "But in the case of a three- to fourfold increase, we will really need to think about whether we can continue this."

Ukrainians scared by Russia's preordained referendums

By YURAS KARMANAU and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — After seven months of war, many Ukrainians fear even more suffering and political repression as referendums orchestrated by the Kremlin portend Russia's imminent annexation of four occupied regions.

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Many residents fled the regions before the so-called referendums got underway, scared about being forced to vote or potentially being conscripted into the Russian army. Others described hiding behind closed doors, hoping to avoid having to answer to armed soldiers going door-to-door to collect votes.

Petro Kobernik, who left the Russian-held southern city of Kherson just before the preordained voting began Friday, said the prospect of living under Russian law and the escalating war made him and others extremely jittery about the future.

"The situation is changing rapidly, and people fear that they will be hurt either by the Russian military, or Ukrainian guerrillas and the advancing Ukrainian troops," Kobernik, 31, said in a telephone interview.

As some Russian officials brought ballots to neighborhoods accompanied by armed police, Kobernik said his 70-year-old father shut the door of his private house in the village of Novotroitske — part of Kherson — and vowed not to let anyone in.

The referendums, denounced by Kyiv and its Western allies as rigged, are taking place in the Russian-controlled Luhansk and Kherson regions, and in occupied areas of the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions. They are widely viewed as a pretext for annexation, and Russian authorities are expected to announce the regions as theirs once the vote ends Tuesday.

The Kremlin has used this tactic before. In 2014, it held a hastily called referendum in Ukraine's Crimea region to justify annexation of the Black Sea peninsula, a move that was denounced as illegitimate by most of the world.

Ukrainian authorities have told residents of the four Russian-occupied regions that they would face criminal punishment if they cast ballots and advised them to leave.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who began mobilizing more troops for the war last week, said he's ready to use nuclear weapons to protect territory in a clear threat to Ukraine to halt its attempts to reclaim the regions.

Putin's escalating rhetoric and politically risky decision to call up as many as 300,000 army reservists comes after Russians were hastily forced to retreat from large swaths of northeastern Ukraine earlier this month. A fierce Ukrainian counteroffensive continues in the country's east and south.

Moscow-appointed governor of the southern Kherson region, Vladimir Saldo, vowed that Ukrainian attempts to derail the referendum by shelling the city won't succeed.

"It's complicated because of security issues, but everything will be done to make the balloting safe for the voters and election officials," Saldo said in a video address. "People are waiting to join Russia and want it done as quickly as possible."

Moscow-backed separatists in the eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions claim that most residents of these territories have dreamed about joining Russia ever since Russia's annexation of Crimea.

But many residents there tell a different story.

"The streets are empty as people stay home," Marina Irkho, a 38-year-old resident of the Sea of Azov port city of Berdyansk said by phone. "No one wants them to declare us part of Russia and start rounding up our men."

She said that "those who actively stood for Ukraine have left or gone into hiding," adding that many of the older people who supported Russia have stayed but feel scared.

Ukrainian guerrillas have continuously targeted Moscow-appointed officials in the occupied regions.

Just a week before the referendum, a deputy head of the Berdyansk city administration and his wife who headed the city election commission were killed in an attack.

Members of the Yellow Band guerrilla group named after Ukraine's yellow-and-blue national flag have spread leaflets threatening those who cast ballots and urged residents to send photos and video of people who vote to track them down later.

The guerrillas also posted phone numbers of election commission chiefs in the Kherson region, calling on pro-Ukraine activists to "make their life unbearable."

Ukrainian officials say signs of the referendums' illegitimacy are all around.

"The Russians are seeing the citizens' fear and reluctance to vote, so they are forced to take people in,"

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said Ivan Fedorov, the Ukrainian mayor of the Russia-held city of Melitopol, who was detained and held by the Russians before leaving the city.

"Groups of collaborators and Russians accompanied by armed troops go from one apartment to another, but few people open the doors," Fedorov said. "The haste with which they organized that pseudo-referendum shows that they weren't going to even count the ballots in earnest."

Larysa Vinogradova, a resident of the port city of Mariupol who left the city after the Russian invasion, said that many of her friends stayed because they had to take care of elderly parents refusing to flee. "They don't stand for Russia, they want Mariupol to be part of Ukraine, and they are waiting for it," she said, bursting into tears.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai, who left the region after it was swept by the Russian forces, said that residents fear that the Russians will round up more men in the region for military service following Putin's mobilization order.

"The Russians are using this pseudo-referendum as a pretext for armed people to visit apartments and search for any remaining men to mobilize them and also look for anything suspicious and pro-Ukrainian," Haidai told The Associated Press.

"The swift Ukrainian counteroffensive has scared the Russians," he added.

Analysts say Putin is hoping to use the threat of military escalation to force Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy into negotiating with the Kremlin.

"The haste with which the referendums were called shows the weakness of the Kremlin, not its strength," said Volodymyr Fesenko, head of the Penta Center, an independent think tank based in Kyiv. "The Kremlin is struggling to find levers to influence the situation that has spun out of its control."

Italy shifts to the right as voters reward Meloni's party

By NICOLE WINFIELD, FRANCES D'EMILIO and GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A party with neo-fascist roots, the Brothers of Italy, won the most votes in Italy's national elections, looking set to deliver the country's first far-right-led government since World War II and make its leader, Giorgia Meloni, Italy's first woman premier, near-final results showed Monday.

Italy's lurch to the far right immediately shifted Europe's geopolitics, placing a euroskeptic party in position to lead a founding member of the European Union and its third-largest economy. Right-wing leaders across Europe immediately hailed Meloni's victory and her party's meteoric rise as sending a historic message to Brussels, while Italy's left warned of "dark days" ahead and vowed to keep Italy in the heart of Europe.

Near-final results showed the center-right coalition netting some 44% of the parliamentary vote, with Meloni's Brothers of Italy snatching some 26%. Her coalition partners divided up the remainder, with the anti-immigrant League of Matteo Salvini winning 9% and the more moderate Forza Italia of ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi taking around 8%.

The center-left Democratic Party and its allies had around 26%, while the 5-Star Movement — which had been the biggest vote-getter in 2018 Parliamentary elections — saw its share of the vote halved to some 15% this time around.

Turnout was a historic low 64%. Pollsters suggested voters stayed home in protest, disenchanted by the backroom deals that had created the last three governments.

Meloni, whose party traces its origins to the postwar, neo-fascist Italian Social Movement, tried to sound a unifying tone in a victory speech early Monday, noting that Italians had finally been able to determine their leaders.

"If we are called to govern this nation, we will do it for everyone, we will do it for all Italians and we will do it with the aim of uniting the people," Meloni said. "Italy chose us. We will not betray it as we never have."

While the center-right was the clear winner, the formation of a government is still weeks away and will involve consultations among party leaders and with President Sergio Mattarella. In the meantime, outgoing Premier Mario Draghi remains in a caretaker role.

The elections, which took place some six months early after Draghi's government collapsed, came at a

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crucial time for Europe as it faces Russia's war in Ukraine and the related soaring energy costs that have hit ordinary Italian pocketbooks as well as industry.

A Meloni-led government is largely expected to follow Italy's current foreign policy, including her pro-NATO stance and strong support for supplying Ukraine with weapons to defend against Russia's invasion, even as her coalition allies stake a slightly different tone.

Both Berlusconi and Salvini have ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin. While both have distanced themselves from his invasion, Salvini has warned that sanctions against Moscow are hurting Italian industry, and even Berlusconi has excused Putin's invasion as foisted on him by pro-Moscow separatists in the Donbas.

A bigger shift and one likely to cause friction with European powers is likely to come over migration. Meloni has called for a naval blockade to prevent migrant boats from leaving North African shores, and has proposed screening potential asylum-seekers in Africa, before they set out on smugglers' boats to Europe.

Salvini made clear he wants the League to return to the interior ministry, where as minister he imposed a tough anti-migrant policy. But he may face an internal leadership challenge after the League suffered an abysmal result of under 10%, with Meloni's party outperforming it in its northeastern stronghold.

Salvini acknowledged the League was punished for its governing alliances with the 5-Stars and then Draghi, but said: "It's a good day for Italy because it has five years of stability ahead of it."

On relations with the European Union, analysts note that for all her euroskeptic rhetoric, Meloni moderated her message during the campaign and has little room to maneuver given the economic windfall Italy is receiving from Brussels in coronavirus recovery funds. Italy secured some 191.5 billion euros, the biggest chunk of the EU's 750 billion-euro recovery package, and is bound by certain reform and investment milestones it must hit to receive it all.

That said, Meloni has criticized the EU's recent recommendation to suspend 7.5 billion euros in funding to Hungary over concerns about democratic backsliding, defending Viktor Orban as the elected leader in a democratic system.

Orban's political director, Balazs Orban, was among the first to congratulate Meloni. "In these difficult times, we need more than ever friends who share a common vision and approach to Europe's challenges," he tweeted.

French far-right leader Marine Le Pen praised Meloni for having "resisted the threats of an anti-democratic and arrogant European Union."

Santiago Abascal, the leader of Spain's far-right Vox opposition party, tweeted that Meloni "has shown the way for a proud and free Europe of sovereign nations that can cooperate on behalf of everybody's security and prosperity."

Meloni is chair of the right-wing European Conservative and Reformist group in the European Parliament, which gathers her Brothers of Italy, Poland's Law and Justice Party, Spain's Vox and the Sweden Democrats, which just won big in elections there on a platform of cracking down on crime and limiting immigration.

"The trend that emerged two weeks ago in Sweden was confirmed in Italy," acknowledged Democratic Party leader Enrico Letta, calling Monday a "sad day for Italy, for Europe."

"We expect dark days. We fought in every way to avoid this outcome," Letta said at a somber news conference. While acknowledging the future of the party and his own future required reflection, he vowed: "The PD will not allow Italy to leave the heart of Europe."

Thomas Christiansen, professor of political science at Rome's Luiss University and the executive editor of the Journal of European Integration, noted that Italy has a tradition of pursuing a consistent foreign and European policy that is in some ways bigger than individual party interests.

"Whatever Meloni might be up to will have to be moderated by her coalition partners and indeed with the established consensus of Italian foreign policy," Christiansen said in an interview.

Meloni proudly touts her roots as a militant in the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement, or MSI, which was formed in the aftermath of WWII with the remnants of Mussolini's fascist supporters. Meloni joined in 1992 as a 15-year-old.

During the campaign, Meloni was forced to respond after the Democrats used her party's origins to paint Meloni as a danger to democracy.

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"The Italian Right has handed fascism over to history for decades now, unambiguously condemning the suppression of democracy and the ignominious anti-Jewish laws," she said in a multilingual campaign video.

13 dead, 21 wounded in school shooting in Russia

MOSCOW (AP) — A gunman opened fire in a school in central Russia Monday, killing 13 people, including seven children, and wounding 21 others.

Russia's Investigative Committee said the shooting took place in School No. 88 in Izhevsk, a city about 960 kilometers (600 miles) east of Moscow in the Udmurtia region. It identified the wounded as 14 children and seven adults.

The governor of Udmurtia, Alexander Brechalov, said in a video statement that the gunman shot himself.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov described the shooting as "a terrorist act" and said that President Vladimir Putin has given all the necessary orders to the relevant authorities.

"President Putin deeply mourns deaths of people and children in the school, where a terrorist act took place," Peskov told reporters Monday.

The school educates children between grades 1 and 11. It has been evacuated and the area around it has been cordoned off, the governor said.

The Investigative Committee identified the gunman as 34-year-old Artyom Kazantsev, a graduate of the same school. It said in a statement that Kazantsev wore a black t-shirt bearing "Nazi symbols." No details about his motives have been released.

Russia's National Guard said Kazantsev used two non-lethal handguns adapted to fire real bullets.

A criminal probe into the incident has been launched on charges of multiple murder and illegal possession of firearms.

Izhevsk, a city of 640,000, is located west of the Ural mountains in central Russia.

Drone attack hits Ukraine; US vows 'consequences' over nukes

By ADAM SCHRECK and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — An overnight drone strike near the Ukrainian port of Odesa sparked a massive fire and explosion, the military said Monday, as Russia's leadership faced growing resistance to its efforts to call up hundreds of thousands of men to fight in Ukraine.

The airstrike on Odesa was the latest in a series of drone attacks on the key southern city in recent days, and hit a military installation and detonated ammunition when it struck. Firefighters were struggling to contain the blaze, and civilians nearby were evacuated, the Ukrainian military's southern command said.

It came hours after the United States vowed to take decisive action and promised "catastrophic consequences" if Russia uses nuclear weapons in Ukraine. Concerns are growing that Russia may seek to escalate the conflict once it completes what Ukraine and the West see as illegal referendums in parts of Ukraine under its control.

The voting, which ends Tuesday, happened after thousands of residents had fled and has included images of armed Russian troops going door-to-door to pressure Ukrainians into casting a ballot. Russia announced the "referendums" as its war on Ukraine has bogged down amid a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

"Every night and day there is inevitable shelling in the Donbas, under the roar of which people are forced to vote for Russian 'peace,'" Donetsk regional governor Pavlo Kirilenko said Monday.

Russia is widely expected to declare the results in its favor, a step that could see Moscow annex the territory and give it the pretext to defend it as its own territory under the Russian nuclear umbrella.

Jake Sullivan, the U.S. national security adviser, said Russia would pay a high, if unspecified, price if it made good on veiled threats to use nuclear weapons in the conflict.

"If Russia crosses this line there will be catastrophic consequences for Russia. The United States will respond decisively," he told NBC's Meet the Press on Sunday.

On Monday, Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko held an unannounced meeting in the southern Russian city of Sochi and said they were ready to cooperate with the West — "if they treat us

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with respect," Putin said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Monday that Putin had told Turkey's president during their meeting in Uzbekistan last week that Moscow was ready to resume negotiations with Ukraine but had "new conditions" for a cease-fire. The minister didn't elaborate on the conditions.

The Kremlin last week announced a partial mobilization to add at least 300,000 troops to its force in Ukraine in the run-up to the votes in the occupied regions. The move, a sharp shift from Vladimir Putin's previous efforts to portray the war as a limited military operation that wouldn't interfere with most Russians' lives, proved extremely unpopular at home.

Thousands of men of fighting age flocked to airports and Russia's land border crossings in an effort to avoid being called up. Protests sparked in various parts of the country, and Russian media reported an increasing number of arson attacks on military enlistment offices, including one that hit the southern city of Uryupinsk.

In a separate, unusually bold attack, a young man entered a military enlistment office Monday in the Siberian city of Ust-Ilimsk and shot the military commandant at close range.

Russian media reports claimed the man walked into the facility saying "no one will go to fight" and "we will all go home now." Local authorities said the military commandant was in intensive care, without elaborating.

The man, identified in the media as 25-year-old local resident Ruslan Zinin, was reportedly upset that a call-up notice was served to his best friend who didn't have any combat experience — which the authorities have said is the main criteria for the draft.

Meanwhile, the first batches of Russian troops mobilized by Moscow have begun to arrive at military bases, the British military said Monday.

In an online intelligence briefing, the British Defense Ministry said tens of thousands had been called up so far. However, the Russians face challenges ahead, the ministry said.

"The Russian military provides low-level, initial training to soldiers within their designated operational units, rather than in dedicated training establishments," it said.

Under normal circumstances, two battalions deploy while a third remains behind to train. But in the Ukraine war, even the third battalion is deploying, weakening that training, the British Defense Ministry said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday said the Russian mobilization — its first such call-up since World War II — was a sign of weakness: "They admitted that their army is not able to fight with Ukraine anymore."

Zelenskyy said in a Facebook post Monday that the Ukrainian military is pushing efforts to take back "the entire territory of Ukraine," and has drawn up plans to counter "new types of weapons" used by Russia, without elaborating.

New Russian shelling struck the area around the Zaporozhzhia nuclear power plant, according to Zelenskyy's office. Cities near the station were fired on nine times in recent hours by rocket launchers and heavy artillery.

In the town of Iziium in eastern Ukraine, which Russian forces left earlier this month after a Ukrainian counteroffensive, Margaryta Tkachenko is still reeling from the battle that destroyed her home and left her family close to starvation.

With no gas, electricity, running water or internet, she said, "I can't predict what will happen next. Winter is the most frightening. We have no wood. How will we heat?"

British pound plunges to new low as tax cuts spark concern

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British pound fell to all-time low against the U.S. dollar early Monday after Treasury chief Kwasi Kwarteng pledged a sweeping package of tax cuts, fueling concerns about the government's economic policy as the United Kingdom teeters toward recession.

The pound fell as low as \$1.0373, its lowest level since the decimalization of the currency in 1971, before

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rallying to above \$1.07 in London morning trading.

The weakening currency piles pressure on the U.K.'s new Conservative government, which has gambled that slashing taxes — and increasing borrowing to compensate — will spur economic growth. Many economists say it's more likely to fuel already high inflation, push down the pound and drive up the cost of U.K. government borrowing — a potential perfect storm of economic headwinds.

The British currency has lost more than 5% of its value against the dollar since Friday, when Kwarteng announced the U.K.'s biggest tax cuts in 50 years.

The government plans to cut 45 billion pounds (\$49 billion) in taxes as well as spend billions to help consumers and businesses struggling with high energy bills that are driving a cost-of-living crisis. The combination sparked investor concern about spiraling government debt.

Kwarteng and Prime Minister Liz Truss, who took office three weeks ago, are betting that lower taxes and reduced bureaucracy eventually will generate enough additional tax revenue to cover government spending. Economists suggest it is unlikely the gamble will pay off.

Opposition Labour Party economy spokeswoman Rachel Reeves said Kwarteng had "fanned the flames" of instability by talking up more tax cuts.

"They're not gambling with their own money, they're gambling with all our money, and it's reckless and it's irresponsible as well as being grossly unfair," she told Times Radio.

The new and untested Truss, who replaced Boris Johnson as prime minister on Sept. 6, also faces pressure from a nervous Conservative Party, which faces an election within two years.

Some Conservatives have welcomed the tax-cutting moves as a return to free-market values after years of state intervention in the economy during the coronavirus pandemic. But others worry it is unconservative for the government to rack up huge debts that taxpayers will eventually have to pay.

Kwarteng insisted the government was acting responsibly — and said there were more tax cuts to come.

"We've only been here 19 days. I want to see, over the next year, people retain more of their income because I believe that it is the British people that are going to drive this economy," he told the BBC.

As it is cutting taxes, the government plans to cap electricity and natural gas prices for homes and businesses to help cushion price rises that have been triggered by Russia's war in Ukraine and have sent inflation to a near 40-year high of 9.9%.

This program will cost 60 billion pounds, and the government will borrow to finance it, Kwarteng said Friday.

He said Sunday that it was the right policy because the government needed to help consumers squeezed by the unprecedented pressures caused by the war in Ukraine and the pandemic.

Britain can afford the cost because its debt as a percentage of gross domestic product is the second lowest among the Group of Seven large industrial economies, Kwarteng said. In the coming months, the government will announce plans for reducing the nation's debt, he said.

"Obviously, I will be setting out plans for the medium-term fiscal plan, as we're calling it, that will show that we're committed to net debt-to-GDP to be falling over time," Kwarteng said.

Sterling is not the only currency showing weakness. The euro also hit a fresh 20-year low against the dollar as the war in Ukraine drives fears about recession and energy security ahead of the winter.

While the pound's slide has accelerated in recent days, the currency has fallen steadily against the dollar for more than a year as investors sought the security of U.S. assets amid the global economic shocks.

The pound's decline against the dollar also has been fueled by the Bank of England not keeping pace with the U.S. Federal Reserve's efforts to rein in inflation. Britain's central bank on Thursday raised interest rates by half a percentage point, compared with large three-quarter-point increase by the Fed last week. But U.K. inflation is the highest among major economies, and the bank predicted that Britain could already be in recession, which it defines as two consecutive quarters of economic contraction.

The bank's rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee is not due to meet again until Nov. 3, but many economists say it may have to hike rates sooner if the pound's slide continues.

Susannah Streeter, senior investment and markets analyst at financial services firm Hargreaves Lans-

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down, said it was difficult to know how low the pound could fall.

"It depends, I think, now on what the Bank of England does in response to sterling's most recent fall," she said. "There's been this dramatic loss of confidence in the government's economic management. But now the ball is in the Bank of England's court."

From Yale to jail: Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes' path

By JACQUES BILLEAUD and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Long before he assembled one of the largest far-right anti-government militia groups in U.S. history, before his Oath Keepers stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, Stewart Rhodes was a promising Yale Law School graduate.

He secured a clerkship on the Arizona Supreme Court, in part thanks to his unusual life story: a stint as an Army paratrooper cut short by a training accident, followed by marriage, college and an Ivy League law degree.

The clerkship was one more rung up from a hardscrabble beginning. But rather than fitting in, Rhodes came across as angry and aggrieved.

He railed to colleagues about how the Patriot Act, which gave the government greater surveillance powers after the Sept. 11 attacks, would erase civil liberties. He referred to Vice President Dick Cheney as a fascist for supporting the Bush administration's use of "enemy combatant" status to indefinitely detain prisoners.

"He saw this titanic struggle between people like him who wanted individual liberty and the government that would try to take away that liberty," said Matt Parry, who worked with Rhodes as a clerk for Arizona Supreme Court Justice Mike Ryan.

Rhodes alienated his moderate Republican boss and eventually left the steppingstone job. Since then he has ordered his life around a thirst for greatness and deep distrust of government.

He turned to forming a group rooted in anti-government sentiment, and his message resonated. He gained followers as he went down an increasingly extremist path that would lead to armed standoffs, including with federal authorities at Nevada's Bundy Ranch. It culminated last year, prosecutors say, with Rhodes engineering a plot to violently stop Democrat Joe Biden from becoming president.

Rhodes, 57, will be back in court Tuesday, but not as a lawyer. He and four others tied to the Oath Keepers are being tried on charges of seditious conspiracy, the most serious criminal allegation leveled by the Justice Department in its far-reaching prosecution of rioters who attacked the Capitol.

Rhodes, Jessica Watkins, Thomas Caldwell, Kenneth Harrelson and Kelly Meggs are the first Jan. 6 defendants to stand trial under a rarely used, Civil War-era law against attempting to overthrow the government or, in this case, block the transfer of presidential power.

The trial will put a spotlight on the secretive group Rhodes founded in 2009 that has grown to include thousands of claimed members and loosely organized chapters across the country, according to Rachel Carroll Rivas, interim deputy director of research with the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project.

For Rhodes, it will be a position at odds with the role of greatness that he has long envisioned for himself, said his estranged wife, Tasha Adams.

"He was going to achieve something amazing," Adams said. "He didn't know what it was, but he was going to achieve something incredible and earth shattering."

Rhodes was born in Fresno, California. He shuttled between there and Nevada, sometimes living with his mother and other times with grandparents who were migrant farm workers, part of a multicultural extended family that included Mexican and Filipino relatives. His mother was a minister who had her own radio show in Las Vegas and went by the name Dusty Buckle, Adams said.

Rhodes joined the Army fresh out of high school and served nearly three years before he was honorably discharged in January 1986 after breaking his back in a parachuting accident.

He recovered and was working as a valet in Las Vegas when he met Adams in 1991. He was 25, she was 18.

He had a sense of adventure that was attractive to a young woman brought up in a middle-class, Church

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of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints family. A few months after the couple started dating, Rhodes accidentally dropped a gun and shot out his eye. He now wears an eye patch.

Adams' family had set aside money for her to go to college, but after their wedding Rhodes decided he should be the first to attend school. He told her she would need to quit her job teaching ballroom and country dancing and instead support them both by working full time as a stripper so he could focus on doing an excellent job in school, according to Adams. They married, but she found stripping degrading and it clashed with her conservative Mormon upbringing, she said.

"Every night the drive was just so bad. I would just throw up every single night before I went in, it was just so awful," Adams said. Rhodes would pressure her to go further, increase her exposure or contact with men to make more money, she said. "It was never enough ... I felt like I had given up my soul."

She quit when she got pregnant with their first child, and the couple moved back in with her family. They worried about her but didn't want to push too far for fear of losing her altogether. By then, Rhodes was the center of her orbit.

Rhodes' lawyer declined to make him available for an interview and Rhodes declined to answer a list of questions sent by The Associated Press.

After finishing college at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Rhodes went to work in Washington as a staffer for Ron Paul, a libertarian-leaning Republican congressman, and later attended Yale, with stints in between as an artist and sculptor. Paul did not respond to a request for comment.

Rhodes' college transcripts earned him entry to several top schools, Adams said. While at Yale, Adams took care of their growing family in a small apartment while he distinguished himself with an award for a paper arguing that the George W. Bush administration's use of enemy combatant status to hold people suspected of supporting terrorism indefinitely without charge was unconstitutional.

After the Arizona clerkship, the family bounced to Montana and back to Nevada, where he worked on Paul's presidential campaign in 2008. That's when Rhodes also began to formulate his idea of starting the Oath Keepers. He put a short video and blog post on Blogspot and "it went viral overnight," Adams said. Rhodes was interviewed by conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, but also more mainstream media figures such as Chris Matthews and Bill O'Reilly.

He formally launched the Oath Keepers in Lexington, Massachusetts, on April 19, 2009, where the first shot in the American Revolution was fired.

"We know that if a day should come in this country when a full-blown dictatorship would come or tyranny, from the left or from the right, we know that it can only happen if those men, our brothers in arms, go along and comply with unconstitutional, unlawful orders," Rhodes said in his Lexington speech, which didn't garner any news coverage.

The group's stated goal was to get past and present members of the military, first responders and police officers to honor the promise they made to defend the Constitution against enemies. The Oath Keepers issued a list of orders that its members wouldn't obey, such as disarming citizens, carrying out warrantless searches and detaining Americans as enemy combatants in violation of their right to jury trials.

Rhodes was a compelling speaker and especially in the early years framed the group as "just a pro-Constitution group made up of patriots," said Sam Jackson, author of the book "Oath Keepers" about the group.

With that benign-sounding framing and his political connections, Rhodes harnessed the growing power of social media to fuel the Oath Keepers' growth during the presidency of Barack Obama. Membership rolls leaked last year included some 38,000 names, though many people on the list have said they are no longer members or were never active participants. One expert last year estimated membership to be a few thousand.

The internal dialogue was much darker and more violent about what members perceived as imminent threats, especially to the Second Amendment, and the idea that members should be prepared to fight back and recruit their neighbors to fight back, too.

"Time and time again, Oath Keepers lays the groundwork for individuals to decide for themselves, violent

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or otherwise criminal activity is warranted," said Jackson, an assistant professor at the University at Albany.

A membership fee was a requirement to access the website, where people could join discussion forums, read Rhodes' writing and hear pitches to join militaristic trainings. Members willing to go armed to a stand-off numbered in the low dozens, though, said Jason Van Tatenhove, a former spokesman for the group.

Showdowns with the government began in 2011 in the small western Arizona desert town of Quartzsite, where local government was in turmoil as officials feuded among themselves, the police chief was accused of misconduct and several police employees had been suspended. A couple years later, Rhodes started calling on members to form "community preparedness teams," which included military-style training.

The Oath Keepers also showed up at a watershed event in anti-government circles: the standoff with federal agents at Nevada's Bundy Ranch in 2014. Later that year, members stationed themselves along rooftops in Ferguson, Missouri, armed with AR-15-style weapons, to protect businesses from rioting after a grand jury declined to charge a police officer in the fatal shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown.

The following year Oath Keepers guarded a southern Oregon gold mine whose mining claim owners were in a dispute with the government. Still, Rhodes was never arrested.

As the Oath Keepers escalated their public profile and confrontations with the government, Rhodes was leaving behind some of those he once championed. Jennifer Esposito hired him as her lawyer after the group's early outing in Quartzsite, but he missed a hearing in her case because he was at the Bundy Ranch standoff. A judge kicked Rhodes off the case, and no lawyer would represent her.

She has no hard feelings, but Michael Roth, also represented by Rhodes in Quartzsite lawsuits, is less forgiving. He compared Rhodes's handling of his case to a doctor walking out of an operating room in the middle of surgery.

"He clearly just used us for publicity to gain membership in the Oath Keepers," Roth said.

The neglect culminated in a disbarment case eventually brought against Rhodes. He ignored the allegations, missed a hearing and wasn't even represented by a lawyer. The commission examining the case in 2015 found his conduct as an attorney wouldn't normally get someone disbarred, but his refusal to cooperate did.

Meanwhile, on the national stage, Donald Trump's political star was taking off. His grievances about things such as the "deep state" aligned with the Oath Keeper's anti-governmental stance. While Rhodes didn't agree with Trump on everything, the group's rhetoric began to shift.

"With the election of Trump, now the Oath Keepers have an ally in the White House," Jackson said.

For much of the the Oath Keepers' history, the federal government was the enemy, but gradually the enemy became left-leaning people in the United States and antifa, or anti-fascist groups, became the primary menace, he said.

Rhodes wanted Oath Keepers to go to Cleveland to provide security for Trump — then set to be the GOP presidential nominee — at the 2016 Republican National Convention, even though no one had asked the group for protection, said Richard Mack, a former Arizona sheriff who served on the Oath Keepers' board for about six years.

"I said, 'Why are we going — so we can say we protected Trump? We are not going to get anywhere near Trump,'" Mack said. "I said, 'This was crazy.' All the other board members voted with me, and Stewart was mad."

That was a breaking point last straw for Mack.

He wasn't the only board member to walk away as they saw the direction of the group close up, Van Tatenhove said.

"Once they saw where he was going, they were a lot less comfortable," he said. But Rhodes always managed to weather the disagreements and hold onto power. "He was always going to be the start and finish of the Oath Keepers."

A voracious reader and charismatic speaker, Rhodes drew people in and had a talent for molding his message to his audience and holding onto power. He warmed to the "alt-right" movement as its profile rose. Van Tatenhove knew he had to leave when in 2017 he overheard a group of Oath Keepers, in a

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discussion in a grocery store, denying that the Holocaust happened.

In 2018, Rhodes went too far for Jim Arroyo, a former Army Ranger who serves as president of an Oath Keepers chapter in Yavapai County, Arizona. He rejected a push to send group members to the U.S.-Mexico border for an armed operation to support the U.S. Border Patrol.

Arroyo said that hadn't been approved by any authority and argued that pointing a gun in the wrong direction along the border could stir an international problem. He refused to go.

"That's when he pretty much didn't want anything to do with us," said Arroyo, who eventually broke away from the national Oath Keepers and hasn't had contact with Rhodes in over four years.

When Biden won the 2020 election, prosecutors say, Rhodes started preparing for battle. Rhodes and the Oath Keepers spent weeks plotting to block the transfer of power, amassing weapons and setting up "quick reaction force" teams with weapons to be on standby outside the nation's capital, prosecutors say.

On Jan. 6, 2021, authorities say, two teams of Oath Keepers stormed the Capitol alongside hundreds of other angry Trump supporters.

Rhodes is not accused of going inside, but he was seen gathered outside the Capitol after the riot with several members who did, prosecutors have said.

Defense lawyers have accused prosecutors of twisting their clients' words. They have argued that the militia group came to Washington only to provide security at events before the riot for right-wing figures such as Trump confidant Roger Stone and that there was never a plan to attack the Capitol.

The case has dealt a major blow to the Oath Keepers, in part because many people associated with it want to be considered respectable in their communities, said Carroll Rivas of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Of the approximately 30 Capitol riot defendants affiliated with the Oath Keepers, nine have pleaded to charges stemming from the attack, including three who have pleaded guilty to seditious conspiracy.

But that doesn't mean the ideas that Rhodes promoted have faded away.

"He came up with a blueprint that is going to be used in the future by people we don't even know about," Van Tatenhove said. "I think it's very important for us to pay attention."

Italy shifts to the right as voters reward Meloni's party

By NICOLE WINFIELD, FRANCES D'EMILIO and GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A party with neo-fascist roots, the Brothers of Italy, won the most votes in Italy's national elections, looking set to deliver the country's first far-right-led government since World War II and make its leader, Giorgia Meloni, Italy's first woman premier, near-final results showed Monday.

Italy's lurch to the far right immediately shifted Europe's geopolitical reality, placing a euroskeptic party in position to lead a founding member of the European Union and its third-largest economy. Right-wing leaders across Europe immediately hailed Meloni's victory and her party's meteoric rise as sending a historic message to Brussels.

Near-final results showed the center-right coalition netting some 44% of the parliamentary vote, with Meloni's Brothers of Italy snatching some 26%. Her coalition partners divided up the remainder, with the anti-immigrant League of Matteo Salvini winning nearly 9% and the more moderate Forza Italia of ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi taking around 8%.

The center-left Democratic Party and its allies had around 26%, while the 5-Star Movement — which had been the biggest vote-getter in 2018 Parliamentary elections — saw its share of the vote halved to some 15% this time around.

Turnout was a historic low 64%. Pollsters suggested voters stayed home in part in protest and also because they were disenchanted by the backroom deals that had created the three governments since the previous election.

Meloni, whose party traces its origins to the postwar, neo-fascist Italian Social Movement, sounded a moderate, unifying tone in a victory speech early Monday that noted that Italians had finally been able to clearly determine who they wanted to govern.

"If we are called to govern this nation, we will do it for everyone, we will do it for all Italians and we will

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do it with the aim of uniting the people (of this country)," Meloni said. "Italy chose us. We will not betray (the country) as we never have."

While the center-right was the clear winner, the formation of a government is still weeks away and will involve consultations among party leaders and with President Sergio Mattarella. In the meantime, outgoing Premier Mario Draghi remains in a caretaker role.

The elections, which took place some six months early after Draghi's government collapsed, came at a crucial time for Europe as it faces Russia's war in Ukraine and the related soaring energy costs that have hit ordinary Italian pocketbooks as well as industry.

A Meloni-led government is largely expected to follow Italy's current foreign policy, including her pro-NATO stance and strong support for supplying Ukraine with weapons to defend against Russia's invasion, even as her coalition allies stake a slightly different tone.

Both Berlusconi and Salvini have ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin. While both have distanced themselves from his invasion, Salvini has warned that sanctions against Moscow are hurting Italian industry, and even Berlusconi has excused Putin's invasion as foisted on him by pro-Moscow separatists in the Donbas.

A bigger shift and one likely to cause friction with European powers is likely to come over migration. Meloni has called for a naval blockade to prevent migrant boats from leaving North African shores, and has proposed screening potential asylum-seekers in Africa, before they set out on smugglers' boats to Europe.

Salvini has made clear he wants to return to the interior ministry, where he imposed a tough anti-migrant policy as minister. But it's not clear he would get the post given he is currently on trial in Sicily for keeping migrants at sea.

On relations with the European Union, analysts note that for all her euroskeptic rhetoric, Meloni moderated her message during the campaign and has little room to maneuver given the economic windfall Italy is receiving from Brussels in coronavirus recovery funds. Italy secured some 191.5 billion euros, the biggest chunk of the EU's 750 billion-euro recovery package, and is bound by certain reform and investment milestones it must hit to receive it all.

That said, Meloni has criticized the EU's recent recommendation to suspend 7.5 billion euros in funding to Hungary over concerns about democratic backsliding, defending Viktor Orban as the elected leader in a democratic system.

Orban's political director, Balazs Orban, was among the first to congratulate Meloni. "In these difficult times, we need more than ever friends who share a common vision and approach to Europe's challenges," he tweeted.

French politician Marine Le Pen's party hailed the result as a "lesson in humility" for the EU.

Santiago Abascal, the leader of Spain's far-right Vox opposition party, tweeted that Meloni "has shown the way for a proud and free Europe of sovereign nations that can cooperate on behalf of everybody's security and prosperity."

Meloni is chair of the right-wing European Conservative and Reformist group in the European Parliament, which gathers her Brothers of Italy, Poland's Law and Justice Party, Spain's Vox and the Sweden Democrats, which just won big in elections on a platform of cracking down on crime and limiting immigration.

Thomas Christiansen, professor of political science at Rome's Luiss University and the executive editor of the Journal of European Integration, noted that Italy has a tradition of pursuing a consistent foreign and European policy that is in some ways bigger than individual party interests.

"Whatever Meloni might be up to will have to be moderated by her coalition partners and indeed with the established consensus of Italian foreign policy," Christiansen said in an interview.

The vice president of the European Parliament, Katharina Barley of the Social Democrats of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, said Meloni's victory was "worrying" given her affiliations with Orban and Donald Trump.

"Her electoral lip service to Europe cannot hide the fact that she represents a danger to constructive coexistence in Europe," she was quoted as saying by German daily WELT.

Meloni proudly touts her roots as a militant in the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement, or MSI, which was formed in the aftermath of WWII with the remnants of Mussolini's fascist supporters. Meloni joined

in 1992 as a 15-year-old.

During the campaign, Meloni was forced to respond after the Democrats used her party's origins to paint Meloni as a danger to democracy.

"The Italian Right has handed fascism over to history for decades now, unambiguously condemning the suppression of democracy and the ignominious anti-Jewish laws," she said in a multilingual campaign video.

EXPLAINER: Why is Japan split over Abe's state funeral?

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — A rare state funeral for Shinzo Abe, the former prime minister who was assassinated in July, has split Japan.

The hawkish Abe was one of the nation's most divisive postwar leaders, but it is the ruling party's cozy ties with the ultra-conservative Unification Church that has fired up much of the opposition to the funeral.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is battling a near-continuous political fallout from his handling of both the links to the church among his party's lawmakers and the state funeral he says Abe deserves.

A look at some of the reasons why the state funeral on Tuesday is causing so much anger:

WHO GETS A STATE FUNERAL IN JAPAN?

The tradition has roots in a ceremony performed by the emperor to honor those who made exceptional contributions to the country.

The emperor before World War II was revered as a god, and public mourning for those honored with state funerals was compulsory. Most state funerals were for members of the imperial family, but political and military leaders were also honored, including Isoroku Yamamoto, who commanded Japan's Pearl Harbor attack and died in 1943.

The state funeral law was scrapped after the war. Japan's only other state funeral for a political leader since then was held in 1967 for Shigeru Yoshida, who signed the San Francisco Treaty ending the U.S. occupation of Japan and restoring ties with the Allies.

Because of criticism that the Yoshida funeral was held without any legal basis, subsequent governments scaled down such events.

"A state funeral contradicts the spirit of democracy," said Junichi Miyama, a historian at Chuo University.

WHY IS ABE GETTING A STATE FUNERAL?

Kishida says Abe deserves a state funeral because he was the longest-serving leader in Japan's modern political history and for his diplomatic, security and economic policies that elevated Japan's international profile. Kishida, noting Abe's assassination during an election campaign, says Japan must show its determination never to bow to "violence against democracy."

Political watchers say holding a state funeral for Abe is Kishida's attempt to please ruling Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers belonging to Abe's conservative political faction so as to buttress his own grip on power.

Koichi Nakano, international politics professor at Sophia University, says the funeral is an attempt to whitewash Abe's legacy and to cover up scandals linked to the Unification Church. The church is accused of inappropriate recruitment and business tactics but denies the charges.

WHY IS IT CONTROVERSIAL?

Opponents say it's undemocratic, citing a lack of a clear legal basis and the unilateral decision by the Kishida Cabinet to hold the funeral.

Abe's opponents recall his attempts to whitewash Japan's wartime atrocities, his push for more military spending, his reactionary view of gender roles and a leadership seen as autocratic and supportive of cronyism.

Protests of the funeral have increased as more details emerged about Abe's and LDP lawmakers' connection to the Unification Church. The South Korea-based church has built close ties with LDP lawmakers

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over shared interests in conservative causes.

Abe's assassin reportedly was enraged about ties between Abe, his party and the church, which he said his mother had given all the family's money to.

Abe, whose grandfather and former leader Nobusuke Kishi helped the church to take root in Japan, is now seen as a key figure in the scandal. Opponents say holding a state funeral for Abe is equivalent to an endorsement of party ties to the Unification Church.

A group of lawyers filed a lawsuit trying to stop the funeral, but it was reportedly dismissed Monday. And an elderly man had set himself on fire near the prime minister's office in an apparent protest of the funeral.

WHAT'S THE COST?

About 1.7 billion yen (\$11.8 million) is needed for the venue, security, transportation and accommodation for the guests, the government said. Opponents say tax money should be spent on more meaningful causes, such as to address widening economic disparities caused by Abe's policies.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR KISHIDA?

Kishida, who took office a year ago, had enjoyed stable public support, with his July election victory seemingly securing him a way to rule for up to three years.

But his support ratings have since plunged over his handling of the state funeral and his governing party's links to the South Korean church.

An LDP survey found nearly half of its lawmakers had ties to the church. Kishida has pledged to all ties, but many Japanese want a further explanation of how the church may have influenced party policies.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE FUNERAL?

Guests will gather hours ahead of the funeral at the Budokan martial arts arena in downtown Tokyo for security checks, which have been tightened after Abe's assassination. No food or drinks are allowed inside, and use of personal computers or cameras are limited to media. About 1,000 Japanese troops will line the streets around the venue. The ceremony will start with a 19-volley salute, as in Yoshida's funeral.

Government, parliamentary and judicial representatives, including Kishida, will make condolence speeches, followed by Abe's widow, Akie Abe. Outside the arena, a table for flowers will be set up for the public.

The government says the funeral is not meant to force anyone to honor Abe. But most of the nation's 47 prefectural governments will fly the flag at half-mast and observe a moment of silence, which could put pressure on public schools. Residents and offices near the venue will be affected by traffic controls and security checkpoints, and classes will be canceled at some neighborhood schools.

Opponents will hold rallies around the country.

WHO WILL ATTEND?

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris as well as the leaders from Australia, India, Vietnam, Cambodia and Singapore will be there. Kishida says the event will provide an opportunity for him to engage in "funeral diplomacy."

The government said last week 4,300 attendants, including foreign dignitaries, Japanese lawmakers, municipal leaders and representatives from business, cultural and other areas, are attending — fewer than the 6,000 invited.

Many opposition members, including the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan and the Japanese Communist Party, are boycotting the funeral. A former minister in the governing party will also stay away.

Powerful typhoon leaves 6 rescuers dead in north Philippines

By JIM GOMEZ and AARON FAVILA Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Typhoon Noru blew out of the northern Philippines on Monday, leaving six

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people dead, knocking down power in two entire provinces, trapping villagers in floods and forcing officials to suspend classes and government work in and around the capital.

The most powerful typhoon to hit the country this year slammed ashore in Burdeos town in Quezon province before nightfall on Sunday then weakened as it barreled overnight across the main Luzon region, where more than 52,000 people were moved to emergency shelters, some forcibly, officials said.

Gov. Daniel Fernando of Bulacan province, north of Manila, said five rescuers, who were using a boat to help residents trapped in floodwaters, were hit by a collapsed wall then apparently drowned in the rampaging waters.

"They were living heroes who were helping save the lives of our countrymen in the calamity," Fernando told DZMM radio network. "This is really very sad."

Police said a Bulacan villager drowned after refusing to heed appeals to leave his riverside house. Authorities were separately trying to confirm another death in Burdeos town and a missing farmer in a flooded village in western Zambales province.

In Aurora province's hard-hit Dingalan town, more than 6,000 houses were damaged and a newly built evacuation center housing more 200 displaced families was battered by the fierce wind and rain but no injuries were reported, officials said.

About 3,000 people were evacuated to safety in metropolitan Manila, which was lashed by fierce wind and rain overnight. Classes and government work were suspended Monday in the capital and outlying provinces as a precaution although the morning skies were sunny.

The entire northern provinces of Aurora and Nueva Ecija, which were hit by the typhoon, remained without power Monday and repair crews were at work to bring back electricity, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla told President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in a televised meeting the president called to assess damage and coordinate disaster-response.

Marcos Jr. praised officials for evacuating tens of thousands of people before the typhoon hit, preventing more deaths, but expressed concern at how Noru and another storm that devastated central and southern provinces in December rapidly intensified into super typhoons.

"Is this climate change?" Marcos Jr., who took office in June, asked. "We have kept watched on these storms for a long time but it wasn't like this before... This is something I have to deal with."

Marcos Jr. later joined an aerial inspection of typhoon-hit provinces in the rice-growing region, where many villages and stretches of roads remained flooded.

Noru underwent an "explosive intensification" over the open Pacific Ocean before it hit the Philippines, Vicente Malano, who heads the country's weather agency, told The Associated Press on Sunday.

From sustained winds of 85 kilometers per hour (53 mph) on Saturday, Noru was a super typhoon just 24 hours later with sustained winds of 195 kilometers (121 miles per hour) and gusts of up to 240 kph (149 mph) at its peak late Sunday.

By Monday noon, Noru had sustained winds of 130 kph (81 mph) and gusts of 160 kph (99 mph) and was moving northwest in the South China Sea toward Vietnam, according to the weather agency.

About 20 storms and typhoons batter the Philippines each year. The archipelago also lies in the "Pacific Ring of Fire," a region along most of the Pacific Ocean rim where many volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur, making the Southeast Asian nation one of the world's most disaster-prone.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest recorded tropical cyclones in the world, left more than 7,300 people dead or missing, flattened entire villages, swept ships inland and displaced more than 5 million in the central Philippines — well to the south of Noru's path.

Hardship remains for Ukrainian town emerging from occupation

By LORI HINNANT Associated Press

IZIUM, Ukraine (AP) — Rainwater is for showers and dishes. Scavenged wood is for the cooking fires. But almost nothing keeps out the autumn chill in homes without windows.

Russian forces controlled Iziium for six months before being forced to retreat two weeks ago in a Ukrainian

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counteroffensive. On one of the last days of the battle, a grad rocket exploded in Margaryta Tkachenko's yard. Its carcass is there still, something of a novelty for her children and a reminder of the terrible six months the family has endured.

The house was damaged beyond recognition months ago.

"I remember planes flying, how mines whistled, cassette (rockets) exploded," said her son Mykyta, the oldest of three.

"We came out of the basement and the house was gone," Tkachenko said. She kept the children in the basement and did her best to clean up the damage above.

"The children had not washed for many days," she said. "We hadn't eaten for several days. The little one ate a spoonful of honey and the boy ate a spoonful of rice. I didn't eat anything for two days."

Her roof is a charred shell, and the upstairs windows that overlook the Sievierodonetsk River are open to the weather. She and her three children — ages 9 months, 7 and 10 — now live in a darkened downstairs corner, sleeping together on a mattress that takes up the entire bedroom and fumbling around for what they need once the sun goes down.

The town has had no gas, electricity, running water or internet since March. No one has been able to predict when that might change, but regional officials have urged residents who left in the early days of the war not to return. Too difficult an — with countless mines strewn about — too dangerous.

But Tkachenko was among the thousands who waited out the Russians.

As dusk settled in on Sunday, she hoisted the baby on her hip, told her daughter to fetch drinking water and with her unoccupied hand crumpled paper, carefully piled kindling, lit the fire and placed the kettle on the grate. The smell of wood smoke filled the air. Her older daughter slowly transformed a slender stick into embers, taking the point out every few seconds to watch it burn in the growing darkness.

The warmed water went into a bottle with some formula, then it was time to milk the goat.

The little vegetable garden has a handful of cherry tomatoes on the vine, but mostly the family relies upon humanitarian aid to get by. At night, once the fire died down, her 10-year-old deftly pulled out a finger length of cotton stuffing, twisted it and poured sunflower oil over it to soak on a plate. With a few wicks already in place from other nights, the makeshift oil lamp was almost bright enough to read by.

Tkachenko has no idea when her two older children can resume studies. Many of Izium's schools were used as bases by the Russians and all have some kind of damage. At least three were completely destroyed by Ukrainian missiles as they tried to seize back the town.

"I can't predict what will happen next. Winter is the most frightening. We have no wood. How will we heat?" Tkachenko asked. She had no answers.

Analysis: Backups, be ready. NFL's QB carousel is spinning

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

The NFL's quarterback carousel may start spinning a bit faster.

Mac Jones, Tua Tagovailoa and Josh Allen got banged-up Sunday. Justin Herbert and Jameis Winston played hurt. Already, Dak Prescott and Trey Lance have gone down.

Backups, be ready.

Jones' leg injury appears most serious. The second-year pro hopped off the field late in the fourth quarter of New England's 37-26 loss to Baltimore, and he appeared to be in extreme pain in photos showing him being assisted to the locker room.

Veteran Brian Hoyer would take over for the Patriots (1-2) if Jones is sidelined. They visit the Green Bay Packers (2-1) this week, a difficult opponent regardless who is under center.

"I think we've always talked about it my whole time here, it's always the next-man-up mentality if it comes to that," Patriots defensive back Jason McCourty said.

Teddy Bridgewater was the next man for the Dolphins when Tagovailoa stumbled off the field late in the first half of Miami's 21-19 win over Buffalo after hitting his head on the ground. Bridgewater was in for three plays because Tagovailoa passed concussion protocol and returned to the game in the third quarter.

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He explained his legs were wobbly following the play because he hurt his back.

Tagovailoa wore a wrap around his back after the game and his status for Thursday night's game at Cincinnati is uncertain.

"It's a quick turnaround so you have to move on quick and get ready for Cincinnati," Tagovailoa said. "For me, I'm just worried about getting my back right. Right now, it's tight. It was sore when it did happen, but any competitor that would have never wanted to come out would've done the same thing. I just tried my hardest to get back up and get the next play and run it."

If Tagovailoa can't go for the Dolphins (3-0), they have a capable backup. Bridgewater is 33-30 in his career as a starter with the Vikings, Saints, Panthers and Broncos.

Allen needed an X-ray after the game on his right hand but didn't have any protection on it afterward and insisted he's fine. The Bills (2-1) visit the Ravens this week. They have veteran Case Keenum, though Allen should be ready to go.

Playing with fractured rib cartilage, Herbert struggled as the Chargers were routed by the Jaguars 38-10 in Los Angeles. Coach Brandon Staley allowed Herbert to finish the game and throw 45 passes despite the lopsided score.

The Chargers (1-2) play at Houston this week and there's no reason to think Herbert wouldn't start.

"Justin is going to be feeling like this when he's out there playing," Staley said. "This injury is going to be there for a while. ... It's not like it's going to feel better next week or the week after that. This thing is going to be present for a while. He felt good today. We're going to continue to manage it the best we can."

Winston played his second straight game for the Saints with a back injury. He threw for 353 yards but also tossed two interceptions in a 22-14 loss at Carolina. New Orleans (1-2) meets Minnesota in London next Sunday. Saints coach Dennis Allen said he's not considering replacing Winston with Andy Dalton.

"He is a battler. He is tough. Yeah, he is fighting through some things, and that is part of playing pro football," Allen said of Winston.

One QB switch that's certain to happen is in New York. The Jets will turn to Zach Wilson once he's cleared to return from a preseason a knee injury. They're 1-2 with Joe Flacco. Wilson is expected back against Pittsburgh on Sunday.

The 49ers lost their first full game without Lance, who went down with a season-ending ankle injury in Week 2. Jimmy Garoppolo, who filled in nicely after Lance got hurt in the first quarter of a 27-7 win over Seattle, threw a pick in an 11-10 loss at Denver on Sunday night.

The Cowboys will seek their second consecutive win with Cooper Rush when they play at the New York Giants on Monday night. Prescott fractured a bone near his right thumb in a season-opening loss to Tampa Bay. He could return in a week or two.

Backup quarterbacks are always one play away from entering the game. They have to be prepared.

Pakistan floods raise fears of hunger after crops wrecked

By MUNIR AHMED and MUHAMMAD FAROOQ Associated Press

KHAIRPUR, Pakistan (AP) — Like every year, Arz Mohammed had planted his little patch of land in southern Pakistan with cotton. The crop would earn him enough so that, as he puts it, his family of five wouldn't be reduced to begging. Then came the deluge.

Pakistan's massive floods this summer collapsed Mohammed's home and destroyed his four acres of cotton, wiping out most of his income.

On top of that, his land and that of his neighbors remain underwater, three months after the heaviest rains stopped. Like many farmers across southern Pakistan, he may not be able to plant his next crop — wheat — in time.

That could spell trouble for the country's food supply.

"These rains have destroyed everything for us," said Mohammed, who lives in a tent with his wife and children near his wrecked house in Khairpur, one of the country's hardest-hit districts. "We don't even have anything to eat."

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This summer's flooding, caused by monsoon rains nearly triple the usual ferocity, wiped out huge swaths of crops, leaving already impoverished families struggling to obtain food. Farmers and officials warn that Pakistan could now face serious food shortages at a time when the government is strapped for cash and world food prices are high.

Nearly 15% of Pakistan's rice crop and 40% of its cotton crop were lost, according to officials. The waters also wiped out the personal grain stores that many farming families rely on for food yearlong.

The flooding, blamed in part on climate change, killed nearly 1,600 people, damaged nearly 2 million homes and overall wreaked damage estimated at more than \$30 billion.

At the United Nations last week, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif told The Associated Press that crops on 4 million acres were washed away. "We need funds to provide livelihood to our people. We need funds to compensate for the loss of crops to our people, to our farmers."

The government says there is no immediate worry about food supplies. In a statement to the AP, the state disaster agency said wheat stock are enough to last through the next harvest and that the government is importing more.

However, the upcoming wheat crop has been thrown into uncertainty. Planting usually starts in October. In Punjab province, the country's main wheat producer, fields suffered less damage and can be sown in time. But in southern Sindh province, the second largest producer, some 50% of the fields remain under-water, according to Jam Khan Shoro, a provincial irrigation minister in Sindh.

Aerial footage in Sindh shows field after field still inundated. The province, in Pakistan's southern lowlands at the downstream end of its major rivers, is where the floods hit hardest: 80% of the rice crop and 70% of cotton were destroyed, devastating the livelihoods of the small farmers who make up most the production.

Altaf Hussain Marri, a larger and relatively well-off landholder in Khairpur, said he normally gives away wheat as a gift to friends and family. Now he's worried about having enough for himself and his children, unsure if his 400 inundated acres will drain in time. The floods demolished his cotton and rice crops, worth around \$40,000.

"If we fail to grow wheat ... next year we might not have even wheat to eat," Marri said. "It will create food insecurity in the country. The poor will suffer a lot. There will be no flour."

Pakistan's agricultural sector had been growing in recent years, allowing the country to export some wheat and rice.

"Now we will have to import wheat and other food items," Pakistan's Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal told the AP.

Sharif, the prime minister, said Pakistan may have to import about a million metric tons of wheat, and it could come from Russia, but Pakistan is open to other offers if the price is right.

Pakistan has already put out orders to import 500,000 metric tons of wheat, Planning Ministry officials say. There are contingency plans to buy as much 2.5 million tons over the next year, but officials are waiting to see how much wheat is planted, they said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the policy was not yet set.

Ashfaq Ahmad, a senior economist, said the additional wheat needs to be brought in quickly, by next month.

Otherwise, "I am seeing a food crisis in December," he told the AP. "Any delay in the import of wheat will cause food shortage."

The flooding was also a blow to Pakistan's important cash crops. Losses will mean lower exports of rice, which earned \$2 billion in 2020. Cotton losses could hurt the country's biggest export, textiles and clothes, which brought in more than \$20 billion annually in recent years.

But the greater damage and danger is likely to Pakistan's poor, with no margin to endure losses in income and food.

In Dasht, a remote district of Baluchistan province, hundreds of orchard owners worry about their future after losing crops of grapes, apples and other fruits. In parts of Baluchistan, piles upon piles of rotten

apples can be seen in submerged areas.

Even before the floods, some 38 million Pakistanis, more than 16% of the population, were living in moderate or severe food insecurity, meaning they were uncertain about being able to obtain food or at times have outright gone without eating, according to the World Health Organization. Nearly 18% of children were acutely malnourished.

The blow to the food supply and incomes will tip those populations deeper into hunger, U.N. agencies have warned. The U.N.'s World Food Program has so far delivered food to 600,000 flood survivors.

Iqbal, the planning minister, said Sindh province is the country's biggest producer of vegetables for domestic markets. Those crops were lost, along with families' personal stores of grains for themselves and feed for their livestock.

"So, therefore we have a real food security challenge at hand," he said.

On the ground in Sukkur, another hard-hit district neighboring Khairpur, the local agricultural director Rasool Bux Junejo fears the worst. Farmers won't be able to grow wheat or other key crops like sunflowers and mustard.

"That will be a huge loss in the coming months. If you ask me as an agriculture worker, I foresee famine, God forbid," he said. "We will be unable to provide food to our people."

Politics impede long-advocated growth of UN Security Council

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Virtually everyone involved agrees: Almost eight decades after it came into existence, the powerful U.N. Security Council needs to expand, to evolve, to include more voices. But as with so many things, the central question — and the biggest disagreement — is exactly how.

Five countries that were major powers at World War II's end have dominated the United Nations and its most important body for its 77-year history. The council remains in its current configuration despite a four-decade clamor for other countries to join that VIP group to reflect the dramatically changed 21st-century world.

The council's failure to respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine has, at this month's gathering of world leaders, shone a spotlight on another misstep: Consumed by national interests and regional rivalries, the 193 U.N. member nations have blocked expansion of the body charged with ensuring international peace and security.

The postwar era when the United Nations was created reflected a desire to, in the U.N. Charter's opening words, "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." An updated council with more voices could re-center that premise, advocates say. But disagreements on the size, composition and powers of a revamped council have left generations of U.N. diplomats wondering whether it will ever change.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pinpointed the problem in 2020: "The nations that came out on top more than seven decades ago have refused to contemplate the reforms needed to change power relations in international institutions."

"Inequality starts at the top —in global institutions," Guterres said then. "Addressing inequality must start by reforming them." But it hasn't happened yet.

HOW IT IS NOW

The 15-member Security Council has 10 non-permanent members from all regions of the world elected for two-year terms without veto power and five permanent members with veto power: the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France.

Two of those members are represented by different governments than they were when the United Nations was established in 1945. The Republic of China, now governed from Taiwan, is excluded from virtually all U.N. bodies, which are occupied by the mainland-governed People's Republic. The Soviet Union dissolved in the early 1990s, leaving Russia as its surviving power.

It is Russia's use, and threatened use, of its veto that has blocked the council from taking action on the now seven-month-old war in Ukraine. It is a failure noted by many leaders in their General Assembly

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speeches, alongside their perennial complaints that the council is outdated and unrepresentative.

Of particular annoyance to governments in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean: They have no permanent members. Can that change? The American president thinks it must.

"The time has come for this institution to become more inclusive so that it can better respond to the needs of today's world," Joe Biden told the General Assembly last week.

He called for increasing the number of both permanent and non-permanent members, including "permanent seats for those nations we've long supported and permanent seats for countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean." The United States also supports permanent seats for Germany, Japan and India.

Peace, said French President Emmanuel Macron, requires an international consensus. "That's why I hope that we can finally commit to reforming the Security Council so that it's more representative, welcomes new permanent members, and remains capable of fully playing its role, by limiting the use of veto rights in instances of mass crimes," he said.

And Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who addressed the assembly Saturday, called for a "more democratic" council by broadening representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America and adding India and Brazil. At a news conference afterward, he said adding "hostile" Western countries like Japan and Germany would bring nothing new to the council: "They are all following the orders of the United States."

HOW REFORM MIGHT WORK

Attempts to reform the council began in 1979. In 2005, world leaders called for the council to be "more broadly representative, efficient and transparent." That year, the General Assembly, which must approve any council reforms, shelved three rival resolutions to expand its membership, a reflection of deep divisions that continue today.

One resolution by Germany, Japan, Brazil and India would give them permanent seats without veto rights on a 25-member council. A second by a group of middle-ranking countries, including Italy and Pakistan, wants 25-member council with 10 new non-permanent seats. The now 55-member African Union wanted to add 11 new spots: six permanent seats, including two for Africa with veto power, and five non-permanent ones.

Senegalese President Macky Sall, the African Union chairman, reiterated its demand for two permanent seats, saying it's time to stop "confining Africa to the margins of decision-making circles." Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said the Ukraine war proves that "a reform of the U.N. is essential if we are to find world peace."

Barbados' prime minister, Mia Mottley, called for removing veto power from the five permanent members: "A Security Council that retains the power of veto in the hands of a few will still lead us to war." And Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country "will continue to underline that 'the world is bigger than five.'"

Virtually all General Assembly presidents in recent years have held negotiations on Security Council reform. Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid, who stepped down as president this month, lamented that he wasn't able to conclude a deal "to reflect the new reality of the world." His successor, Csaba Kőrösi, vows to press on.

"It is high time that the council represents the world's population more equally, and that it reflects 21st century realities," Kőrösi said.

This year, the General Assembly adopted one reform: Any permanent council member casting a veto must now appear before the assembly's 193 nations during a debate to explain why.

David Scheffer, a former U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, said Biden's proposal "reaches beyond anything the U.S. government has stated before on this issue" and "accepts the reality of the world we live in today, and not the world of 1945 at the end of a transformative war."

"The United States needs to be the collaborative superpower of the future, and this will be an important step in that direction," he told The Associated Press.

Richard Gowan, U.N. director of the International Crisis Group, called Biden's remarks on reform "a smart political gambit" that created a stir among diplomats and U.N. officials. The remarks, he said, reflect a

U.S. concern that the council's credibility is waning — and that it serves American interests “to have a more-or-less functional council as an alternative to anarchy.”

“China especially hates the idea that Japan and India could exploit reform discussions to secure permanent seats on the council,” Gowen said. “So Beijing may end up blocking the entire process.”

But he said, “Biden has sparked a discussion of reform that will run for at least a couple of years.” Whether it ends in actual change, or just more talk, remains to be seen.

False claims, threats fuel poll worker sign-ups for midterms

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Outraged by false allegations of fraud against a Georgia elections employee in 2020, Amanda Rouser made a vow as she listened to the woman testify before Congress in June about the racist threats and harassment she faced.

“I said that day to myself, ‘I’m going to go work in the polls, and I’m going to see what they’re going to do to me,’” Rouser, who like the targeted employee is Black, recalled after stopping by a recruiting station for poll workers at Atlanta City Hall on a recent afternoon. “Try me, because I’m not scared of people.”

About 40 miles north a day later, claims of fraud also brought Carolyn Barnes to a recruiting event for prospective poll workers, but with a different motivation.

“I believe that we had a fraudulent election in 2020 because of the mail-in ballots, the advanced voting,” Barnes, 52, said after applying to work the polls for the first time in Forsyth County. “I truly believe that the more we flood the system with honest people who are trying to help out, it will straighten it out.”

Barnes, who declined to give her party affiliation, said she wants to use her position as a poll worker to share her observations about “the gaps” in election security and “where stuff could happen afterwards.”

Nearly two years after the last presidential election, there has been no evidence of widespread fraud or manipulation of voting machines. Numerous reviews in the battleground states where former President Donald Trump disputed his loss to President Joe Biden have affirmed the results, courts have rejected dozens of lawsuits filed by Trump and his allies, and even Trump’s own Department of Justice concluded the results were accurate.

Nevertheless, the false claims about the the 2020 presidential contest by the former president and his supporters are spurring new interest in working the polls in Georgia and elsewhere for the upcoming midterm elections, according to interviews with election officials, experts and prospective poll workers.

Like Rouser, some aim to shore up a critical part of their state’s election system amid the lies and misinformation about voting and ballot-counting. But the false claims and conspiracy theories also have taken hold among a wide swath of conservative voters, propelling some to sign up to help administer elections for the first time.

The possibility they will play a crucial role at polling places is a new worry this election cycle, said Sean Morales-Doyle, an election security expert at The Brennan Center for Justice.

“I think it’s a problem that there may be people who are running our elections that buy into those conspiracy theories and so are approaching their role as fighting back against rampant fraud,” he said.

But he also cautioned that there are numerous safeguards to prevent a single poll worker from disrupting voting or trying to manipulate the results.

The Associated Press talked to roughly two dozen prospective poll workers in September during three recruiting events in two Georgia counties — Fulton County, which includes most of Atlanta and where more than 70 percent of voters cast a ballot for Biden, and Forsyth County north of Atlanta, where support for Trump topped 65 percent.

About half said the 2020 election was a factor in their decision to try to become a poll worker.

“We don’t want Donald Trump bullying people,” said Priscilla Ficklin, a Democrat, while taking an application at Atlanta City Hall to be a Fulton County poll worker. “I’m going to stand up for the people who are afraid.”

Carlette Dryden said she showed up to vote in Forsyth County in 2020 only to be told that she had

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already cast a mail-in ballot. She said elections officials let her cast a ballot later, but she suspects someone fraudulently voted in her name and believes her experience reflects broader problems with the vote across the country.

Still, she said her role was not to police voters or root out fraud.

"What I'm signing up to do is to help others that are coming through here that may need assistance or questions answered," she said.

Georgia was a focus of Trump's attempts to undo his 2020 election defeat to Biden. He pressured the state's Republican secretary of state in a January 2021 phone call to "find" enough votes to overturn Biden's victory in the state and seized on surveillance footage to accuse the Black elections worker, Wandrea Moss, and her mother, Ruby Freeman, of pulling out suitcases of fraudulent votes in Fulton County. The allegation was quickly knocked down, but still spread widely through conservative media.

Moss told the House Jan. 6 committee that she received death threats and racist messages.

At a farmer's market in the politically mixed suburb of Alpharetta north of Atlanta, Deborah Eves said she was concerned about being harassed for working at a voting site but still felt compelled to sign up.

A substitute teacher and Democrat, Eves visited a recruiting booth set up by Fulton County officials next to stands selling single origin coffee, honey and empanadas.

"I feel like our government is 'we the people, and 'we the people' need to step up and do things like poll working so that we can show that nobody's cheating, nobody's trying to do the wrong thing here," she said.

Allison Saunders, who worked at a voting site for the first time during the state's May primary, said she believes Moss and Freeman were targeted because they are Black. Saunders, a Democrat, was visiting the farmer's market with her son.

"More people that look like me need to step up and do our part," said Saunders, who is white. "I think it's more important to do your civic duty than to be afraid."

Threats after the 2020 election contributed to an exodus of full-time elections officials around the country. Recruiters say they have not seen a similar drop in people who have previously done poll work — temporary jobs open to local residents during election season. But some larger counties around the country have reported that they are struggling to fill those positions.

Working the polls has long been viewed as an apolitical civic duty. For first-time workers, it generally involves setting up voting machines, greeting voters, checking that they are registered and answering questions about the voting process.

Elections staff in the U.S. generally do not vet the political views of prospective poll workers deeply, although most states have requirements that seek to have a mix of Democratic and Republican poll workers at each voting location.

Forsyth County's elections director, Mandi Smith, said she was not worried about having people who believe the last presidential election was fraudulent serve as poll workers. The county provides training that emphasizes the positions are nonpartisan and that workers must follow certain rules.

"It's a very team-driven process, as well, in the sense that there are multiple poll workers there and you are generally not working alone," she said.

Ginger Aldrich, who attended the county's recruiting event, said she knows people who believe the last election was stolen from Trump. Their views made her curious about what she described as the "mysterious" aspects of the voting process, such as where ballots go after they leave the voting site.

"There's going to be some people that are unscrupulous, and they are going to spend all this time figuring out how to beat the system," said Aldrich, who is retired.

While she believes there is fraud in elections, she said she was willing to use her experience as a poll worker to try to convince people that there were no problems in her county with the midterm elections.

Bills would curtail objections at future Jan. 6 counts

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of Congress have officially objected to the results in four of the last six presidential elections, a partisan practice that has been legal for over a century but became much more

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fraught after a violent mob of former President Donald Trump's supporters attacked the U.S. Capitol last year.

In an effort to prevent another Jan. 6, 2021, bills moving through the House and Senate would make it harder to lodge those objections when Congress counts the electoral votes in a joint session after every presidential election. The move to curtail the objections is part of a larger effort to overhaul the 1800s-era Electoral Count Act and safeguard the integrity of the vote after Trump tried to persuade his allies in Congress to vote against Democrat Joe Biden's victory and overturn his 2020 defeat.

Under current law, only one member of the House and one member of the Senate has to challenge a state's results in order to trigger votes on that state's electors in each chamber. If a simple majority in each chamber votes to sustain the objection, that state's votes can be thrown out.

The House and Senate bills would each raise that threshold substantially, with the House bill requiring a third of each chamber to object and the Senate bill requiring a fifth of each chamber to object. The House legislation, passed last week, would also lay out new requirements for the grounds for an objection.

"It is just too easy to trigger an objection when it only requires one person in each chamber," says Maine Sen. Susan Collins, a Republican a co-sponsor of the Senate version. Eleven GOP senators have signed on to the legislation, which is up for a vote in a Senate committee on Tuesday.

If the bills are consolidated into one measure that becomes law, it will do away with a tradition that has become increasingly popular as Congress has become more polarized.

Democrats have objected the last three times that Republicans were elected — twice against George W. Bush and once against Trump — but in each of those cases the Democratic candidate had already conceded the election.

The stakes were raised considerably in 2021, when Trump and his allies were actively trying to thwart Biden's win, with a strategy to throw out Biden electors in Congress and the support of a violent mob that broke into the Capitol, interrupted the joint session and threatened the lives of lawmakers and Vice President Mike Pence.

House Administration Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren of California, the Democratic sponsor of the House bill with Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, said the bill would protect the voters' will from "frivolous" objections and more sinister efforts.

"If you want to object to the vote, you better have your colleagues and the Constitution on your side," Lofgren said just before the bill passed. "Don't try to overturn our democracy."

At the 2021 joint session, two GOP senators — Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Josh Hawley of Missouri — joined a larger group of House Republicans in objecting to Biden's electoral votes in Arizona and Pennsylvania, two swing states that Trump had won in the 2016 election but lost in 2020. Both the House and Senate voted to certify Biden's win in those states in the hours after the rioters had injured police, rampaged through the Capitol and sent lawmakers running for their lives.

Congress had only held such votes twice since the enactment of the Electoral Count Act 135 years ago. In 1969, two Democratic senators joined a member of the House to object to the vote of one elector in North Carolina during the certification of Republican Richard Nixon's victory. In 2004, Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer of California and Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones, D-Ohio, objected to President George W. Bush's electors in Ohio over what they said were voting irregularities.

In both cases, the House and Senate rejected the objections.

In several other instances, members of the House have lodged objections without the support of a senator. In 2000, several members of the Congressional Black Caucus objected to Bush's electors in Florida after the Supreme Court had forced a halt to vote-counting in that state and decided the election. Vice President Al Gore, whom Bush had defeated, gaveled the objections down as he presided over the session.

In 2016, several Democrats stood and objected to Trump's win over Democrat Hillary Clinton but no senator joined, and Vice President Joe Biden dismissed them. Like Gore, Clinton had already conceded defeat.

Members on both sides of the Capitol have been working on the revisions to the Electoral Count Act since the 2021 insurrection, saying the law's vague language was not robust enough protection against Trump's overt attempts to subvert the will of the people. The bills would also clarify that the vice presi-

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dent's role is solely ceremonial and try to prevent states from creating slates of illegitimate electors, as Trump's allies tried to do.

The House bill is more expansive than the Senate bill, and the two sides will eventually have to resolve their differences into a single measure. That includes the House language with new grounds for any objection, which would restrict the process even further.

Under the House legislation, no member could make an objection unless it fell under a strict set of parameters that relate to the Constitution — that the state is not validly a state, if the state submits too many electoral votes or if a candidate is not eligible, for example.

House Republicans argued against the bill by saying it was a political attack on Trump, noting the frequent Democratic objections over the years. The House bill only received nine Republican votes, all from members who are not returning to Congress next year.

Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., responded that if lawmakers believed there had been too many objections in the past, "you should absolutely be supporting this legislation."

Hawley, who was photographed raising a fist to pro-Trump protesters outside the Capitol ahead of last year's joint session, said in an interview that he is "skeptical" of the effort to change a law that has been in place for so many years.

"My concern is that it's going to look like to Republican voters that Democrats can object as much as often as they want," the Missouri Republican said, noting the objections in 2000, 2004 and 2016.

"As soon as Republicans do, they change the law," Hawley said. "I can promise you, that will be the perception."

Still, 11 Republican senators have signed on to the Senate bill, enough to break a filibuster and pass the bill in the 50-50 Senate.

Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey, who is retiring, was the latest GOP senator to sign on to the legislation last week.

"The poor drafting of the 1887 Electoral Count Act endangered the transition of power from one Administration to the next," Toomey said when he announced his support.

"Unfortunately, in the over 100 intervening years, individual Democratic and Republican members of Congress have occasionally attempted to exploit the ambiguities in this law to cast doubt on the validity of our elections, culminating in the debacle of January 6, 2021," he said. "It is past time Congress act."

Biden's mixed record forces some Dems into odd balancing act

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Democratic House candidate Greg Landsman can tick off how his party's control of Congress and the White House has benefited his city.

The bipartisan infrastructure deal will mean upgrades to the heavily traveled highway bridge linking Cincinnati with its airport and northern Kentucky while bolstering a vital westside viaduct. COVID-19 relief funding meant training for more new police academy recruits. A sprawling spending package capped insulin prices.

But Landsman won't say whether President Joe Biden, who signed those measures into law, will help or hurt his campaign to unseat longtime Republican Rep. Steve Chabot. He doesn't think the president will visit the southwest Ohio swing district before the November midterm elections and insists that, in thousands of conversations while campaigning, Biden usually "just doesn't come up."

Officeholders and top candidates often distance themselves from their party's unpopular president. Some Republicans shunned Donald Trump ahead of the 2018 midterms when Democrats flipped the House, just as many Democrats ran away from Barack Obama as 2010's red wave loomed. George W. Bush and Bill Clinton suffered similar midterm election fates.

But this cycle presents conflicting political incentives that have forced some front-line Democrats into delicate balancing acts. While improving lately, Biden's approval ratings remain low and inflation is still running near record highs. Yet unemployment is down, wages are up and the White House has notched

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key congressional wins applauded by many Democrats in close races.

The predicament underscores the lack of a national Democratic playbook on how to run in relation to Biden ahead of the midterms.

"These issues become, especially in places like Cincinnati, Greater Cincinnati, very local very quickly," said Landsman, a City Council member whose hesitancy to mention Biden is a change from his appearance with the president in Cincinnati in May.

Two hundred miles north in Toledo, Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur, the longest-serving woman in House history, has been more direct, producing an ad saying she "doesn't work for Joe Biden" mere weeks after greeting the president at the Cleveland airport in July.

Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan, running for Ohio's open Senate seat, appeared with the president at the recent groundbreaking of an Intel computer chip factory outside Columbus. But he suggested then of the possibility of Biden seeking reelection in 2024 that both parties need "new leadership" and "it's time for a generational move."

When Biden visited Milwaukee on Labor Day, Democratic Gov. Tom Evers, who is up for reelection, appeared with him, but Democratic Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, competing against Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, did not. In Maine, Democratic Rep. Jared Golden has an ad saying he opposed "trillions of dollars of President Biden's agenda because I knew it would make inflation worse." Democratic Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly is giving Biden's performance "mixed reviews."

Landsman says he appeared with the president because he supported White House-backed microchip legislation that helped make the new Intel facility a reality. Kaptur says she appeared with Biden because he was announcing \$1 billion for Great Lakes improvements and got a firsthand look at the town of Lorain, which has been devastated by steel mills closing.

"There's some other things I don't agree with the president on. But that one — getting attention to Lorain, Ohio, which has endured such a battering in the international markets, and the people are still so positive and so constructive," she said, "it was a great moment."

Phil Heimlich, a former Cincinnati City Council member and Republican county commissioner who opposes Trump and has endorsed Landsman, said Democrats' struggles with Biden are real but pale in comparison to GOP candidates contending with a national party increasingly beholden to his predecessor.

"I think the national stuff still plays a role," Heimlich said, "but that cuts both ways."

When Trump held a rally recently in Youngstown, Ohio, Chabot didn't attend. Kaptur's opponent, J.R. Majewski, did. But they aren't letting their opponents escape Biden's political shadow.

"I think people know Pelosi and Biden. Some people are favorable. But I don't think that's the majority," said Chabot, who has criticized Landsman for briefly working in Nancy Pelosi's Washington office in 1999, before she was House speaker. He's also tagged tweets about rising prices #Bidenflation.

Majewski said in his first TV ad that "Biden and Kaptur are spending more and more while inflation goes up and up."

Chabot was first elected to Congress in 1994 and has won several hotly contested reelection races. But Ohio's new congressional maps mean his territory encompasses more of Democrat-friendly Cincinnati.

A recent Landsman campaign event included his releasing a 5-year-old wire-haired dachshund named Jerome in a wiener dog race as Oktoberfest celebrations thronged the city's downtown. Chabot, that same weekend, greeted would-be voters at a smaller, Catholic church-sponsored street festival in the nearby town of Reading, where he was born.

"I know a lot of people who are not Democrats and they are definitely going to be voting," Jean Huneck, a 67-year-old who owns a small mechanical engineering business, said of the new, ostensibly bluer district. Huneck is a registered Democrat but supports Chabot and said the GOP needs big November wins to counter Biden.

"I feel like our livelihoods are depending on it," she said.

Kaptur has held her seat since 1983 but faces circumstances opposite from Chabot's. Redistricting swapped parts of her district's largely blue Cleveland suburbs for a conservative, eastern swath of the

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state that hugs Lake Erie and reaches the Indiana border.

Some of the new territory is dotted with cornfields and bait and tackle shops. An occasional yard sign says "Trump 2024 or Before," a reference to the former president's spurious suggestions he could be reinstated into power.

Majewski is Trump-endorsed, and Kaptur has branded him as a past devotee of QAnon conspiracy theories who passed police barricades during last year's deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Kaptur says in a TV ad that her opponent is "too dangerous to serve in Congress."

The National Republican Campaign Committee, the party's House campaign arm, promoted a photo of Biden kissing Kaptur's hand upon arriving in Cleveland and a video of her saying that, after a year in office, the president's "report card is outstanding" juxtaposed with headlines about inflation and the president's sinking approval ratings.

Following an Associated Press report that Majewski misrepresented his military career, the NRCC canceled TV ads it had booked to support his campaign.

Brendan McHugh, a 31-year-old who works in investment real estate in Toledo, said linking Biden and Kaptur isn't a bad thing because "Democrats have been getting some wins recently."

"I've been pleased with the progress that the Biden administration's been making," McHugh said, calling that "a net positive" for Kaptur.

Michael Jones, a 56-year-old attorney who lives in the same Old Orchard neighborhood near the University of Toledo, said that he's a Kaptur supporter and that controlling things like inflation is largely out of Biden's hands. But he added, "There's a lot of challenging things happening right now."

"People may look at who's at the top right now," Jones said. "And it may impact how an undecided person might vote."

Japanese leader's trip to China in '72 was diplomatic gamble

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The Japanese leader who normalized relations with China 50 years ago feared for his life when he flew to Beijing for the high-stakes negotiations at the height of the Cold War, according to his daughter, a former Japanese foreign minister.

Kakuei Tanaka's mission to normalize relations with China just two months after taking office was a huge gamble, his daughter, Makiko Tanaka, said in an interview with The Associated Press ahead of the 50th anniversary Thursday of the historic communique that Tanaka signed with his counterpart, Zhou Enlai.

The then-prime minister told his daughter before his departure that he would resign if his mission failed, recalled Makiko Tanaka, who served as foreign minister and in other key posts from 1993 to 2012.

Opposition was so fierce in Japan, she said, that some ruling party hawks came to their home the day before the trip to try to stop him from leaving. He told his daughter that he feared being poisoned in China, which was a largely closed country in 1972.

Earlier that same year, U.S. President Richard Nixon had made his visit to communist China that would transform China's position in the world. His trip led to the U.S. establishing diplomatic relations with China in 1979 and the parallel severing of formal ties with Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing claims as its own.

Much has changed, too, in the China-Japan relationship over the past half-century. The neighbors enjoy deep business and cultural ties. Japan has given China more than \$25 billion in development aid over the years, and China is Japan's biggest trade partner.

But the underlying tension that marked Tanaka's diplomatic foray remains.

China, a relative backwater then, is now the world's No. 2 economy and a growing military power. Tensions surround Beijing's rivalry with Washington and its increasingly assertive activity in the region, especially around Taiwan.

Japan considers China a security threat and is particularly worried about Chinese naval activity around Japanese-controlled islands in the East China Sea that Beijing also claims.

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Top-level visits have stalled in recent years, and Japan has been steadily building its military, largely in response to China.

Current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government has pledged to further reinforce military power and to nearly double its spending over the next five to 10 years.

"Japan's alliance with the United States is a lynchpin of our diplomacy, but we should not isolate China," Makiko Tanaka said.

She raised worries about U.S.-led groupings of like-minded democracies, including Japan, as a counter to China, and cautioned against pushing Beijing toward closer ties with Russia.

"We are just banding together and being confrontational" toward China, said Tanaka, who was foreign minister in 2001-2002 under former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. She criticized U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei in August for escalating tensions.

Wang Jiaxun, president of the China Enterprises Association in Japan, which includes 150 Chinese companies, acknowledged difficulties but said the neighbors need each other as business partners.

"China and Japan have thousands of years of up-and-down relations," said Wang, whose association sponsored a weekend Japan-China festival in Tokyo in hopes of improving rocky ties.

China has not forgotten Japan's support after the 1972 normalization, and even though his country has become a major power, the two countries can learn from each other. China can provide a huge market for Japan and further contribute to the Japanese economy, he said.

When Tanaka, who died in 1993, made his trip, memories were fresh in Beijing of Japanese brutality during the first half of the 20th century. There was also opposition from anti-communist lawmakers in Tokyo.

Makiko Tanaka accompanied her father on many foreign trips, but he refused to take her to Beijing because of safety worries.

The main sticking points in 1972 were Japan's apology for wartime aggression and differences over Taiwan — issues that strain relations today.

Kakuei Tanaka, however, was determined to make amends with China and change the state of the relationship with a country he saw as a growing power, his daughter said. He believed energetic diplomacy was the only way his resource-poor country could rise from the devastation of the war and survive global competition.

Makiko quoted her father as saying that "leaving the China issue dangling is not good for Japan's future. She said her father "was ready to lower his head and apologize to China (over Japan's wartime atrocities) to create a win-win relationship for Japan's major benefit."

Contrary to his worries, Tanaka was treated in China with extreme hospitality.

His biggest relief centered on Zhou's pledge to waive China's right to seek war compensation, which he said saved Japan from going bankrupt. Makiko Tanaka says the waiver was in exchange for Japan's pledge to sever formal ties with Taiwan.

The East China Sea islands dispute was not part of the 1972 communique. Kakuei Tanaka raised the issue but Zhou said he did not want to discuss it, according to diplomatic records released by the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

In response to Chinese concerns, the Japanese side strengthened an apology over Japan's wartime aggression in the communique.

Makiko Tanaka said an improvement in the current political relationship between Beijing and Tokyo is hopeless, but she is pushing for deeper ties in the private sector. She has been invited to speak at Qinghua University in Beijing, and she is planning to invite a Chinese delegation to visit her father's tomb in his hometown of Niigata later this year.

"If business, scientists and cultural exchanges were prompted more, there would be a sense of closeness" between the countries, Tanaka said. "Diplomacy is about people, and whether you can develop personal relations and talk when needed, but politicians who can do this are rare."

US carrier, S. Korea ships launch drills amid North's threat

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By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A U.S. aircraft carrier and its battle group launched drills with South Korean warships off the Korean Peninsula's east coast on Monday in their first such training in five years, a day after North Korea test-fired a short-range ballistic missile in a possible response to the exercise.

North Korea could conduct more tests in coming days as it views U.S.-South Korean military exercises as practice for an invasion and often reacts with displays of weapons designed to attack its rivals.

The four days of drills are aimed at demonstrating the allies' "powerful resolve to respond to North Korean provocations" and improving their ability to perform joint naval operations, the South Korean navy said in a statement.

More than 20 U.S. and South Korean navy ships, including the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, a U.S. cruiser and South Korean and U.S. destroyers, were mobilized for the drills, according to the navy statement. It said U.S. and South Korean fighter jets and helicopters will also take part in the training.

It would be the first such joint drills involving a U.S. aircraft carrier near the peninsula since 2017, when the U.S. sent three aircraft carriers including the Reagan for naval drills with South Korea in response to North Korean nuclear and missile tests. The allies had since cancelled or downsized some of their regular drills to support now-dormant talks on North Korea's nuclear program or guard against COVID-19.

The North Korean missile fired on Sunday flew about 600 kilometers (370 miles) at the maximum altitude of 60 kilometers (37 miles) before falling into the waters off the North's east coast, according to South Korean estimates. Some experts say North Korea might have launched a nuclear-capable, highly maneuverable ballistic missile and that its 600 kilometer-flight had enough range to strike a southeastern South Korean port where the Reagan was previously docked.

North Korea has performed a record number of missile tests this year as it steadfastly rebuffs U.S. and South Korean calls to resume the nuclear diplomacy. North Korea has said it won't return to talks unless the United States drops its hostile policies in an apparent reference to U.S.-South Korean military drills and U.S.-led economic sanctions on it.

Earlier this month, North Korea adopted a new law that authorized the preemptive use of nuclear weapons in some situations, a development that showed its increasingly aggressive nuclear doctrine. Some analysts say North Korea would eventually aim for arms control negotiations with the United States to get sanctions relief and other concessions in return for a partial surrender of its nuclear capability.

Musk faces deposition with Twitter ahead of October trial

Associated Press undefined

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Tesla CEO Elon Musk is scheduled to spend the next few days with lawyers for Twitter, answering questions ahead of an October trial that will determine whether he must carry through with his \$44 billion agreement to acquire the social platform after attempting to back out of the deal.

The deposition, planned for Monday, Tuesday and a possible extension on Wednesday, will not be public. As of Sunday evening it was not clear whether Musk will appear in person or by video. The trial is set to begin October 17 in Delaware Chancery Court, where it's scheduled to last just five days.

Musk, the world's richest man, agreed in April to buy Twitter and take it private, offering \$54.20 a share and vowing to loosen the company's policing of content and to root out fake accounts. Twitter shares closed Friday at \$41.58.

Musk indicated in July that he wanted to back away from the deal, prompting Twitter to file a lawsuit to force him to carry through with the acquisition.

Dolphins halt Allen, survive 'butt punt' to beat Bills

By ALANIS THAMES AP Sports Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Thomas Morstead stepped into the middle of Miami's end zone, swung his powerful right leg and booted a punt.

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Right into the backside of blocker Trent Sherfield.

Nearly the butt of a bad joke ending, the Dolphins held on for the last laugh against the reigning AFC East champions instead.

Miami overcame what was quickly dubbed the "butt punt" by shutting down Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills twice in the final minutes, improving to 3-0 with a 21-19 victory that ended with Allen desperately trying to spike the football on the edge of field goal range.

"I don't like these shock endings," Dolphins coach Mike McDaniel said. "But I'm just really, really happy for the team because this much I do know: Teams win football games, and if you are going to have success over the long haul, you have to have confidence that whatever phase can win a football game for you, can go ahead and do that."

Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa briefly left the game in the second quarter, returning after halftime despite appearing to be disoriented by a head injury — the team clarified later that actually, he had an issue with his back. He finished with 186 yards and a touchdown pass to River Cracraft.

Allen was also scraped up, getting X-rays on his right hand after the game after banging it on a helmet or facemask. He insisted he was fine after.

The Dolphins' defense did just enough to stall Allen twice in the fourth quarter, the first effort a goal-line stand that followed a go-ahead rushing touchdown by Miami's Chase Edmonds.

Allen threw incomplete on fourth down from the 2-yard line, ending a 17-play, eight-minute drive — and seemingly Buffalo's chances for a comeback win.

But then Tagovailoa and the Dolphins went three-and-out, leaving Morstead with little room to kick the ball away.

It wasn't enough space. The kick clanked right off Sherfield and went out the rear of the end zone for a safety — a mishap drawing immediate comparisons to Jets quarterback Mark Sanchez's infamous "butt fumble" from 10 years earlier. Sanchez ran into the bottom of lineman Brandon Moore, jarring the ball loose.

"Woah... stay out of my lane bro," Sanchez tweeted at Morstead.

Allen had about a minute to guide Buffalo into field goal range, and did so, but the Bills ran out of time. Isaiah McKenzie tried for extra yards on a completion from Allen, costing precious seconds. Dolphins players started celebrating when the clock hit zero with Allen just stepping under center.

Bills offensive coordinator Ken Dorsey slammed his headset and began throwing paper and notebooks in the coaches' box when time ran out.

"It was only fourteen or twelve seconds," said Dolphins linebacker Melvin Ingram, who had a fumble recovery in the first half. "You run around, throw the ball. He runs all the way around, that clock is going to down."

Miami took the lead with about 10 minutes left in the game, scoring a touchdown to go up 21-17. It was the Bills' first deficit of the season.

Buffalo ran 90 plays compared to 39 for Miami, outgaining the Dolphins 497 yards to 212.

"You should win those games," Bills coach Sean McDermott said. "We just didn't take care of the ball enough and come away with some takeaways."

On a day in which Allen completed a career-high 42 passes and finished with 400 yards, the Bills finished with their lowest point total since a Week 13 last season. Allen also completed his first 11 passes for the first time in his career. He had touchdown passes to running back Devin Singletary and McKenzie and a fumble in the first half that led to a Dolphins touchdown.

The Bills were without several defensive starters, including starting safety Micah Hyde, who on Saturday went on injured reserve with a neck injury, and cornerback Dane Jackson, who suffered a neck injury against the Titans last week. The Dolphins' 21 points was the most Buffalo has allowed all season.

"We used about everybody we could on the sideline there," McDermott said.

In the fourth quarter, Miami's Jaylen Waddle caught a 32-yard pass along the right sideline, then added a 45-yard reception on third-and-22 to set up Edmonds' eventual touchdown run.

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

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Several Bills players had trouble adjusting to the South Florida heat. McKenzie, TE Dawson Knox and T Spencer Brown were all listed with heat illnesses. Players went down on the field with cramps at multiple points in the game.

"Breathing was tough sometimes. We had some really, really long drives," Allen said.

INJURIES

Bills: WR Jake Kumerow injured his ankle in the first quarter and did not return. ... CB Christian Benford injured his hand.

Dolphins: T Greg Little injured his finger. CB Xavien Howard left in the third quarter with cramping. but returned.

UP NEXT:

Bills: At the Baltimore Ravens next Sunday.

Dolphins: At the Cincinnati Bengals on Thursday.

Canada struggles to restore power after storm; body found

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of people in Atlantic Canada remained without power Sunday and officials said they found the body of a woman swept into the sea after former Hurricane Fiona washed away houses, stripped off roofs and blocked roads across the country's Atlantic provinces.

After surging north from the Caribbean, Fiona came ashore before dawn Saturday as a post-tropical cyclone, battering Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Quebec with hurricane-strength winds, rains and waves.

Defense Minister Anita Anand said troops would help remove fallen trees, restore transportation links and do whatever else is required for as long as it takes.

Fiona was blamed for at least five deaths in the Caribbean, and one death in Canada. Authorities found the body of a 73-year-old woman in the water who was missing in Channel-Port Aux Basques, a town on the southern coast of Newfoundland.

Police said the woman was inside her residence moments before a wave struck the home Saturday morning, tearing away a portion of the basement. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said in a release on social media that with assistance from the Canadian Coast Guard, as other rescue teams her body woman was recovered late Sunday afternoon.

"Living in coastal communities we know what can happen and tragically the sea has taken another from us," said Gudie Hutchings, the Member of Parliament from Newfoundland.

As of Sunday evening, more than 211,000 Nova Scotia Power customers and over 81,000 Maritime Electric customers in the province of Prince Edward Island — about 95% of the total — remained in the dark. So were more than 20,600 homes and businesses in New Brunswick.

More than 415,000 Nova Scotia Power customers — about 80% in the province of almost 1 million people — had been affected by outages Saturday.

Utility companies say it could be days before the lights are back on for everyone.

Cape Breton Regional Municipality Mayor Amanda McDougall said Sunday that over 200 people were in temporary shelters. Over 70 roads were completely inaccessible in her region. She said she couldn't count the number of homes damaged in her own neighborhood.

She said it was critical for the military to arrive and help clear debris, noting that the road to the airport is inaccessible and the tower has significant damage.

McDougall said it is amazing there are no injuries in her community.

"People listened to the warnings and did what they were supposed to do and this was the result," she said

Prince Edward Island Premier Dennis King said that over 100 military personnel would arrive Sunday to assist in recovery efforts. Schools will be closed Monday and Tuesday. He said many bridges are destroyed.

"The magnitude and severity of the damage is beyond anything that we've seen in our province's history," King said, and that it would take a "herculean effort by thousands of people" to recover over the

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coming days and weeks.

Kim Griffin, a spokeswoman for Prince Edward Island's electricity provider, said it would likely take "many days" to restore power across the island.

"The sense on the street is one of shock and awe over the magnitude of the storm," said Sean Casey, a member of parliament who represents Charlottetown on Prince Edward Island. He added that locals are also determined to mount a recovery effort. A long line quickly formed after the first gas station opened in his community on Sunday afternoon.

"Everywhere you go around town you hear generators and chain saws," Casey said.

Bill Blair, minister of emergency preparedness, said the federal government would also send approximately 100 military personnel to Newfoundland and Labrador as it shifts to recover from the storm.

Entire structures were washed into the sea as raging surf pounded Port Aux Basques, Newfoundland.

"This is not a one-day situation where we can all go back to normal," Mayor Brian Button said on social media. Unfortunately, this is going to take days, it could take weeks, it could take months in some cases."

Much of the town of 4,000 had been evacuated and Button said asked for patience as officials identify where and when people can safely go home. He noted that some residents are showing up at barricades angry and wanting to return.

In Puerto Rico, too, officials were still struggling to grasp the scope of damage and to repair the devastation caused when Fiona hit the U.S. territory a week ago.

As of Sunday, about 45% of Puerto Rico's 1.47 million power customers remained in the dark, and 20% of 1.3 million water customers had no service as workers struggled to reach submerged power substations and fix downed lines.

Gas stations, grocery stores and other businesses had temporarily shut down due to lack of fuel for generators: The National Guard first dispatched fuel to hospitals and other critical infrastructure.

"We're starting from scratch," said Carmen Rivera as she and her wife mopped up water and threw away their damaged appliances, adding to piles of rotting furniture and soggy mattresses lining their street in Toa Baja, which had flooded.

Officials across Eastern Canada also were assessing the scope of damage caused by the storm, which had moved inland over southeastern Quebec.

Mike Savage, mayor of Halifax, said the roof of an apartment building collapsed in Nova Scotia's biggest city and officials had moved 100 people to an evacuation center. He said no one was seriously hurt.

The Canadian Hurricane Centre tweeted that Fiona had the lowest pressure — a key sign of storm strength — ever recorded for a storm making landfall in Canada.

"We're getting more severe storms more frequently," said Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who said more resilient infrastructure is needed to withstand extreme weather events.

Rihanna to headline the next Super Bowl halftime show

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Rihanna will take center stage at February's Super Bowl halftime show.

The singer, who declined to perform in the 2019 Super Bowl halftime show out of solidarity with Colin Kaepernick, will headline the 2023 Super Bowl, the NFL announced Sunday along with Jay-Z's Roc Nation and Apple Music. Rihanna posted an image on Instagram of an arm outstretched holding an NFL football.

"Rihanna is a generational talent, a woman of humble beginnings who has surpassed expectations at every turn," said Jay-Z, whose Roc Nation is an executive producer of the show, in a statement. "A person born on the small island of Barbados who became one of the most prominent artists ever. Self-made in business and entertainment."

The Super Bowl will take place at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, on Feb. 12. After years of Pepsi's sponsorship, the upcoming halftime show will be sponsored by Apple Music.

Rihanna earlier said she turned down a similar opportunity for the 2019 Super Bowl that was ultimately headlined by Maroon 5. At the time, many artists voiced support for Kaepernick, the former San Francisco

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49ers quarterback who protested police brutality against Black people and minorities by kneeling during the national anthem in 2016.

"I couldn't dare do that. For what?" Rihanna told Vogue in 2019. "Who gains from that? Not my people. I just couldn't be a sellout. I couldn't be an enabler. There's things within that organization that I do not agree with at all, and I was not about to go and be of service to them in any way," she said of the league.

Kaepernick accused the NFL of colluding to keep him out of the league in a case that was eventually settled in early 2019.

In 2019, the NFL partnered with Roc Nation (which manages Rihanna) to help pick performers for the Super Bowl and strategize on the halftime show. The widely acclaimed 2022 halftime show featured Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Kendrick Lamar and Mary J. Blige.

With sales of more than 250 million records worldwide, Rihanna ranks as one of the best-selling female artists ever. Her last album was 2016's "Anti." Rihanna last performed publicly at the Grammy Awards in 2018.

In the years since, Rihanna has occasionally teased her music return. Earlier this year, she had her first child with the rapper ASAP Rocky.

Texts: Favre also sought welfare money for football facility

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — After Mississippi spent millions of dollars in welfare money on Brett Favre's pet project, a university volleyball arena, the retired NFL quarterback tried two years later to get additional cash from the state's welfare agency for another sports facility, new court documents show.

The governor at the time, Republican Phil Bryant, texted in 2019 with Favre, who wanted to build an indoor practice facility for the University of Southern Mississippi's football team. Bryant told him federal money for children and low-income adults is "tightly controlled" and "improper use could result in violation of Federal Law."

Text messages between Bryant and Favre are in court documents filed Friday by Bryant's lawyers, which seek to show the governor was willing to help Favre raise private money for the volleyball facility starting in 2017 and was unaware for more than two years that welfare money was going to the project.

Mississippi's largest-ever public corruption case has ensnared several people, including a pro wrestler whose drug rehab was funded with welfare money.

The state has filed a civil lawsuit against Favre and others to recover more than \$20 million in misspent welfare money intended to help needy people in one of the country's poorest states. Bryant and Favre are not facing criminal charges, and Bryant is not among those named in the state's civil lawsuit.

A former director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, John Davis, pleaded guilty Thursday to federal and state felony charges in a conspiracy to misspend welfare money. Davis was appointed by Bryant in February 2016 and fired by him in July 2019. Davis has agreed to testify against others.

Attorneys for a nonprofit organization being sued, Mississippi Community Education Center, sent a subpoena to Bryant in late July, seeking communication between the former governor and any other person about the volleyball arena.

The nonprofit was run by Nancy New and her son, Zachary New, who in April pleaded guilty to state charges of misusing welfare money. They also agreed to testify against others.

In the court filing Friday, Bryant objected to producing documents unless it was under a protective order to prevent public release of the contents.

"This motion was brought in bad faith and solely to annoy, embarrass, and oppress Governor Bryant because he refused to turn a blind eye to the crimes perpetrated by New and Davis," Bryant's attorneys wrote.

Favre's request for money from the Mississippi Department of Humans Services to fund the football facility went nowhere. Favre made the request July 28, 2019, as he was unsuccessfully trying to recruit the son of another retired NFL player, Deion Sanders, to the university in Hattiesburg.

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Favre played football at the University of Southern Mississippi before going to the NFL in 1991. Bryant and New are also alumni, and Favre wrote to Bryant that having an indoor practice facility would give the football program "instant credibility."

Favre's daughter started playing volleyball at the university in 2017. The new court papers said Bryant first learned Favre was trying to raise money for a volleyball arena on April 20, 2017, when Favre texted the governor to say he and his wife, Deanna, were building the facility.

"I need your influence somehow to get donations and or sponsorships," Favre texted Bryant. "Obviously Southern has no money so I'm hustling to get it raised."

The documents said Bryant replied a few hours later, "Of course I am all in on the Volleyball facility. ... One thing I know how to do is raise money."

In July 2017, Favre texted Bryant about the volleyball facility again, asking "if we can find a contractor that would say hey rather than give you money I'll build for free!! Maybe you know of someone."

Bryant replied he was "all over it."

"It is important to note that, in these early text messages, Favre never mentioned the use of public funds, much less the use of TANF funds for the construction of the facility," Bryant's attorneys wrote Friday. "At this time, the discussions between Favre and Governor Bryant were focused on private donations and corporate sponsorships."

In July 2017, court records show Davis and Nancy New met about using welfare money to fund the volleyball arena, with Davis committing \$4 million. New's nonprofit later paid Favre \$1.1 million for speaking engagements to help him pay for the arena. Favre never made the speeches and later repaid the money, although he has not repaid \$228,000 in interest.

Bryant's attorneys wrote that the governor first learned Human Services was involved with funding the volleyball arena in a text message he received from Favre on July 16, 2019. "I want you to know how much I love Nancy New and John Davis," Favre wrote. "What they have done for me and Southern Miss is amazing."

Favre wrote there were plans to do workshops and youth clinics in the volleyball facility with a program run by Nancy New.

"And also I paid for 3/4 of Vball facility and the rest was a joint project with her and John which was saving me 1.8 million," Favre texted Bryant. "I was informed today that she may not be able to fund her part. I and we need your help very badly Governor and sorry to even bring this up."

Bryant's attorneys wrote that "Favre began a campaign to aggressively lobby the governor to help him cover the debt on the USM Volleyball Center." They also wrote Favre had not paid for three-quarters of the construction costs, and Human Services committed more than \$1.8 million to the project.

According to Friday's court documents, Bryant and Favre met Sept. 4, 2019, with the new Department of Human Services director, retired FBI agent Christopher Freeze. Favre texted Bryant after the meeting: "We obviously need your help big time and time is working against us." Favre also mentioned the volleyball facility could be named for Bryant, who was in his final months as governor.

Bryant responded: "We are going to get there. This was a great meeting. But we have to follow the law. I am too old for Federal Prison." He added a smiling emoji with sunglasses.

Russia's call-up splits EU; Ukraine says it shows weakness

By JON GAMBRELL and ADAM SCHRECK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia's rush to mobilize hundreds of thousands of recruits to staunch stinging losses in Ukraine is a tacit acknowledgement that its "army is not able to fight," Ukraine's president said Sunday, as splits sharpened in Europe over whether to welcome or turn away Russians fleeing the call-up.

Speaking to U.S. broadcaster CBS, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also said he's bracing for more Russian strikes on Ukraine's electrical infrastructure, as the Kremlin seeks to ramp up the pressure on Ukraine and its Western backers as the weather gets colder. Zelenskyy warned that this winter "will be very difficult."

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"They will shoot missiles, and they will target our electric grid. This is a challenge, but we are not afraid of that," he said on "Face the Nation."

He portrayed the Russian mobilization — its first such call-up since World War II — as a signal of weakness, not strength, saying: "They admitted that their army is not able to fight with Ukraine anymore."

Zelenskyy also said Ukraine has received NASAMS air defense systems from the U.S. NASAMS uses surface-to-air missiles to track and shoot down incoming missiles or aircraft. Zelenskyy did not say how many Ukraine received.

Although the European Union is now largely off limits to most Russians, with direct flights stopped and its land borders increasingly closed to them, an exodus of Russian men fleeing military service is creating divisions among European officials over whether they should be granted safe haven.

The partial mobilization is also triggering protests in Russia, with new anti-war demonstrations on Sunday.

In Dagestan, one of Russia's poorer regions in the North Caucasus, police fired warning shots to try to disperse more than 100 people who blocked a highway while protesting Russian President Vladimir Putin's military call-up, Russian media reported.

Dozens of women chanted "No to war!" in the Dagestani capital of Makhachkala on Sunday. Videos of the protests showed women in head scarves chasing police away from the rally and standing in front of police cars carrying detained protesters, demanding their release.

Women also protested in the Siberian city of Yakutsk, chanting "No to genocide!" and marching in a circle around police, who later dragged some away or forced them into police vans, according to videos shared by Russian media.

At least 2,000 people have been arrested in recent days for similar demonstrations around Russia. Many of those taken away have immediately received a call-up summons.

Unconfirmed Russian media reports that the Kremlin might soon close Russian borders to men of fighting age are fueling panic and prompting more to flee.

Zelenskyy in his nightly address on Sunday described Russia's mobilization as "criminal" and reiterated his call for Russians to stand up to it.

"Fight so that they don't send your children to die, all of those who they can take in this criminal Russian mobilization," Zelenskyy said, switching to Russian for a brief portion of his speech. "Because if you come to take the lives of our children, I will tell you as a father — we will not let you go alive."

German officials have voiced a desire to help Russian men deserting military service and have called for a European-wide solution. Germany has held out the possibility of granting asylum to deserters and those refusing the draft.

In France, senators are arguing that Europe has a duty to help and warned that not granting refuge to fleeing Russians could play into Putin's hands, feeding his narrative of Western hostility to Russia.

"Closing our frontiers would fit neither with our values nor our interests," a group of more than 40 French senators said.

Yet other EU countries are adamant that asylum shouldn't be offered to Russian men fleeing now — when the war has moved into its eighth month. They include Lithuania, which borders Kaliningrad, a Russian Baltic Sea exclave. Its foreign minister, Gabrielius Landsbergis, tweeted: "Russians should stay and fight. Against Putin."

His counterpart in Latvia, also an EU member bordering Russia, said the exodus poses "considerable security risks" for the 27-nation bloc and that those fleeing now can't be considered conscientious objectors since they did not act when Russia invaded Ukraine in February.

Many "were fine with killing Ukrainians, they did not protest then," the Latvian foreign minister, Edgars Rinkevics, tweeted. He added that they still have "plenty of countries outside EU to go."

Finland also said it intends to "significantly restrict" entry to Russians entering the EU through its border with Russia. A Finnish opposition leader, Petteri Orpo, said fleeing Russian military reservists were an "obvious" security risk and "we must put our national security first."

Russia is pressing on with its call-up of hundreds of thousands of men, seeking to reverse recent losses. Without control of the skies over Ukraine, Russia is also making increasing use of suicide drones from Iran,

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with more strikes reported Sunday in the Black Sea port city of Odesa.

For Ukrainian and Russian military planners, the clock is ticking, with the approach of winter expected to make fighting much more complicated. Already, rainy weather is bringing muddy conditions that are starting to limit the mobility of tanks and other heavy weapons, the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said Sunday.

But the think-tank said Ukrainian forces are still gaining ground in their counteroffensive, launched in late August, that has rolled back the Russian occupation across large areas of the northeast and which also prompted Putin's new drive for reinforcements.

The Kremlin said its initial aim is to add about 300,000 troops to its invasion force, which is struggling with equipment losses, mounting casualties and weakening morale. The mobilization marks a sharp shift from Putin's previous efforts to portray the war as a limited military operation that wouldn't interfere with most Russians' lives.

The mobilization is running hand-in-hand with Kremlin-orchestrated votes in four occupied regions of Ukraine that could pave the way for their imminent annexation by Russia.

Ukraine and its Western allies say the referendums in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions in the south and the eastern Luhansk and Donetsk regions have no legal validity, not least because many tens of thousands of their people have fled. They also call them a "sham." Some footage has shown armed Russian troops going door-to-door to pressure Ukrainians into voting.

The voting ends Tuesday and there's little doubt it will be declared a success by the Russian occupiers. The main questions then will be how soon Putin's regime will annex the four regions and how that will complicate the war.

Jewish pilgrims gather in Ukraine despite the perils of war

HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

UMAN, Ukraine (AP) — Thousands of Hasidic Jewish pilgrims flocked to central Ukraine to mark the Jewish new year Sunday, ignoring international travel warnings as Russia struck more targets from the air and mobilized its citizens to stem losses in the war that has entered its eighth month.

The pilgrims, many traveling from Israel and further afield, converged on the small city of Uman, the burial site of Nachman of Breslov, a respected Hasidic rabbi who died in 1810.

The streets of one of Uman's central neighborhoods were packed with men of all ages wearing traditional black coats and long side curls. Some chanted prayers. Others screamed, shouted and danced. Advertisements and directional signs in Hebrew blanketed the area.

Some visitors, like Nahum Markowitz from Israel, have been making the journey for years and weren't about to let the war get in the way this year.

"We are not afraid. If we come to Rabbi Nachman, he will protect us for the whole year," said Markowitz, who has been visiting Uman since 1991, when the collapse of the Soviet Union made the pilgrimage accessible to foreign visitors.

Besides, he said, he is already familiar with the risk of war and the wail of sirens that comes from living in Israel.

The city, 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of the capital, Kyiv, typically attracts thousands of pilgrims for Rosh Hashana, the Jewish new year, which begins in the evening Sunday and ends on Tuesday.

The Ukrainian embassy to Israel repeatedly urged those planning a pilgrimage to stay home, warning on Facebook that Russia has repeatedly targeted heavily populated areas and that "attacks cause real danger to your lives!"

The Israeli and American governments also cautioned citizens not to make the trip this year — and some of those warnings may have worked.

More than 35,000 pilgrims visited last year even in the face of pandemic travel restrictions, said local official Oleh Hanich.

This year's turnout was smaller, though still substantial, considering that no commercial flights are arriving in the country. The United Jewish Community of Ukraine said 23,000 pilgrims were in Uman as of Sunday.

"Neither coronavirus nor war stops them. For them, this is a holy place," Hanich said, while acknowledging "we can't guarantee their complete safety."

Rav Mota Frank, 54, initially had reservations about making the trip from Israel this year. But he decided it was worth the risk after realizing that the situation in Uman is calmer than at the front and seeing how Ukrainians themselves have reacted to the dangers of war.

"When there are air alarms, they do not hide in the basement, but try to be near the shelter," he said of the Ukrainians. "We in Israel are used to it — there is also a constant war. We are used to what life is like. And that's why it doesn't scare us much."

Uman is relatively far from the front lines in Ukraine's east and south, though it is within the range of Russian missiles and has been struck before.

In 2020, thousands of pilgrims failed to reach Uman after Ukraine closed its borders due to a surge in COVID-19 infections.

After rocky start, hopes up in Oregon drug decriminalization

By ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Two years after Oregon residents voted to decriminalize hard drugs and dedicate hundreds of millions of dollars to treatment, few people have requested the services and the state has been slow to channel the funds.

When voters passed the state's pioneering Drug Addiction Treatment and Recovery Act in 2020, the emphasis was on treatment as much as on decriminalizing possession of personal-use amounts of heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine and other drugs.

But Oregon still has among the highest addiction rates in the country. Fatal overdoses have increased almost 20% over the previous year, with over a thousand dead. Over half of addiction treatment programs in the state lack capacity to meet demand because they don't have enough staffing and funding, according to testimony before lawmakers.

Supporters want more states to follow Oregon's lead, saying decriminalization reduces the stigma of addiction and keeps people who use drugs from going to jail and being saddled with criminal records. How Oregon is faring will almost certainly be taken into account if another state considers decriminalizing.

Steve Allen, behavioral health director of the Oregon Health Authority, acknowledged the rocky start, even as he announced a "true milestone" has been reached, with more than \$302 million being sent to facilities to help people get off drugs, or at least use them more safely.

"The road to get here has not been easy. Oregon is the first state to try such a bold and transformative approach," Allen told a state Senate committee Wednesday.

One expert, though, told the lawmakers the effort is doomed unless people with addictions are nudged into treatment.

"If there is no formal or informal pressure on addicted people to seek treatment and recovery and thereby stop using drugs, we should expect continuing high rates of drug use, addiction and attendant harm," said Keith Humphreys, an addiction researcher and professor at Stanford University and former senior adviser in the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Of 16,000 people who accessed services in the first year of decriminalization, only 0.85% entered treatment, the health authority said. A total of 60% received "harm reduction" like syringe exchanges and overdose medications. An additional 15% got help with housing needs, and 12% obtained peer support.

The Drug Addiction Treatment and Recovery Act, also known as Measure 110, has become a campaign issue this year as Republicans seek to wrest the governorship from Democrats, who have held it since 1987.

"I voted no on Measure 110 because decriminalizing hard drugs like heroin and meth was and is a terrible idea," said GOP candidate Christine Drazan, who supports asking voters to repeal it. "As expected, it has made our addiction crisis worse, not better."

Unaffiliated candidate Betsy Johnson, a former veteran lawmaker, said she would work to repeal what she called a "failed experiment."

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A spokeswoman for Democratic candidate Tina Kotek, a former House speaker, said Drazan and Johnson "want to go against the will of the voters. ... Oregonians do not want to go backward."

"As governor, Tina will make sure that the state is delivering on what voters demanded: expanded recovery services statewide," spokeswoman Katie Wertheimer said.

Under the law, people receive a citation, with the maximum \$100 fine waived if they call a hotline for a health assessment. But most of the more than 3,100 tickets issued so far have been ignored, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported. Few people have dialed the hotline.

Tera Hurst, executive director of Oregon Health Justice Recovery Alliance, which is focused on implementing Measure 110, said coerced treatment is ineffective. Hurst said it's important to focus on "just building a system of care to make sure that people who need access can get access."

Allen called the outlay of million of dollars — which come from taxes on Oregon's legal marijuana industry — a "pivotal moment."

"Measure 110 is launching and will provide critical supports and services for people, families and communities," he told the Senate committee.

It will take time, though, to use the funds to build out the services.

Centro Latino Americano, a nonprofit serving Latino immigrant families, plans to use its \$4.5 million share to move treatment services to a bigger space and hire more staff, said manager Basilio Sandoval.

"Measure 110 makes it possible for us to provide this service free of charge," Sandoval said. "This allows us to reach people we could not serve previously because of a lack of insurance."

Scott Winkels, lobbyist for the League of Oregon Cities, said residents are running out of patience.

"People are going to need to see progress," Winkels said. "If you're living in a community where you're finding needles, how many times do you need to see a needle in a park before you lose your cool?"

AP Top 25: Vols, Wolfpack join top 10; Florida State returns

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Tennessee and North Carolina State broke into the top 10 of The Associated Press college football poll Sunday, and Florida State is back in the rankings for the first time in four years.

Georgia remained No. 1 and received 55 of 63 first-place votes in the Top 25, presented by Regions Bank. No. 2 Alabama (four first-place votes), No. 3 Ohio State (four first-place votes), No. 4 Michigan and No. 5 Clemson all held their places.

Oklahoma's upset loss to Kansas State created room for teams to move up, like Southern California to No. 6 and Kentucky to No. 7.

Tennessee moved up three spots to No. 8, its best ranking since 2006 and first top-10 appearance since a few weeks at ninth in the first half of 2016. That was the last time the Volunteers started 4-0. The Vols knocked Florida out of the rankings by snapping a five-game losing streak in the rivalry.

Oklahoma State remained at nine and North Carolina State jumped two spots to No. 10. The Wolfpack have their best ranking since they were 10th in 2002.

Texas and Miami both dropped out of the rankings after being beaten by unranked teams to fall to 2-2. The Longhorns blew a 14-point lead second-half lead and lost in overtime at Texas Tech. while Miami, which started the season at No. 16, was upended by four-touchdown underdog Middle Tennessee State.

While the Hurricanes and Gators slipping out, No. 23 Florida State (4-0) moved in. The Seminoles are off to their best start since 2015 and in the AP Top 25 for the first time since beginning the 2018 season No. 19, snapping a streak of 69 straight polls unranked.

POLL POINTS

Florida State's poll drought was remarkable considering how the Seminoles have been a Top 25 staple since the late 1970s.

Florida State's streak of 211 straight weeks ranked from 1989-2001 is the third longest streak in the history of the poll and its streak of 42 straight seasons appearing in at least one poll from 1977-2018 is fourth all-time.

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Before the current drought, Florida State had not gone consecutive seasons without being ranked for at least one poll since 1973-77, which was the late Bobby Bowden's first season as coach.

IN

Two other teams are making their Top 25 debuts this week:

— No. 21 Minnesota enters the rankings after crushing Michigan State on the road. The Gophers are ranked for the first time since a short stay in 2020.

— No. 25 Kansas State upset a top-10 ranked Oklahoma team for the third time in the last four seasons. The Wildcats have been briefly ranked in each of the last three seasons, but never more than three weeks.

CONFERENCE CALL

SEC — 7 (Nos. 1, 2, 7, 8, 14, 17, 20).

ACC — 5 (Nos. 5, 10, 22, 23, 24).

Big 12 — 4 (Nos. 9, 16, 18, 25).

Big Ten — 4 (Nos. 2, 4, 11, 21).

Pac-12 — 4 (Nos. 6, 12, 13, 15)

Independent — 1 (No. 19).

RANKED vs. RANKED

No. 10 North Carolina State at No. 5 Clemson. The 87th meeting will be the first matching top-10 teams.

No. 7 Kentucky at No. 14 Mississippi. Wildcats and Rebels have played 44 times, dating back to 1944 and have both been ranked just once in 1958.

No. 2 Alabama at No. 20 Arkansas. Tide is 6-0 when both teams are ranked.

No. 9 Oklahoma State at No. 16 Baylor. Cowboys and Bears played twice as ranked teams last season.

No. 22 Wake Forest at No. 23 Florida State. Only ranked meeting in 39 games was 2008, a Wake victory.

EXPLAINER: Mexican army's role in students' disappearance

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The Mexican army's role in the disappearance of 43 college students, its participation in covering up the facts and its alleged links to organized crime are now at the center of a case that has shaken the nation. The government's Truth Commission declared the incident a "state crime" in August.

Three members of the military and a former federal attorney general were recently arrested in the case, and few now believe the government's initial claim that a local drug gang and allied local officials were wholly to blame for seizing and killing the students on July 26, 2014, then burning their bodies — most of which have never been found.

Crucial details remain unclear despite years of investigation.

But the newspaper Reforma, which obtained portions of a Truth Commission report shared with the Attorney General's Office, has published details of messages between drug gang members and the military that appear to show at least some of the students' bodies were taken to a local army base. Advocates for the students' families fear the leak of sensitive details about suspects could jeopardize prosecutions.

Here are some questions and answers about the abductions.

WHAT HAPPENED?

The president of the Truth Commission, Alejandro Encinas, says that the false, official version announced at the time by Attorney General Jesús Murillo Karam "was designed at the highest levels of the federal government" after meetings in the presidency, then in the hands of Enrique Peña Nieto.

According to that version, Iguala officials thought the students were going to disrupt a local political event. It says police rounded up the 43 students and turned them over to a local drug gang, which killed the youths, burned their bodies at a dump and threw the remains into a river.

Although all the students apparently were murdered, it has since been proven that they were taken in groups to different places. Some apparently were kept alive for days.

The students had hijacked buses to get to a protest in Mexico City and were intercepted in Iguala — possibly because one of the buses contained a drug shipment.

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WHO HAS BEEN ARRESTED RECENTLY?

Three members of the military were arrested this month, among them José Rodríguez Pérez, who as a colonel commanded the local army base in Iguala at the time of the students' disappearance. The Truth Commission report alleges he ordered the killing of six students days after their abduction.

Rodríguez Pérez was later promoted to general. Now retired, he faces organized crime charges. A fourth member of the military, Capt. José Martínez Crespo was arrested in 2020. On Saturday, the Spanish newspaper El País published documents showing that the Attorney General's Office had asked a judge to drop arrest orders against 16 other members of the military. The office did not respond to requests for comment.

The most politically significant arrest took place last month when former Attorney General Murillo Karam was detained. He has been charged with forced disappearance, not reporting torture of suspects and official misconduct. He is accused of announcing a false version of events that he called "the historical truth."

WHAT WAS THE MILITARY'S ROLE?

It was known from the beginning that the army had real-time knowledge of events in Iguala on that night because soldiers were in key locations, including a police coordination center. The Truth Commission report says at least one soldier was infiltrated among the kidnapped students.

In 2015, then-Army chief Gen. Salvador Cienfuegos guaranteed that the army had no responsibility in the events either by action or omission. Communications collected by the Truth Commission, however, contradict that assertion. They suggest military personnel were in contact with the criminals at key moments.

WERE THERE ARMY INFILTRATORS?

The Truth Commission report says at least one of the disappeared students was a soldier sent to spy on the college and an attorney for parents has contended there was another. Separately, relatives of Julio Cesar Mondragon, one of six students killed after surviving the initial attack and then being tortured, have asked for an investigation of two other students — now politicians — who were the leaders who sent the group of protesters to Iguala despite threats the school had received.

WHERE DO THINGS STAND IN THE JUDICIAL PROCESS?

The Ayotzinapa case is a tangle of 28 criminal cases spread over seven states. Eight years later, no one has been convicted.

Santiago Aguirre, a human rights attorney for relatives of the victims, said around 50 people are imprisoned awaiting trial. In August, the Attorney General's Office issued 80 new warrants, but Aguirre said most just opened new cases involving people already in custody.

Still being sought is the man who headed the early investigation into the abductions, Tomás Zerón, who is in Israel. Mexico is seeking his extradition.

Due to the torture of witnesses and other irregularities, dozens of defendants have been acquitted of some charges. However, many of them remain imprisoned on other charges.

WHY IS THE MEXICAN ARMY'S RECORD CONTROVERSIAL?

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has increasingly used the military to build major infrastructure projects and to replace police in the fight against crime, arguing it is less corrupted than other agencies.

Accusations of human rights abuses against the military were common during the "dirty war" of the 1970s and '80s. They were especially harsh in the poor, opium poppy-growing state of Guerrero. Some abuses have continued — as well as allegations of officers linked to drug cartels.

In the last 25 years, three generals have faced charges in Mexico, although only one has been convicted.

The defense secretary at the time of the abductions, Cienfuegos, was arrested in the U.S. in 2020 and accused of links to drug cartels. But under pressure from the Mexican government, the charges against him were later dropped and he was returned to Mexico, which released him.

In the Iguala area where the students were abducted, ties between the military and criminals go back at least to 2013. According to a court document to which The Associated Press had access, members of the military helped a local cartel with weapons and training for its hitmen.

The testimony of an imprisoned criminal suspect said Capt. Jose Martínez Crespo, who was arrested in 2020, received money from a leader of local drug gang, Guerreros Unidos, to help them move weapons.

"He used his vehicles so he could move freely through the region," the witness said.

'Don't Worry Darling' shrugs off drama, opening with \$19.2M

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

After off-screen drama threatened to consume Olivia Wilde's "Don't Worry Darling," the Warner Bros. release opened No. 1 at the box office, debuting with \$19.2 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Starring Florence Pugh and Harry Styles, "Don't Worry Darling" was engulfed by a storm of controversies that revolved around everything from Pugh's allegedly strained relationship with Wilde to whether Styles might have even spit on co-star Chris Pine at the film's Venice Film Festival premiere. (Styles denied it.) The movie, too, was torched by critics (38% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) and arrived in theaters with more baggage than any recent release.

For an original film that cost \$35 million to make, a \$19.2 million launch was solid — and slightly more than the studio had forecast. A large number of moviegoers — including plenty of Styles fans — turned up to see what all the fuss was about.

But the release of "Don't Worry Darling," playing in 4,113 theaters, was also no home run. Audiences gave it a B- CinemaScore, and ticket buyers fell off on Saturday after more promising results on Thursday and Friday. Warner Bros. said the audience was 66% female. The film added \$10.8 million internationally.

Jeff Goldstein, distribution chief for Warner Bros., estimated that "the background noise had a neutral impact." The studio, he said, was "pleased with these results given our modest production budget."

The audience scores and tapering-off ticket sales suggest "Don't Worry Darling" may struggle to hold well in the coming weeks. But its good-enough debut means that Wilde's film didn't turn into the complete fiasco that some pegged it to be.

Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for data firm Comscore, said that, ultimately, bad publicity was good publicity for Wilde's follow-up to her directorial debut, the 2019 teen comedy "Booksmart."

"The latest from Olivia Wilde benefited from the heightened awareness and mainstream press coverage that made 'Don't Worry Darling' the virtual water cooler film of the moment and raised its FOMO factor to even greater heights and this paid big dividends at the box office," said Dergarabedian.

Last week's top film, Gina Prince-Bythewood's African epic "The Woman King," starring Viola Davis, slid to second place with \$11.1 million in its second weekend of release. That was a modest 42% dip for the Sony Pictures release, a sign of resiliency for the acclaimed action drama.

Third place went to a familiar box-office force. The Walt Disney Co.'s rerelease of James Cameron's "Avatar" grossed \$10 million domestically and \$20.5 million internationally, 13 years after its initial run in theaters. Cameron's remastered "Avatar," playing in 1,860 theaters, was again especially popular in 3-D, which accounted for a whopping 93% of its domestic sales. A prelude to the upcoming December release of the long-awaited sequel "Avatar: The Way of Water," the rerelease further pads the all-time worldwide box office record for "Avatar," which now surpasses \$2.85 billion.

Holding well in fourth place was "Barbarian," the Airbnb thriller from Disney and 20th Century Studios. In its third weekend of release, the film added 550 theaters and fell just 26% from the weekend prior. "Barbarian" has thus far grossed \$28.4 million against a \$4 million budget.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Don't Worry Darling," \$19.2 million.
2. "The Woman King," \$11.1 million.
3. "Avatar," \$10 million.
4. "Barbarian," \$4.8 million.
5. "Pearl," \$1.9 million.
6. "See How They Run," \$1.9 million.
7. "Bullet Train," \$1.8 million.

8. "DC League of Super Pets," \$1.8 million.
9. "Top Gun: Maverick," \$1.6 million.
10. "Minions: The Rise of Gru," \$1 million.

Texas vow to 'eliminate all rapists' rings hollow at clinics

By PAUL J. WEBER and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — When Texas' new abortion law made no exceptions in cases of rape, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott defended it with an assurance: Texas would get to work eliminating rapes.

One year later, Lindsey LeBlanc is busy as ever helping rape victims in a college town outside Houston. "The numbers have stayed consistently high," said LeBlanc, executive director of the Sexual Assault Resource Center in Bryan, near Texas A&M University. Despite hiring two additional counselors in the past six months, she still has a waitlist for victims.

"We are struggling to keep up with demand," she said.

The constant caseloads in Texas are another example of how Republicans have struggled to defend zero-exception abortion bans that are unpopular in public polling, have caused uproar in high-profile cases and are inviting political risk heading into November's midterm elections. A year since Texas' law went into effect in September 2021, at least a dozen states also have bans that make no exceptions in cases of rape or incest.

The absence of exceptions has caused divisions among Republicans, including in West Virginia, where a new law signed this month allows a brief window for rape and incest victims to obtain abortions only if they report to law enforcement first. Recently, South Carolina Republicans scuttled a proposed ban after failing to get enough GOP support.

"It really disgusts me," said Republican South Carolina state Sen. Katrina Shealy, ripping into her male colleagues on the floor of the state Senate.

Republican U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, also of South Carolina, allowed exceptions under the proposed national abortion ban he introduced last week. The proposal has virtually no chance of passing, with even GOP leaders not immediately backing it, reflecting how Republicans have broadly struggled to navigate the issue of abortion with voters since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* this summer.

Overwhelming majorities of voters think their state should generally allow abortion in specific cases, including rape, incest or if the health of the pregnant person is endangered. Even Republicans are seeing it as a line with some voters.

"It's a very gray issue," said Claudia Alcazar, the GOP chairwoman in Starr County along the Texas-Mexico border that has become a new political battleground after Republicans made big gains with more conservative Hispanic voters in 2020.

She said she knows those who are "hardcore, never have abortion for any reason, period. And then I have the other ones that are like, 'Well, you know, it depends.'"

In Texas, the blowback was swift when Abbott said last September: "Texas will work tirelessly to make sure that we eliminate all rapists from the streets." Critics called it detached from reality. A sexual assault hotline in Houston has answered almost 4,800 calls through August this year — putting it on track to exceed last year's volume of 4,843.

As of this summer, all abortions were banned in Texas except if it would save a mother's life.

Asked what Abbott has done in the past year to eliminate rape, spokeswoman Renae Eze highlighted older measures to clear rape test kit backlogs, a law signed in June aimed at coordinating and expanding sexual assault resources and a task force his office launched in 2019 to address the issue.

"To prevent such heinous crimes before they happen, and to prosecute any criminals to the full extent of the law, Governor Abbott has aggressively fought against defunding the police and led bail reform efforts to prevent the release of dangerous criminals," Eze said in a statement.

More than 14,000 rape crimes have been reported in Texas since the law took effect last year, according to data from the Texas Department of Public Safety. That was slightly down from the year before and

consistent with a decline in other violent crime figures across the state.

Crisis centers in Texas say the number of rape victims they've accompanied to hospitals for exams is rebounding since the pandemic restrictions kept advocates from entering. The Women's Center in Fort Worth has made more than 650 visits to counsel victims undergoing exams in the past year compared to about 340 in the year prior, said Alisha Mathenia, the assistant director of crisis services at the center.

The majority of sexual assaults are never reported to police, making any available data an incomplete picture. And about 8 out of 10 sexual assaults are committed by a person known to the victim, according to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network.

"We're not talking about a large of number of rapists walking around on the street. That's a myth," said Democrat Donna Howard, a state representative in Austin who co-authored the bill creating Abbott's task force.

At The SAFE Alliance in Austin, where sexual assault victims can get exams and medical care at its Eloise House, senior director Juliana Gonzales said it's admirable for Texas to work on rape prevention. "But I also think it's important for the state to live in the reality that we have to respond to sexual assault," she said.

Ceremony and controversy await Harris during visit to Asia

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attending funerals on behalf of the United States is normally a straightforward assignment for a vice president, but Kamala Harris will confront controversy at nearly every turn as she visits Asia for the memorial honoring former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

American allies are seeking clarity after mixed messages over whether President Joe Biden would send troops to defend Taiwan from a Chinese invasion, a potential conflict that could swiftly engulf the rest of the region. There is the potential for more provocations from North Korea, which test-fired a missile shortly before Harris' departure Sunday from Washington.

Meanwhile, South Korea and Japan are inching toward a reconciliation that would heal some of the wounds left from World War II, with the U.S. gingerly trying to nudge along the process. And there's resentment over a new U.S. law that makes electric vehicles built outside of North America ineligible for subsidies.

Even Abe's state funeral Tuesday itself is a sensitive topic in Japan, where such memorials are uncommon and the late leader's legacy remains disputed. Abe, a conservative nationalist in a country that embraced pacifism after World War II, was assassinated with a homemade firearm nearly three months ago.

In a reflection of deep divisions, an elderly man reportedly set himself on fire to protest the funeral, and more demonstrations are expected in the coming days. The controversy has politically weakened Japan's current prime minister, Fumio Kishida, at a time when his government is planning to further Abe's goal of strengthening the country's military.

If Japan moves forward with its proposed military spending, it will have the world's third-largest defense budget in the coming years as tensions rise between China and the United States over Taiwan. The island is a self-governing democracy, but Beijing views it as part of its territory and has pledged to reunify it with the mainland.

Harris, who is leading a delegation of current and former U.S. officials to the funeral, plans to spend three nights in Tokyo. She is expected to meet with Kishida, South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. Harris plans to meet with Japanese business leaders as the U.S. seeks to expand computer chip manufacturing and visit with U.S. sailors serving on an American destroyer at a nearby naval base.

It will be the vice president's second trip to Asia since taking office in January 2021.

At a stop in South Korea, she intends to see President Yoon Suk Yeol and host a roundtable discussion with leading women — a delicate topic in a country where Yoon has faced criticism for his male-dominated administration.

Relations between South Korea and Japan remain strained because of the legacy of Japan's aggression during World War II. Koreans are seeking compensation over forced labor and sex slavery that occurred

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when Japan occupied their country.

Kishida and Yoon announced Thursday at the United Nations that they will accelerate their work to repair their two countries' relationship.

Biden met separately with each leader, and the U.S. is eager to see the two allies resolve their issues as it seeks a united front against China.

Taiwan remains a flashpoint, and tensions have been rising in recent months.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., visited the Taiwan in August, outraging Beijing, which responded by holding military exercises. Although Chinese leaders have said they seek peaceful reunification with Taiwan, the exercises are a reminder of the possibility that Beijing could use force.

China also fired missiles into waters near some of Japan's southern islands, a reminder that any conflict over Taiwan would be a threat to other countries as well.

The U.S. has 55,000 troops based in Japan, with more than half on the southern island of Okinawa. Earlier this month, Okinawa reelected a governor who calls for a reduction in the U.S. presence there.

Biden said in a recent CBS "60 Minutes" interview that the U.S. would send its own troops to defend Taiwan if China invaded. But there is no formal defense treaty with Taiwan and administration officials have repeatedly said Biden's comments don't reflect a change in policy, muddying the waters over what, exactly, the U.S. would do.

"It is ambiguous," said Ja-Ian Chong, an associate professor of political science at the National University of Singapore. "But whether it's strategically ambiguous, I don't know."

More controversy awaits Harris in South Korea, where there's outrage over new U.S. rules that make electric cars built outside of North America ineligible for U.S. government subsidies. The policy was included in the Inflation Reduction Act, a landmark piece of legislation that includes nearly \$375 billion for climate change initiatives.

Yoon, South Korea's recently elected president, had spent his first few months in office emphasizing his country's close ties with the U.S., but now officials are expressing a sense of betrayal. They want the rules to be postponed until 2025, when Korean automaker Hyundai plans to complete a new factory in Georgia.

Yoon's government is also considering whether it should file a complaint at the World Trade Organization over the law, which it sees as potentially violating trade rules and an agreement between the two countries.

South Korean officials are also seeking cooperation with European nations such as Germany and Sweden, which they say share similar concerns about their electric vehicles exported to the U.S., to put more pressure on Washington over the "discriminatory" withdrawals of subsidies.

The dispute is an unpleasant sequel to Biden's trip to Seoul earlier this year, when he celebrated automaker Hyundai's plans to invest \$10 billion in the United States. About half of that money is for the Georgia factory.

'Multilateral'? Global South's leaders question solidarity

By KRISTA LARSON Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — The United Nations was established on one simple notion above all others: Working together is better than going it alone. But while the term "multilateralism" might be trending at this year's U.N. General Assembly, some leaders are calling out the heads of richer nations.

Whether it's the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic or climate change, developing countries say it seems that richer nations are thinking of themselves first and not the world's most vulnerable.

"The global economy is now a house on fire, yet we continue to use evacuation methods that rush some nations out to safety while leaving the rest of us behind to fend for ourselves in the burning building," said Malawi's president, Lazarus Chakwera. "But if we are truly one U.N. family, then leaving no one behind has to be practiced, not just preached."

Tanzania's Vice President Philip Isdor Mpango was even more blunt. He said that "unilateralism driven by greed is leading us — rich and poor, strong and weak — to a catastrophe."

When the United Nations was established in 1945, world leaders hoped it would make sure that something like World War II never happened again. Over the years its mandate has tackled everything from nuclear

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proliferation to protecting refugees. But that high-minded notion of multilateralism has never wavered — even if the reality sometimes has.

Kiribati President Taneti Maamau Beretitenti reminded member states last week that the United Nations' founders wanted to not only prevent future wars but also "improve the standard of living for all."

"Today, we take stock of the progress made towards those goals along with new commitments and to reflect and assess if we have truly lived up those values," he said. Regionalism and solidarity, he said, "are at risk of being increasingly used to serve specific national interests" rather than for the common benefit.

"Broken humanity cannot be fixed by wonderful speeches, meetings, resolutions, nor international instruments, but by an interplay of greater compassion and solidarity," he added.

Mohammad Niamat Elahee, an international business professor at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, said most rich countries are giving lip service to multilateralism but are, in reality, acting otherwise.

"When we try to solve it ourselves, maybe in the short term we gain some benefits only for a limited number of people. But in the long run, it becomes worse for everyone," he said, pointing to the COVID-19 variants that emerged in developing countries after rich countries initially hoarded vaccine supplies.

"For multilateralism to work, we need cooperation across the board. If some countries follow multilateralism and some countries don't, then it doesn't work," Elahee said. "Big countries have a disproportionately high influence in the world," he said. "When they abandon multilateralism, everybody else abandons it and it becomes a dog-eat-dog world. And that's the challenge."

Multilateralism has taken a steady stream of hits over the past 20 years, from U.S. military interventions to the backlash against globalization. Former U.S. President Donald Trump's tenure reintroduced an "America First" approach to foreign policy. His administration eschewed the United Nations as an "unelected, unaccountable global bureaucracy."

Then came the COVID-19 pandemic — a shared global disaster, but also one that exposed how there was enough oxygen for some countries, but untold patients elsewhere would die without.

"The richer nations immediately received vaccines at the expense of the have-nots," Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said last week, echoing the anger of a number of other countries.

Even issues that many countries have rallied around, like condemning the war in Ukraine, feel different to nations whose armed conflicts have not garnered the same international solidarity.

"They should pause for a moment to reflect on the glaring contrast in their response to the wars elsewhere where women and children have died by the thousands from wars and starvation," East Timor President José Ramos-Horta told the Assembly.

"The response to our beloved Secretary-General's cries for help in these situations have not met with equal compassion," he said. "As countries in the Global South, we see double standards."

Countries like Ghana say they need more international solidarity, too, when it comes to the inequities in how economies have weathered the impact of the pandemic and global inflation. The resulting currency devaluations have made it even harder for countries to pay back their U.S. dollar loans.

The consequences are also more dire for developing countries when it comes to climate change, leaders say. Presidents from Africa and island nations have been asking richer countries to take more financial responsibility for the fact they've contributed the most carbon emissions.

The fear lies, too, in what will happen once this annual flurry of promise-making ends, says Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, whose country has seen apocalypse-like flooding.

"My real worry is about the next stage of this challenge — when the cameras leave and the story just shifts away to conflicts like Ukraine," he said. "My question is: Will be left alone to cope with a crisis we did not create?"

Ultimately, the "united" in United Nations means interdependence. It's a notion that the past three years have taught many nations in substantial ways. Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina summoned that as she told world leaders that "the greatest lesson we learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that 'no one is safe until everyone is safe.'"

"Mutual solidarity must be shown more than ever," she said. "We need to prove that in times of crisis, the United Nations remains the cornerstone of the multilateral system."

Democrats in Florida seek to win over Latinos on gun control

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Annette Taddeo walked to a podium overlooking Miami's Biscayne Bay and described to her audience how she had fled terrorism as a teenager in Colombia and now feared for the safety of her 16-year-old daughter at an American public school.

A blue and bright orange bus behind the Democratic congressional candidate carried this message in Spanish: "A future without violence."

"Latinos are here because of the American dream, and it is really hard to do that when you are worried about your kids' safety," said Taddeo, a state senator who is challenging a Republican congresswoman, María Elvira Salazar.

Few places disappointed Democrats in 2020 as deeply as South Florida. A shift among Latinos toward the GOP contributed to several unexpected losses in House races and helped then-President Donald Trump carry Florida by more than 3 percentage points.

Democrats are campaigning differently this year as they aim to connect the party's priorities to the personal experiences of a group that often feels overlooked in national politics.

The effort comes at a volatile moment for Latinos in Florida. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has attracted national attention to immigration after arranging to fly a group of Venezuelans from Texas to Massachusetts' Martha's Vineyard as part of a state-funded relocation program for migrants who are in the country illegally.

While some Venezuelans and Latinos affiliated with the Democratic party have condemned it as a "cruel stunt," some exiles applauded DeSantis' actions. Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, a Cuban American, wrote a column in Spanish for a conservative online platform seemingly taking DeSantis' side by raising concerns that migrants crossing into the United States from Mexico could be criminals freed by Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.

Gun violence, meantime, is a particularly powerful issue in Florida, where two of the deadliest mass shootings in recent years have occurred. Spanish-language media have given wide coverage both to the elementary school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, a predominantly Hispanic area, and to the penalty trial of the shooter who attacked a high school in Parkland, Florida, in 2018.

In an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll conducted in June, 35% of Latinos named gun issues in an open-ended question allowing people to identify up to five issues for the government to be working on in the next year. That compared with 18% in late 2021 and 10% in 2020.

"This topic has risen in the consciousness of the Latino community," said Stephen Nuño-Perez, a pollster analyst at BSP Research firm who researches concerns among Latino voters for the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Education Fund.

A gun control group founded by former Arizona Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, who survived a 2011 shooting in Tucson that killed six and injured more than a dozen, chose Florida for a state-specific initiative and selected a slate of candidates to support.

The Giffords political committee gave \$15,500 to more than three dozen Latino candidates around the country, and the group has so far invested \$1 million in Florida this cycle.

In Texas, ads and billboards have taken on Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, using remarks he made at one of the news conferences after the Robb Elementary school shooting in his state, when he said it "could have been worse" while initially praising the law enforcement response to the shooting. Later it was revealed that nearly 400 law enforcement officers on the scene waited outside more than an hour before the 18-year-old gunman was shot to death inside a classroom.

"It's a kitchen-table issue," said Peter Ambler, executive director of Giffords, the gun control group.

"We think we have a real opportunity, specifically in Florida, where there have been so many high-profile, tragic acts of gun violence, where there is such an epidemic of gun violence, to really shift votes."

Gun violence is killing an increasing number of children in the United States, with 1,562 deaths among those 17 or younger in 2021, according to the website Gun Violence Archive, which tracks shootings from more than 7,500 law enforcement, media, government and commercial sources.

Even though Latin American countries have tough gun restrictions, gun death rates are high as a result of gang violence, which is fueled by illegal firearm trafficking.

For some Cubans, though, gun control is off the table.

Isabel Caballero, a 96-year-old Cuban woman, said she would not support any gun restrictions. In the years after Fidel Castro and his rebels toppled dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959, Cubans were encouraged to register weapons and later authorities used a list to go door-to-door encouraging people to turn over the firearms.

"Guns, What for?" That's what he used to say. People turned them over, and then the only people who had guns were them," Caballero said of Castro and his allies. "Lesson? Do not let them go."

But other Cubans who had arrived later in Miami said they were more willing to support a change, saying they thought it was not right for children to be afraid at school.

"You can find guns everywhere, any place. You have \$400 and you can get it. It shouldn't be like this," said Amauris Puebla, who came from Cuba in 1994.

Puebla was playing a game at the Domino Park on a recent morning in Little Havana when Taddeo and Rep. Val Demings, the Democrat challenging Rubio for the Senate, made a stop on the gun safety tour bus. Demings asked him if she could play. She won.

Prosecutors to begin Florida school shooter trial rebuttal

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Prosecutors in the penalty trial of Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz will begin their rebuttal case Tuesday, challenging his attorneys' contention that he murdered 17 people because his birth mother abused alcohol during pregnancy, a condition they say went untreated.

Prosecutor Mike Satz's team is expected to call experts who will testify Cruz has antisocial personality disorder — in lay terms, he's a sociopath — and fully responsible for his Feb. 14, 2018, attack at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

According to the National Institutes of Health, people with antisocial personality disorder commit "exploitive, delinquent and criminal behavior with no remorse." They usually have no regard for others, don't follow the law, can't sustain consistent relationships or employment and use manipulation for personal gain, the NIH says.

Prosecutors will want to reemphasize Cruz "understood exactly" what he was doing during the massacre and could "formulate and carry out a plan," said David S. Weinstein, a Miami defense attorney and former prosecutor.

Robert Jarvis, a professor at Nova Southeastern University's law school, said prosecution experts will also likely testify that even if Cruz's brain was damaged by his birth mother's drinking, that's true of thousands of other Americans and they don't commit mass murder.

"If they did, we would be having mass murders on an unprecedented scale," he said.

Cruz, who turned 24 on Saturday, pleaded guilty last October to murdering 14 Stoneman Douglas students and three staff members. The seven-man, five-woman jury will decide whether he is sentenced to death or life without parole, weighing aggravating factors presented by prosecutors against the defense's mitigating circumstances. A juror could also vote for life out of mercy for Cruz. For the former Stoneman Douglas student to receive a death sentence, the jury must unanimously agree.

Satz's team told Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer their presentation could take two weeks, but Jarvis and Weinstein question whether that's too much for a jury that began hearing evidence in July.

Jurors may be eager to deliberate, so Satz should keep the rebuttal case focused and to the point, they said.

"Don't get greedy," Weinstein said.

Jarvis said lawyers too often think that if they just add more witnesses and evidence, that makes their case stronger. But in a trial like Cruz's where the decision isn't whether he's guilty but what sentence he deserves, Jarvis believes that by rebuttal each juror knows his or her vote. Any reconsideration won't