

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 15, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 100 ~ 1 of 63

Mobridge defeated Groton Area in football action Friday night in Mobridge, 30-12. Did not have time to compile a story this morning.

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Groton Community Calendar

Saturday, Oct. 15

Volleyball at Milbank Tournament. Groton games in the elementary gym. Groton plays Great Plains Lutheran at 9 a.m.; Groton plays Sioux Valley at noon; Groton plays Hamlin at 1 p.m.; Finals start at 3 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 16

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.

St. John's worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship with communion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Confirmation retreat for freshmen, 1 p.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

UMC: Conde Worship, 8:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School after children's sermon during worship.

Monday, Oct. 17

Senior Menu: Beef tips with gravy over noodles, lettuce salad with dressing, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Pot sickers, rice.

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Com-

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

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.



"The moment may be temporary, but the memory is forever."

BUD MEYER

munity Center.

Volleyball hosting Langford Area. Parent's Night. Also wear Pink night. Old gym has 8th grade match at 5 p.m. and 7th grade match at 6 p.m. In the Arena: JV match at 6 p.m. followed by varsity match.

St. John's Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 18

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, au gratin potatoes, carrots, apple sauce, cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: French toast.

**HELP
WANTED!**

Part time cashier wanted at Ken's Food Fair of Groton. Must be available any hours including weekends. Stop at the store and see Lionel or Matt.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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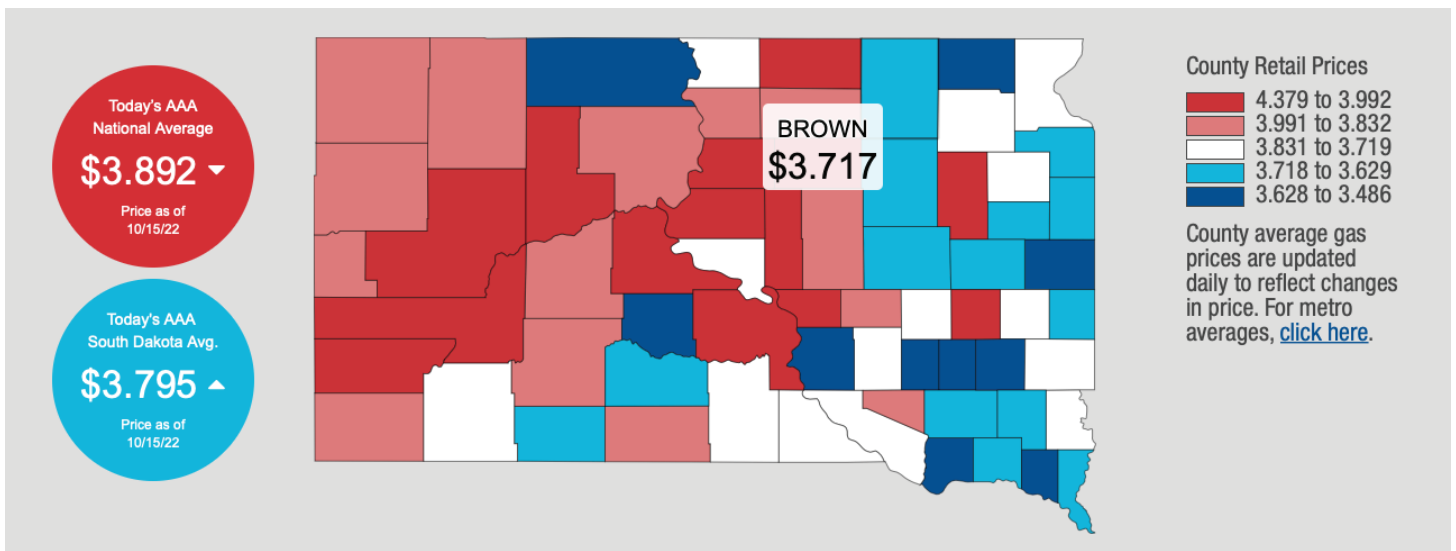
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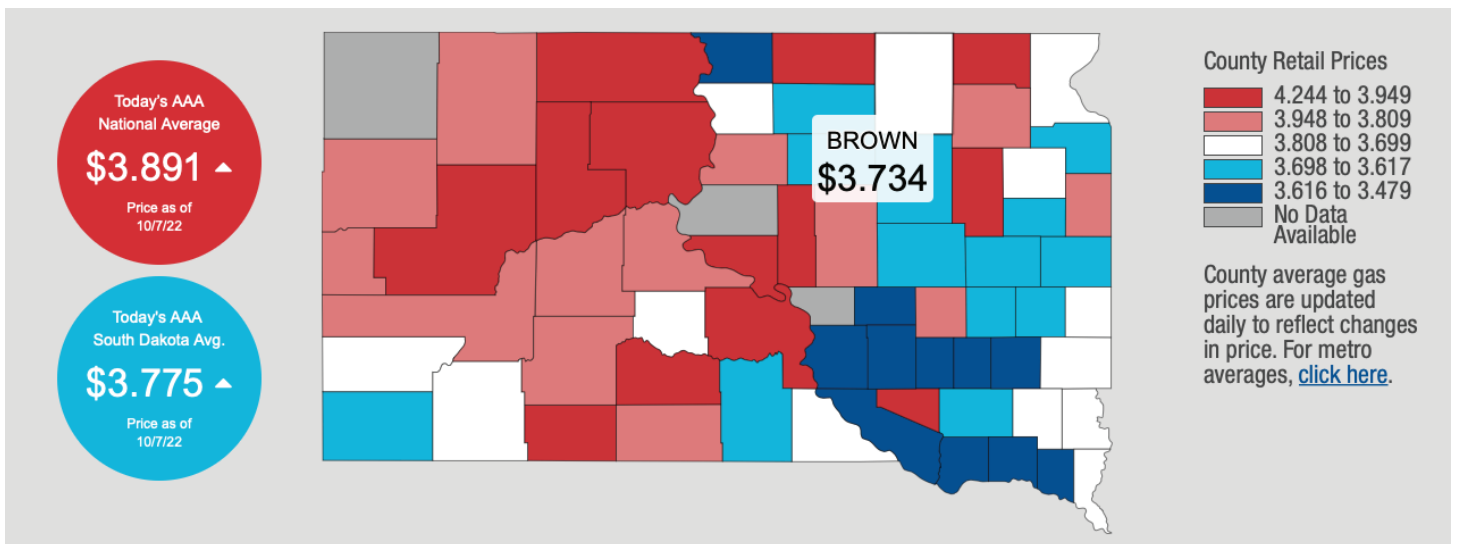
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.795	\$3.980	\$4.429	\$5.040
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.789	\$3.977	\$4.436	\$5.035
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.801	\$3.937	\$4.410	\$4.778
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.680	\$3.843	\$4.287	\$4.822
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.225	\$3.345	\$3.691	\$3.444

This Week



Last Week



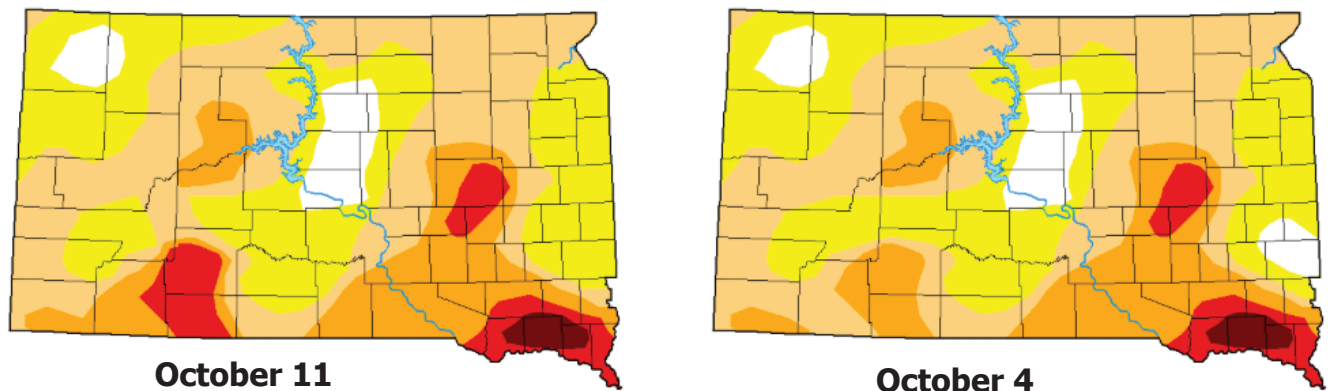
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Drought Classification



Drought Monitor

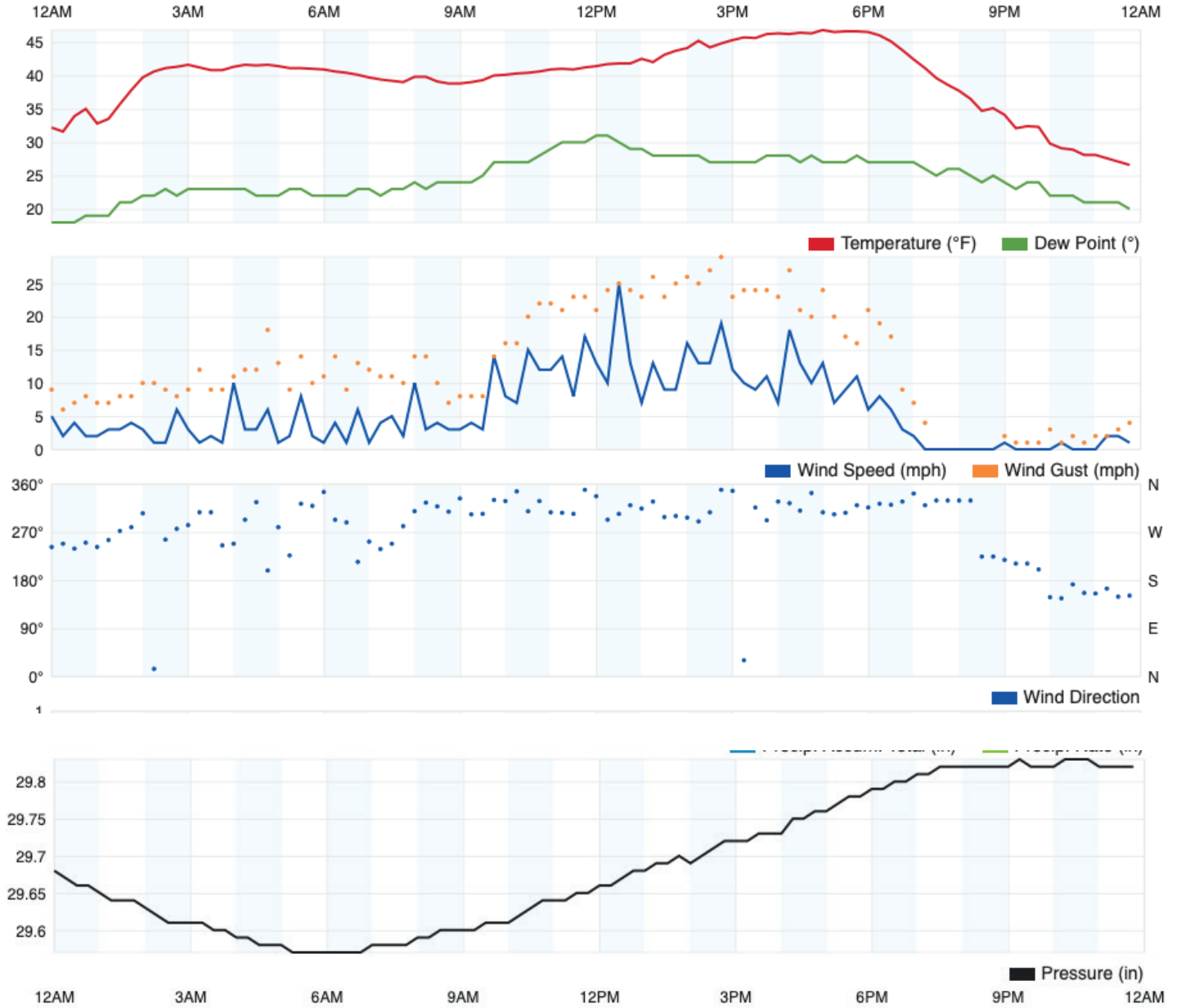


30 to 120-day SPI along with soil moisture indicators supported expansion of moderate drought (D1) throughout northern and eastern North Dakota. Based on a consensus of indicators, severe drought (D2) was added to central North Dakota. Severe (D2) to extreme (D3) drought was expanded slightly across east-central Nebraska based on SPI at multiple time scales and soil moisture. Likewise, these indicators supported a 1-category degradation in parts of south-central and southwestern South Dakota. Impact reports from these areas of South Dakota include: zero soil moisture down to three feet on several fields and low stock ponds. The most widespread degradations made to Kansas were in northeast and east-central parts of the state, consistent with 90 to 120-day SPEI along with soil moisture indicators. An expansion of abnormal dryness (D0) and moderate drought (D1) was made to southeastern Colorado, based on 30-day SPIs, declining soil moisture and streamflows, and very dry VegDRI. Conversely, heavy rainfall (1 to 2 inches) since the beginning of October prompted a 1-category improvement for parts of southwestern Colorado. Slight improvements were justified across northwestern Wyoming, due to positive values of 30 to 90-day SPI and favorable soil moisture response from recent precipitation.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Mostly Sunny
then Sunny
and Breezy

High: 58 °F

Tonight



Increasing
Clouds

Low: 31 °F

Sunday



Mostly Sunny

High: 46 °F

Sunday
Night



Partly Cloudy

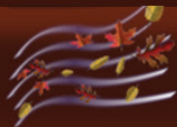
Low: 21 °F

Monday



Sunny

High: 41 °F



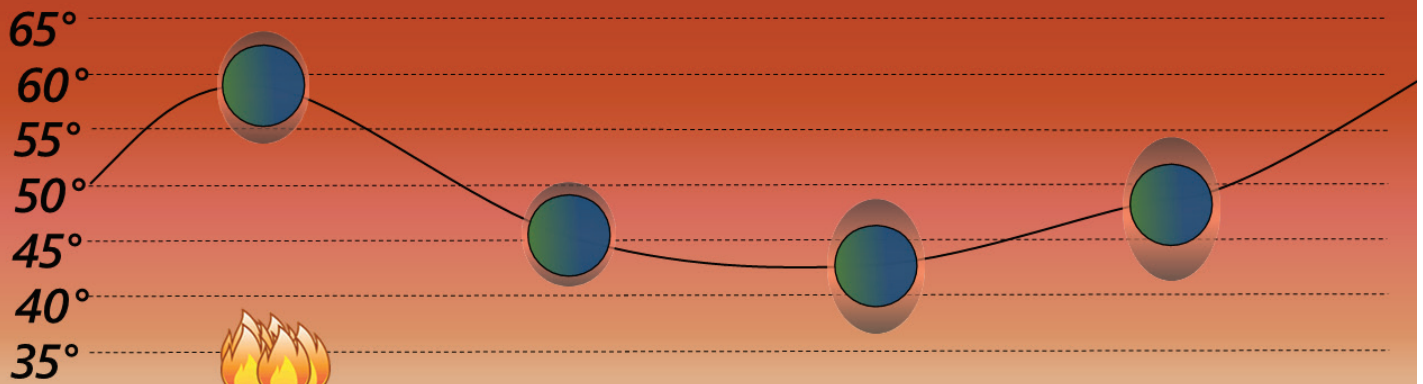
Warmer and Breezy Today

Today
54 to 63°

Sunday
41 to 50°

Monday
37 to 48°

Tuesday
42 to 54°



Breezy
Elevated Fire Weather Concerns

Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov/abr



Today will be breezy with winds out of the northwest once again. The combination of breezy winds and dry conditions will create elevated fire weather concerns this afternoon. Cooler air will sink across the area Sunday and linger through Tuesday.

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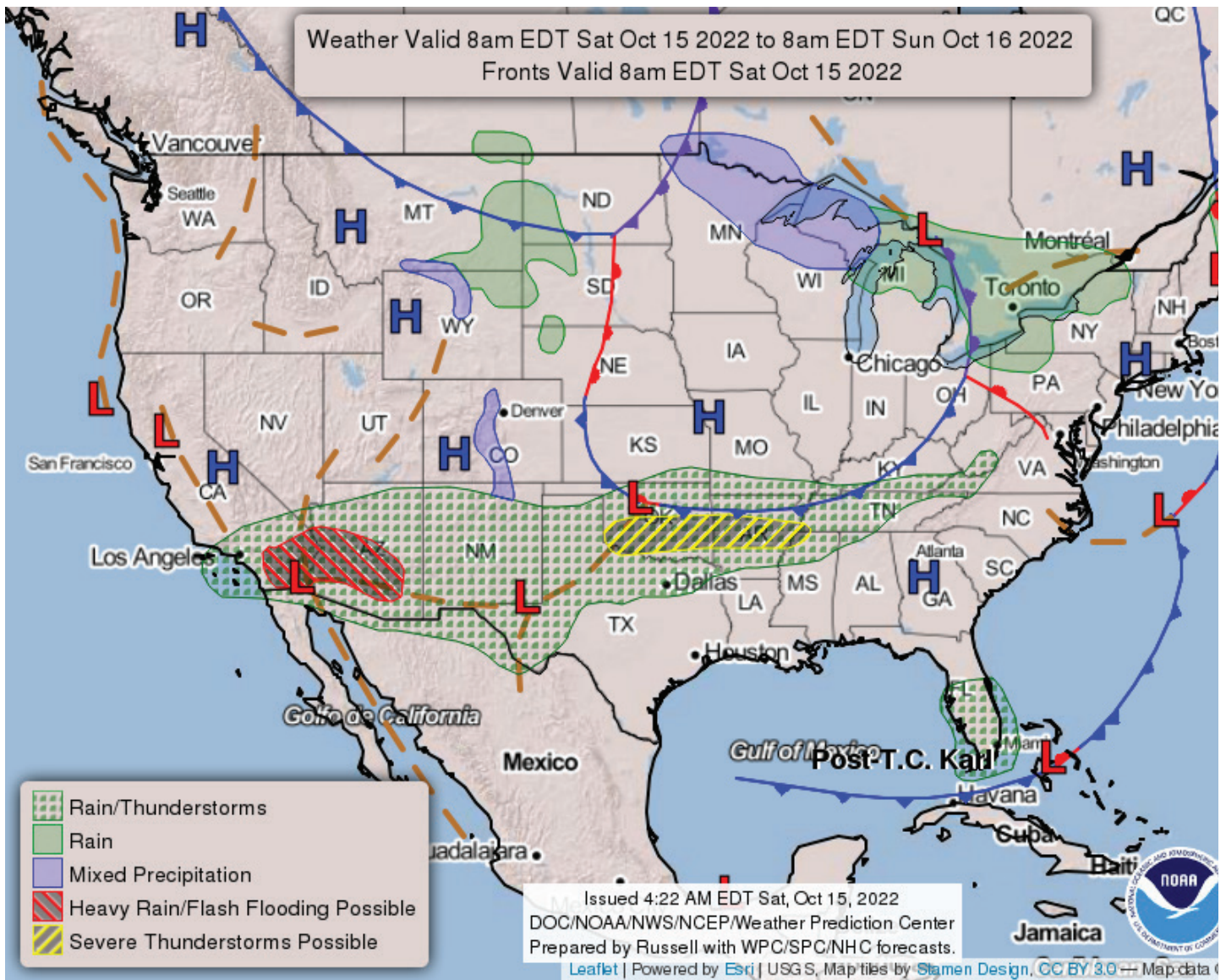
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 46.8 °F at 5:00 PM
Low Temp: 26.6 °F at 11:45 PM
Wind: 29 mph at 2:45 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 1 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 88 in 1958
Record Low: 15 in 2018
Average High: 60°F
Average Low: 34°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.13
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.45
Average Precip to date: 19.46
Precip Year to Date: 16.50
Sunset Tonight: 6:48:41 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:48:50 AM



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Today in Weather History

October 15, 1880: A violent early season blizzard devastated Minnesota and the Dakotas. Winds gusted to 70 mph at Yankton, SD, and snow drifts 10 to 15 feet high were reported in northwest Iowa and southeast South Dakota. Canby Minnesota reported 20 feet high snow drifts from this storm. Saint Paul, MN, reported a barometric pressure of 28.65 inches on the 16th. Piles of snow, which remained throughout the severe winter to follow, blocked railroads. The winter of 1880-81 is vividly portrayed in Laura Ingalls Wilder's Book: The Long Winter.

October 15, 1992: Snow fell throughout the day across the north-central and northwest part of the state with 2 to 6 inches occurring. There was a separate report of 7 inches near Harding in northwestern South Dakota.

1608: Evangelista Torricelli, the Italian physicist and mathematician who invented the barometer, was born on this day. In 1644, Evangelista Torricelli built the first barometer with mercury.

1954: By 11 pm on the 15th, Hurricane Hazel had reached and crossed the waters of Lake Ontario, still sporting sustained winds as high as 60 mph. Hazel took direct aim at the heart of Toronto as it roared past at 49 mph. Toronto saw heavy rainfall before Hurricane Hazel on the 14th. The previous storm, in combination with the hurricane, resulted in significant flooding.

1984: The Monday Night Football game in Denver, Colorado, was played in a raging blizzard. 15 inches of snow fell with up to 34 inches reported in the nearby mountains. The Air Force Academy canceled classes for the first time in its' recorded history.

1987: Beginning on the night of October 15th, an unusually strong weather system caused extremely high winds in the United Kingdom. This storm became known as the Great Storm of 1987. It was the worst storm to hit the UK since the Great Storm in 1703.

1880 - A violent early season blizzard raked Minnesota and the Dakotas. Winds gusted to 70 mph at Yankton SD, and snow drifts 10 to 15 feet high were reported in northwest Iowa and southeast South Dakota. Saint Paul MN reported a barometric pressure of 28.65 inches on the 16th. Railroads were blocked by drifts of snow which remained throughout the severe winter to follow. Gales did extensive damage to ship on the Great Lakes. (15th-16th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1966 - Iowa experienced its worst late season tornado of record. In just one minute a twister tore through the town of Belmond leveling 75 percent of the businesses, and 100 homes, causing more than eleven million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Unseasonably cold weather continued in the eastern U.S., with thirteen cities reporting record low temperatures for the date. The low of 34 degrees at Montgomery AL was their coldest reading of record for so early in the season. Lows of 32 degrees at Harrisburg PA and 34 degrees at Parkersburg WV marked their third straight morning of record cold. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - The cold high pressure system responsible for the record low temperatures in the eastern U.S. began to move out to sea, giving way to a trend toward "Indian Summer". Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced golf ball size hail at Altamont KS and hail two inches in diameter at Yates City IL. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Hurricane Jerry made landfall at Galveston, TX, at 6 30 PM (CDT). Winds at the Galveston Airport reached 75 mph, with gusts to 100 mph. Tides along the island were six to eight feet, and rainfall totals ranged up to slightly more than six inches north of Beaumont. Three persons were killed when their vehicle was blown off the Galveston seawall into the pounding surf. Total damage along the Upper Texas Coast was estimated at fifteen million dollars. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Lower Michigan during the late morning. Two persons were injured when a tree fell on their camper at the Traverse City State park. While strong northerly winds ushered much colder air into the central U.S., unseasonably warm weather continued in the south central and eastern U.S. The afternoon high of 82 degrees at Bluefield WV was a record for October. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

We often apply words without understanding the importance of their exact meaning. The word "ignorant" is a good example. To be sure, I am "ignorant" about many things. I know nothing about "quantum physics" but that does not mean I am "dumb." I cannot fly an airplane, but that does not mean I am "stupid." Rather, in both areas of knowledge, I am "ignorant" about quantum physics and how to fly an airplane, but not dumb or stupid.

Being ignorant differs from "ignoring" something. It means that I lack knowledge or information about a subject. It may or may not impact on my life in a harmful way. But, if I "ignore" something important or significant that can affect my well-being, that is different.

Something not to be "ignored" is discipline because it has serious consequences. "He who ignores discipline despises himself; but whoever heeds correction gains understanding." A conscious rejection or refusal to accept discipline or the willingness to consider it as an important aspect in life is a sign of ignorance. Solomon says that a person who ignores discipline "despises himself" and is "unwilling to be corrected." This often refers to "personal pride" or an unwillingness to see myself as I am. It is as though I say to myself, "It does not matter what the truth is about me, I refuse to admit it."

If we look at this from another perspective, it is the same as a sinner saying to God, "I don't need You. I can make it by myself. I need nothing - including You."

However, if we accept "God's correction" for our lives by accepting His grace through faith in His Son, we will receive His salvation which is the beginning of a new life and insight.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for all we have because of Your love. May we gladly accept Your correction and salvation and begin a new life in and through Your Son. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Those who disregard discipline despise themselves, but the one who heeds correction gains understanding. Proverbs 15:32



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
11/13/2022: Snow Queen Contest
11/19/2022: 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

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

09-22-26-41-44, Mega Ball: 19, Megaplier: 2

(nine, twenty-two, twenty-six, forty-one, forty-four; Mega Ball: nineteen; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 454,000,000

Friday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Brandon Valley def. Rapid City Central, 25-16, 25-8, 25-7

Lakeville North Tournament=

Lakeville South, Minn. def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 32-30, 25-9

Northfield, Minn. def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-11, 25-20

PREP FOOTBALL=

Aberdeen Central 29, Yankton 7, 30T

Alcester-Hudson 36, Irene-Wakonda 14

Beresford 22, Dakota Valley 20

Burke 33, Gayville-Volin 22

Canistota 22, Platte-Geddes 8

Canton def. Custer, forfeit

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 38, Marty Indian 22

Dell Rapids 42, St. Thomas More 19

Deuel 26, Redfield 13

Elk Point-Jefferson 28, Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan 14

Elkton-Lake Benton 32, Castlewood 26

Faith 42, Stanley County 16

Freeman/ Marion/ Freeman Academy Co-op 36, Florence/Henry 14

Garretson 33, Centerville 14

Gregory 23, Bon Homme 12

Hanson 45, Colome 14

Harrisburg 41, Brookings 7

Herreid/Selby Area 50, Britton-Hecla 0

Hitchcock-Tulare 52, Great Plains Lutheran 0

Hot Springs 42, Hill City 0

Howard 45, Chester 7

Ipswich 54, North Central Co-Op 0

Kadoka Area 56, New Underwood 6

Kimball/White Lake 53, Bennett County 0

Lead-Deadwood 53, Lakota Tech 30

Leola/Frederick 56, Faulkton 34

Lower Brule 48, Omaha Nation, Neb. 0

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Lyman 60, Lemmon/McIntosh 7
McCook Central/Montrose 44, Parker 0
Milbank 16, Chamberlain 8
Miller/Highmore-Harrold 41, Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes Central/Dakota Christian 16
Mitchell 21, Huron 14
Mobridge-Pollock 30, Groton Area 12
Philip 50, White River 0
Pierre 35, Tea Area 30
Potter County 42, Sunshine Bible Academy 14
Red Cloud 48, Winnebago, Neb. 42
Sioux Falls Christian 48, Belle Fourche 7
Sioux Falls Jefferson 38, Brandon Valley 14
Sioux Falls Lincoln 38, Sioux Falls Washington 7
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 53, Rapid City Central 7
Sioux Valley 29, Flandreau 13
Sisseton 20, Baltic 6
St. Francis Indian 26, Pine Ridge 6
Sturgis Brown 27, Douglas 0
Sully Buttes 32, Corsica/Stickney 14
Todd County 30, Standing Rock, N.D. 22
Tri-Valley 48, Wagner 6
Vermillion 28, Madison 20
Warner 55, Northwestern 0
Watertown 26, Spearfish 7
Waverly-South Shore 55, Langford 0
West Central 38, Lennox 16
Winner 34, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 8
Wolsey-Wessington 34, Avon 16
Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/Sanborn Central 14, Rapid City Christian 6

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

EXPLAINER: What to expect from China's party congress

BEIJING (AP) — China's ruling Communist Party is holding its twice-a-decade national congress starting Sunday, at which Xi Jinping is expected to receive a third five-year term as the uncontested head of the party, government and military of the world's second-largest economy.

The proceedings surrounding the event are shrouded in secrecy, as is typical in China's authoritarian one-party state. But the weeklong congress, the 20th in its more than 100-year history, is expected to produce a new set of leaders handpicked by Xi, who faces no term limits and has yet to indicate a successor after a decade in the top spot.

The 96 million-member party is led by a Central Committee and Politburo. Their top cadres, who now number seven, form the powerful Politburo Standing Committee.

WHAT IS AT STAKE AT THIS YEAR'S MEETING?

No significant changes to the political or economic system are expected. Using a wide-ranging anti-corruption campaign and relentless crackdown on dissidents and free speech, Xi has eliminated virtually all opposition and placed loyalists in most of the key positions.

Yet his hard-line "zero-COVID" policy that has placed tens of millions under quarantine, severely restricted travel and imposed a growing economic cost has sparked rare protests, including the appearance of anti-Xi

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banners in Beijing's high-tech business district of Haidian this week.

Authorities refused to comment on the incident and shut down all discussion about it on the internet — the only sphere of public life where criticism of the regime is possible, at least until party censors move in.

Xi's administration says such tight COVID-19 controls are the only way to prevent a wider outbreak in the world's most populous nation.

HOW WILL THE CONGRESS AFFECT CHINA GLOBALLY?

China's more assertive foreign policy, sometimes described as the "wolf warrior" approach based on the name of a popular action film, has prompted a backlash from the U.S., Europe and regional neighbors. China's claim to virtually the entire South China Sea has raised tensions with fellow claimants, the U.S. and others, while its forces have clashed with Indian troops along their disputed border.

Beijing's close alignment of its foreign policy with Russia and refusal to criticize Moscow's invasion of Ukraine have also heightened tensions with the West.

That's also focused attention on China's threat to invade the self-governing island democracy of Taiwan to bring it under its control, a move that would draw in the U.S. and allies such as Japan and Australia.

Xi has shown no sign of a change in foreign policy direction, although China's sharply reduced economic growth rate and challenges facing his signature "Belt and Road" foreign investment program are seen as reducing his leverage. The internment of more than 1 million Muslim minorities in Xinjiang and the quashing of opposition voices and free speech in Hong Kong have also drawn broad criticism abroad, placing many local leaders under U.S., U.K. and EU travel and financial restrictions.

WHO IS REPRESENTED AT THE CONGRESS?

State media report that 2,296 representatives were "elected" to the congress. All candidates are carefully vetted and no open campaigning is allowed. Of those, 771 are described as frontline party members who hold jobs outside of the party bureaucracy, either in the armed forces, which functions as the party's military branch, or in agriculture or technical professions.

The party and the congress's makeup remain heavily dominated by men from China's main Han ethnic group. Women and members of minority groups account for 27% and 11.5% of representatives respectively, according to the official state news agency, Xinhua.

Following what is expected to be a lengthy policy address Sunday, the congress will be conducted mainly behind closed doors.

If past protocols are followed, the new leadership will be unveiled the day after the congress closes, with its highest-ranking members emerging from behind a curtain to take their places in the hierarchy based on their distance to the left and right of Xi.

This story has been corrected to say that the new leadership will likely be unveiled the day after the close of the congress, not at the closing session.

Death toll rises to 40 in Turkey coal mine explosion

By MEHMET GUZEL and ZEYNEP BILGINSOY Associated Press

AMASRA, Turkey (AP) — The death toll from a coal mine explosion in northern Turkey rose to at least 40 people Saturday, officials said.

Desperate relatives had waited all night in the cold outside the state-owned TTK Amasra Mueessesesi Muredurlugu mine in the town of Amasra, in the Black Sea coastal province of Bartin, hoping for news. There were 110 miners working in the shaft when the explosion occurred Friday evening.

Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said Saturday that 40 miners were confirmed dead. Eleven were injured and hospitalized, while 58 others managed to get out of the mine on their own or were rescued unharmed. The status of one remaining miner was unclear.

Energy Minister Fatih Donmez said rescue efforts were almost complete. Earlier he had said that a fire

was still burning in the mine's gallery where more than a dozen miners had been trapped. Work to isolate and cool the fire continued, he said.

Preliminary assessments indicated that the explosion was likely caused by firedamp, which is a reference to flammable gases found in coal mines, Donmez said overnight. Three prosecutors were investigating the blast.

A miner who works the day shift said he saw the news and hurried to the site to help with the rescue. "We saw a frightful scene, it cannot be described, it's very sad," said Celal Kara, 40. "They're all my friends... they all had dreams," the miner of 14 years said after exiting the mine, his face covered in soot.

Ambulances were on standby at the site. Rescue teams were dispatched to the area, including from neighboring provinces, Turkey's disaster management agency, AFAD, said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was expected to visit Amasra on Saturday. He tweeted that any neglect would be punished.

Separately, the Turkish police headquarters said in a statement that legal action would be taken against 12 online users who allegedly shared provocative content about the mine explosion to incite hate on social media.

Turkey's worst mine disaster was in 2014, when 301 miners died after a fire erupted inside a coal mine in the town of Soma, in the west of the country.

Ukrainian deminers remove deadly threats to civilians

By JUSTIN SPIKE Associated Press

HRAKOVE, Ukraine (AP) — Beside an abandoned Russian military camp in eastern Ukraine, the body of a man lay decomposing in the grass — a civilian who had fallen victim to a tripwire land mine set by retreating Russian forces.

Nearby, a group of Ukrainian deminers with the country's territorial defense forces worked to clear the area of dozens of other deadly mines and unexploded ordnance — a push to restore a semblance of safety to the cities, towns and countryside in a region that spent months under Russian occupation.

The deminers, part of the 113th Kharkiv Defense Brigade of Ukraine's territorial defense forces, walked deep into fallow agricultural lands on Thursday along a muddy road between fields of dead sunflowers overgrown with high weeds.

Two soldiers, each with a metal detector in hand, slowly advanced up the road, scanning the ground and waiting for the devices to give a signal. When one detector emitted a high tone, a soldier knelt to inspect the mud and grass, probing it with a metal rod to see what might be buried just below the surface.

The detector's hit could indicate a spent shell casing, a piece of rusting iron or a discarded aluminum can. Or, it could be an active land mine.

Oleksii Dokuchaev, the commander of the demining brigade based in the eastern Kharkiv region, said that hundreds of mines have already been discharged in the area around the village of Hrakove where they were working, but that the danger of mines across Ukraine will persist for years to come.

"One year of war equals 10 years of demining," Dokuchaev said. "Even now we are still finding munitions from World War II, and in this war they're being planted left and right."

Russian forces hastily fled the Kharkiv region in early September after a rapid counteroffensive by Ukraine's military retook hundreds of square miles of territory following months of Russian occupation.

While many settlements in the region have finally achieved some measure of safety after fierce battles reduced many of them to rubble, Russian land mines remain an ever-present threat in both urban and rural environments.

Small red signs bearing a white skull and crossbones line many of the roads in the Kharkiv region, warning of the danger of mines just off the pavement. Yet sometimes, desperation drives local residents into the minefields.

The local man whose body lay near the abandoned Russian camp was likely searching for food left behind by the invading soldiers, Dokuchaev said, an additional danger posed by the hunger experienced by

many in Ukraine's devastated regions.

The use of the kind of tripwire land mines which killed him is prohibited under the 1997 Ottawa Treaty — of which Russia is not a signatory — which regulates the use of anti-personnel land mines, he said.

"There are rules of war. The Ottawa Convention says that it's forbidden to place mines or any other munitions with tripwires. But Russians ignore it," he said.

The deminers had cleared the road of anti-personnel mines the previous day, allowing them to search for anti-tank mines hidden beneath the ground that could destroy any vehicles driving over them.

They hoped to bring vehicles deep enough into the area to retrieve an abandoned Russian armored personnel carrier, the engine of which they planned to salvage. A vehicle would also need to be brought in by local police to retrieve the body.

The deminers reached the abandoned camp, set in a grove of trees and strewn with the remains of the months the Russian soldiers had spent there: rotting food rations in wooden ammunition boxes, strings of high-caliber bullets, a stack of yellowing Russian newspapers and trenches filled with refuse.

After a thorough scan of the area, the servicemen recovered two Soviet-made TM-62 anti-tank mines and six pneumatically armed fuses and placed them in a depression on the edge of the camp, taped into a bundle along with 400 grams of TNT.

Dokuchaev placed an electric detonator into the explosive charge and connected it to a long length of wire before taking cover with his men at a distance of more than 100 meters (yards).

When the charge was detonated — something the servicemen laughingly called "bada-boom" — the immense blast ripped through the air, causing a cascade of autumn leaves to fall from the surrounding trees and emitting a tall plume of gray smoke.

After the mines had been destroyed, Dokuchaev — a former photographer who enlisted with the territorial defense forces after the outbreak of war — said the work his brigade is doing is essential to keep civilians safe as they pick up the pieces of their shattered lives.

Despite the dangers, he said, he enjoys his work.

"I don't know what I'll do after our victory," Dokuchaev said. "Life is boring without explosions."

Parkland shooter's life sentence could bring changes to law

By TERRY SPENCER, JESSICA GRESKO and BRENDAN FARRINGTON Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — It wasn't long ago that Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz would have been looking at a near-certain death sentence for murdering 17 people in Parkland, even if his jury could not unanimously agree on his fate.

Until 2016, Florida law allowed trial judges to impose a death sentence if a majority of the jurors agreed. With a 9-3 vote Thursday supporting Cruz's execution, Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer would have likely sent him to Death Row for the 2018 massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High.

Now, however, a vote of anything less than 12-0 means an automatic sentence of life without parole — a standard the Stoneman Douglas families and the head of the state's prosecutors association want changed. That would again put Florida in a distinct minority among the 27 states that still have the death penalty where almost all require juror unanimity.

Ed Brodsky, president of the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association, believes the Legislature will next year consider changing the law it passed after a pair of court decisions rejected the old law.

"When there is an overwhelmingly majority and sentiment about what the ultimate penalty should be, should one minority voice be able to dominate and hijack justice?" said Brodsky, the elected state attorney for Sarasota County and its neighbors.

Gov. Ron DeSantis at a Friday press conference criticized the sentence, but wouldn't specify what changes he would support.

"We need to do some reforms to be better serving victims of crimes and the families of victims of crimes and not always bend over backwards to do everything we need to for the perpetrators of crimes," DeSantis said.

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Cruz, 24, pleaded guilty a year ago to the murder of 14 Stoneman Douglas students and three staff members on Feb. 14, 2018. That left it up to the seven-man, five-woman jury to only decide whether he would be sentenced to death or life without parole.

The three-month trial included horrific prosecution videos, photos and testimony about Cruz's murders. That was followed by defense testimony about his birth mother's heavy drinking during pregnancy that witnesses said created a brain-damaged person who began displaying erratic, bizarre and violent behavior at age 2.

After seven hours of deliberations, the jurors announced Thursday they unanimously agreed the prosecution's argument for aggravating factors such as the multiple deaths and Cruz's planning did exist, but not on whether those outweighed the mitigating circumstances. Scherer will impose Cruz's life sentence Nov. 1.

"If this was not the most perfect death penalty case, then why do we have the death penalty at all?" said Linda Beigel Schulman, the mother of slain teacher Scott Beigel.

But some defense attorneys and capital punishment experts said it wasn't surprising the jurors couldn't unanimously agree. Only 18 death sentences were handed down nationwide last year, two of them in Florida.

The latest Gallup Poll showed 54% of Americans favor the death penalty, down from 80% in the mid-1990s. And while the Cruz jurors all said they could vote for the death penalty if chosen, they didn't say they support it.

"At first glance, you think to yourself, 'My God, how can you not vote for the death penalty?'" said Richard Escobar, a Tampa defense attorney and former prosecutor. He has tried capital cases in both roles. "But you've got to reflect and think to yourself, 'If this person was truly mentally ill, you shouldn't impose the death penalty because they got that mental illness through no fault of their own.'"

Robert Dunham, the Death Penalty Information Center's executive director, said the Cruz case has a lot in common with the 2012 shooting at an Aurora, Colorado, movie theater where 12 people died. In that case, 11 jurors voted for death while one disagreed based on testimony about the shooter's mental illness. That meant a life sentence.

"It's not a question of does the murder warrant the death penalty. (Cruz) is clearly the type of case in which a jury could reasonably impose the death penalty," Dunham said. "The question is 'Does the defendant deserve the death penalty?'"

Florida's law allowing for a majority jury vote had been in place for decades before it was overturned, but it was an outlier. Almost all death penalty states required unanimity throughout those years or adopted it. Alabama allows a death sentence after a 10-2 vote. Missouri and Indiana allow the judge to decide if jurors unanimously agree the aggravating circumstances exist but can't agree on a sentence.

Then in 2016, by an 8-1 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court threw out Florida's law, saying the judge had too much weight in the decision.

The Legislature passed a bill requiring a 10-2 jury recommendation, but the state Supreme Court overturned it. In 2017, the law was changed to require a unanimous jury.

Three years later, however, DeSantis, a Republican, replaced three retiring Florida justices with more conservative jurists and the state court rescinded the earlier decision. It said a death recommendation no longer needed to be unanimous, but legislators through three annual sessions haven't changed the law back from unanimity. DeSantis never pushed them.

David S. Weinstein, a Miami criminal defense lawyer and former prosecutor, doesn't think DeSantis and the Legislature will make any changes to unanimity next year, either — that would risk the U.S. Supreme Court throwing out the state law again.

"That ship has sailed," he said.

But will the Cruz sentence make Florida prosecutors less likely to seek the death penalty?

Craig Trocino, a University of Miami law professor who previously handled death penalty appeals, doesn't think so.

"It might even harden their resolve," he said.

Still, he said, it is difficult to make broad predictions on the impact fringe cases like Cruz will have. No U.S. mass shooter who killed as many or more than Cruz had ever gone to trial — nine were killed by

themselves or police during their attack or immediately after. A 10th is awaiting trial in Texas.

On Cruz's side, it is rare for attorneys to have so much documentation supporting their mitigating circumstances. The Broward public defender's office also had better-quality attorneys to assign to Cruz's case and more money for investigations than their counterparts in smaller jurisdictions typically do, he said.

In those counties, "Mitigation would be one witness and it would be mama saying, 'He was always a troubled kid,'" Trocino said.

Is Alex Jones verdict the death of disinformation? Unlikely

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A Connecticut jury's ruling this week ordering Alex Jones to pay \$965 million to parents of Sandy Hook shooting victims he maligned was heartening for people disgusted by the muck of disinformation.

Just don't expect it to make conspiracy theories go away.

The appetite for such hokum and narrowness of the judgments against Jones, who falsely claimed that the 2012 elementary school shootings were a hoax and that grieving parents were actors, virtually ensure a ready supply, experts say.

"It's easy to revel in Alex Jones being punished," said Rebecca Adelman, a communications professor at the University of Maryland. "But there's a certain shortsightedness in that celebration."

There's a deep tradition of conspiracy theories across American history, from people not believing the official explanation of John F. Kennedy's assassination to various accusations of extraterrestrial-visit coverups to unfounded allegations of the 2020 presidential election being rigged. With the Salem witch trials in 1692, they even predated the country's formation.

What's different today? The internet allows such stories to spread rapidly and widely — and helps adherents find communities of the likeminded. That in turn can push such untrue theories into mainstream politics. Now the will to spread false narratives skillfully online has spread to governments, and the technology to doctor photos and videos enables purveyors to make disinformation more believable.

In today's media world, Jones found that there's a lot of money to be made — and quickly — in creating a community willing to believe lies, no matter how outlandish.

In a Texas defamation trial last month, a forensic economist testified that Jones' Infowars operation made \$53.2 million in annual revenue between 2015 and 2018. He has supplemented his media business by selling products like survivalist gear. His company Free Speech Systems filed for bankruptcy in July.

To some, disinformation is the price America pays for the right to free speech. And in a society that popularized the term "alternative facts," one person's effort to curb disinformation is another person's attempt to squash the truth.

Will the Connecticut ruling have a chilling effect on those willing to spread disinformation? "It doesn't even seem to be chilling him," said Mark Fenster, a University of Florida law professor. Jones, he noted, reacted in real time on Infowars on the day of the verdict.

"This will not impact the flow of stories that are filled with bad faith and extreme opinion," said Howard Polskin, who publishes The Righting, a newsletter that monitors the content of right-wing websites. He says false stories about the 2020 election and COVID-19 vaccines remain particularly popular.

"It seems to me that the people who peddle this information for profit may look upon this as the cost of doing business," Adelman said. "If there's an audience for it, someone is going to meet the demand if there's money to be made."

Certainly, the people who believe that Jones and those like him are voices of truth being suppressed by society aren't going to be deterred by the jury verdict, she said. In fact, the opposite is likely to be true.

The plaintiffs awarded damages in the Sandy Hook case were all private citizens, an important distinction in considering its impact beyond this case, said Nicole Hemmer, a Vanderbilt University professor and author of "Partisans: The Conservative Revolutionaries Who Remade American Politics in the 1990s."

The case is reminiscent of Seth Rich, a young Democratic Party aide killed in a Washington robbery in

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2016, she said. Rich's name was dragged — posthumously — into political conspiracy theories, and his parents later sued and reached a settlement with Fox News Channel.

The message, in other words: Be wary of dragging private citizens into outlandish theories.

"Spreading conspiracy theories about the Biden administration is not going to get Fox News Channel sued," Hemmer said. "It is not going to get Tucker Carlson sued."

Tracing the history of outlandish theories that sprout and thrive in the web's murky corners is also difficult. Much of it is anonymous. It's still not clear who is responsible for what is spread on QAnon or who makes money off it, Fenster says.

If he was a lawyer, he said, "Who would I go after?"

Despite any pessimism about what the nearly \$1 billion Sandy Hook judgment might ultimately mean for disinformation, the dean of the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania says it still sends an important message.

"What this says is we can't just make up truths to fit our own ideological predilections," John Jackson said. "There is a hard and fast ground to facts that we can't stray too far from as storytellers."

Consider the lawsuit filed against Fox News Channel by Dominion Voting Systems, a company that makes election systems. It claims Fox knowingly spread false stories about Dominion as part of former President Donald Trump's claims that the 2020 election had been taken from him. Dominion has sought a staggering \$1.6 billion from Fox, and the case has moved through the deposition phase.

Fox has defended itself vigorously. It says that rather than spreading falsehoods, it was reporting on newsworthy claims being made by the president of the United States.

A loss in a trial, or a significant settlement, could impose a real financial hardship on Fox, Hemmer said. Yet as it progresses, there's been no indication that any of its commentators are pulling punches, particularly concerning the Biden administration.

Distrust of mainstream news sources also fuels the taste among many conservatives for theories that fit their world view — and a vulnerability to disinformation.

"I don't think there's any incentive to move toward well-grounded reporting or to move in the direction of news and information instead of commenting," Hemmer said. "That's what they want. They want the wild conspiracy theories."

Even if the crushing verdict in Connecticut this week — coupled with the \$49 million judgement against him in August by the Texas court — muzzles or minimizes Jones, Adelman says others are likely to take over for him: "It would be wrong to misinterpret this as the death knell of disinformation."

US shift on Venezuelan migrants fuels anxiety in Mexico

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and MARIA VERZA Associated Press

TIJUANA, Mexico (AP) — Jose Maria Garcia Lara got a call asking if his shelter had room for a dozen Venezuelan migrants who were among the first expelled to Mexico under an expanded U.S. policy that denies rights to seek asylum.

"We can't take anyone, no one will fit," he answered, standing amid rows of tents in what looks like a small warehouse. He had 260 migrants on the floor, about 80 over capacity and the most since opening the shelter in 2012.

The phone call Thursday illustrates how the Biden administration's expansion of asylum restrictions to Venezuelans poses a potentially enormous challenge to already overstretched Mexican shelters.

The U.S. agreed to let up to 24,000 Venezuelans apply online to fly directly to the U.S. for temporary stays but said it will also start returning to Mexico any who cross illegally — a number that topped 25,000 in August alone.

The U.S. expelled Venezuelans to Tijuana and four other Mexican border cities since Wednesday, said Jeremy MacGillivray, deputy director of the United Nations' International Organization for Migration in Mexico. The others are Nogales, Ciudad Juarez, Piedras Negras and Matamoros.

Casa del Migrante in Matamoros admitted at least 120 Venezuelans from Brownsville on Thursday, said

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the Rev. Francisco Gallardo, the shelter director. On Friday, the Mexican government was offering free bus rides to Mexico City.

Venezuelans have suddenly become the second-largest nationality at the U.S. border after Mexicans, a tough challenge for President Joe Biden. Nearly four out of five who were stopped by U.S. authorities in August entered in or near Eagle Pass, Texas, across from Piedras Negras, a Mexican city of about 150,000 people with scarce shelter space.

"We are on the verge of collapse," said Edgar Rodriguez Izquierdo, a lawyer at Casa del Migrante in Piedras Negras, which feeds 500 people daily and is converting a school to a shelter for 150 people.

Tijuana, where Garcia Lara runs the Juventud 2000 shelter, is the largest city on Mexico's border and likely has the most space. The city says 26 shelters, which are running near or at capacity, can accommodate about 4,500 migrants combined.

Tijuana's largest shelter, Embajadores de Jesus, is hosting 1,400 migrants on bunk beds and floor mats, while a group affiliated with University of California, San Diego, is building a towering annex for thousands more.

Embajadores de Jesus is growing at a blistering pace at the bottom of a canyon where roosters roam freely and shanties made of plywood and aluminum sheets line dirt roads and cracked pavement that easily flood when it rains. A cinderblock building with a kitchen and dining area is nearing completion, while migrants shovel dirt for a soccer field.

Gustavo Banda, like other shelter directors in Tijuana, doesn't know what to expect from the U.S. shift on Venezuela, reflecting an air of uncertainty along the Mexican border. Tijuana was blindsided by a surge in Haitian arrivals in 2016, a giant caravan from Central America in 2018 and the implementation in 2019 of a now-defunct policy to make asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for hearings in U.S. immigration court.

"Nobody really knows what's going to happen until they start sending people back," Banda said Thursday as families with young children prepared for sleep.

Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry said it would temporarily admit "some" Venezuelans who are expelled from the U.S. under a public health order known as Title 42, without indicating a numerical cap. The U.S. has expelled migrants more than 2.3 million times since Title 42 took effect in March 2020, denying them a chance at asylum on grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

A Mexican official said Mexico's capacity to take back Venezuelans hinges on shelter space and success of the U.S. offer of temporary stays for up to 24,000 Venezuelans. The official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke condition of anonymity.

Until now, Mexico has only accepted returns from Guatemala, Honduras or El Salvador, in addition to Mexico. As a result, Mexican shelters have been filled with migrants from those countries, along with Haitians.

Venezuelans, like those of other nationalities including Cuba and Nicaragua, have generally been released in the United States to pursue immigration cases. Strained diplomatic relations have made it nearly impossible for the Biden administration to return them to Venezuela.

Blas Nuñez-Neto, a top U.S. Homeland Security Department official, didn't answer directly when asked by reporters Thursday how many Venezuelans are likely to be expelled to Mexico, saying only that he expects fewer will try to cross the border.

Homeland Security said Venezuelans who cross the border by land after Wednesday's announcement will be expelled. Edward Pimentel was among the migrants who said they were returned despite being in U.S. custody before the policy was announced.

"The truth is that our dream is the American dream, we wanted to go to the United States," Pimentel said outside a Tijuana convenience store.

In Matamoros, hundreds of Venezuelans protested, saying they entered the U.S. before the policy took effect. Gregori Josue Segovia, 22, said he was processed by U.S. authorities Monday in El Paso, Texas, and was moved around before ending up in Matamoros.

"We were on three buses and they told us nothing, but we thought everything was normal when we

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realized were on the (international) bridge" to be returned to Mexico, he said Friday.

About 7 million Venezuelans have fled their homeland in recent years but had largely avoided the U.S. The U.S. offers a relatively strong economy and slim chances of being returned to Venezuela, suddenly making it more attractive.

For Venezuelans in Mexico, their best hope may be a U.S. exemption from Title 42 for people deemed particularly vulnerable.

In Tijuana, it appears more migrants are getting such exemptions from the U.S. Homeland Security Department. The U.S. has been allowing about 150 migrants a day at a border crossing to San Diego, said Enrique Lucero, Tijuana's director of migration affairs.

Many are chosen by advocacy groups from Tijuana shelters — causing some migrants to move there not for a place to stay but for a better shot at being selected to enter the U.S., said Lucero.

Embajadores de Jesus keeps a notebook with names of migrants hoping to qualify for a Title 42 exemption. Banda, a pastor and shelter director, said they wait about three months to enter the U.S.

Venezuelans who were in Mexico before Wednesday may also apply for one of the 24,000 temporary slots that the U.S. is making available, similar to an effort launched in April for up to 100,000 Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion. They must have a financial sponsor in the U.S. and pay for their flights.

Mexico welcomed statements from U.S. officials that the temporarily relief offered to Ukrainians and now Venezuelans may expand to other nationalities.

Orlando Sanchez slept in a bus station in Mexico City with hundreds of other Venezuelans waiting to receive money from family. He said he didn't have enough for a flight.

Naile Luna, a Venezuelan who was on her way to Ciudad Juarez, across the border from El Paso, said she hoped being eight months pregnant would spare her being expelled to Mexico. She said she knew nothing about the new policy.

Kemp vs. Abrams II: Republican has incumbent advantage now

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — In 2018, Brian Kemp spent much of his campaign for Georgia governor in Stacey Abrams' shadow as the Democratic Party star tried to become the nation's first Black female governor.

In the end, he won narrowly anyway.

Then, halfway through his term, the Republican governor became the target of Donald Trump's wrath when the defeated president threatened retribution after Kemp certified Democrat Joe Biden's slate of presidential electors in Georgia.

But not only did Kemp maintain support among most Republican voters while defying Trump, he seems to have only grown stronger heading into his rematch with Abrams. Now he wields the power of incumbency and a record that includes tax cuts and teacher pay raises.

He has also drawn the praise of national Republicans for the campaign he has run while Abrams has struggled to capitalize on the star power that once had her as a possible running mate for Biden or even a candidate for president herself.

"A lot of people didn't know who I was," in 2018, "and I was defined by a candidate who had twice as much money as I did and had the national media in her pocket," Kemp said after one fall campaign stop. "I never could really fight through that. It's a different story now."

The result is a confident candidate who hopes to win more than 50 percent of the vote and build substantially on the 55,000-vote margin he held in 2018, enough to avoid a runoff by fewer than 20,000 votes.

"Four years ago, Democrats were almost staging a revolution for the first African American woman governor," said Mark Rountree, a Republican pollster, describing a campaign fought on Abrams' terms. Now, he said, she must react to Kemp: "I'd argue that it makes Stacey Abrams very small compared to who she was and how she ran four years ago."

Abrams, who remains an unquestioned party leader in Georgia and influential Democrat nationally, is still a powerful draw. She's outraised Kemp \$85 million to \$60 million through the end of September. But

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her inner circle acknowledges a fundamental shift from 2018.

"We're in a midterm with a Democratic president, a climate that is really brutal," campaign manager Lauren Groh-Wargo said in an interview. "People are exhausted. This is a powerful incumbent who's gotten a boatload of federal money."

The only way to run against an incumbent, she said, is "running scared."

Kemp blends a sales job on his record with withering attacks on Abrams. He promotes the multiple tax cuts he's signed and the multibillion-dollar surplus on the state's balance sheet. He claims vindication for his decision to resist mask mandates, school closures and business lockdowns early in the pandemic, making sure to blast "Ms. Abrams and the radical Democrats" for taking a different approach.

The governor even embraces Abrams' national brand and fundraising prowess, reminding supporters that his rival considered the possibility of becoming Biden's running mate in 2020. One of his most reliable applause lines: "Make sure that Stacey Abrams is not going to be our governor — or our next president."

For her part, Abrams has a broad menu of ideas for spending the state surplus. She wants more raises for law enforcement and teachers. As in 2018, she proposes expanding Medicaid under the 2010 national health insurance overhaul. Georgia remains one of the few states, all Republican-led, not to expand the program, forgoing billions of dollars for its public and private health care systems over time.

Abrams criticizes Kemp's tax cuts for being tilted to the wealthy. "Millions ... for them. A debit card for you," one of her latest ads says. Her campaign aides note, sometimes with frustration, that Kemp takes credit for a Georgia economy boosted by ample federal spending during the pandemic. Trump and Biden each signed packages that steered direct support to businesses and individuals. Notably, Kemp singled out Democrats' March 2021 measure as wasteful.

Similarly, Kemp dismisses Abrams' spending plans as excessive and certain to require tax hikes, though independent analysis confirms that Abrams' could deliver her promised agenda under the existing tax laws.

As a rejoinder to Kemp's talk of "radical Democrats," Abrams has tagged her opponent as an "extremist" on guns and abortion. She cites Kemp signing a 2022 law making it legal to carry a concealed weapon without a permit and a 2019 law banning abortions in the state after the sixth week of pregnancy, before many women know they're pregnant. The latter statute, which Kemp signed in 2019, went into effect after the U.S. Supreme Court in June overturned *Roe v. Wade*, a nearly 50-year precedent that legalized abortion nationwide.

And she continues to criticize Kemp for signing a sweeping overhaul of state election law that she once characterized as "Jim Crow 2.0" because it could make it harder for some Georgia voters to cast ballots.

Rountree, the Republican pollster, said Abrams should distill her assertions into a clear reason voters should change governors. "She's quibbling over how to spend a state surplus and then reacting to national issues like abortion that are presented to her," Rountree said.

But Groh-Wargo said the campaign's research shows that abortion is an animating issue for voters, particularly among Democrats who are normally unlikely to vote and even Republicans who favor abortion rights.

Groh-Wargo said also Abrams faces the burden of trying to break two historic barriers in a state that has known nothing but white men in the governor's chair. "We're not only doing the work to confront those biases, we're giving voters what they want and need to make a decision," Groh-Wargo said, explaining why Abrams explains in detail what she'd do with the job.

If Kemp has a hidden vulnerability, it would be the Republicans who won't forgive him for his opposition to Trump. Trump endorsed former U.S. Sen. David Perdue over Kemp in the GOP primary, trying to make good on his post-2020 threats. Kemp thrashed Perdue with 74% of the primary vote, and Trump has been silent on Kemp since.

The question is how many of Perdue's 262,000 primary supporters refuse to back Kemp over Abrams, either sitting out the governor's race or giving their votes to the Libertarian Party nominee, potentially forcing a runoff by pulling Kemp below a majority.

"There are plenty of Republicans still mad at Kemp," said Debbie Dooley, an early tea party organizer and Trump ally. "I'll never vote for him."

But Dooley conceded that Abrams herself is a coalescing force for Kemp. So much so that some Republicans marvel that Kemp, once expected to have a bruising primary fight, could be the heavyweight who carries the GOP ticket, rather than the beloved-but-embattled former University of Georgia football star Herschel Walker, who is running for the Senate against Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock.

"There's a whole lot of people who are glad their kids were in school not wearing masks," said Martha Zoller, a conservative radio host in north Georgia. "I think we're going to see how strong Brian really is."

Mel Gibson can testify at Harvey Weinstein trial, judge says

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Mel Gibson can testify about what he learned from one of Harvey Weinstein's accusers, a judge ruled Friday in the rape and sexual assault trial of the former movie mogul.

The 66-year-old actor and director was one of many witnesses, and by far the best known, whose identities were revealed in Los Angeles Superior Court. The judge and attorneys had taken a break from jury selection for motions on what evidence will be allowed at the trial, and who can testify. The witness list for the trial is sealed.

Judge Lisa B. Lench ruled that Gibson can testify in support of his masseuse and friend, who will be known as Jane Doe #3 at the trial. Weinstein is accused of committing sexual battery by restraint against the woman, one of 11 rape and sexual assault counts in the trial against the 70-year-old.

Prosecutors said that after getting a massage from the woman at a California hotel in Beverly Hills in May of 2010, a naked Weinstein followed her into the bathroom and masturbated. Weinstein has pleaded not guilty, and denied any non-consensual sexual activity.

Weinstein's attorneys argued against allowing Gibson to testify, saying that what he learned from the woman while getting a massage from her does not constitute a "fresh complaint" by the woman under the law by which Gibson would take the stand. A "fresh complaint" under California law allows the introduction of evidence of sexual assault or another crime if the victim reported it to someone else voluntarily and relatively promptly after it happened.

Prosecutors said that when Gibson brought up Weinstein's name by chance, the woman had a traumatic response and Gibson understood from her that she had been sexually assaulted. Gibson did not remember the timing of the exchange, but the prosecution will use another witness, Allison Weiner, who remembers speaking to both Gibson and the woman in 2015.

Judge Lench said Gibson's testimony will depend on how the accuser describes the exchange with him when she takes the stand, and she may choose to rule against it at that time.

Weinstein attorney Mark Werksman then argued that if Gibson does take the stand, the defense should be allowed to cross-examine him about widely publicized antisemitic remarks Gibson made during an arrest in 2006, and about racist statements to a girlfriend that were recorded and publicized in 2010.

Lench said a wider discussion of Gibson's racism was not relevant to the trial, but she would allow questioning of whether he had a personal bias and animus toward Weinstein.

Werksman argued that Gibson had such a bias both because Weinstein is Jewish, and because Weinstein published a book that criticized the depiction of Jews in the Gibson-directed 2004 film, "The Passion of the Christ."

"Any evidence of Mr. Gibson's racism or antisemitism would give rise to a bias against my client, who challenged him," Werksman said.

The lawyer briefly, and mistakenly, said he thought the movie won a best picture Academy Award, but Weinstein, whose films once dominated the Oscars, shook his head as he sat at the defense table.

"Sorry, my client would know better than I would," Werksman said. "But it was an award-winning movie."

The defense also argued that Gibson was trying to whitewash his image by focusing on Weinstein's wrongdoing and asserting himself as a champion of the #MeToo movement.

The prosecution argued that Gibson had made no such suggestions about himself, and that at the time of the conversation with his masseuse he said he was discussing getting into a business deal with Wein-

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stein, showing there was no such bias.

Deputy District Attorney Marlene Martinez called Gibson's past comments "despicable," but said they had no relevance for the narrow purposes he would be called to the stand for.

Gibson's testimony raises the prospect of two of Hollywood's once most powerful men, who have undergone public downfalls, facing each other in court.

An email seeking comment from a representative for Gibson was not immediately returned.

In one of several similar rulings Friday, Lench also found that "Melrose Place" actor Daphne Zuniga could testify in a similar capacity for a woman known at the trial as Jane Doe #4, whom Weinstein is accused of raping in 2004 or 2005.

The Associated Press does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused.

Weinstein is already serving a 23-year sentence for a 2020 conviction for rape and sexual assault in New York. The state's highest court has agreed to hear his appeal in that case.

He was subsequently brought to Los Angeles for a trial that began Monday, five years after women's stories about him gave massive momentum to the #MeToo movement.

Friday's arguments came a day after the premiere of the film "She Said," which tells the story of the work of the two New York Times reporters whose stories brought Weinstein down.

Weinstein's attorneys previously sought to have the Los Angeles trial delayed because publicity from the film might taint the jury pool, but the judge denied their motion.

The trial is expected to last eight weeks. The judge and attorneys will return to the jury selection process on Monday morning, and opening statements are expected to begin on Oct. 24.

At debate, Walker denies past support for US abortion ban

By BILL BARROW and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — Georgia's Republican Senate candidate Herschel Walker on Friday denied his previous support for an outright national ban on abortion, though he has insisted at various points throughout the campaign that it was a proposal he endorsed.

Walker, a staunch anti-abortion politician recently accused by a former girlfriend of encouraging and paying for her 2009 abortion, was asked during a debate with Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock about his support for "a complete ban on a national level." He said the moderator had misstated his position.

Walker's claim contradicted statements he had made repeatedly on the campaign trail, including in July when he said "that's a problem" that there is no national ban.

Walker said Friday that his position is the same as Georgia's state law, the so-called heartbeat bill that bans abortion at six weeks, before many women know they're pregnant. That law went into effect this year after the Supreme Court overturned the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortions nationwide.

The debate in Georgia's marquee Senate contest was held just days before in-person early voting begins Monday. The outcome will help determine which party controls the Senate for the next two years of President Joe Biden's term.

The heated exchange on abortion was one of many that highlighted stark differences between the two men on policy, personality and governing philosophy. The debate covered a wide range of topics, including abortion, personal integrity, crime and student loans, and forced both men to answer attacks that have flooded voters' television screens and social media feeds for months.

Walker, a Georgia football icon making his first bid for public office, leaned heavily on assertions that Warnock is a puppet of President Joe Biden, saying the Nov. 8 midterm election is about what those two "had done to you and your family" in an inflationary economy. Warnock, who is senior pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, answered that the election is a choice about "who is ready to represent Georgia."

Warnock never directly brought up the recent allegations about Walker paying for an abortion, leaving that to moderators, who elicited another flat denial from the Republican nominee. Trying to shift the discussion, Walker blasted Warnock for being a Baptist pastor who supports abortion rights and suggested he doesn't care about abortions in the Black community. Both men are Black.

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"Instead of aborting those babies, why aren't you baptizing those babies?" Walker asked.

Warnock insisted he can support abortion rights as a Christian and a pastor. "God gave us a choice and I respect the right of women to make a decision," Warnock said, adding that Walker "wants to arrogate more power to politicians than God has."

Warnock and fellow Georgia Democrat Jon Ossoff won their Senate seats in a January 2021 special election two months after Biden won Georgia by fewer than 12,000 votes out of 5 million cast. That was the first time in two decades Democrats won federal elections in the historically conservative state, raising questions about whether Warnock can replicate his victory in a midterm election, especially with Biden's popularity down among Georgia voters.

Walker repeatedly blamed Warnock and Biden for inflation, thought he offered little when pressed for details about what he would do to fix it. Walker said the first step to a more stable economy is "getting back" to energy independence rather than depending "on our enemies." The U.S. has, in actuality, never been completely free from depending on fossil fuel imports from other countries, including some with whom Washington has tense relationships, such as Russia.

In his defense, Warnock highlighted Democrats' "Inflation Reduction Act," with a focus on provisions he sponsored capping insulin and other health care costs for Medicare recipients, Democrats' extension of the child tax credit and infrastructure provisions that Warnock shepherded with Republican colleagues. But Warnock also offered few specifics about any additional steps Congress could take.

Warnock also declined to engage on whether Biden should seek reelection in 2024, arguing that Georgia's immediate choice for the Senate is more important. Senate Democratic candidates around the country have distanced themselves from Biden during the fall campaign.

Walker deviated from his friend, former President Donald Trump, by acknowledging that Biden won legitimately in 2020. But Walker wasted no time saying he'd support Trump in 2024, calling it an act of loyalty. Trump encouraged Walker to run and has endorsed him.

Both Walker and Warnock said they would accept the outcome of their Senate election.

Debate moderators drew both men into discussions of their personal lives.

Recent reporting by The Daily Beast disclosed records of an abortion receipt and a subsequent personal check from Walker to a woman who said the celebrity football icon paid for her abortion when they were dating. Walker's denials have continued even after the woman identified herself as the mother of one of his four children.

Other reports, including from The Associated Press, have detailed how Walker has exaggerated his academic achievements, business success and philanthropic activities, as well as accusations that he threatened the life of his ex-wife that go beyond details Walker himself acknowledged in a 2008 memoir and subsequent media interviews. Walker also acknowledged three of his children publicly for the first time only after earlier Daily Beast reporting. Before his Senate bid, he'd spoken publicly only of Christian Walker, his adult son by his first wife.

Warnock, in perhaps his most searing move against Walker, alluded to that cascade of stories. "We will see time and time again tonight, as we've always seen, that my opponent has a problem with the truth," said Warnock, dismissing reports that a foundation tied to Ebenezer Baptist Church had evicted tenants from its real estate holdings. He said Walker was trying to "sully the name of Martin Luther King's church."

When Walker accused Warnock of being anti-police, Warnock brought up Walker's myriad suggestions that he's worked in law enforcement. "One thing I've never done, I've never pretended to be a police officer, and I've never threatened a shootout with the police," the senator said.

Walker has never been a trained law enforcement officer, though he has a litany of law enforcement endorsements and pulled out what appeared to be a police badge, prompting a rebuke from moderators who reminded him of debate rules forbidding props.

Walker pushed back at the notion that his past should be disqualifying by pointing to a 2008 memoir in which he detailed being diagnosed with dissociative personality disorder. Walker said he's "been transparent."

"I continue to get help if I need help, but I don't need any help. I'm doing well," he said. "I'm ready to

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lead today.”

The Savannah debate was the two rivals’ only meeting because Walker declined to accept the three fall debates typical in Georgia campaigns. The Friday debate did not include Libertarian Chase Oliver, who did not meet organizers’ polling threshold.

Warnock will meet Oliver in a Sunday forum sponsored by the Atlanta Press Club. In that debate, Walker will be represented by an empty podium because he declined the invitation.

Early voting begins Monday and runs through Nov. 4. Election Day is Nov. 8.

Los Angeles mystery: Who taped meeting with racist rants?

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AP Political Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An anonymously leaked recording of crude, racist remarks and political scheming that led to the resignation of the Los Angeles City Council president and a powerful labor leader left behind a mystery: Who made the tape, and why?

The posting of the year-old recording on the website Reddit in the run-up to November’s midterm elections raised obvious suspicions of political motive. Much of the hourlong, private conversation among several councilmembers and the head of Los Angeles County Federation of Labor — all Latino Democrats — centered on fortifying their clout in the realignment of Council districts.

It has now prompted a state investigation.

The recording was made in a meeting room inside the headquarters of the politically influential labor group -- known locally as “the Fed” -- but it’s not known how the recording was made during a small gathering of friends, or even who was in the room.

“It’s blatantly obvious it was an insider job,” said Mark Gonzalez, who heads the Los Angeles County Democratic Party and believes the most likely target of the unknown person who recorded the meeting was federation president Ron Herrera.

Herrera has since resigned.

“It had to be somebody who had the access, and who knew his calendar, who was aware of that,” Gonzalez said. “Everybody is coming up with their own speculation.”

Former Council President Nury Martinez, the first Latina to hold the post, resigned Wednesday after President Joe Biden joined a chorus of officials calling on those involved to step down.

Martinez was recorded in the conversation as saying that white Councilmember Mike Bonin handled his young Black son as if he were an “accessory” and used derogatory terms in describing both of them, the Los Angeles Times reported Sunday.

At another point on the hourlong recording she called indigenous immigrants from the Mexican state of Oaxaca “tan feos,” or “so ugly.” The conversation also included crass and bigoted comments about Jews, Armenians and other groups.

The source of the tape “is a parlor game going on all over town,” said former Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. “It may never be solved.”

Two other Council members who attended the meeting remained out of public view on Friday, Gil Cedillo and Kevin de Leon, holding their seats despite mounting pressure to resign.

No one at the meeting has spoken publicly about the possible source of the recording.

The discussion centered on protecting Latino political power during the redrawing of council district boundaries, known as redistricting. The once-a-decade process can pit one group against another to gain political advantage in future elections.

The California Legislative Black Caucus said the recording “reveals an appalling effort to decentralize Black voices during the critical redistricting process.”

The labor federation did not respond to a series of questions, including detailing who attended the meeting. It issued a one-sentence statement which did not specifically say the meeting with the Council members was not recorded by the organization.

“It is not nor has it ever been the policy of the Fed to record meetings,” interim President Thom Davis

said in a statement.

In today's tech-saturated society, it's simple to furtively record a private conversation with widely available devices. Mobile phones have highly sensitive microphones and easily can be concealed in a briefcase, purse or backpack.

The recording reveals possible clues: Clicks that could be briefcases opening, and noises that sound like papers shuffling that might suggest a microphone somewhere on or near the tabletop.

The language was appalling, Yaroslavsky said, and he could not recall any incident in which a private meeting among elected officials was privately taped. "I've never seen anything like this," he said.

The Los Angeles Times reported that the recording was posted on Reddit by a now-suspended user. It is unclear who recorded the audio or who uploaded it to the website.

The disclosure of the secret recording unsettled the Los Angeles political community, especially those who have worked at the labor group's headquarters. Gonzalez, the Democratic leader, said people were feeling "unsafe."

Longtime Los Angeles-based Democratic consultant Michael Trujillo said whoever made the tape might never want to be identified. The person could be seen as a hero in some quarters for exposing racism within the highest ranks of City Hall, but it could also expose the person or persons to legal action for recording a conversation without consent, which is illegal in California. State law requires a person making a recording of someone else to obtain consent.

"The problem is that same hero is going to be facing criminal and civil court cases," he said.

Police: 15-year-old boy kills 5 in Raleigh shooting rampage

By GARY D. ROBERTSON, HANNAH SCHOENBAUM and ALLEN G. BREED Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — A 15-year-old boy killed five people and injured two more in a shooting rampage in Raleigh, police said, horrifying a community that is now mourning victims whose lives were cut short as they were going about their daily routines.

Raleigh Police Chief Estella Patterson said the teen was captured hours after the victims were gunned down Thursday evening. He was hospitalized and in critical condition following his arrest, but authorities have not said how he was injured. Patterson said Friday that police haven't determined a motive for the attack.

The victims were different races and ranged in age from 16 to their late 50s, Patterson said. Family members and friends said some of the victims were gunned down while doing normal, everyday activities — an off-duty police officer was killed while on his way to work, one of the women who died was on her porch talking to a neighbor, another woman who died was out walking her dog and another was out exercising.

Gov. Roy Cooper called the shooting an "infuriating and tragic act of gun violence." He added: "No neighborhood, no parent, no child, no grandparent, no one should feel this fear in their communities — no one."

The gunfire broke out around 5 p.m. Thursday in a residential area northeast of downtown, Raleigh Mayor Mary-Ann Baldwin said. Police said from there, the teenager fled to a nearby walking trail and continued shooting.

The teen, who was not immediately identified by police, eluded officers for hours — setting off a man-hunt across a crime scene that stretched for 2 miles (3 kilometers) — before he was cornered in a home and arrested, Patterson said.

The Hedingham neighborhood is a residential area of single family and town homes. The Neuse River Greenway, a walking and biking trail, is behind some of the houses. The trail runs about 27 miles (43 kilometers) along the river and connects to the state's Mountains-to-Sea Trail that's popular with hikers. The stretch of trail behind the neighborhood is paved and lies down a grassy slope from the houses.

Police said Officer Gabriel Torres, 29, was among the five killed. He was off-duty and heading to work when the shooting began. The other victims were Nicole Connors, 52; Mary Marshall, 34; Susan Karnatz, 49; and James Roger Thompson, 16. Connors' husband told The Associated Press she was on the porch talking to a neighbor when she was killed. Marshall's sister told NBC News that she was walking her dog,

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Scruff.

Marcille Lynn Gardner, 59, was talking to Connors when she was shot. Gardner remained hospitalized in critical condition Friday. A second police officer, Casey Joseph Clark, 33, was also wounded and released from the hospital.

Karnatz's husband, Tom Karnatz, said she was an avid runner who often ran on the greenway.

"She was a very loving wife and amazing mother to our three sons," he said through tears when he answered his door Friday. "We're absolutely heartbroken and miss her dearly."

In the driveway, a silver minivan and a Toyota Camry had matching 26.2 stickers — symbolizing the miles of a marathon. The minivan's license plate read simply: "RUNNR."

Woodrow Glass, a 74-year-old retiree and neighbor of Connors, said he talked to her nearly every day as she walked her small dog.

"She was friendly with everybody in the neighborhood, spoke with everybody ... and was really respected here. And we're going to miss her," he said.

In a statement Friday, President Joe Biden said he and first lady Jill Biden are grieving with victims' families, and his administration is working with Cooper to help local authorities with their investigation.

"Enough. We've grieved and prayed with too many families who have had to bear the terrible burden of these mass shootings," he said.

Omer Rosas, a sophomore at Knightdale High School, said he was shocked to learn Friday that his classmate was arrested in the shooting.

"I did not expect it to be him," Rosas told the AP. "He was very calm. He wasn't like a mean person. He was open to be nice to everyone."

Rosas said the teen is personable and athletic — a smaller guy who enjoys running and was considering joining the school's track team.

Thompson, the 16-year-old victim, was a junior at the school.

Prosecutors will seek to charge the suspect as an adult, Wake County District Attorney Lorrin Freeman said in an email. Authorities have not commented on what charges the teen could face.

The Raleigh shooting was the latest in a violent week nationwide. Five people were killed Sunday in a shooting at a home in Inman, South Carolina. On Wednesday, two police officers were fatally shot in Connecticut after apparently being drawn into an ambush by an emergency call about possible domestic violence. Police officers have been shot this week in Greenville, Mississippi; Decatur, Illinois; Philadelphia, Las Vegas and central Florida. Two of those officers, one in Greenville and one Las Vegas, were killed.

Thursday's violence was the 25th mass killing in 2022 in which the victims were fatally shot, according to The Associated Press/USA TODAY/Northeastern University Mass Killings database. A mass killing is defined as when four or more people are killed excluding the perpetrator.

The walking trail was quieter than usual Friday. Sara Cutter, 31, said she sensed "a lingering sadness over Raleigh" as she walked the greenway, about a mile from the shootings.

"We're all hurting today, the entire city," Cutter said. "I've seen some somber faces while I've been out walking today. But it's also been good to see people out. The community — that's what will get us through."

5 years on, key #MeToo voices take stock of the movement

By JOCELYN NOVECK and MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

Once again, disgraced mogul Harvey Weinstein sits in a courtroom, on trial in Los Angeles while the reckoning the accusations against him launched marks a significant milestone this month: It's been five years since a brief hashtag — #MeToo — galvanized a broad social movement.

The Associated Press went back to Louise Geiss and Andrea Constand, accusers in two of the #MeToo era's most momentous cases — Weinstein, already convicted in a New York case, and Bill Cosby, once convicted and now free — to learn how their lives have changed, whether they have any regrets, and how hopeful they feel after a decidedly mixed bag of legal results.

And we spoke to the woman who originally coined the phrase — Tarana Burke, a longtime advocate for

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sexual violence survivors and a survivor herself — about her own journey, the movement's resilience, and the challenges ahead.

LOUISETTE GEISS: A LAWSUIT AND A MUSICAL

All in all, Louissette Geiss considers herself one of the luckier ones: When she tried to run out of a hotel room to escape Harvey Weinstein's alleged advances, the door opened. She was able to flee.

Geiss, a former actress and screenwriter who, in 2017, accused Weinstein of attempting to force her to watch him masturbate in a hotel bathroom in 2008, was the lead plaintiff in a class action lawsuit against his former studio.

But fighting through the justice system — an experience that has deeply frustrated her — was not the only means by which Geiss has attempted to cope. She's also written a musical.

"The Right Girl" was waylaid by the pandemic but will be produced live onstage sometime in 2023. The show, with a high-profile production team that includes songwriter Diane Warren, tells the story of three women at various levels of power in a workplace plagued by a serial sexual predator.

"In the end, you see that the judicial system is still not in the right place to take him down," Geiss said. "It's really society that takes him down."

It's a reflection of Geiss' view that the latter has moved faster than the former to absorb the lessons of #MeToo, albeit still imperfectly.

"I think the MeToo movement definitely gave predators pause to act on their inclinations," she said. "I think that they have been warned. And so they are less likely to do it, but I do think they're still doing it."

At times, yes, she had regrets about coming forward. She worried about the effects on her children, now 7 and 5 — her youngest was only weeks old when the case exploded. But it was also her children that made her realize she had to fight.

"In the end, to make a bigger change for women and for children — for your child, and for my children — it was important that I step up and do it," she said.

That's also why Geiss, 48, continues to encourage younger survivors to speak out — even though she understands why they may not want to.

"You don't want your name to be synonymous with Weinstein. Neither do I," she said of her pitch to them. "But guess what? They're not going to go away until we keep screaming about this."

ANDREA CONSTAND: 'IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO'

For Andrea Constand, the chief accuser in Cosby's criminal case, the past five years have been turbulent, to say nothing of the preceding decade.

Cosby's lawyers loudly derided her as a "con artist" during the first celebrity trial of the #MeToo era, in 2018. Yet the jury nonetheless convicted the aging comedian of drugging and sexually assaulting her in 2005 and a judge sent him to prison. Then, a Pennsylvania appeals court freed Cosby last year.

Constand had gone to police a year after the encounter with Cosby, which he called consensual. A prosecutor declined to press charges, later saying he had secretly promised Cosby he'd never be charged — a hotly debated claim that ultimately undid the conviction. And the first jury to hear her case, in 2017, couldn't reach a verdict.

Through the yearslong storm, Constand has remained serene. She believes these are just early days for the movement.

"I think it was a much needed time to be able to address the issue (of) just how profound sexual violence is — in boardrooms, in corporations, in the entertainment industry and just generally all over," Constand, 49, said this month from her home near Toronto, a rural retreat that she says brings her solitude and peace.

"A lot of trauma was released," she added. "Keeping secrets can really can make you sick."

The AP does not name people who say they have been sexually assaulted, unless they come forward publicly.

She continues to work as a massage therapist, while pushing lawmakers to adopt a legal definition of consent. As jurors in both Cosby's Pennsylvania trial and Weinstein's in New York deliberated, they asked for the definition — but the law in both states was silent.

She has written a memoir, and started a foundation to help sexual assault survivors through their

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physical, spiritual and emotional recovery. She has also created a mobile app where survivors can seek trauma-informed services.

"I had everything to lose and nothing to gain. I was a loser, you know, really, going in," Constand said of her 2006 police complaint.

But despite all the twists and turns, "it was the right thing to do," she concluded, citing #MeToo movements around the world.

"You have ... everybody coming out of that shame and out of that silence," she said.

TARANA BURKE: KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING

Harvey Weinstein. R. Kelly. Bill Cosby. Two are in prison, one has been freed.

And that's exactly how not to measure the success of the #MeToo movement, says Tarana Burke — as a scorecard of high-profile "wins" and "losses," and through the lens of celebrity.

Rather, says the advocate for sexual violence survivors, cultural change should be the key metric. And by that standard, she says, the movement has achieved an "awe-inspiring" amount in five years.

"Five and a half years ago, we could not have a sustained global conversation about sexual violence that was framed inside social justice. It was always framed inside crime and punishment, or celebrity gossip," she said.

Burke, 49, had coined "Me Too" as part of her advocacy work more than a decade before a hashtagged tweet from actor Alyssa Milano, in the wake of the Weinstein allegations, saw the phrase explode.

Just six months earlier, Burke recalls, she had been on an organizing retreat in California, handing out T-shirts and dreaming aloud about how she could revitalize her work and raise enough money to tour Black colleges and universities to raise awareness. When the spotlight shifted to #MeToo later in 2017, her first worry was that the work behind her phrase would be coopted. But she soon realized she had an enormous opportunity.

"The kind of shift we need to see sustainable change, we're still working toward. But the shift we've had in the last five years would have taken 20 years to happen (without #MeToo), and that's incredible," she said.

Burke has spent the last few years building an organization to promote the movement, and has published a raw memoir, "Unbound," which includes an account of how she herself was raped at seven years old.

Burke notes proudly that a new Pew study shows more than twice as many Americans support, rather than oppose, #MeToo. But, she says, struggles remain, especially in terms of bringing Black, Indigenous, trans and disabled women into the conversation, and in shoring up fundraising.

The goal now is to keep momentum going and restore the early enthusiasm.

Burke likes to remind people that within the first year, some 19 million people went on Twitter to say "me too," attesting to their own experiences in a powerful collective reckoning.

"This is why we have a movement that cannot be ignored," Burke says.

Haiti gang makes demands in test of power with government

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A standoff between a powerful gang federation and Haiti's government is testing how much power both sides wield and threatens to further derail a paralyzed country where millions of people are struggling to find fuel and water.

A former police officer who leads a gang alliance known as "G9 and Family" has proposed his own plan for Haiti's future — even seeking seats in the Cabinet — while demanding that the administration of Prime Minister Ariel Henry grant amnesty and void arrest warrants against the group's members, a demand that so far has gone unanswered.

In mid-September, the gang surrounded a key fuel terminal to demand Henry's resignation and to protest a spike in petroleum prices after the prime minister announced that his administration could no longer afford to subsidize fuel.

That move, coupled with thousands of protesters who have blocked streets in the capital of Port-au-Prince and other major cities, has caused major shortages, forcing hospitals to cut back on services, gas

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stations to close and banks and grocery stores to restrict hours.

In a recent video posted on Facebook, G9 and Family leader Jimmy Cherizier, who goes by the nickname "Barbecue," read a proposed plan to stabilize Haiti that includes the creation of a "Council of Sages" with one representative from each of Haiti's 10 departments.

The gang also is demanding positions in Henry's Cabinet, according to the director of Haiti's National Disarmament, Dismantling and Reintegration Commission, speaking to radio station Magik 9 on Thursday.

"It's a symptom of their power, but also a symptom that they may fear what is coming," Robert Fattou, a Haitian politics expert at the University of Virginia, said of the gang's demands.

Henry and 18 members of his Cabinet appealed nearly a week ago for the deployment of foreign troops to quell violence and end the fuel blockade, a proposal that has yet to be formally discussed by the United Nations Security Council, which meets on Monday.

The gang, which has overpowered an understaffed and under-resourced police department, is likely wary of the potential deployment of specialized armed troops, Fattou said.

"They are trying to get the best deal they can get while to some extent they have the upper hand," he said.

Gang demands are nothing new in Haiti, and they have grown more powerful since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

But such threats were quickly quelled in the past with the help of U.N. peacekeeping forces, Fattou said.

In the aftermath of a rebellion that ousted former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, then-President René Prével ordered gangs to lay down their weapons. He did it peacefully at first, but upon receiving no results, he threatened them.

"They were told, 'You either disarm, or you're going to be dead,'" Fattou said. "Some gangs accepted the solution, and others were destroyed."

He said special forces used drones and invaded slums, which gangs have long controlled.

But gangs have played major political roles before: The leader of one gang helped launch the revolt that removed Aristide, who refused to resign before the end of his term in 2006. That leader, Butteur Metayer, had been an Aristide supporter, but turned against him after his brother, also a gang leader, was killed in 2003.

Fattou said that while the demand to give Cherizier's gang federation Cabinet positions is "a crazy proposition," he added that an amnesty involving giving up weapons might be a solution.

"The government saves face, the gangs say, 'We've achieved what we've wanted,' and there's a compromise," he said.

But the demand to void arrest warrants would likely be rejected by the government, which has long sought to arrest Cherizier on charges including orchestrating one of the country's worse massacres, in which dozens of men, women and children were slain.

Haitian officials have warned the international community that the situation is dire, noting that a recent cholera outbreak could also worsen due to the limited availability of water and other basic supplies.

On Friday, UNICEF warned that nearly 100,000 children younger than 5 are already suffering from severe acute malnutrition and are vulnerable to cholera: "The crisis in Haiti is increasingly a children's crisis."

Later in the day, a report from U.N. agencies and international aid groups said a record 4.7 million people in Haiti are facing acute hunger, including 19,000 in catastrophic famine conditions for the first time, all in the gang-controlled Cite Soleil slum of Port-au-Prince.

It is also becoming a crisis for women. The United Nations Population Fund said Friday that 30,000 pregnant women are at risk because roughly three-fourths of Haiti's hospitals are unable to provide services due to a lack of fuel.

In addition, gangs are increasingly raping women and girls, as well as boys and to some extent men, to exert and retain control over territory, according to a U.N. Human Rights report released Friday.

Helen La Lime, the top U.N. official in Haiti, told reporters that human rights abuses including rape and sexual assault have reached alarming levels.

"The testimonies of victims are truly horrible," she said. "This must stop."

Arnaud Gustave Royer, with the U.N.'s Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, noted that one woman saw gangs execute her husband and was then raped by several armed men in front of her four children for several hours.

"Rape becomes a weapon, a tactic for gangs," he said, adding that the acts committed are extremely violent and done in front of family members to humiliate victims.

Gangs, who control an estimated 60% of Port-au-Prince, have raped children as young as 10 and elderly women as well, according to the U.N. report.

In one case, a 12-year-old boy was raped by five individuals who just minutes before had raped his older sister during gang clashes in April, the U.N. said: "A few days later, his body was found, with a gunshot wound to the head, laying on a pile of garbage in an abandoned area."

NC shooting claims mom, veteran, matriarch, officer and teen

By BEN FINLEY, HANNAH SCHOENBAUM and ALLEN G. BREED undefined

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — An avid runner and the mother of three boys. A woman who was the "rock" of her family and knew everyone in the neighborhood. A Navy veteran whose wedding was two weeks away.

These were among the victims of a shooting rampage in North Carolina's capital city, Raleigh, that claimed five lives and wounded two others.

The calm order of the day was shattered around 5 p.m., police say, when a 15-year-old boy opened fire, killing a total of five people in Raleigh's Hedingham neighborhood and along the nearby Neuse River Greenway. Another of those slain was a police officer who was headed off to work in North Carolina's capital.

Another Raleigh police officer also was wounded as well as a woman who remained in critical condition on Friday.

Among the dead were:

NICOLE CONNORS

Connors, 52, was the matriarch of her extended family, the one who "got things done," her husband Tracey Howard told The Associated Press.

When her father died, she was the one who went to Veterans Affairs to straighten things out — using "choice words" — to ensure he was buried in a veterans cemetery, Howard said. She also left her job in human resources to care for her mother after she had a stroke.

"Anything that had to be done, she was going to do it," Howard said. "And she was going to make sure it was done right."

Connors and her husband liked to get out of the house and explore Raleigh's restaurant scene. They had tickets for the next Black Panther film, coming out in November, and planned to go to the North Carolina State Fair this weekend.

Late Thursday afternoon, Howard left the house to get food for lunch — he works the third shift — and to buy a lightbulb for the porch. Connors had taken a friend to Red Lobster to celebrate her friend's birthday before coming home.

"She couldn't have been home more than five or 10 minutes before this happened," Howard said.

Connors and a neighbor, who was still in critical condition on Friday, were shot, Howard said.

"Her friend was more or less by the driveway like she was about to go home or was on her way home, and my wife was on the porch," Howard said.

Howard is left to wonder what motivated the shooting.

"It is just a senseless killing," he said. "People outside enjoying the weather, talking. Next thing you know they're gone. It's just stupid. It's senseless."

Connors' neighbors said she was always friendly while walking her Jack Russell terrier, Sami.

"All these shootings right now are all coming from kids that are under 19 years old," said neighbor Joshua Phillips. They "have no business owning a gun, period. And you can't blame the law-abiding citizens on that."

Marvin Judd said Connors was a "sweet person" with a "good heart."

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"And she was always kind and gentle to everybody she met," Judd said. "She didn't meet strangers. Everybody was a friend to her."

Judd added: "This didn't have to happen. But people don't realize. Satan is loose up on the Earth. And he's taking out as many victims as he can."

SUSAN KARNATZ

Her husband, Tom Karnatz, told the AP that she "was a very loving wife and amazing mother to our three sons. We're absolutely heartbroken and miss her dearly."

Karnatz, 49, was an avid runner who frequented the greenway where some of the shootings occurred. Two cars parked in the driveway had matching 26.2 stickers – marking the mileage of a marathon. The license plate of a minivan said "RUNNR."

In a Facebook post, Tom Karnatz wrote that he and his wife had big — and little — plans together.

"We had plans together for big adventures," he wrote. "And plans together for the mundane days in between. We had plans together with the boys. And we had plans together as empty nesters. We had plans together for growing old ... Now those plans are laid to waste."

MARY MARSHALL

Marshall, 34, was killed while walking her dog Scruff and was supposed to get married on Oct. 29, her sister told NBC News.

"Her fiancé Rob, he was just the love of her life," Meaghan McCrickard told NBC. "I think we're going to still do a celebration of life, that's the plan, for the date of the wedding."

"She's got a friend coming from Japan, somebody coming from Florida, from Texas," McCrickard said. "As excited as she was to be married, I know she was more excited to have all the people she loved the most at the same place at the same time."

When the shooting started, Marshall was walking Scruff on the Neuse River Greenway, her sister told NBC.

"She had called her fiancé Rob and said, 'I'm walking the dog, I'm hearing these gunshots, can you come home?' And that was the last conversation that they had," McCrickard said.

Marshall's step-grandmother, Donna Marshall, told the Raleigh News & Observer that Mary had served in the Navy and attended culinary school before moving back to the Raleigh area three years ago.

"She loved to go to the beach, and she was an absolute fanatic about Disney World," Donna Marshall told the newspaper.

Scruff had effectively chosen Marshall as his owner when he sat on her lap at an animal shelter, her step-grandmother said.

"It's going to be extremely difficult for her mom and dad and her sister and her close family," Donna Marshall said. "It's just going to be awful."

GABRIEL TORRES

Torres, 29, was on his way to work when he was fatally shot in the Hedingham neighborhood, police said. Raleigh Police Chief Estella D. Patterson said Torres was not in uniform or in his patrol car at the time of the shooting, according to the News & Observer.

Torres leaves behind a wife and child, the chief said. Torres was on the job for 18 months. Before that, he served as a U.S. Marine at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville.

The Raleigh Police Protective Association, an advocacy group for officers, said in a statement on Friday that it's "in the process of setting up fundraising efforts that are approved and authorized by the family."

"We ask all of you to please pray and keep in your thoughts Officer Torres and the other victims of this senseless act of evil," the organization said on Facebook.

JAMES THOMPSON

Thompson, 16, was a junior at Knightdale High School in Raleigh, according to a statement from Principal Keith Richardson.

"It is an unexpected loss and we are saddened by it," Richardson said. "Our condolences, thoughts, and prayers go out to James' family, the other victims, their families and all who have been impacted by yesterday's events."

The school board chair and superintendent of the Wake County Public School System issued a statement

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that said they are "shocked, saddened and broken-hearted."

"Our hearts go out to the victims' loved ones, and our community continues to seek answers around this tragedy and solutions to prevent such unspeakable events in the future," the statement said.

Officials: 25 dead, many trapped in Turkish coal mine blast

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — An explosion inside a coal mine in northern Turkey killed at least 25 people, local officials announced, while rescuers working through the night were trying to bring dozens of others trapped to the surface.

The explosion occurred 6:45 p.m. at the state-owned TTK Amasra Muessese Mudurlugu mine in the town of Amasra, in the Black Sea coastal province of Bartin.

Energy Minister Fatih Donmez said a preliminary assessment indicated the explosion was likely caused by firedamp — a reference to flammable gases found in coal mines.

There were 110 people in the mine at the time of the explosion, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu, who traveled to Amasra to coordinate the rescue operation, told reporters. Most of the workers were able to evacuate following the blast, but 49 were trapped in a higher risk area of the facility, the minister said.

Soylu would not provide a number for those still trapped, saying some among the 49 had been lifted to safety.

"We are faced with a picture that we truly regret, that we regret to have to share (with the public)," Soylu said.

The Bartin governor's office said 25 were killed in the blast. Health Minister Fahrettin Koca reported at least 17 injured, including eight who were being treated in intensive care units.

Several rescue teams were dispatched to the area, including from neighboring provinces, Turkey's disaster management agency, AFAD, said.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced he was canceling a planned visit to the southeastern city of Diyarbakir and would travel to Amasra instead to coordinate the rescue operation. He said three prosecutors had been assigned to investigate the incident.

"Our hope is that the loss of life does not increase further, that our miners are saved," Erdogan said in a statement. "All our efforts are geared in that direction."

The private DHA news agency quoted one worker as telling Bartin Gov. Nurtac Arslan that he came out of the mine by his own means. He described feeling a "pressure" but said he could not see anything due to the dust and dirt.

People rushed to the mine for news of trapped friends or colleagues, DHA reported.

In Turkey's worst mine disaster, a total of 301 people died in 2014 in a fire inside a coal mine in the town of Soma, in western Turkey.

Ohio Dems press party to invest in high stakes Senate seat

By STEVE PEOPLES and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Democrats across Ohio are pleading for help in the state's Senate contest, afraid they may lose a winnable election unless national party leaders make major investments in the coming days.

So far, the most powerful groups in Democratic politics have prioritized Senate pickup opportunities in North Carolina, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania over Ohio, once a perennial swing state that veered right in the Trump era. But on the eve of the 2022 midterms, some public polls suggest Ohio is as competitive as the other swing states, leaving many Democrats here wondering why their party isn't backing Senate contender Tim Ryan more forcefully.

"Ohio's just not a priority anymore. It's a daunting task that we have to navigate," said state Rep. Don-tavius Jarrells, a Ryan ally. "The reality is that without federal investments, he may not win."

Ryan, a 10-term congressman, said in an interview that party leaders who believe he can't win "have no idea what's going on out here."

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"I've come to terms with the fact that we're probably not going to get any help. I'm playing with the team we got on the field," Ryan said. "I can't think of anything more Ohio than us taking on the entire political establishment at this point."

The tension is a reflection of the difficult decisions Democratic leaders are facing about how to invest limited financial resources in the final weeks before the Nov. 8 election. With a razor-thin Senate majority, any move could carry long-term consequences. If Republicans gain even one seat, they would take control of the Senate — and with it, gain power to control judicial nominations and President Joe Biden's legislative agenda.

And if Ryan comes up short by just a few points, there will likely be an intense round of post-election questions about whether the party could have done more to win.

The financial disparities in the race are stark. Republican JD Vance, a venture capitalist and author of "Hillbilly Elegy," is the beneficiary of more than \$30 million from outside Republican groups. They include organizations aligned with former President Donald Trump and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell. By contrast, Ryan has benefited from less than \$4 million in outside spending so far.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, who has built a reputation as a progressive Democrat who can still win over working class voters in places like Ohio, said the party should do more.

"If we want to win in Ohio, we need to invest in Ohio," he said. "Tim Ryan is running a great campaign because he's showing voters that he is the candidate who's on their side. That's how you win elections."

David Bergstein, the spokesperson for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, which is the official campaign arm for Senate Democrats, said the organization was "proud" to support Ryan's campaign with a coordinated investment of roughly \$1 million in television spending that allowed the campaign to take advantage of lower advertising rates for candidates.

There is still a chance Democrats will find some additional money to help Ryan.

The Senate Majority PAC, by far the most influential super PAC in Senate Democratic politics, is not ruling out significant Ohio investments over the election's final days, although the group has spent little there so far compared with other key states. On Thursday, the group announced an additional \$4 million investment in North Carolina television advertising, bringing its total spending in the state to \$15 million and counting.

"Tim Ryan is running a remarkably strong campaign that is resonating with Ohio voters of every political persuasion and putting Republicans on defense, while Vance's weak candidacy has become a serious liability for the GOP," said JB Poersch, Senate Majority PAC president. "We're going to continue making strategic, effective decisions that put us in the best position possible to accomplish our mission: defending our Democratic Senate majority."

Another pro-Democrat group, the Save America Fund, has already spent \$2.5 million on television ads designed to help Ryan since August. The group has been discussing more significant buys with other PACs.

"We are having lots of conversations about how Tim Ryan can win this race," said Eric Hyers, a former colleague of Ryan's campaign manager who is running the Save America Fund. "We are all in on this."

But there are no easy options for Democratic groups deciding where to dedicate their final round of resources.

Democrats are defending vulnerable incumbent senators across Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and New Hampshire. They have also been investing heavily in flipping Republican-held seats across Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Wisconsin.

Democratic officials privately note that Trump twice won Ohio by 8 points, reflecting the Republican leanings of the state. By comparison, Trump won North Carolina by less than 1 percentage point and lost Wisconsin by just over 1 percentage point.

National Democratic strategists also note that Ohio's large working class population has shifted sharply away from Democrats in recent years, despite Ryan's best efforts to appeal to such voters.

That sentiment has led to a sense among Democrats in Ohio that their national party is abandoning them.

"There's a lot of frustration," said Ohio-based Democratic strategist Cliff Schechter, conceding that national Democratic leaders have a difficult job. "Tim Ryan doesn't need a lot -- just something. Do what you gotta do. Find a little bit of extra money. This race is incredibly winnable."

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Some Republicans privately see Vance as an underwhelming candidate, although most expect him to win because of the state's recent Republican shift. He has badly trailed Ryan in fundraising, typically an important gauge of a candidate's strength. Ryan has raised more than \$21.5 million on his own, compared with Vance's \$6.9 million.

As the race moves into its final weeks, Vance is leaning on Trump's continued popularity in the state to maintain momentum, particularly among undecided working class white voters. Donald Trump Jr., one of Vance's strongest supporters, campaigned alongside the Ohio Republican last week.

But Vance's relationship with Trump is complicated.

Vance was initially a so-called "Never Trumper" before Trump won the president. The former president then botched Vance's name at a rally during the spring primary. And at Trump's most recent Ohio rally for Vance, the former president quipped that Vance "is kissing my a—" for political support.

Ryan echoed that comment during a debate this week, calling Vance an "a— kisser." In the interview, Ryan said he's considering renaming his campaign bus "The A— Kicker Express."

He also made clear that while he'd welcome national Democratic dollars, he doesn't want Biden to campaign on his behalf.

"It's nothing personal. It's just like, I'm running in Ohio. I know Ohio. I know the message," Ryan said. "There's nobody that can express that better than me. And every time you bring people in, you take on their enemies, they may not say the things the way you want it to be said, and we've run a very disciplined campaign for the last year and a half. I just want to make sure that I'm the face, I'm the voice."

Ryan added, "And I want Ohioans to know I stand on my own."

Yet many Ryan allies continue to clamor for help from the national party.

Former Ohio Democratic Party Chairm David Pepper said the DSCC needs to step up and support Ryan, who's "fighting as effectively as anybody could" without national money.

"It's so similar to what happened in '16, it's kind of hard to watch," Pepper said, referencing former Democratic Gov. Ted Strickland's loss to Republican Sen. Rob Portman in that year's Senate race. "It's when polls are tied, our candidate has more money and is a stronger candidate and, when Republicans throw a punch, we walk away. It's a terrible signal to send."

In 2016, Strickland ultimately lost to Portman by 21 points. Next door in Pennsylvania, Republican Sen. Pat Toomey won by less than 2.

Justice Dept. seeks end to arbiter's review of Trump docs

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department asked a federal appeals court on Friday to shut down the work of an independent arbiter who was appointed last month to review documents seized during an FBI search of former President Donald Trump's Florida estate.

The appeal is the latest salvo in weeks of litigation over the scope of duties of the arbiter, also known as a special master, who was assigned to inspect the records taken in the Aug. 8 search of Mar-a-Lago and weed out any that may be protected by claims of legal privilege.

The special master process has caused some delays to the Justice Department's investigation into the holding of top-secret documents at the home. But a major hurdle was cleared last month when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit lifted a temporary bar on the department's ability to use the seized classified documents as part of its criminal probe.

The move permitted a core aspect of the probe to resume, greatly reducing the odds that the process could have a significant impact on the investigation. Even so, department lawyers returned to the court Friday to ask for the entire special master review to be shut down, saying the judge who made the appointment had no basis for doing so and that Trump was not entitled to an independent review of the seized records or to claim privilege over them.

"Plaintiff has no plausible claim of executive privilege as to any of the seized materials and no plausible claim of personal attorney-client privilege as to the seized government records — including all records bearing classification markings," according to the department's brief.

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"Accordingly," they added, "the special-master review process is unwarranted."

The Justice Department says it seized about 13,000 records, including roughly 100 with classification markings, during its court-authorized search in August. The department is conducting a criminal investigation into the retention of those records as well as into whether anyone obstructed its probe.

As part of the investigation, the FBI has interviewed multiple Trump aides, including a lawyer for him who served as a custodian of the records and who in June presented investigators with a signed letter asserting that all the classified records the Justice Department had asked for in a subpoena had been located and turned over.

Agents believed more records remained at the house, returned in August with a search warrant and removed 33 boxes of documents, including material classified at the top-secret level.

Weeks later, the Trump team asked a judge in Florida, Aileen Cannon, to appoint a special master to do an independent review of the records. Cannon agreed, naming a veteran Brooklyn judge, Raymond Dearie, to inspect the records and segregate from the rest of the investigation any documents that could possibly be covered by claims of executive privilege or attorney-client privilege.

The 11th Circuit subsequently lifted Cannon's prohibition on the department's use of the classified documents for its investigation pending Dearie's review, as well as a requirement that the Justice Department provide those specific records to Dearie for his review.

The Supreme Court on Thursday declined a request from Trump's lawyers to intervene in the dispute.

The Justice Department has repeatedly rejected the idea that a special master review was needed, and though it has been able to resume its review of the classified records, it said its investigation remains slowed by its inability to use the much larger set of non-classified documents as part of its probe.

"The district court's injunction barring review and use of the other seized records harms the government and the public as well," the department said. "A magistrate judge has already found probable cause to believe that those records may constitute evidence of crimes, and the government has demonstrated a clear need for them."

Families face man charged in killings of 22 elderly Texans

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A week after the second conviction of a man charged in the deaths of 22 elderly women, family members of those he is accused of killing gathered at a Dallas courthouse Friday to face him.

In Ellen French House's victim impact statement, she told Billy Chemirmir, who was wearing a striped jail uniform, that she wanted him to see two photos of her mother: one of Norma French alive, the other after the 85-year-old was killed.

"This is my beautiful mother," House said as she displayed the first photo. "This is my mother after you pried her wedding ring off of her finger that she couldn't even get off."

For most of the families, Friday may be their only chance to face Chemirmir in a courthouse. After trying Chemirmir in two of the deaths and obtaining two sentences of life in prison without parole, Dallas County prosecutors have said they will dismiss their remaining 11 capital murder cases against him. Prosecutors in neighboring Collin County haven't yet said if they will try any of their nine capital murder cases against him.

Chemirmir, 49, received his second sentence of life in prison without parole last Friday after being convicted of capital murder in the smothering death of 87-year-old Mary Brooks. He was already sentenced to life in prison without parole for an April conviction in the death of 81-year-old Lu Thi Harris.

Authorities say he preyed on older women, killing them and stealing their valuables. Time after time, their deaths were initially determined to be from natural causes, even as family members raised alarm bells about missing jewelry. He has been charged in deaths over a two-year span.

Loren Adair Smith told Chemirmir that at 91, her mother, Phyllis Payne, was still a "vibrant, active, loving, amazing woman" who was "still living a fabulous life" when she was killed.

"You stole my mom, my best friend," Smith said. "And for what? A bit of jewelry? A bit of silver?"

She said she and her brother were convinced their mother would live to be 100. "We just wanted time,

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and you stole that time from us," Smith said.

As the family members spoke, emotions ranged from forgiveness to anger to an expressed desire for Chemirmir, who has maintained his innocence, to confess. Several family members said they still have nightmares about the way their loved one died.

It was a woman's survival of a March 2018 attack that set Chemirmir's arrest in motion. Mary Annis Bartel, then 91, told police a man forced his way into her apartment at an independent living community for seniors, tried to smother her with a pillow and took her jewelry.

Police testified they found Chemirmir the next day in the parking lot of his apartment complex holding jewelry and cash, having just thrown away a large red jewelry box. Documents in the jewelry box led them to the home of Harris, who was found dead in her bedroom, lipstick smeared on her pillow.

Prosecutors presented evidence at Chemirmir's trials that he and Harris had been at the same Walmart just hours before she was found dead.

After Chemirmir's arrest, police across the Dallas area reexamined deaths, and the charges against him grew. Many of the victims' children have said they were left perplexed by the deaths at the time, as their mothers, though older, were still healthy and active. Four indictments were added this summer.

Most of the victims lived in apartments at independent living communities for older people. One woman who lived in a private home was the widow of a man Chemirmir cared for while working as an at-home caregiver.

As the victims' children began finding each other, they formed Secure Our Seniors' Safety, which has worked to pass legislation surrounding the safety of older people.

Lindsey Watkins told Chemirmir that she was just 18 when she went to check on her grandmother, 82-year-old Helen Lee, after she didn't show up for church and found her dead.

"What you'll never understand is that her jewelry was the least valuable thing that you stole," Watkins said. "Her life was worth just a few thousand dollars to you. But it was worth everything to me."

Putin calls his actions in Ukraine 'correct and timely'

By SABRA AYRES Associated Press

KYIV, UKRAINE (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday he expects his mobilization of army reservists for combat in Ukraine to be completed in about two weeks, allowing him to end an unpopular and chaotic call-up meant to counter Ukrainian battlefield gains and solidify his illegal annexation of occupied territory.

Putin — facing domestic discontent and military setbacks in a neighboring country armed with increasingly advanced Western weapons — also told reporters he does not regret starting the conflict and "did not set out to destroy Ukraine" when he ordered Russian troops to invade nearly eight months ago.

"What is happening today is unpleasant, to put it mildly," he said after attending a summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Kazakhstan's capital. "But we would have had all this a little later, only under worse conditions for us, that's all. So my actions are correct and timely."

Russia's difficulties in achieving its war aims have become apparent in one of the four Ukrainian regions Putin illegally claimed as Russian territory last month. Anticipating an advance by Ukrainian forces, Moscow-installed authorities in the Kherson region urged residents to flee Friday.

Even some of Putin's own supporters have criticized the Kremlin's handling of the war and mobilization, increasing pressure on him to do more to turn the tide in Russia's favor.

In his comments on the army mobilization, Putin said the action he ordered last month had registered 222,000 of the 300,000 reservists the Russian Defense Ministry set as an initial goal. A total of 33,000 of them have joined military units, and 16,000 are deployed for combat, he said.

Putin ordered the call-up to bolster the fight along a 1,100-km (684-mile) front line where Ukrainian counteroffensives have inflicted blows to Moscow's military prestige. The mobilization was troubled from the start, with confusion about who was eligible for the draft in a country where almost all men under age 65 are registered as reservists.

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Opposition to the order was so strong that tens of thousands of men left Russia, and others protested in the streets. Critics were skeptical the draft would end in two weeks. They predicted only a pause to allow enlistment offices to process regular conscripts during Russia's annual fall draft for men aged 18-27, which was postponed from Oct. 1 to Nov. 1.

"Do not believe Putin about 'two weeks.' Mobilization can only be canceled by his decree. No decree - no cancellation," Vyacheslav Gimadi, an attorney for imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, wrote on Facebook.

Asked about the possibility of an expanded mobilization, the Russian president said the Defense Ministry had not asked him to authorize one.

"Nothing further is planned," Putin said, adding, "In the foreseeable future, I don't see any need."

Putin and other officials stated in September the mobilization would affect some 300,000 people, but his enabling decree did not cite a specific number. Russian media reports have suggested it could be as high as 1.2 million.

Putin had also said only those with combat or service experience would be drafted. He later admitted military officials had made mistakes, such as enlisting reservists without the relevant background. Men who received minimal training decades ago were drafted in droves.

Reports also have surfaced that some recruits were sent to the front lines in Ukraine with little preparation and inadequate equipment. Several mobilized reservists were reported to have died in combat in Ukraine this week, just days after they were drafted.

Putin responded to the criticism Friday, saying all activated recruits should receive adequate training and that he would assign Russia's Security Council "to conduct an inspection of how mobilized citizens are being trained."

Before launching the invasion on Feb. 24, Putin questioned Ukraine's right to exist as a sovereign nation, portraying the country as part of historic Russia. Asked about this on Friday, he repeated his claim that Russia was prepared for peace talks and again accused the Ukrainian government of quitting negotiations after Russian troops withdrew from Kyiv early in the war.

Ukraine rejected any possibility of negotiating with Putin after he illegally annexed Ukraine's Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk regions last month based on "referendums" that Kyiv and the West denounced as a sham.

The battlefield momentum has shifted toward Ukraine as its military recaptures cities, towns and villages that Russia took early in the war. After occupied Kherson's worried Kremlin-backed leaders asked civilians to evacuate to ensure their safety and to give Russian troops more maneuverability, Moscow offered free accommodations.

Russia has characterized the movement of Ukrainians to Russia or Russian-controlled territory as voluntary, but in many cases they aren't allowed to travel to Ukrainian-held territory, and reports have surfaced that some were forcibly deported to "filtration camps" with harsh conditions.

An Associated Press investigation found that Russian officials deported thousands of Ukrainian children — some orphaned, others living with foster families or in institutions — to be raised as Russian.

Ukrainian forces reported retaking 75 populated places in northern Kherson in the last month, according to Ukraine's Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories. A similar campaign in eastern Ukraine resulted in most of the Kharkiv region returning to Ukrainian control, as well as parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the ministry said.

As they retreat, Russian forces are adding to their losses by abandoning weapons and ammunition. In the U.S., the Office of the Director of National Intelligence presented a slide deck Friday stating that at least 6,000 pieces of Russian equipment have been lost since the start of the war. The presentation outlines enormous pressure on Russia's defense industry to replace its losses and says that because of export controls and international sanctions, Russia is expending munitions at an unsustainable rate.

Konstantin, a Kherson resident who spoke to the AP only if his last name was withheld for safety reasons, said columns of military trucks had moved around the region's capital and eventually left. Most govern-

ment offices have reduced working hours, and schools have closed, he said.

"The city is now in suspense. Primarily the Russian military from the headquarters and the family of collaborators are leaving," Konstantin said. "Everyone is discussing the imminent arrival of the Ukrainian military and preparing for it."

Russian forces on Friday carried out missile strikes on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, and in the Zaphorizhzhia region, home to Europe's biggest nuclear power plant. The U.N.'s nuclear watchdog has warned that fighting at or near the Russian-controlled Zaphorizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, now shuttered, could trigger a catastrophic radiation release.

Putin has vowed to retaliate if Ukraine or its allies strike Russian territory, including the annexed regions of Ukraine. Russia's Belgorod region on the border with Ukraine came under attack for a second day Friday. According to Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov, the shelling damaged an electric substation, five houses in the village of Voznesenovka and a power line, leaving several nearby villages temporarily without electricity. No casualties or injuries were reported.

Ukrainian shelling blew up an ammunition depot in the Belgorod region on Thursday, according to Russia's Investigative Committee. Unconfirmed media reports said three Russian National Guard officers were killed and more than 10 were wounded.

Vowing to liberate all Russian-occupied areas, Gen. Valeriy Zaluzhny, the commander of Ukraine's armed forces, said in a video message Friday, "We have buried the myth of the invincibility of the Russian army."

Officials: Musk seeks US funds for Ukraine satellite network

By TARA COPP and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Defense Department has gotten a request from SpaceX and Tesla founder Elon Musk to take over funding for his satellite network that has provided crucial battlefield communications for Ukrainian military forces since almost the beginning of its war with Russia, U.S. officials said Friday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter not yet made public, said the issue has been discussed in meetings and senior leaders are weighing the matter. There have been no decisions.

In a statement later Friday, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said, "We can confirm the Department received correspondence from SpaceX about the funding of Starlink, their satellite communications product in Ukraine. We remain in communication with SpaceX about this and other topics."

During a Pentagon briefing, she declined to provide any details about the communication or say to whom the correspondence was sent and when the communications with Musk began.

Musk began sending Starlink satellite dishes to Ukraine just days after Russia invaded in February. On Feb. 28, Ukrainian Vice Prime Minister Mykhailo Fedorov tweeted a photo of the first Starlink kits arriving on the back of a truck.

"You are most welcome," Musk tweeted back.

Musk's generosity was hailed by Ukrainians and seen as a game changer in war tactics — the Russians could try to cut Ukrainian ground communications but it could not control space.

The Starlink system of more than 2,200 low-orbiting satellites has provided broadband internet to more than 150,000 Ukrainian ground stations. Early Friday, Musk tweeted that it was costing SpaceX \$20 million a month to support Ukraine's communications needs.

In addition to the terminals, he tweeted that the company has to create, launch, maintain and replenish satellites and ground stations.

CNN was the first to report the Musk request.

The Starlink satellite internet's vital role in Ukraine's defense cannot be overstated. It has, for example, assisted front-line reconnaissance drone operators in targeting artillery strikes on key Russian assets. A senior military official on Friday made it clear that the U.S. believes the system has proven exceptionally effective on the battlefield. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to provide U.S. assessment of the Ukrainian battlefield.

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In a tweet on Friday, Ukrainian presidential adviser Mikhail Podolyak said Ukraine will find a solution to keep Starlink working.

"Let's be honest. Like it or not, @elonmusk helped us survive the most critical moments of war. Business has the right to its own strategies," he tweeted. "We expect that the company will provide stable connection till the end of negotiations."

In response to multiple questions during the briefing, Singh said the Pentagon was working with the Ukrainian Defense Ministry. "We know that there is this demand, and (satellite communications) capability ... is needed and we want to be able to ensure that there are stable communications for the Ukrainian forces and for Ukraine."

The request from the world's richest man to have the Pentagon take over the hundreds of millions of dollars he says the system is costing comes on the heels of a Twitter war between Musk and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. And in tweets overnight Musk referred to the friction, suggesting it may affect his decision to end his company's largesse in funding the systems.

In a Twitter exchange last week, Musk argued that to reach peace Russia should be allowed to keep the Crimean Peninsula, which it seized in 2014. He also said Ukraine should adopt a neutral status, dropping a bid to join NATO.

Musk also started a Twitter poll asking whether "the will of the people" should decide if seized regions remain part of Ukraine or become part of Russia.

In a sarcastic response, Zelenskyy posted a Twitter poll of his own asking "which Elon Musk do you like more?": "One who supports Ukraine" or "One who supports Russia." Musk replied to Zelenskyy that "I still very much support Ukraine, but am convinced that massive escalation of the war will cause great harm to Ukraine and possibly the world."

Andriy Melnyk, the outgoing Ukrainian ambassador to Germany, responded to Musk's original tweet with an obscenity.

It's not clear how much of the cost of deploying Starlink satellite uplinks in Ukraine has been covered by U.S. funding. In April, the U.S. Agency for International Development said it had delivered 5,000 of the terminals. The Pentagon had no response to that question.

Musk's commitment to spend \$44 billion to purchase Twitter "has to factor into his decision that he can no longer afford to do this for free," said retired Army Maj. Gen. John Ferrari, a non-resident senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Musk's request that the Pentagon begin to pick up the tab comes as the Space Force and Pentagon have been looking at how commercial vendors will play a role in national security. Musk's threat to withdraw highlights the risk of leaning too much on commercial capabilities, Ferrari said.

"Commercial vendors always get to change their mind," Ferrari said, adding that the reliance on Starlink to provide communications for Ukraine also serves as a reminder that the Pentagon has to expand this service beyond SpaceX, he said.

"The government needs many vendors for key capabilities, of course that often means more money, but it is an insurance policy and insurance costs money," Ferrari said.

In March, commander of U.S. Space Command Army Gen. James Dickinson said that having vendors provide needed capabilities, such as Maxar's satellite imagery of stalled Russian convoys, has become essential, because it frees up limited military satellite assets to focus on other things.

In his tweets, Musk also raised a question that various vendors and the Pentagon are considering as space becomes a more critical part of wartime operations: If a commercial vendor is assisting the U.S. and is targeted, does the U.S. owe it protection?

"We've also had to defend against cyberattacks & jamming, which are getting harder," Musk tweeted.

Trump's subpoena and what's next for the Jan. 6 panel

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In an extraordinary step, the House Jan. 6 committee has voted unanimously to

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subpoena former President Donald Trump — a final effort to get the full story of the Capitol insurrection as the panel wraps up its work by the end of the year.

Trump still does not acknowledge the “former” in front of “president,” and he has been relentlessly hostile to the investigation. He called it a “charade and a witch hunt” in a letter to the committee on Friday — but notably did not mention the subpoena or say whether he would comply with the demand for his appearance.

The attempt to compel Trump’s testimony comes as the committee is tying together multiple investigative threads and compiling its final report. The panel is only authorized through this Congress, which ends on Jan. 3.

A look at what’s next as the panel sprints to its finish:

THE TRUMP SUBPOENA

The nine-member committee has interviewed more than 1,000 witnesses, including many of the former president’s top White House aides. And they have laid out a detailed timeline of Trump’s efforts to overturn his 2020 election defeat — including his inaction as his supporters stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. But they still want to hear from Trump himself.

Now that a subpoena has been authorized — on Thursday — it must be delivered in writing to Trump. That step, expected early next week, will set a date for an interview and lay out requests for documents.

Trump and his lawyers will then decide how to respond. He could comply, negotiate with the committee, announce he will defy the subpoena or ignore it altogether. He could also go to court and try to stop it.

If Trump doesn’t comply, the panel will have to weigh the practical and political implications of a vote on holding him in contempt of Congress. If the full House voted to recommend such a charge, the Justice Department would then review the case.

The committee has taken that step with some of Trump’s allies who refused to comply with subpoenas, including Steve Bannon, who was convicted of contempt in July. But holding a former president in contempt would be another matter, an exceptional step for any Congress.

In his letter on Friday, Trump repeated his false claims of widespread election fraud and said he was writing to express “anger, disappointment and complaint” that the committee wasn’t investigating his claims. He also took the opportunity to boast anew about the size of the crowd that gathered for his speech near the White House on the morning of Jan. 6, before he sent them marching to the Capitol. He included aerial photographs. He said nothing about the subpoena.

Even if he does comply, there’s reason to doubt that Trump’s appearance would help the investigation. He did respond to some written questions from special counsel Robert Mueller during the probe of Russian cooperation with his 2016 campaign. But his answers produced little or nothing to advance the investigation. More recently, he appeared for a deposition by the office of New York State Attorney General Letitia James — but invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination more than 400 times in refusing to answer questions.

WHAT ABOUT PENCE?

The committee is still talking to lawyers for former Vice President Mike Pence, as it has been for months. But it is unclear whether the lawmakers will subpoena the vice president or ask him for testimony.

Several of Pence’s aides have talked to investigators, some providing great detail about his movements and state of mind as he resisted Trump’s pleas to object to the certification of electoral votes that day and try to overturn their defeat to Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

Video shown Thursday at the committee’s final hearing before the midterm elections showed Pence coordinating with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer for help as the rioters were inside the building, some of them calling for Pence’s execution. The leaders were working with security officials to ensure that they could return to the Capitol and certify Biden’s victory.

A CRIMINAL REFERRAL?

The committee will also have to decide whether to refer any allegations of crimes to the Justice Department. While federal prosecutors are conducting their own investigations into Jan. 6 and Trump’s efforts

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to overturn the election, the congressional committee has its separate, massive trove of evidence.

Lawmakers on the panel have hinted multiple times over the past year that they will issue criminal referrals. At the hearing on Thursday, Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, the committee's Republican vice chairwoman, said that the panel "may ultimately decide" to do so. She said they have "sufficient information to consider criminal referrals for multiple individuals."

While such a referral would not force any action, it would amplify the political pressure on Attorney General Merrick Garland as the department pursues its own probes.

SECRET SERVICE

The committee recently received more than 1.5 million pages of documents from the Secret Service. But lawmakers say they still don't have everything they want.

The panel is working to verify the accounts of White House aides who described Trump's actions on Jan. 6 as he tried to go to the Capitol and accompany his supporters, hundreds of whom eventually broke in. Security officials, along with many White House aides and GOP members of Congress, were vehemently opposed to the idea. Trump was livid and tried, ultimately unsuccessfully, to go to the Capitol anyway, according to several accounts aired by the committee.

California Rep. Pete Aguilar, a Democratic member of the panel, said the lawmakers "will be recalling witnesses and conducting further investigative depositions" based on the Secret Service material. The agency has not turned over text messages that it says were deleted.

FINAL REPORT

The panel's expected final action will be a massive report laying out evidence, findings and legislative recommendations to ensure nothing like Jan. 6 ever happens again. But it's unclear how much of its investigative material will be released to the public.

In one of eight hearings last summer, Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, another Democratic member, said, "We have only shown a small fraction of what we have found."

Lawmakers have made clear that the report will lay out what they view as the stakes for the country as many Republicans still believe, falsely, that the 2020 election was stolen and as Trump considers another run in 2024.

"With every effort to excuse or justify the conduct of the former president, we chip away at the foundation of our republic," Cheney said at the hearing.

Actor Robbie Coltrane, Harry Potter's Hagrid, dies at 72

LONDON (AP) — Robbie Coltrane, the baby-faced comedian and character actor whose hundreds of roles included a crime-solving psychologist on the TV series "Cracker" and the gentle half-giant Hagrid in the "Harry Potter" movies, has died. He was 72.

Coltrane's agent Belinda Wright said he died Friday at a hospital in his native Scotland, and did not immediately offer other details. She called him "forensically intelligent" and "brilliantly witty" in just one of many tributes made to him.

"Harry Potter" author J.K. Rowling, who decades ago had said Coltrane was her first choice to play Hagrid, tweeted Friday that he was "an incredible talent, a complete one off."

"I was beyond fortunate to know him, work with him and laugh my head off with him," she wrote.

Born Anthony Robert McMillan in Rutherglen, Scotland, Coltrane was in his early 20s when he began pursuing an acting career and renamed himself in honor of jazz musician John Coltrane.

He already had a notable screen career, with credits including "Mona Lisa," "Nuns on the Run" and Kenneth Branagh's adaptation of "Henry V" when he broke through on his own as a hard-bitten detective in "Cracker," the 1990s TV series for which he won best actor at the British Academy Television Awards three years running.

He went on to appear in all eight "Harry Potter" movie as the young wizard's mentor and had a wide variety of other parts, including a Russian crime boss in the James Bond thrillers "GoldenEye" and "The World is Not Enough" and Pip's guardian Mr. Jaggers in a 2012 adaptation of Dickens' "Great Expectations."

More recently, he received rave reviews for playing a beloved TV star who may harbor a dark secret in the 2016 miniseries "National Treasure."

On Friday, his "Nuns on the Run" co-star Eric Idle tweeted that he had been talking about Coltrane, "wondering where he was," when he learned of his death.

"Such a bright and brilliant man. A consummate actor, an extraordinarily funny comedian and an amazing actor. He was also a very good friend," Idle wrote.

Wright said Coltrane is survived by his sister Annie Rae, his ex-wife Rhona Gemmell and his children Spencer and Alice.

Parkland shooter prosecutors call for probe of juror threat

By TERRY SPENCER and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Prosecutors of Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz called for an investigation Friday after a juror said another panelist threatened her during the deliberations that ended with a life sentence for Cruz's murder of 17 people four years ago at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Prosecutor Carolyn McCann told Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer during a brief hearing that prosecutors are not trying to invalidate Thursday's jury vote and reported the threat only for safety reasons and so the Broward County Sheriff's Office can investigate.

In their written motion asking for the hearing, prosecutors said the juror told them another juror did something during deliberations that "she perceived to be a threat."

McCann said they did not ask any further questions because they didn't want to taint any investigation and said the Broward state attorney's office has no intention of getting involved further.

"We don't want to touch this with a 10-foot pole," she said.

Scherer agreed that if a possible crime was committed, deputies should investigate. The information has been turned over to sheriff's investigators, who will contact the juror.

Florida criminal defense attorneys Richard Escobar and David Weinstein, who are both former prosecutors, said in interviews that even if a threat was made to a juror, the jury's decision cannot be overturned because of double jeopardy, or trying the same defendant twice for the same crime.

Weinstein pointed to a 1990s case involving two drug kingpins who bribed a jury and were acquitted. Even under that circumstance, prosecutors couldn't retry the duo for drug trafficking, but did convict them on charges stemming from the bribery.

Scherer said two jurors tried to speak to her after Thursday's decision was announced, she said, but she told them that wouldn't be appropriate.

Scherer said a bailiff told her later that one juror wanted to speak to her during Thursday's reading of the decision. That juror sat slumped over during the 50-minute reading but did nothing obvious to indicate he wanted Scherer's attention. When the jurors were polled, he agreed the life sentence was the panel's decision.

Jurors have told local TV stations that the final vote was 9-3 for death, with one of the three voters for life adamant she would never change her mind. Under Florida law, a death sentence requires a unanimous vote, and jurors decided there was no point in continuing deliberations.

That means Scherer will sentence Cruz to life without parole at a Nov. 1 hearing — a punishment whose announcement left many families of the victims angered, baffled and in tears. They will be allowed to address Cruz at the hearing.

Jury foreman Benjamin Thomas told local reporters "It really came down to a specific (juror) that he (Cruz) was mentally ill."

Cruz, 24, pleaded guilty a year ago to murdering 14 Stoneman Douglas students and three staff members, and wounding 17 others on Feb. 14, 2018.

Cruz's jury unanimously agreed there were aggravating factors to warrant a possible death sentence, such as agreeing that the murders were "especially heinous, atrocious, or cruel."

But one or more jurors also found mitigating factors, such as untreated childhood problems stemming from his birth mother's excessive drinking during pregnancy. In the end, the jury could not unanimously agree that the aggravating factors outweighed the mitigators.

The jurors pledged during the selection process that they could vote for a death sentence, but some parents, including some who attended the trial almost daily, wondered whether they were all being honest.

Juror Denise Cunha sent a short handwritten note to the judge Thursday defending her vote for a life sentence and denying she intended to vote that way before the trial began.

"The deliberations were very tense and some jurors became extremely unhappy once I mentioned that I would vote for life," Cunha wrote. She did not explain her vote. McCann said she is not the juror who reported the possible threat.

Thomas did not say whether that adamant life vote was Cunha's.

Brazil polls facing Bolsonaro backlash after election miss

By CARLA BRIDI Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Brazilian polling companies have been facing threats of a crackdown after their surveys for the election's first round significantly understated the support for the president and his allies.

President Jair Bolsonaro's Justice Ministry called for a Federal Police investigation and the antitrust regulator on Thursday launched a probe into whether pollsters formed a cartel to manipulate election results. Allies in Congress are pushing separate initiatives, one of which would establish prison sentences for polls failing to accurately predict results.

Multiple analysts consulted by The Associated Press — even those who said polls have room to improve — slammed these efforts.

"The main goal is not to improve electoral polls, but to persecute and punish institutes," said Alberto Almeida, who leads political research institute Brasilis. "There were mistakes, but voting on a bill, doing a congressional investigation — that is an embarrassment. Wanting to criminalize is senseless."

Before the Oct. 2 vote, many polls had indicated that Bolsonaro was far behind. Some suggested leftist former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva could even clinch a first-round victory. Most showed a margin that neared or exceeded double digits.

Instead, Bolsonaro came within five points of da Silva and the two will compete in an Oct. 30 runoff. Bolsonaro's right-wing allies in congressional and gubernatorial races also did better than polls indicated.

Throughout the campaign, Bolsonaro and his backers had scoffed at pollsters' findings, pointing instead to the president's packed rallies. Those, they said, represented his true support.

After the vote, they seized on results as proof. And a flurry of attacks followed.

Justice Minister Anderson Torres requested the Federal Police to investigate polling institutes, writing on Oct. 4 that their conduct appeared to indicate criminal practice, though he didn't specify what law they might have broken. Police launched their probe on Thursday, as did the federal antitrust regulator — only to have Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who also oversees the electoral court, block both investigations that evening.

"These investigations seem to demonstrate the intention to satisfy (Bolsonaro's) electoral will," de Moraes wrote in his decision.

A pro-government senator requested the Senate to investigate which institutes operate "outside tolerable margins."

And Bolsonaro's whip in the lower house presented a bill to criminalize polls conducted within 15 days of elections whose findings differ significantly from results.

The proposal to punish off-base polls goes far beyond previous efforts in Brazil's Congress to just ban polls in the immediate lead-up to elections so they cannot influence voters' choices. One such bill passed in the lower house last year, but wasn't taken up by the Senate.

Such blackout periods are common across the world. Polls cannot be published within 15 days of Chilean and Italian elections, eight days for Argentine races, five for Spain and three for Mexico.

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By contrast, it is legal to publish polls in Greece and the U.K. until the day before the vote. There are no restrictions in the U.S., though most media organizations that sponsor polls on election day — including the AP — voluntarily wait to publish information that could preview the outcome in each state until polls have closed.

Current Brazilian law prohibits publication of a fraudulent poll, but doesn't clarify how to establish fraud has occurred, leaving room for interpretation, said constitutional law expert Vera Chemin, so the nation should discuss reforming that legislation.

"But this needs to be done calmly and impartially, which isn't the case right now," she said, adding that the proposal to punish pollsters is "too extreme."

Under its terms, poll directors and coordinators as well as clients who commission an errant poll could be sentenced to between four and 10 years prison and fined.

The bill's sponsor, lower house whip Ricardo Barros, indicated in an interview that he faces resistance from other lawmakers, but described the measure as an alternative to a pre-election poll ban — an approach previously ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

"I would rather prohibit polls, but since we can't do the same as other countries, pollsters need adequate techniques so results converge with what we see in the vote," he said.

Brazil's association of polling institutions expressed "indignation" at efforts to take legal action against them. It said the country's polls are "diagnoses, not projections" and follow international standards.

Eduardo Grin, a political analyst at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a university and think tank in Sao Paulo, criticized the fact Barros' bill doesn't establish willful misconduct as necessary for punishment, and said it reflects Bolsonaro's attempt to test public opinion for measures that limit society's access to information.

Hardly a day goes by during campaign season without results from a fresh poll. This year's first round had a whopping 975 polls regarding presidential candidates, up 92% from 2018, according to Daniel Marcelino, a data researcher for news site Jota who counted the polls registered with the electoral authority.

It isn't clear why so many polls missed the mark on Bolsonaro's support. Analysts have said that respondents who said they favored also-rans in the multi-candidate race appeared to migrate to Bolsonaro at the last minute. Some suggested that so-called "shy voters" had been embarrassed to disclose support for Bolsonaro. Others said outdated census data had hurt survey design.

Adriano Oliveira, director at Intelligence Scenario, a pollster based in Pernambuco state, said many polls frame questions in a way that skews results. He said they should first ask whether respondents have selected a candidate to avoid pressuring for an answer not indicative of their eventual vote. He also said results are often presented and reported by media as though vote intention isn't subject to change.

Nevertheless, he said, "This crusade against research institutes is absurd. After all it is a company, it functions within the free market. ... People define which institute has the most credibility."

Dolly Parton donation strategy: 'I just give from my heart'

By GLENN GAMBOA AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Dolly Parton laughs at the idea that she is some sort of secret philanthropist.

Sure, social media sleuths did piece together this week that the country superstar had been quietly paying for the band uniforms of many Tennessee high schools for years. And yes, it did take decades for her to reveal that she used the songwriting royalties she earned from Whitney Houston's version of "I Will Always Love You" to purchase a strip mall in Nashville to support the surrounding Black neighborhood in her honor. Oh, and it did eventually come out that Parton had donated \$1 million for research that helped create the Moderna vaccine for COVID-19.

"I don't do it for attention," she told The Associated Press in an interview, shortly before she received the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy at Gotham Hall in New York City Thursday night. "But look! I'm getting a lot of attention by doing it."

In fact, Parton believes she gets too much attention for her philanthropic work — which ranges from promoting childhood literacy to supporting those affected by natural disasters and providing numerous

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college scholarships through her Dollywood Foundation.

"I get paid more attention than maybe some others that are doing more than me," Parton said, adding that she hopes that attention inspires more people to help others.

In her Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy speech, Parton said she doesn't really have a strategy for her donations.

"I just give from my heart," she said. "I never know what I'm going to do or why I'm gonna do it. I just see a need and if I can fill it, then I will."

One need Parton does focus on filling is fostering a love of reading in children. Her Imagination Library initiative sends a free book every month to children under five whose parents request them. Currently, Parton sends out about 2 million free books each month.

"This actually started because my father could not read and write and I saw how crippling that could be," she said. "My dad was a very smart man. And I often wondered what he could have done had he been able to read and write. So that is the inspiration."

That program continues to expand. And last month, the state of California partnered with Imagination Library to make the program available to the millions of children under five in the state.

"That is a big deal," she said. "That's a lot of children. And we're so honored and proud to have all the communities that make that happen because I get a lot of glory for the work a whole lot of people are doing."

Parton said she'll accept that attention because it furthers the cause. "I'm proud to be the voice out there doing what I can to get more books into the hands of more children," she said.

Eric Isaacs, president of the Carnegie Institution for Science and a member of the medal selection committee, said Parton is a "tremendous example" of someone who understands the importance of philanthropy.

"Everyone knows her music," he said. "They might know Dollywood for entertainment, more broadly. But now they're going to know her for her philanthropy, which I'm not sure they have before."

If Parton didn't make philanthropy a priority in her life, it could be difficult to balance it with all her other pursuits.

She released "Run, Rose, Run," a best-selling novel co-written with James Patterson, in March. She filmed the holiday movie "Dolly Parton's Mountain Magic Christmas" with Willie Nelson, Miley Cyrus and Jimmy Fallon for NBC. And she will be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on Nov. 5, alongside Eminem, Lionel Richie and Pat Benatar – an honor she initially declined, but then graciously accepted.

"I'm ready to rock," she said, adding that she has already written a new song, especially for that ceremony in Los Angeles.

But Parton is also ready to expand her philanthropic work. This year, she launched the Care More initiative at her Dollywood Parks and Resorts, which gives employees a day off to volunteer at a nonprofit of their choice.

"I think it's important for everyone to do their share to help their fellow man," she said. "This world is so crazy. I don't think we even know what we're doing to each other and to this world."

Parton says she hopes the day of service will let people realize that "when you help somebody, it helps them, but it can help you more."

"That's what we should do as human beings," she said. "I never quite understood why we have to let religion and politics and things like that stand in the way of just being good human beings. I think it's important from that standpoint just to feel like you're doing your part, doing something decent and good and right."

UK's Truss drops tax cuts, axes Treasury chief amid turmoil

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Embattled British Prime Minister Liz Truss sacked her Treasury chief and reversed course on a major part of her tax-cutting economic plan Friday as she struggled to hang on to her job after weeks of turmoil on financial markets. But the market response was muted and the political reaction to what

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many saw as panicked moves left Truss' credibility in tatters after only six weeks in office.

At a hastily arranged news conference, Truss said she was acting to "reassure the markets of our fiscal discipline" by ditching her pledge to scrap a planned increase in corporation tax. Earlier, she fired her close friend Kwasi Kwarteng as head of the Treasury and replaced him with Jeremy Hunt, a long-time lawmaker who has served three previous stints as a Cabinet minister.

Truss is trying to restore confidence and rebuild her credibility with international investors and members of her own party after the "mini-budget" she and Kwarteng unveiled three weeks ago sparked political and economic turmoil.

The government's Sept. 23 announcement that it planned to cut taxes by 45 billion pounds (\$50 billion) without detailing how it would pay for them or offering independent analysis about the impact on public finances raised concerns that government borrowing could rise to unsustainable levels.

That sent the pound plunging to a record low against the dollar and forced the Bank of England to step in to prevent a wider economic crisis.

Truss has now canceled about 20 billion pounds of the originally planned tax cuts.

But her brief, downbeat news conference is unlikely to have reassured Truss' Conservative Party that she is in control.

"I think she's just confirmed that she's not the right person for the job," said Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London. "I don't think it communicated the kind of confidence the country needs right now."

Despite backtracking on a major part of her program, Truss clung to the idea that her policies were what the country needs to spur economic growth. She also avoided repeated questions about why she should remain in office when she and Kwarteng were equally responsible for the government's economic plan and the fallout it triggered.

"I am absolutely determined to see through what I have promised," Truss said.

The initial response from investors suggested Truss' moves may not be enough to calm financial markets.

Yields on 10-year government bonds rose immediately after her news conference, indicating investors are still concerned about government debt. The pound fell 1.2% against the U.S. dollar.

The next big test for Truss will come Monday when trading resumes on financial markets. The Bank of England on Friday ended its emergency intervention to stabilize long-term bond prices and protect pensions funds.

"Whether or not she remains prime minister, her whole agenda now, her ability to pursue her political project, if you like, is really out of her hands," said Jill Rutter, a senior fellow at the Institute for Government, a London-based think tank.

"Her fate is now in the hands of the markets."

Truss is also facing pressure from across the political spectrum.

The opposition Liberal Democrats called for an emergency weekend session of the House of Commons for Hunt to provide more detail on the government's economic plan. Scotland's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon called for an early general election. And the BBC reported that a group of senior Conservative lawmakers are planning to call for Truss' resignation next week.

Truss' future is in doubt less than six weeks after she took office promising to re-energize the British economy and put the nation on a path to "long-term success."

A small-state, low-tax Conservative who patterns herself after 1980s Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Truss argued that cutting taxes, reducing red tape and courting investment would spur economic growth and generate more revenue to pay for public services.

But the Sept. 23 tax cut plan only provided half of the equation. Without an independent analysis of her full economic program, the added growth it will produce and the additional tax revenue likely to be created, she was asking investors and voters to trust that the sums would in the end add up.

Truss said Friday that Hunt would unveil the full economic plan on Oct. 31, along with analysis from the independent Office for Budget Responsibility.

James Athey, investment director at the fund manager abrdn, described Truss' move as a "U-turn on its decision not to U-turn on its profligate tax-cutting policies." And, Britain still faces myriad problems, he said.

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"Inflation is at multi-decade highs, government borrowing is huge, as is the current account deficit. The housing market is likely to suffer a hammer blow from the jump in mortgage rates and the war in Ukraine rumbles on," he said.

"We may well be through the worst of the volatility, but I fear that the U.K. is nowhere near out of the woods."

Conservative lawmakers are agonizing over whether to try to oust their second leader this year. Truss was elected last month to replace Boris Johnson, who was forced out in July.

The weeks of financial turmoil has helped the opposition Labour Party take a commanding lead in opinion polls. A national election does not have to be held until 2024, but many Conservatives fear the party is running out of time to close the gap.

Fractious Conservative lawmakers are scrambling to find a unity candidate who could replace Truss, with speculation centering on Hunt and two of the rivals who lost to Truss in the summer leadership contest: Rishi Sunak and Penny Mordaunt.

NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

By The Associated Press undefined

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

Russian strikes in Kyiv didn't destroy Zelenskyy's office

CLAIM: Ukrainian media is reporting that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office was destroyed by a missile strike.

THE FACTS: The building wasn't destroyed and the claim wasn't reported by mainstream Ukrainian news outlets. Twitter accounts supporting Russia shared the baseless assertion that Zelenskyy's office was among the buildings struck by a barrage of missile strikes in Ukraine's capital on Monday. "ZELENSKY'S OFFICE WAS DESTROYED BY A MISSILE STRIKE: UKRAINIAN MEDIA," wrote one Russian-aligned account, receiving more than 2,000 shares and 6,500 likes. The user reposted a video from a separate account called UkraineNews, which gives updates on the war. Though identified as "Ukrainian media," UkraineNews often makes posts in support of Russia. The account shared a video on Monday of smoke rising over the skyline, suggesting in the caption that Zelenskyy's office may have been the target while stating the report was "unconfirmed." But AP reporting and other images of the site show the government building where Zelenskyy works was not destroyed. AP journalists on the ground in Kyiv confirmed the building was not hit. Satellite images taken by Planet Labs Inc. and obtained by the AP capture an aerial view of the building on Monday that shows the structure still standing. Statements from the Office of the President of Ukraine on Monday and Tuesday made no mention of any strikes to its building, instead specifying that "civilian infrastructure" was targeted. Zelenskyy on Monday also filmed a video address outside of the Presidential Administration Building. The video captured much of the building's exterior and courtyard, and no damage can be seen. In Kyiv, blasts struck in the Shevchenko district, which includes the historic old town and government offices, both Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko and Zelenskyy said. While some of the strikes hit near the government quarter, where parliament and other major landmarks are located, neither official gave any indication that those government buildings were hit. AP images of the damage show a crater in the ground and debris strewn about a playground at Taras Shevchenko Park, near the city center. Outside of Kyiv, strikes in 12 other regions Monday caused power outages and killed at least 19 people. Russia launched the widespread attacks in retaliation for an explosion last weekend that damaged a bridge linking the country to the Crimean Peninsula.

— Associated Press writer Sophia Tulp in New York contributed this report.

Hoax tweet spreads false claim of Pelosi buying cannabis stocks

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CLAIM: Reuters reported that U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi recently purchased 10 million shares in a cannabis company.

THE FACTS: Reuters never published such a report, and financial disclosures show no record of Pelosi making such a stock purchase. After President Joe Biden announced on Oct. 6 that he is pardoning thousands of Americans convicted of "simple possession" of marijuana under federal law, social media users shared a hoax tweet suggesting Pelosi stood to profit from the move. The posts featured screenshots of the tweet, which was made to look like it came from a popular Twitter account, Breaking911. However, the tweet was actually posted by an account with a different username. "BREAKING: NANCY PELOSI PURCHASED 10,000,000 SHARES OF \$WEED 4 DAYS AGO :REUTERS," read the tweet in the screenshot. A second tweet noted that shares of Canopy Growth Corporation, which trades under WEED on the Toronto Stock Exchange, were up on Oct. 6. But Reuters never published this claim, and there is no evidence to suggest Pelosi has recently bought shares of Canopy Growth Corporation, nor the Roundhill Cannabis exchange-traded fund, which trades under WEED on the New York Stock Exchange. Heather Carpenter, a spokesperson for Reuters, confirmed in an email to the AP that the news agency did not publish the claim. "This is not a Reuters story," Carpenter wrote. Online records of Pelosi's financial disclosures show no such purchase by the congresswoman or her family filed with the Clerk of the House of Representatives, although lawmakers have 45 days to report trades under a 2012 law called the Stock Act. A spokesperson for Pelosi's office said the claim in the tweet was not true. "No such transaction has been made," Drew Hammill, Pelosi's deputy chief of staff, told the AP in an email. Pelosi has said she does not trade stocks herself. However, her husband, Paul Pelosi, is an investment banker who has traded tens of millions of dollars worth of stocks and options. Critics have argued that members of Congress and their families should not be allowed to trade individual stocks at all, because they may have the opportunity to profit off insider information gained through their official duties.

Posts mischaracterize Home Depot political donations

CLAIM: Home Depot recently donated \$1.75 million to Hershel Walker's U.S. Senate campaign.

THE FACTS: Bernard "Bernie" Marcus, a Home Depot co-founder who left the company in 2002, made contributions totaling \$1.75 million to a political action committee supporting Walker, not The Home Depot. Social media users this week conflated donations made by the former Home Depot executive with the political spending history of the company itself, amid the pivotal race for a U.S. Senate seat in Georgia. Walker, a political newcomer and former University of Georgia football star, is looking to flip the seat held by his Democratic opponent, incumbent Sen. Raphael Warnock, as Republicans try to take control of the Senate during the upcoming midterm elections. Commenting on the race on Monday, one Twitter user called for people to boycott Home Depot. "Home Depot just backed Hershel Walker with \$1.75 million. Please shop at Lowe's," the user wrote. The claim surfaced on Oct. 7 when another user tweeted: "Will you join me in boycotting Home Depot for donating \$1.75 MILLION to Herschel Walker's campaign?" That post prompted a denial from the company. "The company has not contributed to this campaign," Home Depot's account responded. "The contribution was from our co-founder Bernie Marcus, who left The Home Depot more than 20 years ago." Federal Election Commission data confirms that neither The Home Depot, nor its PAC, The Home Depot PAC, have donated directly to Walker's campaign or related PACs set up to exclusively support his campaign. Instead, FEC records show two donations equaling \$1.75 million made by Marcus, whose employer is listed as The Marcus Foundation, to a PAC dedicated to supporting Walker. One donation for \$1 million was made by Marcus to 34N22 PAC on March 21, 2022, and another donation of \$750,000 was made to the same PAC on Nov. 8, 2021, according to the database. Marcus co-founded Home Depot in 1978 and served as chairman of the board until his retirement in 2002. "His views do not represent the company," spokesperson Sara Gorman wrote in a statement, adding that, "The Home Depot PAC hasn't donated to Walker's or Warnock's campaigns." FEC data for the 2021-2022 election cycle shows the PAC has donated to a number of campaigns and PACs on both sides of the aisle. A search of such records shows The Home Depot PAC donated a combined \$90,000 to the National Republican Senatorial

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Committee from 2021-2022. The NRSC works to elect Republicans to the Senate. It has used funds to launch advertisements in Georgia against Walker's opponent, Warnock. It also donated \$30,000 to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, according to the FEC database.

— Sophia Tulp

Stacey Abrams did not lobby against major Atlanta events

CLAIM: Stacey Abrams lobbied for moving Major League Baseball's 2021 All-Star Game and Atlanta's 2022 Music Midtown festival out of Georgia.

THE FACTS: Abrams, the Democratic candidate in Georgia's gubernatorial race, did not advocate for either event to be moved out of state. As Georgia's gubernatorial race heats up in its final month, the false claims have re-emerged on social media, suggesting she advocated for the moves in response to voting and gun legislation backed by Republicans. "Never forget. Stacey Abrams lobbied to move the Allstars game and Music Midtown. She cost Georgia 150 million plus. Not Kemp," multiple posts on Facebook stated. Abrams, who is running against Republican incumbent Brian Kemp, has fought against the legislation in question. However, a review of Abrams' public comments shows she did not lobby for moving either of these events out of Georgia, and in fact spoke out against both moves. MLB pulled its 2021 All-Star Game from Atlanta in April last year over the league's objections to changes to Georgia's voting laws, which included new restrictions on voting by mail and greater legislative control over election administration, the AP reported. Prior to MLB's decision, Abrams urged against boycotts of Georgia in a video on Twitter. "To our friends across the country, please do not boycott us," she said. In a statement posted to her Twitter account the same day MLB made its announcement about the All-Star Game, Abrams wrote: "Like many Georgians, I am disappointed that the MLB is relocating the All-Star game," adding, "As I have stated, I respect boycotts, although I don't want to see Georgia families hurt by lost events and jobs." Asked in a subsequent AP interview whether she supports corporate boycotts such as the All-Star Game move, Abrams responded: "I do not believe that a boycott at this moment is beneficial to the victims of these bills." In August 2022, Music Midtown announced that "due to circumstances beyond our control, Music Midtown will no longer be taking place this year." A reason for the cancellation wasn't given. However, the AP reported that some believed the decision was the result of a 2019 Georgia Supreme Court ruling that limited the ability of private companies to ban guns on public property. This decision stemmed from a 2014 state law that expanded the locations where guns were allowed. The location of the canceled festival was Piedmont Park, a public-private partnership. "In dire economic times for so many Georgians, this cancellation will cost Georgia's economy a proven \$50 million," Abrams lamented in a statement on her campaign website. "This means that small businesses and workers who rely on events like Music Midtown and their tremendous economic impact have now lost incomes that help put food on the table and a roof over their heads." Alex Floyd, a spokesperson for Abrams' campaign, confirmed to the AP that she did not lobby for the outcome of either event. "Stacey Abrams has never supported the All-Star Game boycott or the cancellation of Music Midtown, and in fact has spent her career trying to bring more business and opportunities to Georgia," Floyd wrote in an email.

— Associated Press writer Melissa Goldin in New York contributed this report.

How are mail-in and absentee ballots verified?

By ALI SWENSON undefined

How are mail-in and absentee ballots verified?

Whether a state requires voters to request an absentee ballot or participates in universal mail-in voting, all ballots cast by mail or dropped off at a drop box are vetted to ensure their legitimacy.

Election officials log every mail ballot so voters cannot request more than one. Those ballots also are logged when they are returned, checked against registration records and, in many cases, voter signatures are on file to ensure the voter assigned to the ballot is the one who cast it.

Still, mail ballots are one of the most frequent targets of misinformation around voting, despite fraud

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being rare.

Different states have different ballot verification protocols. All states require a voter's signature, while some states have additional precautions, like having bipartisan teams compare that signature to a signature on file, requiring the signature to be notarized or requiring a witness to sign.

In Arkansas, you must return proof of voter registration or a copy of your ID with the ballot. In states including Georgia, Minnesota and Ohio, you have to submit your driver's license number or state ID card number, which will be compared with voter registration records before your vote is counted.

In states that require voters to submit applications to receive absentee ballots, the application typically includes several pieces of identifying information to ensure you are who you say you are. In some cases, that includes a copy of your photo ID.

In almost every state, mailed ballots can be tracked online through a unique bar code on the envelope, allowing voters to watch the movement of their ballot until it is counted. Ballot security features and ballot sorting at election offices help weed out any counterfeits, though election officials say fake ballots have not been a problem in U.S. elections. A Georgia investigation into allegations of counterfeit ballots in the 2020 election found no evidence to back up the claims.

Secure ballot drop boxes are placed in public locations and emptied only by trained election staff, to prevent anyone else from tampering with the votes inside.

As with other forms of election fraud, harsh penalties for voter fraud by mailed ballot act as another deterrent. Depending on the circumstance, voter fraud charges can result in a fine, prison time or both.

Despite widespread claims of mail-in and absentee ballot fraud, the reality is it's exceedingly rare. The Brennan Center for Justice in 2017 ranked the risk of ballot fraud at 0.00004% to 0.0009%, based on studies of past elections.

Meanwhile, a May 2022 Associated Press survey of states that allowed the use of drop boxes in the 2020 presidential election found no cases of fraud, vandalism or theft involving drop boxes that could have affected the results.

Besieged Jerusalem refugee camp reels from Israeli crackdown

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A line of cars snaked through the garbage-strewn streets of the Shuafat refugee camp in east Jerusalem, as Palestinians waited to pass an Israeli checkpoint.

Alaa Gharab was sunk down behind the steering wheel at an intersection that resembled a ragged war zone, littered with burnt tires, gutted appliances and the charred carcass of a car.

It was the first time she could leave the camp since last Saturday night, when a Palestinian gunman fired at the checkpoint from close range, killing a 19-year-old female Israeli soldier and severely wounding a security guard before disappearing toward Shuafat.

The attack prompted a large-scale and ongoing manhunt. As part of the search, Israeli security forces choked off the camp's entry and exit points, bringing life to a standstill for its estimated 60,000 residents.

The restrictions set off an explosion of anger in Palestinian neighborhoods across the city. Palestinian shops shuttered in protest by day and crowds of young men skirmished with Israeli troops by night — the fiercest unrest in months. Clashes in Jerusalem, the holy and bitterly contested city, became a rallying cry last year that triggered a bloody 11-day Gaza war.

"No one could go to work, go to the hospital, get food, go out," Gharab, a 24-year-old nurse, said from her car window. "Everyone was scared. Everything stopped."

The restrictions eased on Thursday, allowing food and supplies to enter and residents to return to work in the city. But the outrage was undimmed in Jerusalem's only refugee camp — a neighborhood long left in a vacuum of governance.

Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, a Jerusalem deputy mayor, described the closures as a matter of security.

But to camp residents, it felt like a siege. "It was like being in prison," said 14-year-old Sadeen Rajabi, who stayed home from school for the week because the difficulty of crossing and her parent's fears for

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her safety.

Even in normal times, Shuafat is a lawless slum full of smoldering garbage heaps and lacks municipal services. The camp falls within the Jerusalem municipal limits, but outside the hulking separation barrier that Israel says it built to stem militant attacks from the occupied West Bank. Palestinians have decried the barrier, which often slices through communities, as a land grab.

After the 1967 Mideast war, Israel annexed the eastern, Palestinian-populated half of Jerusalem and declared the entire city its capital in a move not recognized internationally. The government expanded the municipal limits far past the Old City, home to Jerusalem's holy sites, taking in far-flung Palestinian villages like Shuafat and the adjacent refugee camp. At the time, the camp had just a few thousand residents.

Anger has been building across the Israeli-annexed sector of the city, where many Palestinians say they feel abandoned by Israel. Residents complain of home demolitions and the near impossibility of obtaining Israeli building permits. Palestinian residents of Jerusalem pay Israeli municipal taxes but receive a fraction of the services that Jewish residents do.

The feeling of being in limbo is perhaps no more acute than in the Shuafat camp, one of several Palestinian neighborhoods that are formally part of Jerusalem, but are on the "West Bank side" of the separation barrier. The Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited control in parts of the West Bank, has no jurisdiction. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees runs part of the camp, providing educational and sanitation services.

Hassan-Nahoum acknowledged the challenges of providing services in the camp. She said the city fears attacks on its personnel working on the other side of the barrier. "It's a very difficult thing to control," she said.

Omar Sarhan, a shop owner restocking his shelves on Thursday for the first time this week, said the camp feels cut off from the city. "We do not feel we're in Jerusalem," he said. "We have nothing."

Water and electricity shortages are frequent. Sewer services are unreliable. Roads are potholed. There's virtually no garbage pickup. High-rise apartments, some over 10 stories high, are built so close together in some areas as to be a fire hazard. Israeli police rarely enter to crack down on surging crime.

The road into the rest of Jerusalem is both a lifeline and a potential chokepoint. Most residents have permanent residency in the city, meaning they have freedom of movement, unlike West Bank Palestinians who need special entry permits.

But the access is strictly controlled. When Israeli security forces escalated searches at the main Shuafat checkpoint this week, residents said it upended their lives. Patients couldn't reach Israeli hospitals because of hours-long waits. Ambulances idled in snarled traffic. Deliveries of food and medicine stopped. Most of the camp's 15,000 children missed school.

Residents shared stories of desperation.

"Yes, the attacker is from the camp, but why are tens of thousands of people held accountable?" said Hassan Alequm, a health official who reported that 50 patients with kidney disease missed their dialysis appointments at Israeli hospitals this week.

Dr. Saeed Salameh said his medical center was flooded with requests to help patients who couldn't make it to hospitals. The clinic offered painkillers until it ran out IVs. Then it was struck by tear gas canisters and forced to close.

Hiba, a 50-year-old hepatitis patient with diabetes who gave only her first name, hadn't received an insulin injection in five days.

"I couldn't leave my house because of the gas," she said, her face ashen.

Many families stayed inside as tear gas veiled the camp. But thousands rushed into the streets to confront Israeli security forces in what residents described as the worst clashes in recent memory. Israeli forces unleashed rubber bullets, stun grenades and tear gas on young men hurling stones and firebombs.

"It was the first time I've seen that kind of violence in the camp," said Mohammed Salah, 32.

On Wednesday night, clashes spread across east Jerusalem neighborhoods.

The surging tensions in Jerusalem come as violence rises across the West Bank, where more than 120 Palestinians have been killed so far in 2022 — the deadliest round of fighting in seven years.

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Confrontations have escalated since a series of Palestinian attacks killed 19 people in Israel last spring. Israel says most of the Palestinians killed have been militants. But stone-throwing youths protesting the incursions and others uninvolved in clashes have also been killed.

Palestinians want the occupied West Bank and Gaza as territories for their future state, with east Jerusalem as their capital. But adjacent to Shuafat refugee camp and other Palestinian enclaves neighborhoods in Jerusalem, Israel has built Jewish settlements home to some 220,000 people.

Israel's police said Friday it was calling up reserve units of the border police — a paramilitary force known for using tough tactics to quell Palestinian unrest.

"The fighters will continue to act with a heavy hand, using all advanced means, against violators of public order," said Amir Cohen, the commander of the border police.

Expired drug kills 10 child leukemia patients in Yemen

CAIRO (AP) — At least 10 child leukemia patients in Yemen have died, and dozens more left seriously ill, after being administered expired doses of a cancer treatment in the rebel-held capital, medical officials and workers said on Friday.

Yemen's ruinous conflict, now entering its eighth year, has caused one of the world's worst humanitarian crises and killed in excess of 150,000 people.

The children were aged between three and 15 and died at Sanaa's Kuwait Hospital after being injected with old doses of smuggled medicine at a number of private clinics, the rebel-run Health Ministry said in a statement Thursday. The officials did not say when the 10 deaths occurred.

According to a half dozen health officials and workers who spoke to The Associated Press, some 50 children received a smuggled chemotherapy treatment known as Methotrexate that was originally manufactured in India. They said a total of 19 children had died from the expired treatment. The officials and workers spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not briefed to speak with the media.

Amid Yemen's war, the lack of access to basic resources, including food and medicine, has created large smuggling networks across both rebel-held Houthi and Saudi coalition-run areas.

Several doctors in Sanaa said that Houthi officials secretly work in partnership with medicine smugglers who sell often expired treatment to private clinics from storage houses across the country. In doing so, they said the Houthis were limiting the availability of safe treatments.

The Houthi health ministry said it has opened an investigation into the incident. In their statement, they blamed the deaths on the Saudi coalition forces for causing a lack of available medicine in Houthi-controlled areas.

The family of one of the deceased children said that their son felt pains and cramps after receiving the expired chemotherapy treatment then died five days later. "The worst thing was that the hospital administration tried to hide the truth from us," said the boy's father, who asked not to be named for his and his family's safety.

The failure to extend the nationwide truce in early October has threatened to reignite bloodshed after a six-month lull in fighting. The Houthis blamed the dead-ended negotiations on the U.N., which has facilitated the cease-fire talks, while the U.S. envoy to Yemen accused the rebel group of hijacking the peace talks through last-minute demands.

Iranian-backed Houthi forces seized swathes of northern Yemen and Sanaa in 2014, pushing the government into exile. A Saudi Arabia-led coalition — which included the United Arab Emirates — intervened the following year to try to restore the internationally recognized government to power.

New this week: 'Halloween Ends,' 'Rosaline' and The 1975

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

MOVIES

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— Is it really time to say goodbye to Jamie Lee Curtis' Laurie Strode? That's the idea behind "Halloween Ends," which promises some kind of conclusion to the Michael Myers saga, which has been going on now for 45 years, and as the promos tease "only one of them will survive." Director David Gordon Green returns to close his modern trilogy, which will be released in theaters and on Peacock on Friday. The last film, "Halloween Kills," ended on a cliffhanger with a mob rising up to hunt down Michael Myers. Green said in an interview recently that, "Any frustration that was expressed about the last one, I kind of just smile and say, 'Hold tight, here we come.'"

— "Booksmart" star Kaitlyn Dever lends her comedic skills to "Rosaline," a cheeky twist on the "Romeo and Juliet" story focused on Romeo's briefly mentioned ex. Dever plays the title character who has just discovered that her love (Kyle Allen) has become interested in someone else, Juliet (Isabela Merced), and she takes it upon herself to try to sabotage the new relationship. Coming to Hulu on Friday, "Rosaline" is based on a young adult novel by Rebecca Serle, adapted for the screen by "(500) Days of Summer" scribes Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber and directed by Karen Maine ("Obvious Child"). Minnie Driver and Bradley Whitford co-star. It could make a thematically appropriate double feature with Lena Dunham's "Catherine Called Birdy," over on Prime Video.

— On video on demand, you can also check out "Piggy," a horror that got good buzz out of the Sundance Film Festival early this year. The film stars Laura Galán as a teenage girl who is overweight and bullied by the locals in the Spanish countryside where she spends her summers. But things take a turn when she finds that her tormenters have been kidnapped and she has to figure out what to do about it. It's the feature debut of Carlota Pereda, who wrote the script, and whose work on the film drew comparisons to Brian De Palma and "Carrie."

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

MUSIC

— With "Being Funny In a Foreign Language," The 1975 continue their tradition of long and cryptic album titles. The only clues about the direction of their latest, 11-track collection is some of its singles — the funky "Happiness," the sweet, uncynical throwback "I'm In Love With You" and the ambitious, totally cynical and progressive "Part of the Band," with singer Matty Healy's memorable lyrics: "Am I ironically woke? The butt of my joke? Or I am just some post-coke, average, skinny bloke calling his ego imagination?" So where does that seem to lead? So far, just good music. (Read AP's review.)

— Red Hot Chili Peppers aren't ready to stop spicing up our lives this year. Their album "Return of the Dream Canteen," comes out Friday, their second album release of 2022, following "Unlimited Love" from April. Once again, they've joined forces with longtime producer and creative confidant Rick Rubin, with an early single being "Tippa My Tongue." In between albums, the band won the prestigious Global Icon Award and performed at the MTV Video Music Awards. The band says the new album "is everything we are and ever dreamed of being. It's packed. Made with the blood of our hearts."

— If you're feeling down, who is there? Exactly. We mean dance diva Betty Who. It's virtually impossible to be down after listening to her 14-track "BIG!" — brimming with self-love and acceptance. "I won't apologize for taking up space/I'm not gonna fight it/I belong out of place," she sings on the title track. The project's debut single, "Blow Out My Candle," is pure empowerment pop and "She Can Dance" sees Betty looking back to an earlier, less conscious self: "Second choice and second best/Couldn't say the things she meant/Or find the missing pieces that were broke/But she could dance."

— Global trailblazer and provocateur M.I.A. is back and you better make room. "Beep, beep! Yeah, I'm tryna come through," she sings on the hypnotic "Beep" from the new album, "Meta." Other singles include "The One" and "Popular," where M.I.A.'s sarcastic view of fame is hard to hide: "Suddenly it's about me, 'bout me/ Now you wanna be around me, 'round me." The follow-up to 2016's "Aim," "Mata" is years in the making, its compositions recorded in London, Los Angeles, Italy, Bali, Jakarta and St Vincent.

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

TELEVISION

— "Supernatural," which ended its 15-year-run in 2020, begat a comic book series, novels and, finally, a spin-off about brothers Sam and Dean Winchester's parents. Dean (Jensen Ackles) serves as narrator for

"The Winchesters," which traces the love story of John Winchester (Drake Rodger) and Mary Campbell (Meg Donnelly) in the 1970s. He's a newly returned Vietnam War veteran, she's fighting her own battles as a demon hunter, and they are intent on uncovering secrets kept by both their families. The series debuts Tuesday on the CW.

— "High School," the 2019 memoir by indie pop duo and twins Tegan and Sara Quin, has been adapted for an eponymously named series set in 1990s Canada. TikTok creators Railey and Seazynn Gilliland, also twins, play the teenage versions of, respectively, Tegan and Sara, in the coming-of-age story flavored by the era of grunge. Cobie Smulders and Kyle Bornheimer guest star as the twins' parents in "High School," which debuts Friday on the Amazon Freevee streaming service.

— "Shantaram" is another book-based series, this time the novel of the same name by Gregory David Roberts. In vividly depicted 1980s Bombay, India, fugitive Lin Ford (Charlie Hunnam) is trying to disappear into a new life but finds that old patterns and love are getting in the way. It's a grueling journey for Lin, as it was in the novel that Roberts has said incorporates elements of his own life, including drugs, prison and an unlikely role as healer. The Apple TV+ series debuts with three episodes on Friday, with the remaining nine episodes released weekly.

Realtors apologizing for past discrimination, urging change

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — When Abdul-Kaba Abdullah decided to sell his home two years ago, he listed the neatly-kept, four-bedroom house at \$175,000 based on presale evaluations.

But once a buyer made an offer, an appraiser valued the home at only \$150,000, and the bank wouldn't give a loan for the original asking price.

Curious, Abdullah looked at the appraisal report and found the photos weren't even of his home in the predominantly Black area of north St. Louis. The photos had been pulled off the internet, and were not new photos showing updates he had made.

"I immediately knew, well, we have an issue here," Abdullah said.

It's a struggle Black Americans have lived with for decades. Now, some leaders in the real estate industry are apologizing for past discrimination while promising to address problems that still remain.

Last month, St. Louis Realtors — the St. Louis area's largest real estate trade group — issued a formal apology for past discriminatory practices. The National Association of Realtors issued an apology in 2020. Realtor groups in cities like Atlanta and Chicago have shown similar remorse.

"The discrimination to which the Black community was subjected to was part of a system designed to cause residential racial segregation, led by the federal government, supported by the banking system and the real estate industry, and driven by practices like redlining and the use of restrictive covenants," the apology from St. Louis Realtors states.

St. Louis was notorious for housing discrimination in the mid-20th century, when Black applicants were frequently denied mortgages, white homeowners were encouraged by real estate agents to move once a neighborhood began to integrate, and certain areas of the region were "redlined," meaning loans to buy homes in those areas were nearly impossible to get.

Will Jordan, executive director of the Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council, said change is happening far too slowly.

"Redlining and those types of issues are still playing out in the St. Louis metropolitan area," Jordan said. "I've seen notes on appraisals that are written by banks saying, 'nothing north of Delmar can possibly be that much. Let's rewrite this.'" Delmar Boulevard is infamously known as the dividing line between predominantly white and Black areas of St. Louis.

"North of Delmar, it's still very difficult to get any bank to finance something," Jordan said.

It's part of the reason the city's once vibrant north side has struggled in recent decades with rampant crime, high vacancy rates and a dilapidated housing stock.

Katie Berry, president of St. Louis Realtors, said past discrimination was no accident. Federal lending program maps used green lines to indicate places where loans would be approved — predominantly white

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areas. Red lines indicated high risk, "and those areas were Black communities or integrated communities because the theory was that once you integrated a community, the home values are going to drop," she said.

Making matters worse, once integration began in a neighborhood, real estate agents would participate in what was known as "blockbusting." An agent would help a Black family move into a white neighborhood, then "start knocking on doors of the neighbors saying, 'Hey, did you know this Black family's moved in? Home values are going to plummet. You should go ahead and list your house with me. Hurry up and get out of here,'" Berry said.

Meanwhile, a provision of the National Association of Realtors' Code of Ethics from 1924 to 1950 instructed realtors to avoid "introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood."

A report released earlier this year by the National Association of Realtors showed that while 72.1% of white Americans own their homes, the rate for Black Americans is just 43.4%. The report also found that Black and Hispanic applicants for mortgage loans were far more likely to be rejected than white and Asian applicants.

Bryan Greene, vice president of policy advocacy for the NAR, said apologies are important because realtors "need to atone for our failures."

The Atlanta Realtors Association apologized in 2021 for past discriminatory practices.

"We can't change our history but we can choose to learn from our past, make current powerful decisions, and act with intention to write future chapters that leave a positive legacy," then-President Cynthia Lippert wrote in a letter of apology.

In 2019, Chicago Association of Realtors President Tommy Choi issued an apology on behalf of the organization for being "on the wrong side of history."

Lydia Pope, president of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, which promotes Black homeownership, said the apologies are good starting points.

"Now show us that you want to do better, that you are willing to do more to help create an environment where everyone is treated equally," Pope said in a statement.

Greene said the NAR has taken several steps, including creation of a Fair Housing Policy Committee. The national group also adopted an action plan in 2020 that emphasizes accountability, culture change and training local realtors in fair housing practices.

As part of the effort to change, realtors in Atlanta have undergone unconscious bias training and are seeking relationships with diverse real estate associations such as the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals and the LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance, the group said.

In St. Louis, the realtors' association hired a director of diversity, equity and inclusion, is working with lawmakers to reduce barriers to homeownership for minorities, is seeking to address housing vacancies, and is pushing to bring in more Black real estate agents.

Berry knows change won't happen quickly.

"People have been harmed for generations," she said.

Abdullah, 44, is executive director of Park Central Development, a company that works to attract investment and keep people in their homes in St. Louis. So he's familiar with fair housing laws. From the outset, he questioned the appraisal of his home by an appraiser from a mostly-white neighboring county.

When Abdullah filed a complaint with Jordan's office, the bank eventually agreed to increase the loan value to \$160,000, and Abdullah sold. Still, he asked the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to investigate. The case remains unresolved.

"Just because I'm in this line of work, I didn't think I was exempt from these things happening to me," Abdullah said. "People have a right to the American dream."

Faith groups curb Haiti work due to chaos, 2021 kidnapping

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By PETER SMITH and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

A year after 17 North American missionaries were kidnapped in Haiti, beginning a two-month ordeal before they ultimately went free, the agency that sent them hasn't made a permanent return, and several other international groups have also scaled back their work there.

The kidnapping underscored a deteriorating security situation that has worsened in the past year, with Haitian leaders calling for foreign troop deployments to help break the paralyzing grip of gang activity and protests.

The missionary group, including five minors ranging from an infant to teens, was abducted Oct. 16, 2021, while returning from a visit to an orphanage supported by their organization, Christian Aid Ministries.

It was the largest kidnapping of its kind in recent years, though hundreds of abductions have targeted Haitian nationals and drawn scant international attention.

The hostage-takers from the notorious 400 Mawozo gang demanded \$1 million ransom for each victim, CAM says. After two were released for medical reasons and three others ransomed by a third party for an undisclosed amount, the remaining 12 went free Dec. 16 after what they described as an overnight escape.

The standoff came just a few months after a presidential assassination and an earthquake that killed and injured thousands.

Currently, basic supplies such as fuel and water have dwindled since a powerful gang seized control of a main fuel terminal in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Demonstrators have blocked roads to protest a spike in fuel prices, and gas stations and schools have closed.

Some North American workers from CAM have visited Haiti in the last year, "checking up on things as they're able," spokesman Weston Showalter said. But there's no timetable for a permanent return.

"It seems like things are more difficult there than ever," he said, adding that Haitian staff work is also hindered by the crisis.

The kidnapped missionaries included 16 Americans and one Canadian. Christian Aid Ministries, based in Berlin, Ohio, draws support from conservative Mennonite, Amish, Brethren and related groups. The agency, which has worked in Haiti since the 1980s, is weighing the lessons of 2021.

"We've become hypersensitive to the risk," Showalter said. "So especially the matter of women and children being present there, I would say that is a big matter of discussion."

Other faith-based agencies are also struggling to respond to Haiti's plight.

"There's not a clear path forward," said Alex Morse, deputy regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean for Church World Service, a partnership of more than 30 Christian denominations and communions in the U.S. that provides development assistance and disaster relief worldwide.

As of August, CWS decided to operate its remaining programs in Haiti with only local staff — agriculture and food security programs in the northwest, housing construction and social support for children in the southwest.

Morse worked in the country after a devastating earthquake in 2011 and recalls that many Haitians found resilience in their belief in God.

It's different now.

"I'm hearing people saying they've lost hope," he said. "People who used to be quick to turn to their faith — we're hearing less of that."

Patrick Nelson, a Haitian who is CWS's top representative in the country, said children and students "want to be in school and studying right now, taking courses, but schools and universities are closed."

However, he said people are discouraged but not despairing.

"If people didn't have faith in God or hope that things could be different in Haiti, they wouldn't be in the streets demanding change," Nelson said via email.

One of CWS's members is the Church of the Brethren, which has offered programs for more than 20 years in Haiti and has 30 congregations there. It had a main base in Croix-des-Bouquets, near Port-au-Prince, but the area has been an epicenter of gang activity, according to Jeffrey Boshart, manager of the church's Global Food Initiative.

Earlier this year one of the program's drivers was kidnapped — though later released — and his vehicle

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stolen, Boshart said, prompting the church to suspend all its activities in the Port-au-Prince region. The remaining programs, involving agriculture, drinking water and home construction, are mostly in rural areas far from the capital and staffed entirely by Haitians, he added.

Boshart said the church also has sharply curtailed a mobile medical clinic program because several of the Haitian doctors who participated have fled to the U.S.

Catholic Relief Services has more than 200 staff members in the country, almost all of them Haitian, but they've largely been working remotely. Many of their educational and health care outreaches are on hold.

"Roads are blocked, and they can't get on the road to go to the office," said Akim Kikonda, the CRS country representative. "There is no gas to drive their cars, and in some cases there is no internet at the office."

He added: "You can imagine our frustration ... when we see the needs are greater than they have ever been, but we are unable to go meet those needs."

He hopes that international supporters will rally behind Haiti.

"Haiti has been close to the edge so many times and has always been able to come back," Kikonda said. "This time I'm seeing a very difficult and challenging situation, hoping there is a light, but personally I can't see it yet."

Living Waters for the World, a U.S.-based nonprofit providing clean water systems to numerous countries, has managed to continue its work in Haiti because much of it is done by Haitians, said Bob McCoy, moderator of its Haiti Network Coordinating Team.

International visits continue, though planned carefully.

"The kidnapping was a very unfortunate situation," McCoy said. "Do we worry about it? You bet. We try to stay smart about what we're doing. It doesn't stop our going."

Meanwhile a new book published by CAM gives its official account of the kidnapping and includes interviews with the hostages, their families and CAM officials.

"Kidnapped in Haiti," written by Katrina Hoover Lee, reveals that while CAM had a longstanding no-ransom policy, board members were not as committed to it as they thought in the face of an actual crisis.

In internal debates, the book says, some asked, "Was it sensible to risk human lives over an issue that was not spelled out in Scripture?"

The ministry ultimately agreed to offer humanitarian aid to the kidnappers, which they rejected. It then reluctantly accepted a third party's offer to pay ransom.

Showalter said CAM still "does not have details of who paid or what amount that included." The ransom happened in December, and the hostages were told they would all be freed. But they said that due to internal gang conflicts, the kidnappers only released three.

The remaining hostages prayed and worshipped together daily. They also debated intensely whether to attempt an escape. Finally, they all agreed to try. According to their accounts, they pried open a barricaded door after midnight on Dec. 16 and walked for miles to safety.

Showalter said the ministry continues its work in other nations and will consider returning to Haiti.

One of the former hostages, Dale Wideman, is returning to the mission field for a stint in Liberia, where CAM supplies medical clinics.

His experience in Haiti has motivated him to help others. "It just reminded me of how much I've been given, being brought up in Canada in a good solid home," said Wideman, of Moorefield, Ontario. He recalled the extreme poverty in Haiti, with many youths joining gangs "looking for any way possible to get a meal and make a few bucks."

"I'd like to say I wouldn't make those choices if I were in their situation, but I have no idea," said Wideman, 25. "Our worlds are so different. I feel like I should give back."

N. Korea fires missile, artillery shells, inflaming tensions

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired a ballistic missile and hundreds of artillery shells toward

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the sea Friday and flew warplanes near the tense border with South Korea, further raising animosities triggered by the North's recent barrage of weapons tests.

The North Korean moves suggest it is reviving an old playbook of stoking fears of war with provocative weapons tests before it seeks to win greater concessions from its rivals.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement the short-range missile lifted off from the North's capital region at 1:49 a.m. Friday (1649 GMT Thursday; 12:49 p.m. EDT Thursday) and flew toward its eastern waters.

It was North Korea's 15th missile launch since it resumed testing activities Sept. 25. North Korea said Monday its recent missile tests were simulations of nuclear strikes on South Korean and U.S. targets in response to their "dangerous" military exercises involving a U.S. aircraft carrier.

Soon after the latest missile test, North Korea fired 130 rounds of shells off its west coast and 40 rounds off its east coast. The shells fell inside maritime buffer zones the two Koreas established under a 2018 inter-Korean agreement on reducing tensions, South Korea's military said.

On Friday afternoon, South Korea's military said North Korea fired 90 additional shells off its east coast. It said it also spotted about 300 other North Korean artillery launches from two separate western coastal areas. In both cases, the North Korean shells were believed to have landed in the buffer zones again, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Observers said it was North Korea's third and most direct violation of the 2018 agreement, which created buffer zones and no-fly areas along their land and sea boundaries to prevent accidental clashes. South Korea's Defense Ministry said it earlier sent North Korea a message asking it not to violate the agreement again.

North Korea separately flew warplanes, presumably 10 aircraft, near the rivals' border late Thursday and early Friday, prompting South Korea to scramble fighter jets. There were no reports of clashes between the two countries. It was reportedly the first time that North Korean military aircraft have flown that close to the border since 2017.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said North Korea's provocations are becoming "indiscriminate" but that his country has massive retaliation capabilities that can deter actual North Korean assaults to some extent.

"The decision to attack can't be made without a willingness to risk a brutal outcome," Yoon told reporters. "The massive punishment and retaliation strategy, which is the final step of our three-axis strategy, would be a considerable psychological and social deterrence (for the North)."

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Friday it imposed sanctions on 15 North Korean individuals and 16 organizations suspected of involvement in illicit activities to finance North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs. They were Seoul's first unilateral sanctions on North Korea in five years, but observers say they are largely a symbolic step because the two Koreas have little financial dealings between them.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters he supports South Korea's decision to impose the sanctions.

Most of the North's recent weapons tests were ballistic missile launches that are banned by United Nations Security Council resolutions. But the North hasn't been slapped with fresh sanctions thanks to a divide at the U.N. over U.S. disputes with Russia regarding its invasion of Ukraine and with China over their strategic competition.

The missile launched Friday traveled 650-700 kilometers (403-434 miles) at a maximum altitude of 50 kilometers (30 miles) before landing in waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, according to South Korean and Japanese assessments.

"Whatever the intentions are, North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches are absolutely impermissible and we cannot overlook its substantial advancement of missile technology," Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement that the U.S. commitment to the defense of South Korea and Japan remains "ironclad."

Other recent North Korean tests included a new intermediate-range missile that flew over Japan and

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demonstrated a potential range to reach the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam; long-range cruise missiles; and a ballistic missile fired from an inland reservoir, a first for the country.

After Wednesday's cruise missile launches, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his nuclear forces were fully prepared for "actual war to bring enemies under their control at a blow" and vowed to expand the operational realm of his nuclear armed forces, according to North Korea's state media.

Some observers had predicted North Korea would likely temporarily pause its testing activities this week in consideration of its ally China, which is set to begin a major political conference Sunday that is expected to give President Xi Jinping a third five-year term as party leader.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a regular briefing Friday that all related countries should work to prevent tensions from escalating and move toward restarting meaningful talks.

North Korea's ongoing testing spree is reminiscent of its 2017 torrid run of missile and nuclear tests that prompted Kim and then-U.S. President Donald Trump to exchange threats of total destruction. Kim later abruptly entered high-stakes nuclear diplomacy with Trump in 2018 but their negotiations fell apart a year later due to wrangling over how much sanctions relief Kim should be provided in return for a partial surrender of his nuclear capability.

Kim has repeatedly said he has no intentions of resuming nuclear diplomacy. But some experts say he would eventually want to win international recognition of his country as a nuclear state and hold arms control talks with the United State to wrest extensive sanctions relief and other concessions in return for partial denuclearization steps.

The urgency of North Korea's nuclear program has grown since it passed a law last month authorizing the preemptive use of nuclear weapons over a broad range of scenarios, including non-war situations when it may perceive its leadership as under threat.

Most of the recent North Korean tests were of short-range nuclear-capable missiles targeting South Korea. Some analysts say North Korea's possible upcoming nuclear test, its first bomb detonation in five years, would be related to efforts to manufacture battlefield tactical warheads to be placed on such short-range missiles.

These developments sparked security jitters in South Korea, with some politicians and scholars renewing their calls for the U.S. to redeploy its tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea as deterrence against intensifying North Korean nuclear threats.

North Korea's military early Friday said it took unspecified "strong military countermeasures" in response to South Korea's artillery fire for about 10 hours near the border on Thursday. South Korea's military later confirmed it conducted artillery training at a frontline area but said its drills didn't violate the conditions of the 2018 agreement.

Maj. Gen. Kang Ho Pil of the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a televised statement that South Korea issued "a stern warning to (North Korea) to immediately halt" its weapons tests.

South Korea's military said it will begin an annual 12-day field training Monday to hone its operational capabilities under various scenarios of North Korean provocations. It said an unspecified number of U.S. troops plan to take part in this year's drills.

US migrant policy 'bucket of cold water' to some Venezuelans

By MARKO ALVAREZ and ASTRID SUÁREZ Associated Press

NECOCLI, Colombia (AP) — Venezuelan Gilbert Fernández still plans to cross the dangerous Darien jungle into Panama and head toward the United States over land, despite a U.S. announcement that it will grant conditional humanitarian permits only to 24,000 Venezuelan migrants arriving by air.

"The news hit us like a bucket of cold water," Fernández said Thursday, a day after the announcement, which also stated that Venezuelans arriving by land at the Mexico-U.S. border would be returned to Mexico.

Fernández spoke to The Associated Press on a beach in Necocli, a Colombian town where about 9,000 people, mostly Venezuelans, waited to board a boat to take them to the entrance of the Darien Gap connecting the South American country to Panama. From there, migrants head by land up Central America

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through Mexico toward the U.S.

Some on the Colombian beach said they would seek other routes into the United States or give up the voyage after hearing the news. Critics noted that the announced number of humanitarian visas is just a fraction of the number of Venezuelans seeking to enter the United States.

But for Fernández it was too late to turn back. He said he sold his car and his land in Venezuela to finance the trip with his 18-year-old son and his friends, and he no longer has money for a plane ticket to the U.S.

"Those of us who have already started, how are we going to do that?" he wondered. "We are already involved in this."

The U.S. and Mexico said Wednesday that the Biden administration agreed to accept up to 24,000 Venezuelan migrants at U.S. airports while Mexico agreed to take back Venezuelans who come to the U.S. over land.

Venezuelans who walk or swim across the border will be immediately returned to Mexico under a pandemic rule known as Title 42 authority, which suspends rights to seek asylum under U.S. and international law on grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The U.S. offer to the Venezuelans is modeled on a similar program for Ukrainians who fled Russia's invasion.

The moves are a response to a dramatic increase in migration from Venezuela, which surpassed Guatemala and Honduras in August to become the second largest nationality arriving at the U.S. border after Mexico.

So far in 2022, more than 151,000 people have crossed into Panama through the jungle, the majority — 107,600 — Venezuelans. That already exceeds the 133,000 people who crossed in the previous year, according to official Panamanian figures. The trip through the inhospitable jungle is fraught with dangers, including thieves, human traffickers and the possibility of sexual assault. Armed groups operate in the region.

Arrests of Venezuelans at the U.S. border also have increased. Authorities detained Venezuelans 25,349 times in August, making them the second most detained nationality at the border, after Mexicans.

For some, the offer of 24,000 humanitarian visas is not enough given the dimensions of Venezuela's migration situation, and many consider the conditions on those visas too difficult.

María Clara Robayo, an investigator for the Venezuelan Observatory at Colombia's Del Rosario University, said the flow of migrants through the Darien Gap might be reduced a bit but won't stop.

"People will continue exposing themselves to precarious situations" crossing the jungle, she said.

Jeremy Villegas arrived in Necocli in a group of 30 people, most of whom are turning back or looking for other routes. He said he is still undecided and is waiting to hear from people who are farther along the route to know if it is worth the risk.

Cristian Casamayor said he has decided to stop his journey through the Darien after hearing of the new U.S. policy.

"I stopped out of awareness and being smart ... they mark your passport and you can no longer enter the United States," he said, adding that he has not decided where he will go now. All he knows is that he will not return to Venezuela.

Mario Ricardo Camejo, a member of the nonprofit Colombian-Venezuelan foundation Fundacolven, said that while they appreciate any help and humanitarian visas from countries like the U.S., they worry the help comes with conditions that make it difficult on the poorest migrants. For example, having to arrive by plane and having a financial sponsor.

"Automatically, a filter is created that ensures the help does not reach the people who need it most," Camejo said.

Of the more than 7.1 million Venezuelans who have left their country due to the social and economic crisis, at least 4.3 million have difficulties accessing food, housing and formal employment, according to a report released Wednesday by the International Organization for Migration and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Venezuelans back in that country's capital agreed the new rules will hurt.

"The people who leave by land have no money, no visa, no family there" in the United States, José Santana said in Caracas' central plaza. "It is useless for them to say that they are going to let many enter by plane."

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Today in History: October 15, Senate confirms Thomas

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Oct. 15, the 288th day of 2022. There are 77 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 15, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a bill creating the U.S. Department of Transportation.

On this date:

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte, the deposed Emperor of the French, arrived on the British-ruled South Atlantic island of St. Helena, where he spent the last 5 1/2 years of his life in exile.

In 1945, the former premier of Vichy France, Pierre Laval, was executed for treason.

In 1946, Nazi war criminal Hermann Goering (GEH'-reeng) fatally poisoned himself hours before he was to have been executed.

In 1954, Hurricane Hazel made landfall on the Carolina coast as a Category 4 storm; Hazel was blamed for some 1,000 deaths in the Caribbean, 95 in the U.S. and 81 in Canada.

In 1966, the revolutionary Black Panther Party was founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California.

In 1976, in the first debate of its kind between vice-presidential nominees, Democrat Walter F. Mondale and Republican Bob Dole faced off in Houston.

In 1989, South African officials released eight prominent political prisoners, including Walter Sisulu (sih-SOO'-loo).

In 1991, despite sexual harassment allegations by Anita Hill, the Senate narrowly confirmed the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court, 52-48.

In 1997, British Royal Air Force pilot Andy Green twice drove a jet-powered car in the Nevada desert faster than the speed of sound, officially shattering the world's land-speed record.

In 2001, Bethlehem Steel Corp. filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

In 2003, eleven people were killed when a Staten Island ferry slammed into a maintenance pier. (The ferry's pilot, who'd blacked out at the controls, later pleaded guilty to eleven counts of manslaughter.)

In 2015, President Barack Obama abandoned his pledge to end America's longest war, announcing plans to keep at least 5,500 U.S. troops in Afghanistan at the end of his term in 2017 and hand the conflict off to his successor.

Ten years ago: Former pro wrestler Hulk Hogan sued the news and gossip website Gawker for posting a sex tape of him online. (Hogan won a \$140 million verdict against Gawker, which ended up settling for \$31 million in a legal fight that led to the media company's bankruptcy.)

Five years ago: Actress and activist Alyssa Milano tweeted that women who had been sexually harassed or assaulted should write "Me too" as a status; within hours, tens of thousands had taken up the #MeToo hashtag (using a phrase that had been introduced 10 years earlier by social activist Tarana Burke.) Former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick filed a grievance against the NFL, alleging that he was still unsigned because of collusion by owners resulting from his protests during the national anthem.

One year ago: British Conservative lawmaker David Amess was stabbed to death as he met with constituents at a church hall; the assailant, an Islamic State supporter who said he targeted Amess because of his past support for airstrikes on Syria, was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. A suicide bombing targeting a Shiite mosque in southern Afghanistan killed at least 47 people and wounded scores of others; the Islamic State group claimed responsibility. The lawyers for accused Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz said he would plead guilty to the 2018 massacre at a Parkland high school that killed 14 students and three staff members.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Barry McGuire is 87. Actor Linda Lavin is 85. Rock musician Don Stevenson (Moby Grape) is 80. Baseball Hall of Famer Jim Palmer is 77. Singer-musician Richard Carpenter is 76. Actor

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Victor Banerjee is 76. Former tennis player Roscoe Tanner is 71. Singer Tito Jackson is 69. Actor-comedian Larry Miller is 69. Actor Jere Burns is 68. Movie director Mira Nair is 65. Britain's Duchess of York, Sarah Ferguson, is 63. Chef Emeril Lagasse (EM'-ur-ul leh-GAH'-see) is 63. Rock musician Mark Reznicek (REHZ'-nih-chehk) is 60. Singer Eric Benet (beh-NAY') is 56. Actor Vanessa Marcil is 54. Singer-actor-TV host Paige Davis is 53. Country singer Kimberly Schlapman (Little Big Town) is 53. Actor Dominic West is 53. R&B singer Ginuwine (JIHN'-yoo-wyn) is 52. Christian singer-actor Jaci (JAK'-ee) Velasquez is 43. Actor Brandon Jay McLaren is 42. R&B singer Keyshia Cole is 41. Actor Vincent Martella is 30. Actor Bailee Madison is 23.