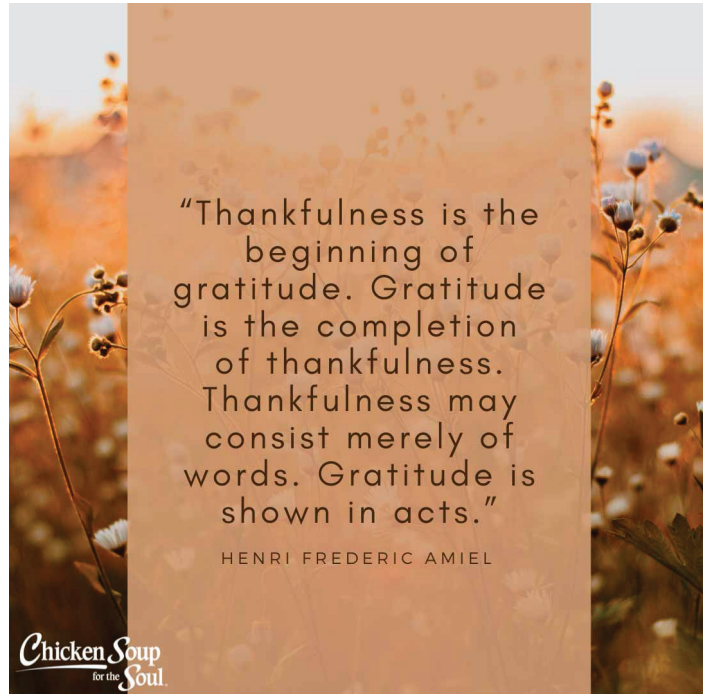


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Groton Community Calendar

Wednesday, Nov. 9

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, creamed peas, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg Omelets.

School Lunch: Chicken noodle soup.

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

UMC: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; UMYF Bible Study, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Youth Meeting, 6 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 10

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazzini, mixed vegetables, honey fruit salad, vanilla pudding, whole wheat

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.

potatoes.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Hamburgers, waffle fries.

UMC: Bible Study with Ashley, 6:30 p.m.

Junior High Girls Basketball at Webster, 7th grade at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade.

Friday, Nov. 11 - VETERAN'S DAY

Senior Menu: Goulash, green beans, baked apples, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage.

School Lunch: Pizza, green beans.

Veteran's Day Program, 2 p.m., GHS Arena

SATURDAY CLEANER NEEDED IN FERNEY, SD, 830 am to 130 pm, \$16 an hour. Must be dependable and be willing to work around customers coming into the family owned business. Please call Stephanie at 605-381-1758. (1102.1109)

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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Miller ends Groton Area Volleyball Season at SoDak16

Groton Area's volleyball season came to an end Tuesday as the Tigers lost to Miller at the SoDak16 match held at James Valley Christian School.

The first match was competitive as Groton Area gave Miller a challenge. The set was tied five times with Groton Area leading for most of the set until the 16 tie. Miller then got the upper hand and went on for the 25-21 win. The 31-2 Miller Rustlers then took care of the business, putting down the Tigers in the next two sets, 25-12 and 25-10.

Anna Fjeldheim had four kills and an ace, Sydney Leicht two kills and a block, Lydia Meier three kills and a block, Carly Guthmiller and Rylee Dunker each had a kill, Elizabeth Fliehs and Jerica Locke each had an ace, Aspen Johnson had five kills and a block and Emma Kutter had four kills.

Ally Mullaney led the Rustlers with 13 kills while Abigail Blake had 10 kills, four blocks and an ace serve, Tricia Lammers and Jaden Werdel each had six kills, Jolie Palmer two ace serves and a kill, Aleah Schlechter had a block and Ruby Carder had three ace serves and a kill.

Groton Area finishes the season with a 14-15 record.

The event was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bahr Spray Foam, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Dan Richardt - Groton Ford, Groton Chamber Commerce, Groton Chiropractic Clinic, Groton Legion, Heavy Hitter Detailing with Cyrus DeHoet, Hefty Seed, John Sieh Agency, Karma Salon, Rutgear605, Lori's Pharmacy, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc, SD Army National Guard with Brent Wienk, Thunder Seed - John Wheeting, Weismantel Insurance AGENCY. Justin Hanson provided the play-by-play action.



2023 DOG LICENSES due by Dec. 30, 2022

Fines start January 1, 2023

Spayed/Neutered dogs are \$5 per dog, otherwise \$10 per dog

Proof of rabies shot information is **REQUIRED!!**

Email proof to city.kellie@nvc.net,
fax to (605) 397-4498 or bring a copy to City Hall!!

Please contact City Hall as soon as possible if you no longer have a dog(s) that were previously licensed!

Questions call (605) 397-8422



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Kristi Noem wins second term as South Dakota governor

Resounding victory saw incumbent outperform even favorable polls

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 9, 2022 12:50 AM

In the run-up to election day, Democrats in South Dakota believed they saw hopeful signs in the governor's race.

An SDSU poll put Democratic candidate Jamie Smith within striking distance of incumbent Republican Gov. Kristi Noem. The Smith crew also pointed to internal polling that suggested a strong potential for the Sioux Falls lawmaker, who gave up his state House of Representatives seat to challenge Noem.

The will of the voters, however, aligned more closely with polling that put the governor 19 points ahead of Smith.

That poll, too, may have been off target. As of midnight, with the majority of precincts reporting, Noem led Smith by nearly 30 points.

The outcome of the race was never in question as results rolled in, but West River broke hard for the incumbent. Noem outperformed in both counties she'd won four years ago against Democrat Billie Sutton and those where that race was tighter.

In Codington County – Noem's home county – she earned nearly 68% of the vote. In 2018, she won the county with 55%.

Noem credited her commitment to a hands off COVID-19 response, a low tax environment, her positions on transgender athletes and other social issues such as a more patriotic social studies curriculum standards as drivers of her victory.

South Dakota, Noem told supporters at the Hilton Garden Inn in Sioux Falls, has become a standard-bearer for conservative governance.

"In states across the country, they're electing Republican governors, because they want what South Dakota has," said Noem, speaking at a podium bearing a seal that read "Kristi Noem: America's Governor."

The governor also gave herself a boost with ad spending in the final weeks of the campaign, one where she'd ultimately outspend her opponent 6-to-1. The former U.S. representative for South Dakota lobbed accusations of extreme liberalism at Smith in ads that sought to tie the Democrat to the policies of President Joe Biden.

"The nation that is unfolding around us is Joe Biden's" Noem said. "It's not the nation that I want to leave to my kids or grandkids ... there's violence and crime on our streets in America, our border is overrun with drugs and human trafficking, and it's reaching all the way here to South Dakota."

Smith called Noem to concede just before taking the stage at The District in Sioux Falls to address his supporters at a Democratic watch party. He was the last of the statewide Democratic candidates to speak, on a night when each fell to their Republican opponent.

"While the election didn't go the way we wanted, I have offered to work with Gov. Noem on behalf of South Dakota for the next four years," Smith said. "I truly hope that she's able to build a stronger, more welcoming, more prosperous South Dakota in this next term."

The candidate apologized to those whose futures, he said, "depended so much on the outcome of this election."

"But know this: just because we did not achieve victory tonight, the values we fought for and the movement we started will not end here."

Noem also referenced the concession call in the waning moments of her stem-winder of a victory speech.

"Jamie and I had a very different vision for our state," she said. "Tonight our vision of less government and more freedom won the day. Thank you for trusting me."



JOHN HULT ✉ 🐦

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

John Thune will serve a fourth term as a South Dakota senator

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 8, 2022 11:32 PM

Sen. John Thune will serve a historic fourth term as the senior United States senator from South Dakota – a seat to which he was first elected in 2004 – despite his challengers' attempts to paint him as a creature of Washington.

"Only in America can an ordinary kid from Murdo, SD have the opportunity to get to serve the state of South Dakota in the U.S. Senate," Thune said.

The AP called the race Tuesday night for Thune with 69% of the vote. Democrat Brian Bengs and Libertarian Tamara Lesnar had 27% and 4%, respectively.

Bengs said the results tell him that many South Dakotans are simply unwilling to vote for a Democrat.

"The media environment, the information environment that we have in this country, in South Dakota, is very good at conditioning people to vote against their own interests and against what they believe because of the letter behind somebody's name," Bengs said.

Libertarian Lesnar said the hurdle she ran into was getting out her message to enough voters.

"This isn't the end for me," Lesnar said.

Sen. Thune was South Dakota's Congressman from 1997 to 2003. He then defeated Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle in 2004, portraying Daschle as a creature of Washington.

Historian and Thune adviser Jon Lauck said calling Daschle "too Washington" was effective because Washington D.C. Democrats are ideologically out of line with most South Dakotans – whereas Washington D.C. Republicans are not.

"The crucial difference between Sen. Thune and Senator Daschle is that Thune is closely aligned ideologically with his state, which is obviously conservative, while Sen. Daschle represented the party of the left, and therefore his representation ran counter to a reddening home state," Lauck said.

Thune was selected to serve as the minority whip in 2020.

The only other South Dakotan to be elected to the U.S. Senate for four consecutive terms was Republican Karl Mundt of Humboldt (1948-73).



JOSHUA HAIAR ✉ 🐦

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Voters back Medicaid expansion, lean against recreational cannabis

Marijuana vote tallies pointed to a loss early Wednesday morning

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 9, 2022 1:39 AM

South Dakotans voted to expand eligibility for the state's Medicaid programs Tuesday. Constitutional Amendment D was winning with 56% of the vote as of 1 a.m. Nov. 9, or roughly 166,879 votes.

While the state is one of 12 that hadn't expanded eligibility for its Medicaid programs, it was the only state to feature the question in the 2022 election.

The proposal would offer Medicaid coverage to an estimated 42,500 low-income South Dakotans ages 18 to 64.

About 16,000 of those people don't currently qualify for any government assistance with health coverage even though their income falls below the federal poverty level.

Medicaid, the nation's leading public health insurance program for low-income and disabled Americans, covers more than 82 million people and is jointly financed and operated by the federal and state governments. The 2010 Affordable Care Act allows states to offer coverage to more people, with the federal government paying 90% of the costs.

"Increasing Medicaid eligibility means more South Dakotans will have access to comprehensive coverage, including cancer screenings, diagnostic testing, treatment services and follow-up care needed to survive the disease that will kill 1,740 South Dakotans this year," said Matthew McLarty, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) South Dakota government relations director in a prepared statement.

Keith Moore, director of Americans for Prosperity in South Dakota, told Kaiser Health News ahead of the election that he opposes expanding Medicaid because the taxpayer-funded program has been victim to billions of dollars in fraud and error. Moore also pointed to states that ended up spending more than expected on expanded coverage.

Americans for Prosperity supported an effort to create a 60% approval threshold for constitutional ballot questions that cost \$10 million or more to implement, which would have included Medicaid expansion. In June, voters overwhelmingly defeated that proposal, so the expansion amendment needed only a simple majority to pass in November.

Marijuana measure headed for likely defeat

Another ballot measure faced a likely loss early Wednesday morning. South Dakotans appear to have rejected recreational cannabis on an election day that saw the five states considering legalization.

As of 1:30 a.m. Wednesday morning, Initiated Measure 27 had the support of just 47% of voters. The measure would have legalized the possession, use and distribution of recreational marijuana for people 21 years and older.

Vote tallies from the state's two largest counties had yet to fully report results in the early morning hours. IM 27 was winning in Minnehaha County, but the gulf between yes and no votes stood at around 20,000. The measure was winning in Minnehaha County by more than 6,000 votes.

Arkansas and North Dakota also voted against legalizing recreational marijuana, while Maryland and Missouri will join 19 other states and the District of Columbia in allowing use. Jurisdictions with legal recreational marijuana ahead of the Nov. 8 election accounted for about 44% of the U.S. population.

This was the second time a measure to legalize recreational marijuana has appeared on South Dakota ballots. Residents passed Amendment A with 54% of the vote in 2020.

Amendment A was struck down in February 2021 as unconstitutional on the grounds that it violated the state's single-subject rule for ballot initiatives. The case was appealed to the state supreme court, which upheld the decision in November 2021.



MAKENZIE HUBER  

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Fire puts nursing home residents in Wagner polling place

Voting continued as Good Samaritan Center evacuees moved into Charles Mix County gym

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 9, 2022 1:00 AM

Some poll workers in Wagner had to make space for around two dozen senior citizens on Tuesday after a late morning fire damaged the city's Good Samaritan Center.

The fire at the nursing home in the city of 1,400 broke out around 11 a.m., according to Charles Mix County Emergency Manager Mike Kotab. The roof burned, but the residents were evacuated and no one was hurt, he said.

"There's enough damage that it will be out of commission for a while," Kotab said.

The residents moved in with poll workers at the Wagner National Guard Armory shortly after the fire, according to Charles Mix County Auditor Jason Gant.

"We were pretty spread out (in the gymnasium), so we just moved our poll workers into a different area to make space for beds and medical equipment," Gant said.

The armory is the polling place for two of the 13 precincts in the county. Charles Mix has a total population of about 9,100. The election is still running smoothly, Gant said, in spite of the unexpected influx of visitors to the polling place.

"We had to roll with what was happening and try to help out," he said.

Dustin Zephier is a cook at the facility and was at work when the fire broke out.

"All I know was I was cooking, and the next thing we knew there was smoke," Zephier said. "As soon as we got outside and saw flames, everybody was evacuated."

He and his coworkers helped move all 42 residents out of the building as fire crews arrived, and later fed them food donated by local restaurants. Residents with higher medical needs were moved to Wagner Community Hospital, he said.

"It was basically all hands on deck, even for people (at Good Sam) who had the day off," he said. "There were teachers there from the school, and all the restaurants chipped in to donate food."

The incident and response shows the value of a well-trained staff during emergency situations, said Phil Samuelson, Good Samaritan Society executive director.

"We plan for events like these and are so grateful to our staff for their quick actions to ensure residents' safety. We cannot thank the community enough for their support during this time," he said. "Residents are being relocated to nearby Good Samaritan Society locations while crews are on-site assessing the damage and investigating the cause of the fire."



JOHN HULT  

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

U.S. Senate control too close to call as multiple states grapple with tight vote counts

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT, ARIANA FIGUEROA AND JACOB FISCHLER

- NOVEMBER 9, 2022 1:49 AM

WASHINGTON — Control of the U.S. Senate remained unclear early Wednesday as races in a handful of swing states in the midterm elections were still too close to call, and it appeared it might be days — or even weeks — before a final result was known.

Among the tightest contests:

In Pennsylvania, Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, a Democrat, was slightly ahead of celebrity TV doctor Mehmet Oz, a Republican, with 49% of the vote compared to Oz's 48%. The seat opened up after Republican U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey announced he'd retire at the end of this Congress, increasing its competitiveness and leading Democrats to hope they could pick up the seat.

Georgia Democratic U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock and former professional football player and GOP nominee Herschel Walker remained locked in a dead heat in the Peach State, sending that race to a runoff contest next month if neither can get past 50% of the vote.

Wisconsin Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson held a narrow lead over Democratic Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes in a state Democrats vehemently hope to pick up.

In Arizona, Democratic U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly was up with 57% over Republican Blake Masters' 40% with about half of the state's votes counted.

Nevada election officials had just started releasing results of the race between Democratic U.S. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto and former state Attorney General Adam Laxalt, a Republican, as of 1:00 a.m. Eastern. The race is one of the closest in the country and could end up determining control of the U.S. Senate.

Early Senate victors

While those five races may not be called yet, both parties cheered their victories in other U.S. Senate races following calls by The Associated Press that their candidates had won. The Senate is now evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, with Vice President Kamala Harris casting deciding votes.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Maggie Hassan held onto her seat in her first reelection bid, defeating Republican nominee Don Bolduc. And in Colorado, Democratic U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet staved off a challenge from Republican nominee Joe O'Dea to keep that seat blue.

Republicans held onto Florida, where U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio defeated a challenge from Democratic nominee Rep. Val Demings. The GOP kept control of one Ohio seat, with Republican candidate J.D. Vance beating out Democratic U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan for the seat currently held by retiring Sen. Rob Portman.

In Iowa, Republican U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, who was first elected to Congress in 1974 before becoming a senator in 1980, defeated Michael Franken, securing an eighth term in the Senate.

Republican U.S. Rep. Ted Budd defeated state Supreme Court Justice Cheri Beasley, a Democrat, to keep North Carolina's open seat safely red for another six years.

Since just one-third of U.S. Senate seats were up for reelection this year, 36 Democrats and 29 Republicans didn't face voters Tuesday. And many of the senators up for reelection were in safe states, leaving voters in just a handful of races to determine control of the chamber.

Georgians could be the deciders

Depending on how the undetermined races shake out, control of the U.S. Senate may not be decided

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until December, if Georgia goes to a runoff election.

Two years ago, control of the U.S. Senate came down to Georgia, when its races went into runoffs before voters elected Sen. Jon Ossoff, the state's first Jewish senator, and Sen. Raphael Warnock, its first Black senator.

Ossoff was elected to a full six-year term, but Warnock is facing voters again since 2018 was a special election triggered by former Georgia U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson's resignation.

Runoff elections take place four weeks after Election Day, so Georgia voters would head to the polls again Dec. 6.

Georgia and the other uncalled races were among the most competitive in the country.

The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter pegged the closest Senate races as Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania, leaving all four of those contests in its "toss-up" category ahead of the elections.

In its final update Friday, Jessica Taylor, the Senate and governors editor, wrote that Republicans were entering "the final days of the midterms with the political winds at their backs and the slight momentum in the battle for Senate control."

Taylor noted that Democrats' best chance of holding onto their majority in that chamber was to keep the equally divided 50-50 Senate. The other option was that "Republicans could get to 52 seats, or 53 in a huge wave."

"While Democrats saw momentum swing in their favor this summer on abortion following the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision, the economy, inflation and crime are now driving a dour environment across the board," Taylor wrote. "While Republicans are still beset by many weak nominees that have been bailed out on air by superPACs, it appears that the climate may end up winning out over candidate quality."

Early voting

Voting rights advocates said Tuesday midday that voting had gone smoothly so far without major incidents or cases of voter intimidation.

The U.S. Justice Department announced Monday that it would monitor 64 jurisdictions across 24 states to make sure those polling locations complied with federal elections, as required by the Voting Rights Act.

But not all voting took place on Tuesday, with more than 45 million Americans voting early and 25 million of those voters opting to use mail-in ballots, according to the United States Election Project.

That means swing states have a significant number of mail ballots to count, a process that could take days before it's complete. And in states where the results are especially close, it's likely election workers will need to recount all the ballots to be sure of the winner.

Arizona has 1.5 million mail-in ballots to count, a significant number given how close the race between Kelly and Masters remained.

Georgia voters sent in 234,000 mail ballots that could end up playing a role in that extremely tight U.S. Senate contest.

In Nevada, election officials have 411,000 mail-in ballots to add to the totals.

Pennsylvania voters cast 1.2 million mail ballots with nearly 70% of those coming from Democrats, a factor that could help boost Fetterman against Oz.

Biden 'optimistic'

President Joe Biden has been hopeful about Democrats' chances of holding onto the U.S. Senate in the days leading up to the election, saying Monday night that he was "optimistic."

"I think we'll win the Senate, and I think the House is tougher," Biden said on the South Lawn of the White House.

Biden spent much of his election night calling Democrats to congratulate them on winning their election. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who easily won his reelection in blue New York state, Vermont Sen.-elect Peter Welch, Colorado's Bennet and New Hampshire's Hassan were among his calls.

If Republicans do regain control of the U.S. Senate, their relationship with the Biden administration is likely to change, though it's not clear by how much.

Biden cautioned Friday that he's prepared to reject any party-line bills a Republican-controlled Congress

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could send to his desk, should the GOP regain control.

"If we lose the House and Senate, it's going to be a horrible two years," Biden said at a Democratic finance reception at the Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel. "The good news is I'll have a veto pen."

GOP policies

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, has shared very little about what a Republican U.S. Senate would do with the next two years.

McConnell opted not to release a campaign platform ahead of the elections, the way House Republicans did with their so-called Commitment to America, a one-page document that briefly outlined the types of bills the House GOP planned to bring to the floor if they regained control of that chamber.

McConnell largely rebuffed the campaign platform that National Republican Senatorial Committee Chair Rick Scott, a Florida Republican, released earlier this year, saying if "we're fortunate enough to have the majority next year, I'll be the majority leader. I'll decide in consultation with my members what to put on the floor."

McConnell and several other Senate Republicans also largely rejected the idea the party would bring up nationwide abortion legislation in September when South Carolina GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham released a 15-week national ban with exceptions after that gestational age for rape, incest, or the life of the pregnant patient.

"I think most of the members of my conference prefer that this be dealt with at the state level," McConnell said on Sept. 13.

One of the first significant tests for Republicans, if they officially take over in January, will be to determine how they can work with the Biden administration to fund the government and raise the nation's debt limit to avoid a default sometime next year.

The government funding deadline will likely hit on Sept. 30, 2023 when the federal fiscal year ends, though the debt limit might need congressional action before then if the Treasury Department reaches its \$31.4 trillion borrowing limit.

Senate Republicans opted not to lend any votes to the first debt limit bill needed during the Biden administration, helping Democrats to get past the legislative filibuster, but not to actually pass the measure.

And key House Republicans, including Kevin McCarthy, a California Republican and likely the next speaker, have indicated they'll use the debt limit as leverage to get spending cuts.

Nominations potentially in jeopardy

Aside from legislative debates, a Republican U.S. Senate would have a significant impact on the Biden administration's executive and judicial nominations, which have largely sailed through that chamber under Democratic control.

Iowa's Grassley, who is expected to resume his place as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said in a statement that "under a Republican majority, nominees will receive more thorough scrutiny than they have for the last two years."

"We'll certainly stop being complacent rubber stamps for President Biden's picks like Democrats have been, especially when the nominees are overtly political," Grassley added.

McConnell became somewhat notorious in 2016 for holding up former President Barack Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland — who is now attorney general — to the U.S. Supreme Court ahead of the presidential election.

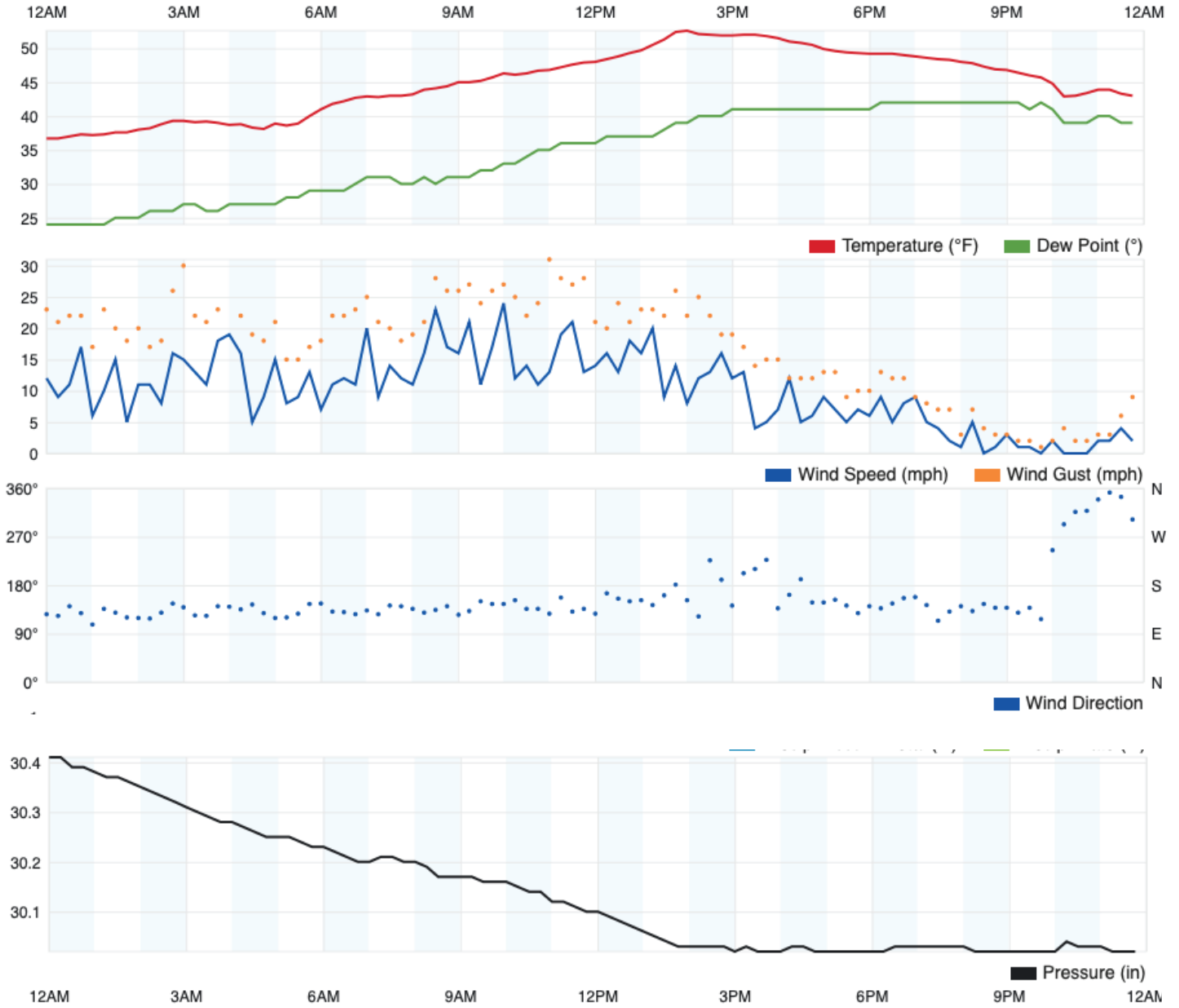
The move led to then-President Donald Trump nominating three justices to the court, giving the one-term president's nominees control of one-third of the bench.

With two years left in Biden's first term, any future Supreme Court nominees would now be subject to approval, or blockade, if voters elect a Republican U.S. Senate.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Winter Storm Warning
URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
National Weather Service Aberdeen SD
333 AM CST Wed Nov 9 2022

SDZ005>007-010-011-017-018-036-037-092200-
/O.UPG.KABR.WS.A.0004.221110T0300Z-221111T1800Z/
/O.NEW.KABR.WS.W.0004.221110T0000Z-221111T0600Z/
McPherson-Brown-Marshall-Edmunds-Day-Faulk-Spink-Hyde-Hand-
Including the cities of Eureka, Aberdeen, Britton, Ipswich,
Webster, Faulkton, Redfield, Highmore, and Miller
333 AM CST Wed Nov 9 2022

...WINTER STORM WARNING IN EFFECT FROM 6 PM THIS EVENING TO
MIDNIGHT CST THURSDAY NIGHT...

- * WHAT...Heavy mixed precipitation expected. Total snow accumulations of 1 to 4 inches and ice accumulations in excess of one quarter of an inch. Winds gusting as high as 45 mph.
- * WHERE...Portions of central, north central and northeast South Dakota.
- * WHEN...From 6 PM this evening to midnight CST Thursday night.
- * IMPACTS...Power outages and tree damage are likely due to the ice. Travel could be nearly impossible. Patchy blowing snow could significantly reduce visibility. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning or evening commute.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

If you must travel, keep an extra flashlight, food, and water in your vehicle in case of an emergency.

The latest road conditions can be obtained by calling 5 1 1.

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TODAY
WED 11/09
HIGH 36 °F

[62% Precip. / 0.04 in](#)

Cloudy with occasional showers this afternoon. Temps nearly steady in the mid 30s. Winds NNE at 10 to 20 mph. Chance of rain 60%.



TONIGHT
WED 11/09
LOW 24 °F

[98% Precip. / 1 in](#)

Periods of freezing rain...and becoming windy overnight. Low 24F. Winds NNE at 20 to 30 mph. Chance of precip 100%. Winds could occasionally gust over 40 mph.

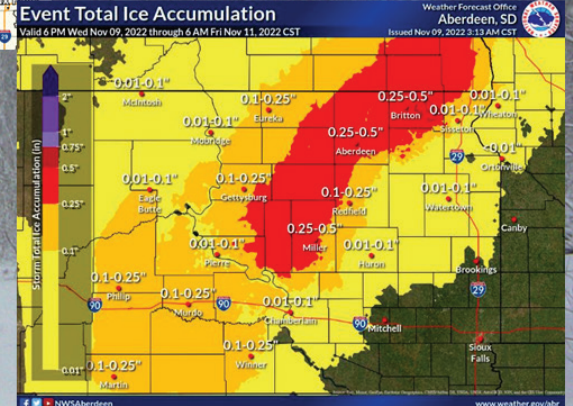
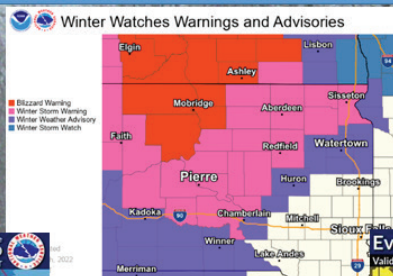


TOMORROW
THU 11/10
HIGH 26 | 15 °F

[80% Precip. / 2 in](#)

Snow and gusty winds during the morning will be followed by lingering snow showers during the afternoon. Potential for blizzard conditions. High 26F. Winds NW at 20 to 30 mph. Chance of snow 80%. Snow accumulating 1 to 3 inches.

Winter Storm to Affect Area Tonight and Thursday



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/abr

Graphic Created
11/9/2022 5:41 AM

A storm system is still on track to move into the area later today, and looks to depart Thursday night. A mix of rain, freezing rain, and snow will develop across the region this evening, with the precipitation becoming all snow during the day Thursday. Freezing rain may accumulate to significant levels, perhaps greater than one quarter of an inch for some areas. The highest potential for 6 or 10 inches of snow now exists over north central South Dakota. Very windy conditions will develop on Thursday as well.

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First Major Winter Storm of the Season

November 8, 2022

3:48 PM

Wednesday Evening through Early Friday

Key Messages

- **Travel** will likely be impacted.
- **Significant ice accumulations** possible.
- Precipitation transitioning to all **snow** late Wed. night into **Thurs.** Potential for **heaviest** (6"+) snow over north central & northern SD.
- Strong winds creating potential for **blowing snow with reduced visibility** as precipitation changes to snow.

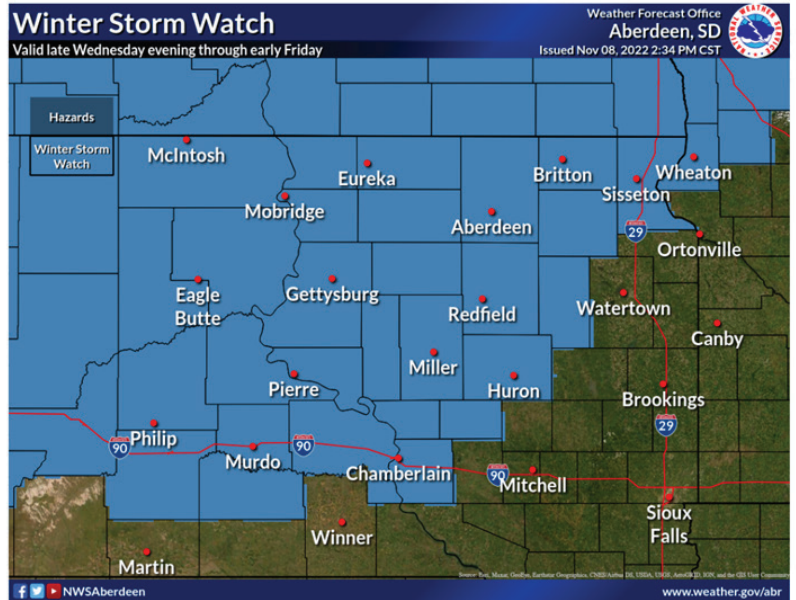
NEW

Important Updates

- Slight northwest shift in axis of heaviest snowfall totals.

Next Scheduled Briefing

- Wednesday morning



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Our first major winter storm of the season is possible later this week. This system will bring a wintry mix of snow, rain, and freezing rain starting on Wednesday night and continuing into Friday. The wintry mix will gradually transition to all snow from west to east during the day on Thursday. Strong winds on the

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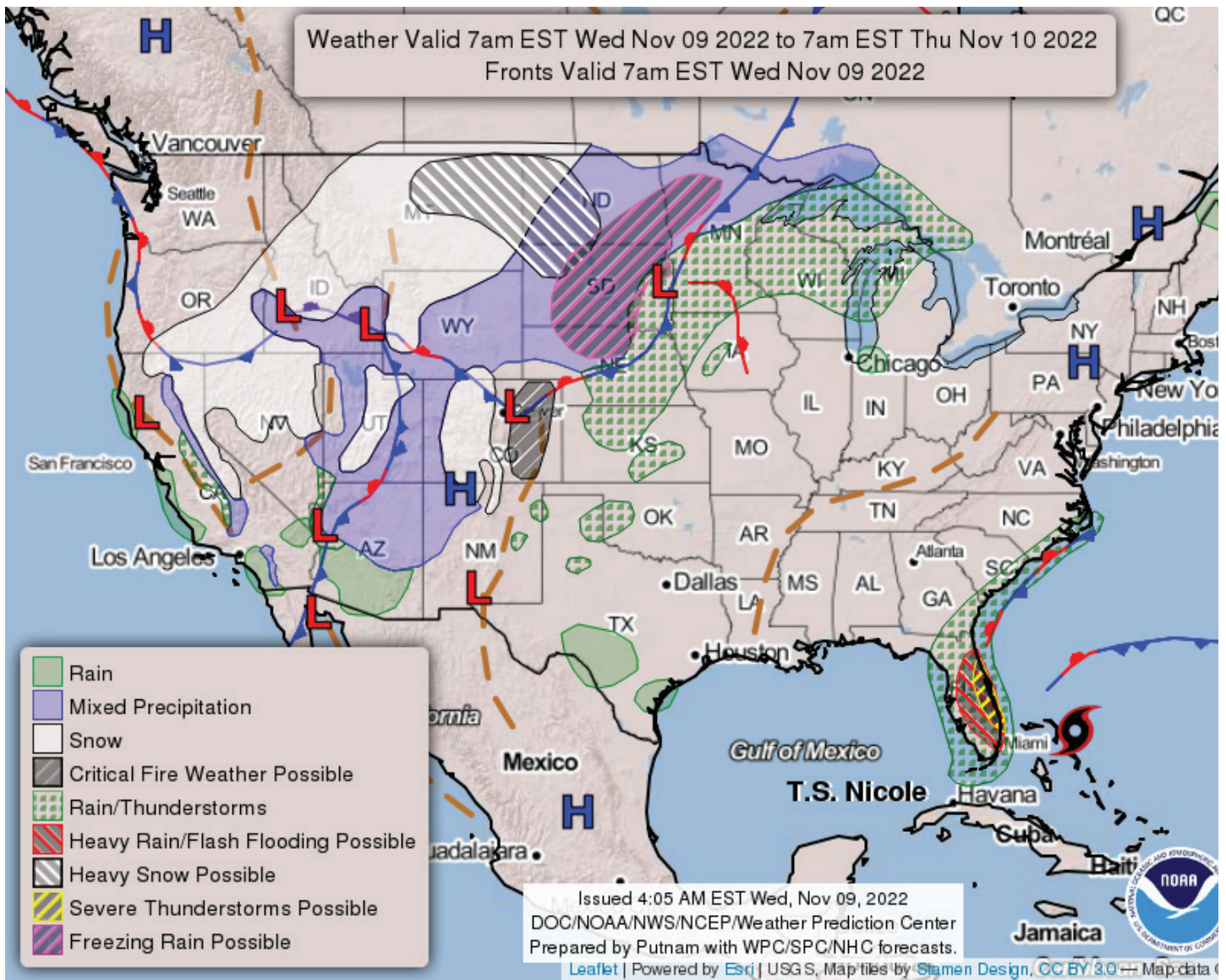
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 52.6 °F at 2:00 PM
Low Temp: 36.7 °F at 12:15 AM
Wind: 31 mph at 11:00 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 48 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 70 in 1903
Record Low: 0 in 2018
Average High: 46°F
Average Low: 22°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.29
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 20.76
Precip Year to Date: 16.50
Sunset Tonight: 5:10:42 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:23:08 AM



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Today in Weather History

November 9th, 1977: An intense early winter storm moved northeast from Colorado to Iowa on November 9th and then to Lake Superior by November 10th. In most areas, the precipitation began late on the 8th as rain with temperatures in the 50s, changing to snow early on Wednesday the 9th, with the storm continuing through Thursday. In west-central Minnesota, some freezing rain also occurred before it changed to all snow. As the storm intensified, the winds in the eastern half of South Dakota increased with some gusts as high as 60-70 miles per hour, with widespread visibilities reduced to zero in blowing snow. In west-central Minnesota, north to northwest winds of 60 to 80 mph reduced visibility to zero and piled snow into eight-foot drifts. The temperature dropped rapidly into the 20s. Many roads throughout the eastern part of South Dakota and west-central Minnesota were blocked, and the heavy wet snow immobilized snow plows. Many cars and trucks were snowbound on the roads and highways. Approximately 100 cars and trucks were stalled on Interstate 90, east of Murdo. Near Fergus Falls in western Minnesota, two trucks loaded with turkeys became stuck, and half the birds were frozen. Many schools were closed on the 9th and 10th. Snowfall amounts in the eastern half of the state were more significant than four inches. A band of heavy snow, ten inches or more, extended from Bridgewater to Howard to Clear Lake into parts of west-central Minnesota. The high winds also destroyed a 1400-foot TV tower at Garden City. In addition, there was some loss of the corn crop. Sunflowers comprised the greatest loss because they had not been entirely harvested. Reports of livestock losses were minimal. Some storm total snowfall amounts include; 15 inches in Watertown; 14 inches in Sisseton; 12 inches in Clear Lake and Wheaton; 10.5 inches in Castlewood; and 9 inches near Raymond and Bryant.

1864: On Election Night, a violent tornado strikes a ferry on the Mississippi River near Chester, Illinois, blowing away all but the hull. The boiler and engines are found up the bluff. Half of Chester was destroyed, and twenty died during the storm.

1926: An estimated F3 to F4 tornado tore through La Plata, Maryland, killing 14 individuals at a small school. This storm caused 17 deaths and injured 65 others.

1913 - The freshwater fury , a rapidly deepening cyclone, caused unpredicted gales on the Great Lakes. Eight large ore carriers on Lake Erie sank drowning 270 sailors. Cleveland OH reported 17.4 inches of snow in 24 hours, and a total of 22.2 inches, both all-time records for that location. During the storm, winds at Cleveland averaged 50 mph, with gusts to 79 mph. The storm produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Buffalo NY, and buried Pickens WV under three feet of snow. (9th-11th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1926 - A tornado in Charles County of southern Maryland killed seventeen persons. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - Seven tornadoes touched down in southern California, three of which began as waterspouts. The waterspouts moved ashore at Point Mugu, Malibu, and Long Beach. The Long Beach tornado traveled inland ten miles causing much damage. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and gusty winds associated with a cold front helped extinguish forest fires in the Appalachian Region and clear out smoke in the eastern U.S. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains from eastern Texas to the Tennessee Valley. Longview TX received 3.12 inches of rain, including two inches in two hours, Tupelo MS was soaked with 2.80 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a strong cold front produced severe weather from eastern Oklahoma to central Indiana. Hail more than two inches in diameter was reported around Tulsa OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - High winds prevailed along the eastern slopes of the Rockies from the afternoon of the 8th into the early morning hours of the 9th. Winds of 50 to 80 mph prevailed across the northwest chinook area of Wyoming, with gusts to 100 mph. Winds in Colorado gusted to 97 mph at Fritz Peak (located near Rollinsville) the evening of the 8th, and early in the morning on the 9th, gusted to 78 mph west of Fort Collins. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1996 - The Veteran's Day storm of November 9-14, 1996 may be the most severe early season lake effect snow (LES) storm the Great Lakes has witnessed in the past fifty years. At the height of the storm, over 160,000 customers were without power in Greater Cleveland alone, as the storm produced isolated snowfall tallies approaching 70 . As usual with these LES events, the Veteran's Day storm battered snow-belt communities downwind of each of the Great Lakes while nearby towns went unscathed. (University of Illinois WW2010)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

HIS STRENGTH

"Remember, don't BLT," said the surgeon. Of course, that got my attention immediately.

Then he explained, "Do not bend, lift or twist. If you do, you will damage or destroy the work that I did on your spine. You must ask for help from others if you want to heal properly. If you are seated, get help to stand. Do not lift anything that weighs more than five pounds. And, turn your entire body rather than twist if you want to see something that is to your left or right."

As I was wheeled from the hospital to begin the trip home, I could not imagine how different my life was going to be. Being dependent on others has always been difficult for me. But thinking of his orders and my false pride forced me to admit how often I had failed at one thing or another because I refused to ask someone for help. Even God. Certainly, "pride does come before a fall."

"Look to the Lord and His strength," said the Psalmist. How easy it sounds but how difficult it is for many of us to do. God wants us to depend on Him and seek the help and counsel of others. If we don't, the likelihood of failure looms large. Our strength is limited, but He is not.

But there is something more to be learned here. When I come to the end of my strength and am unable to do what He has called me to do and ask others to help me, they share in my ministry. So, two things happen: I realize the blessings that can come from depending on others because they are able show His love by helping me. Also, I can share my calling with them. It's all good!

Prayer: Lord, Your ways and Your Word and Your wisdom are gifts we do not deserve. While we know this is true, we realize we have a desperate need for both. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Look for the Lord and His strength. Look for His face all the time. Psalm 105:4



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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News from the Associated Press

2022 midterms live updates: Latest election news from AP

By The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — Follow along for real-time, on-the-ground updates on the 2022 U.S. midterm elections from The Associated Press. Live updates — all times Eastern — are produced by Ashraf Khalil, Annie Ma, Aamer Madhani, Chris Megerian, Mallika Sen and AP journalists around the country.

READ MORE

Election Day, Election Night, Election Morning After: Control of Congress still hangs in the balance as Democrats showed unexpected resilience in the midterm elections. With votes still being counted across the country, Republicans still had the opportunity to win control, but the results were nonetheless uplifting for Democrats who were braced for sweeping losses, AP national political reporters Sara Burnett, Jill Colvin and Will Weissert report.

SNAPSHOT

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers won a second term in office, positioning himself as a check on Republican power in the state. Evers often touted the fact that he vetoed more than 120 GOP-backed bills that would have broadened gun rights, limited access to abortion and made it harder to cast absentee ballots.

2:15 a.m.

Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy addressed supporters for the first time early Wednesday morning, staking his party's claim of the House majority despite several dozens of seats still undecided.

"Now let me tell you, you're out late, but when you wake up tomorrow, we will be in the majority and Nancy Pelosi will be in the minority," the California lawmaker, who could be poised to become Speaker should Republicans take the House, said at a election event in Washington.

The speech, which had originally been planned for hours earlier, noted several GOP gains across the country, especially in highly contested races in Virginia and Texas. McCarthy's comments came as key Democratic wins in the House began to cast doubts on the possibility of a red wave this midterm election.

THEY SAID IT

"This campaign has always been about fighting for everyone who's ever been knocked down that ever got back up."

— John Fetterman, Pennsylvania's newest senator-elect

The AP called the race for Fetterman, a Democrat who was in a tight contest with television personality Mehmet Oz, early Wednesday morning. In a victory speech before the race call, Fetterman nodded to his stroke earlier this year: "Health care is a fundamental right and it saved my life."

Fetterman's victory flips the Senate seat for Democrats as he replaces retiring Republican Pat Toomey.

READ MORE

"It's why you brew coffee," John King grumbled after yet another spin through rural Georgia counties on CNN's "magic wall" trying to decipher that Senate race.

It was an election night that even TV news couldn't impose a storyline upon, AP media writer David Bauder reports. Tight races across the country confirmed the nation's divide and kept reporters across formats wary of drawing conclusions about the political future.

SNAPSHOT

Democratic Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has won a second four-year term, defeating Republican

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challenger Tudor Dixon in a campaign that focused on their opposing views on abortion.

READ MORE

While Mayor Muriel Bowser easily coasted to a third term, one of the more interesting items on the Washington, D.C., ballot this year was a proposal to completely revamp the way servers and bartenders in Washington's many restaurants are paid, AP's Ashraf Khalil reports.

Initiative 82, which passed easily with almost 75% of the vote, will eliminate the so-called tipped wages system in which restaurant owners pay certain staff members well below the \$16.10 minimum hourly wage.

The referendum is particularly notable since literally the same idea was approved by voters four years ago, only to be immediately overturned by the D.C. Council and Bowser amid murky circumstances.

Currently, restaurant managers pay some staffers salaries as low as \$5.35 per hour. If the employees' tips for the night don't raise that income up to the minimum, the employers make up the difference. That two-tiered system will now be phased out and employers will be required to pay every staffer at least the \$16.10 minimum by 2027.

The dynamic was more complex than merely labor vs. management and the debate divided the staffs of restaurants and bars. Many waiters and bartenders opposed it since they currently earn well above the minimum on tips and feared those tips would shrink if an owners imposed an extra service charge in response to their increased costs.

The D.C. Council members seem unlikely to overturn the measure again. They drew accusations of back-room influence from the restaurant industry the first time around. And the idea has apparently become much more popular in the past four years, gaining 20 percentage points over its 2018 margin of victory.

THEY SAID IT

"I have felt a weight on my shoulders to make sure that every little girl and all the women of the state who've had to bang up against glass ceilings everywhere they turn, to know that a woman could be elected in her own right and successfully govern a state as rough and tumble as New York."

— Gov. Kathy Hochul, New York's first elected female governor, standing under a literal glass ceiling

THEY SAID IT

"Even though our fight for the governor's mansion may have come up short, I'm pretty tall."

— Stacey Abrams, conceding the Georgia governor's race to incumbent Brian Kemp

After the Democrat lost her gubernatorial campaign in 2018, she refashioned herself as an advocate for voting rights and garnered the admiration of Democrats nationwide.

But it wasn't enough to help her win a rematch with Kemp, a Republican, which the AP called early Wednesday. Abrams had delivered her concession speech before the call.

It was a difficult blow to Abrams, who had been viewed as a potential force within the party at a time when Georgia has been increasingly contested as a battleground state.

And it showed Kemp's ability to salvage a political career that was in danger after he angered former President Donald Trump by refusing to go along with his false claims that the 2020 election was stolen.

STATUS UPDATE

Democrat Josh Shapiro has been elected as governor of Pennsylvania, defeating hard-right Republican candidate Doug Mastriano after a highly anticipated battle in a key battleground state.

Shapiro, a two-term state attorney general, will replace the term-limited Democrat Tom Wolf.

Mastriano, a member of the state Senate, courted controversy as a staunch supporter of former President Donald Trump's discredited claims that he was cheated out of victory in the 2020 elections.

A perennial swing state, Pennsylvania's races have drawn national attention. In addition to the governor's race, Wolf's former lieutenant governor John Fetterman is facing off against television celebrity Mehmet Oz in an still-uncalled race that could determine control of the U.S. Senate.

—

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STATUS UPDATE

Rep. Sean Casten of Illinois, who faced a barrage of negative advertising in the final days of the campaign but also received some last minute support from President Joe Biden, has hung on to his seat.

The Congressional Leadership Fund, a super PAC aligned with the GOP House leadership, last week announced a \$1.8 million ad buy against Casten, who represents a district that Biden won easily in 2020. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy also made a stop on Friday in the district to hold a fundraiser for Casten's Republican opponent, Orland Park Mayor Keith Pekau.

Biden made his own fundraising stop for Casten and fellow suburban Chicago Democrat Rep. Lauren Underwood on Friday.

DID YOU KNOW?

Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley, 89, who would turn 95 four months before his next term expires, will be among the oldest sitting senators in the chamber's history, reports AP's Thomas Beaumont. Republican Strom Thurmond of South Carolina retired at age 100 in 2003.

Grassley will be the Senate's oldest Republican and second oldest member behind California Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who is three months older than the Iowa lawmaker.

His Democratic opponent Michael Franken did not make Grassley's age a specific issue in the campaign, though his ads featured photographs of Grassley, who first won elected in office in Iowa in 1958, going back to the early days of his career.

STATUS UPDATE

Democratic Sen. Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire won a second term in office in a race that Republican strategists had targeted as ripe for flipping, AP's Holly Ramer reports from Concord.

New Hampshire has a mixed political history, with both Republicans and Democrats capturing the governor's office in recent years. Currently, Democrats control both Senate seats and all four seats in the House of Representatives, and New Hampshire has gone Democratic in the last five presidential elections. But the state legislature and the governor's office are in Republican hands.

Hassan defeated Donald Bolduc, a retired Army general who has espoused conspiracy theories about vaccines and embraced the discredited belief that former President Donald Trump won the 2020 election.

PARTY POLITICS

The menus of campaign parties can tell a story on their own. Here's a brief roundup of refreshments and nourishments on offer:

— In Utah, supporters of U.S. Sen. Mike Lee are drinking non-alcoholic ginger beers under fluorescent lights, AP's Sam Metz reports from Salt Lake City. Lee served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which teaches abstinence from alcohol.

— At U.S. Sen. John Kennedy's election watch party, his featured cocktail was named the "Old Fashioned Weed Killer," an ode to his catchphrase "I'll never stop fighting ... I'd rather drink weed killer," AP's Sara Cline reports from Baton Rouge. Kennedy has also said he would rather drink the chemical than be a political insider or support the federal health care overhaul. The cocktail was a standard Old Fashioned, with no special ingredient.

— John Fetterman's campaign party in Pittsburgh had crudités on offer to guests, AP's Ted Shaffrey reports. That's an apparent reference to a much-mocked effort by his rival for Pennsylvania's Senate seat, Mehmet Oz, to spotlight inflation by shopping for raw vegetables cut up and served as an hors d'oeuvre.

VOTECAST

President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump might not be on this year's midterm ballots, but they loom large over the 2022 election for congressional, state and local races.

About 7 in 10 Republican voters said they were voting to defy Biden, according to AP VoteCast, while

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two-thirds of Democrats said their votes were meant to show opposition to Trump.

Biden faces criticism about his leadership, even among Democrats. Nearly a third of voters who backed Democratic congressional candidates said that Biden is not a strong leader. One in five Democrats says he lacks the mental capability to serve effectively as president.

THEY SAID IT

"For those who have felt unseen, this victory is for you. For those who have felt marginalized, this victory is for you. For those who have felt left out, left behind, and undervalued, this victory is for you."

— Andrea Campbell, Massachusetts' attorney general-elect

Voters in Massachusetts for the first time have elected a Black woman to serve as attorney general, and she has a compelling backstory.

When she was just a child, Campbell's father was sent to prison for eight years. Her mother died in a car accident on the way to visit him, forcing Campbell and her brothers to live with relatives and in foster care. Much later, her twin brother died in police custody, and her older brother faced charges in a string of alleged rapes.

STATUS UPDATE

In a hotly contested race, Democratic Virginia Rep. Abigail Spanberger defeated Republican challenger Yesli Vega. Spanberger held onto the seat, which she flipped in 2018 as part of a wave of Democrats that retook the House.

The race was one of the most expensive in the country, with over \$20 million in independent expenditures, AP's Sarah Rankin reported.

Democrats were able to hold Rep. Jennifer Wexton's seat in the northern Virginia, but they lost a seat in another Virginia swing district after Elaine Luria conceded the race to Republican Jen Kiggans.

STATUS UPDATE

Republican J.D. Vance has beaten Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan in the campaign for an Ohio Senate seat, AP's Julie Carr Smyth reports from Columbus.

The seat is currently held by Rob Portman, a Republican who is retiring.

STATUS UPDATE

Republican Greg Abbott secured a third term as Texas governor Tuesday night, defeating Democratic challenger Beto O'Rourke after a tight campaign in which the two candidates focused on starkly different issues.

O'Rourke, who rose to prominence in 2018 in a failed effort to unseat Sen. Ted Cruz, centered his campaign on abortion rights and gun control. He attacked Abbott for opposing stricter gun laws after 19 schoolchildren were killed at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, and for signing a law that outlawed all abortions, including for rape victims.

Nevertheless, O'Rourke always faced an uphill battle in a state where no Democrat has won statewide office in nearly 30 years.

11 p.m.

Joe Biden and Donald Trump are having a rare moment of agreement on Election Day: They're urging voters to stay in line.

Biden took to Twitter late in the evening to urge voters who are facing long lines to wait it out to cast their ballots. "If you're in line to vote, remember to stay in line!" Biden tweeted.

The Democrats tweet came hours after Trump took his social media startup Truth Social to urge "The Great People of Arizona" to not leave the line "until you VOTE."

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DID YOU KNOW?

The 2022 elections are on track to cost \$16.7 billion at the state and federal level, making them the most expensive midterms ever, according to the nonpartisan OpenSecrets.

For perspective: The contests will nearly double the cost of the 2010 midterm elections, more than double the 2014 midterms and are on pace to roughly equal the 2022 gross domestic product of Mongolia, AP's Brian Slodysko reports.

THEY SAID IT

"I know Vermonters believe that politics can be different. That's why we won."

— Becca Balint, the Democrat who was elected as Vermont's first female and openly gay member of Congress.

DID YOU KNOW?

A quick historical reminder: More often than not, the president's party typically faces significant losses in midterm elections.

Since 1934, only Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934, Bill Clinton in 1998, and George W. Bush in 2002 saw their parties gain seats in the midterms.

Some recent presidents saw big losses in their first midterm races. Republicans under Donald Trump lost 40 House seats but gained two Senate seats in 2018; Democrats under Barack Obama lost 63 House seats and six Senate seats in 2010, and Democrats under Clinton lost 52 House seats and eight Senate seats in 1994.

THEY SAID IT

"I like it, I love it, I want some more of it."

In South Carolina, Republican Gov. Henry McMaster let country music star Tim McGraw do the talking, chanting along with the election party while referring to "that famous philosopher's" 1995 chart-topping hit, AP's James Pollard reports.

McMaster earlier turned to another country singer as his muse: "Let's give 'em something to talk about," said McMaster, the third oldest governor in the United States, quoting Bonnie Raitt's Grammy-winning 1991 single.

10 p.m.

President Joe Biden has made several "congratulatory" calls to fellow Democrats on Tuesday evening, according to the White House.

The White House said Biden has already reached out to Massachusetts Governor-elect Maura Healey, Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee, Vermont Senator-elect Peter Welch, Delaware Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, Virginia Rep. Abigail Spanberger, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York.

The Associated Press has not declared Spanberger, a two-term incumbent, the winner in Virginia's 7th district race.

SNAPSHOT

Republican Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee's victory party briefly turned emotional as his wife, Maria, joined him on stage in a headscarf to give an update on her battle with cancer, AP's Kimberlee Kruesi reports from Nashville.

The two held back tears as they thanked their supporters and God for giving them the strength to make it through the campaign.

STATUS UPDATE

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U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, the freshman Republican who gained notoriety in her first term for incendiary rhetoric that edged into racism, antisemitism and conspiracy theories, has been reelected, AP's Russ Bynum reports from Savannah.

Just weeks after taking office last year, members of the Democratic-controlled House voted to strip Greene of her committee assignments following uproar over her past comments and apparent support of violence against Democrats.

Democrats were particularly livid about a Facebook ad on Greene's campaign page. The image featured a photo of Greene holding a gun along images of Democratic U.S. Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. The ad included the caption: "Squad's worst nightmare."

Greene was expected to easily win reelection and has made clear that should Republicans win control of House she expects to hold a prominent role in the caucus.

"I'm going to be a strong legislator and I'll be a very involved member of Congress," she predicted. "I know how to work inside, and I know how to work outside. And I'm looking forward to doing that."

THEY SAID IT

"Two more years!"

That was the cheer of some supporters at Gov. Ron DeSantis' victory party on Tuesday night.

It was a nod toward the possibility that the Republican seeks the presidency in 2024.

STATUS UPDATE

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine won reelection to a second term in office, defeating Democratic challenge Nan Whaley.

DeWine and Whaley briefly found common ground in pledging to work together on a bipartisan effort for gun reform in 2019, after a gunman killed nine people in Dayton, where Whaley was the mayor.

But Whaley has said that DeWine did not make good on his promise, criticizing his signing of a bill to arm school employees and saying he failed to pass stronger gun laws, AP's Andrew Welsh-Huggins reports.

DID YOU KNOW?

If South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster serves his full second term, which he won Tuesday night, he will be the longest-serving executive in state history with a 10-year tenure, AP's Jeffrey Collins reports from Columbia. McMaster finished the final two years of Nikki Haley's term before being reelected twice.

He defeated Joe Cunningham, a former Democratic congressman. Democrats have steadily lost ground in the state, having race in 16 years. A Democrat has not won the governor's race since 1998.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sarah Huckabee Sanders, a former White House press secretary, is the first woman elected Arkansas governor, AP's Andrew DeMillo reports. She defeated Democratic nominee Chris Jones to nab the seat that her father, Mike Huckabee, held from 1996 to 2007.

STATUS UPDATE

Republican U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida easily won another term on Tuesday, beating Democratic U.S. Rep. Val Demings, AP's Brendan Farrington reports.

Rubio's victory appeared to be further evidence of hardening conservative politics in Florida, once the quintessential swing state. Demings was unable to unseat Rubio despite raising more money and drawing national attention with her role in then-President Donald Trump's first impeachment trial.

STATUS UPDATE

Four years ago, Ron DeSantis narrowly won the Florida governor's office in a squeaker. But he's consolidated his grip on the state since then, and on Tuesday the Republican easily won a second term, AP's Anthony Izaguirre reports.

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The Associated Press called the race shortly after polls closed. The victory could embolden DeSantis to seek the White House in the next election as many have expected.

DID YOU KNOW?

Two gubernatorial firsts tonight: In Maryland, Democrat Wes Moore becomes the state's first Black governor. And in Massachusetts, Democrat Maura Healey's win makes her the state's first elected woman and openly gay governor.

Moore is a bestselling author in his first run for public office, AP's Brian Witte reports.

Healey is currently Massachusetts' attorney general and has broken a peculiar jinx in the state. Since 1958, six former Massachusetts attorneys general sought the governor's office and all failed, AP's Steve LeBlanc reports.

STATUS UPDATE

There will be at least two new faces in the Senate Republican caucus.

Rep. Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma has won a special election to serve the final four years of longtime Republican Sen. Jim Inhofe's fifth-term in the Senate. Inhofe announced in February that he would resign before completing the six-year term. Katie Britt, a former chief of staff for the retiring Sen. Richard Shelby, has won her bid to succeed her old boss. Shelby, who is retiring, first took office in 1987.

SNAPSHOT

While Kathy Hochul waits to see if she'll become the first woman to win election as New York's governor, invitees to her campaign party are assembling under a quite literal glass ceiling.

AP photographer Mary Altaffer is at Capitale, an event space in Manhattan's Chinatown playing host to Hochul's Election Night party. This isn't the first time Hochul, who became New York's governor when her predecessor Andrew Cuomo resigned last year amid scandal, has stood under a glass ceiling.

Hochul held her Democratic primary victory party at a similar space earlier this year, AP's Michelle L. Price reported at the time.

"I'm also here because I stand on the shoulders of generations of women, generations of women who constantly had to bang up against that glass ceiling," Hochul said in June. "To the women of New York, this one's for you."

Hochul faces Republican congressman Lee Zeldin in the general election.

STATUS UPDATE

Democrat Maxwell Alejandro Frost has become the first Gen Z member to win a seat in Congress, winning a Florida House seat.

Frost, a 25-year-old gun reform and social justice activist, ran in a heavily blue Orlando-area district being relinquished by Democratic Rep. Val Demings, who challenged Republican Sen. Marco Rubio this year.

Frost is a former March For Our Lives organizer seeking stricter gun control laws and has stressed opposition to restrictions on abortion rights. Generation Z generally refers to those born between the late 1990s to early 2010s. To become a member of Congress, candidates must be at least 25 years old.

He ran against Calvin Wimbish, a 72-year-old former Army Green Beret who called himself a "Christian, conservative, constitutionalist" candidate for office.

STATUS UPDATE

Incumbent U.S. Sen. Rand Paul has defeated challenger Charles Booker, a progressive Black Democrat, to secure a third term from Kentucky.

Booker, a former member of the Kentucky House of Representatives, previously sought to challenge Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell in 2020, but lost a close race in the Democratic primary.

Paul, 59, capitalized on his massive fundraising advantage to run a series of TV ads, while Booker, 38,

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relied mostly on social media and grassroots campaigning. Paul paid little public attention to Booker, refusing to debate his challenger.

Democrats haven't won a Senate election in Kentucky since 1992, when then-incumbent Wendell Ford won his last election.

READ MORE

A lot of people have warned that democracy is on the ballot this year, and nowhere is that more true than in campaigns for secretary of state, AP's Meg Kinnard and Nick Riccardi explain.

In most states, the role functions as the chief election officer, overseeing the machinery of collecting and counting ballots.

Although they're sometimes appointed by governors, other times they're chosen by voters. There are 27 secretary of state contests right now.

Some of the candidates have supported former President Donald Trump's baseless claims about voter fraud, leading to concerns that they could meddle in future election outcomes.

STATUS UPDATE

Right as polls closed in South Carolina and Vermont, AP made its first calls in U.S. Senate races. Republican Tim Scott won reelection in South Carolina, while Democrat Peter Welch was elected from Vermont.

In defeating Trump-endorsed Republican Gerald Malloy, Welch — who has served in the House of Representatives for 16 years — becomes the junior senator from Vermont while independent Bernie Sanders becomes the state's senior senator. Longtime U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy is retiring after serving 48 years, AP's Wilson Ring reports.

6:30 p.m.

The last day of midterms voting has started to slowly wind down.

Polls closed in Kentucky and Indiana at 6 p.m. Eastern. The next wave of closures will be in New Hampshire, Vermont, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. Polls close or begin to close in those states at 7 p.m. Eastern.

READ MORE

Voters in five states are weighing whether to approve the use of recreational marijuana, a move that could signal a major shift toward legalization in even some of the most conservative parts of the country.

The proposals are on the ballot in Republican strongholds Arkansas, Missouri, North Dakota and South Dakota as well as Democratic-leaning Maryland, reports AP's Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock. The ballot measures come on the heels of President Joe Biden announcing last month he was pardoning thousands of Americans convicted of simple possession of marijuana under federal law.

Advocates of the marijuana initiatives are hopeful Biden's announcement may give a boost to their efforts.

THEY SAID IT

"This is a different breed of cat."

— President Joe Biden

Over and over on the campaign trail, Biden has described today's Republican Party as much different than the one he's used to working with over several decades in politics.

Today's Republicans, he argues, are "MAGA Republicans," a reference to Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan. Sometimes Biden calls them "ultra MAGA" or "mega MAGA," and he describes their ideas as "mega-MAGA, trickle-down politics in the extreme."

Biden made the point again on Tuesday in a radio interview with comedian DL Hughley as he made a final push for Democrats over the airwaves.

Asked why listeners should brave the rain or wait in long lines, Biden warned that "MAGA Republicans" would gain ground.

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"You've seen what you got from that community," he said. "It matters."

VOTECAST

High inflation and worries about the future of American democracy were significant factors in voters' decisions in this year's midterm election, according to AP VoteCast. Roughly three-quarters say the country is headed in the wrong direction. That figure is higher than it was in VoteCast surveys of voters in 2018 and 2020.

AP's Josh Boak and Hannah Fingerhut report on this year's survey of more than 90,000 voters, which offers a detailed portrait of the American electorate.

THEY SAID IT

"And so far Election Day in Georgia has been, in fact, wonderfully, stupendously boring."

— Gabriel Stirling, an official with the Georgia secretary of state's office, on Twitter

5:10 p.m.

With the first polls set to close in under an hour, AP's Mike Catalini explains why the AP will be able to call some elections immediately.

SNAPSHOT

If you were awake before the sun on election night, you might have spotted a rare sight in the sky — a blood moon. It gets its portentous name because the lunar surface appears reddish-orange during the eclipse.

READ MORE

More than 130 measures are on state ballots this Tuesday. In rather meta fashion, voters in several states will weigh in on questions about how future elections will function, AP's David A. Lieb reports. Other measures deal with abortion rights, marijuana legalization and taxation.

READ MORE

Social media platforms can be full of useful information and misinformation, hearsay and rumors alike. AP's David Klepper has a guide on how to interpret your social media feeds this Election Day.

Far-right message boards and social media platforms lit up Tuesday with misleading claims equating expected delays in counting the vote to election fraud.

SITE Intelligence Group, a firm that tracks disinformation, reported a sharp uptick in social media posts Monday and Tuesday claiming Democrats would use delays in vote tallying to rig elections through the country. Some of the posts originated on websites popular with supporters of ex-President Donald Trump as well as adherents of the baseless QAnon conspiracy theory.

Trump and many influential figures on the far right used the length of time it took to count votes in 2020 to spin baseless conspiracy theories about a rigged election. Those misleading claims have been blamed for decreasing trust in U.S. elections and have been recycled as a main misinformation narrative in 2022.

1:30 p.m.

Whatever the outcome of today's voting, the White House will stay bathed in bright light until 2 a.m. — largely to accommodate TV correspondents filing on-camera reports and other reporters trying to make their deadlines.

The floodlights are usually turned off around 10 p.m. every night, in part because they bleed into the executive residence where the president and first lady live.

U.S. Secret Service officers usually make a pass through the press briefing room each night, checking news organization offices to make sure all reporters have left the building so they can lock the doors to

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the workspace. But the rules are usually relaxed on major news nights, like midterm and presidential elections, and presidential inaugurations.

THEY SAID IT

"I think we're going to have a very big night and it's going to be very exciting to watch."

— former President Donald Trump

Trump predicted Republicans would have a "great night" as he voted in Palm Beach, Florida, on Tuesday morning. He told reporters outside the Morton and Barbara Mandel Recreation Center that he had voted to reelect Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, even as the two could soon become rivals if — as many expect — they both run for president in 2024.

Trump is planning an announcement in Florida next Tuesday, as AP's Jill Colvin reports. Trump said Nov. 15 would "be a very exciting day for a lot of people."

SNAPSHOT

From Lewiston, Maine, to rainy Pacoima, California, AP photographers were there to capture the scene at voting locations across the U.S. Emotions were raw outside libraries, fitness centers, laundromats and fire stations as voters said inflation, abortion, crime and the future of democracy weighed heavily on their minds.

11:20 a.m.

President Joe Biden was not expected to make any public appearances Tuesday as voters went to the polls.

Indeed, well before the lunch hour rolled in, the White House called a "lid." It's the lingo that means the president would spend the day in the executive mansion awaiting the results of vote counting that will decide political control of Congress and, with that, how the two years left in his term will play out.

Biden's chief spokesperson, Karine Jean-Pierre, told reporters that Biden would have a full schedule Tuesday, including prepping for an upcoming trip to international summits in North Africa and Asia and watching the election results come in.

"We expect the president will address the elections the day afterwards," Jean-Pierre said.

THEY SAID IT

"Everything we have achieved over the last 60 years is now up for a vote."

— Courtland Cox, a veteran civil rights movement organizer, in a note he penned overnight shared with the AP by the NAACP

Cox urged voters in Georgia and elsewhere on Tuesday to vote to protect civil rights that he and others warned are at stake in the midterm elections. Cox, 82, who famously wrote the speech that the late Rep. John Lewis delivered at the March on Washington in 1963, likened Tuesday to a "battle for our freedom."

"If you're a woman, your right to choose is on the ballot," Cox said. "If you're African American, your right to vote is on the ballot. If you're poor, your right to feed yourself is on the ballot. If you're LGBTQ+, your right to love who you love is on the ballot. If you're a senior citizen, your social security is on the ballot. And if you're a young voter, your future is on the ballot."

READ MORE

If you're the type to have your TV tuned to the news throughout Election Day, the jargon might get overwhelming. The AP's Meg Kinnard offers a glossary of key election-related terms you might hear on your broadcast or read in AP copy. And if you're curious about how the networks and cable news prepared for Tuesday, media reporter David Bauder has a look at their coverage plans.

DID YOU KNOW?

How did the AP get the job of calling races? No one wanted to wait for weeks to find out who won

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elections, AP's Meg Kinnard explains, but no centralized body to count votes existed. The AP began tallying votes with the 1848 election, creating an operation that has evolved into a network of thousands of stringers and vote center clerks who take feeds, scrape official state websites for data and electronically add up votes across the country.

Race calls are made before the results are official, but the AP declares a winner only when it's certain that candidate can't be caught. In 2020, the AP was 99.9% accurate in all its race calls and perfect in declaring winners in the presidential and congressional races in each state.

READ MORE

Millions of people have already submitted their ballots, and millions more are heading to the polls Tuesday. For a deeper dive on what's at play in these midterm elections, congressional reporter Mary Clare Jalonick has the details on what happens if the House flips, among other scenarios.

6:15 a.m.

Polls are beginning to open for in-person voting — by 1 p.m. Eastern, voting locations will be open in all 50 states (Hawaii is five hours behind the East Coast). As fears of harassment of election officials and disruptions at polling places and tallying sites arise, election officials say they are prepared to handle potential issues. Voters should not be deterred, AP's Christina A. Cassidy and Geoff Mulvihill report, and no major problems were reported during the early voting period.

READ MORE

What are Americans voting on? What's at stake? If you need a general primer on the 2022 midterm elections, AP's Mike Catalini has you covered with a basic overview of what's on the ballot, how counting works, how long this thing might take and what the possible outcomes might mean.

12:01 a.m.

Election Day has dawned. With polls set to begin opening in a few hours across the country, you can find a guide of what to expect for each state at our Election Expectations 2022 hub.

It's not a presidential year, but these are high-stakes elections nonetheless. AP's chief political writer, Steve Peoples, highlights six key things to watch today. Among them: Will the expected red wave be a ripple or a tsunami? What effect will the Supreme Court decision striking down Roe v. Wade have? And what will we know before we go to bed tonight?

The answer to that last question is yet unclear. While there are some races the AP can call as soon as polls close, as Mike Catalini explains, other winners might take a lot longer to identify. Christina A. Cassidy takes a look at the factors that can delay results.

Follow the AP's coverage of the 2022 midterm elections at <https://apnews.com/hub/2022-midterm-elections>. And check out <https://apnews.com/hub/explaining-the-elections> to learn more about the issues and factors at play in the midterms.

T rex skull unearthed in South Dakota to be auctioned in NY

NEW YORK (AP) — A Tyrannosaurus rex skull unearthed in South Dakota is expected to sell for \$15 million or more at auction in New York next month, officials with Sotheby's said Tuesday.

The 200-pound (91-kilogram) skull fossil, nicknamed Maximus, is being sold Dec. 9 by an owner who wishes to remain anonymous, the auction house said.

The skull was excavated in 2020 and 2021 in Harding County, South Dakota, where other T. rex skeletons like Sue and Stan were found, according to Cassandra Hatton, Sotheby's head of science and popular culture. She called the area "the world capital for T. rexes."

Most of the rest of this T. rex's remains were destroyed over time by erosion, but Sotheby's experts said

the skull was a major find. Hatton noted, "When you think about it, more people can fit a skull in their home than people who could fit a full dinosaur."

The 6 1/2-foot (2-meter) fossil is about 76 million years old and still has most of the external skull bones and numerous teeth, Sotheby's experts said.

Hatton said two large puncture holes in the skull are evidence of a big fight, probably with another T. rex. "We don't know that this is what caused the death of this animal, but we can tell that it did have a major battle during its lifetime," she said.

Marks on the skull are interesting to study "because they give us an idea about what life was like during the Cretaceous period," Hatton said.

This specimen may not be headed to a research institution, though. "It's the ultimate trophy," Hatton said. "To place in one's home."

Voters approve recreational marijuana in Maryland, Missouri

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Voters approved recreational marijuana in Maryland and Missouri but rejected it in two other states, signaling support gradually growing for legalization even in conservative parts of the country.

The results mean that 21 states have now approved marijuana's recreational use. Arkansas and North Dakota voters rejected legalization proposals in Tuesday's elections. A similar initiative went before voters in South Dakota, but early Wednesday it was too early to call.

Advocates said the results send a message to lawmakers in Washington about support around the country for legalization.

"A growing number of voters recognize that cannabis policy reform is in the best interest of public health and safety, criminal justice reform, social equity, and personal freedom," Toi Hutchinson, president and CEO of the Marijuana Policy Project, said in a statement. "State-level legalization victories are what's necessary to move the needle forward at the federal level."

The state voting follows moves by President Joe Biden toward decriminalizing marijuana. Biden last month announced he was pardoning thousands of Americans convicted of simple possession of marijuana under federal law.

Advocates of the marijuana initiatives have said Biden's announcement could give a boost to their efforts.

Missouri's measure will legalize recreational marijuana for adults 21 and older and expunge records of past arrests and convictions for nonviolent marijuana offenses, except for selling to minors or driving under the influence.

"It just shows that this is not a partisan issue," said John Payne, who led the Missouri campaign to legalize marijuana use. "This is something that transcends partisan divides."

Payne said he expected recreational sales to start in Missouri early next year.

Opponents said they would be working to limit the implementation of Missouri's legalization, such as working with cities and towns to opt out of allowing dispensaries.

"The devil is in the details, and we will remain actively involved in Missouri implementation because we don't need another Big Tobacco industry harming kids in Missouri," said Kevin Sabet, president of SAM Action, an anti-legalization group.

Maryland will also make changes in criminal law and create automatic expungements of past marijuana possession convictions.

Heading into the election, recreational marijuana was legal in 19 states, and polls have shown opposition to legalization softening. All of the states with recreational marijuana on the ballot, except for Maryland, voted for Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election.

About 6 in 10 voters support legalizing the recreational use of marijuana nationwide, according to VoteCast, an extensive survey of more than 90,000 voters nationwide conducted for The Associated Press by NORC at the University of Chicago.

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"Support for ending marijuana prohibition in the states is spreading much like it did at the end of alcohol prohibition," said Mason Tvert, a partner at VS Strategies, a cannabis policy and public affairs firm. "

The five states that held votes on Tuesday have legal medical marijuana programs. That includes Arkansas, which in 2016 became the first Bible Belt state to approve medical marijuana. The state's dispensaries opened in 2019, and more than 91,000 patients have cards to legally buy marijuana for medical conditions.

The legalization campaigns raised about \$23 million in the five states, with the vast majority in Arkansas and Missouri. More than 85% of contributions in those two states came from donors associated with companies holding medical marijuana licenses, according to an Associated Press analysis of the most recent campaign finance reports.

In Arkansas, supporters ran upbeat ads touting the thousands of jobs they said would be created by the measure. Opponents ran more ominous spots, warning voters to "protect Arkansas from big marijuana."

"The marijuana industry spent millions of dollars trying to write itself into the Arkansas Constitution," said Jerry Cox, executive director of the Family Council Action Committee, one of the groups opposing the measure. "Now they know that Arkansans do not support that kind of crony politics."

The initiative drew the criticism of traditional legalization opponents as well as some medical marijuana advocates, who said the Arkansas proposal placed too many limits and would only benefit a handful of dispensaries. Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a former head of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration, also opposed the measure.

Supporters indicated they planned to try again in Arkansas.

"Tonight, we made history by putting adult-use cannabis on the ballot for the first time. Although we fell short, we look forward to continuing this effort to build this momentum to 2024," said Robert McLarty, campaign director for Responsible Growth Arkansas.

David Owen, who led North Dakota's legalization effort, said he wasn't sure another effort would be made after the proposal was rejected.

"Tonight was not what we wanted, but the people have spoken and we have to prepare for the next steps," Owen said.

North Dakota's proposal would have allowed people 21 and older to legally use marijuana at home as well as possess and cultivate restricted amounts of cannabis. It also would have established policies to regulate retail stores, cultivators and other types of marijuana businesses.

"It's pretty clear North Dakota families don't want marijuana across the state," said Luke Niforatos, executive vice president of Smart Approaches to Marijuana, a Virginia-based political organization against marijuana legalization, which helped fight the measure in North Dakota.

South Dakotans, including a sizable number of Republicans, voted to legalize marijuana possession in 2020, but that law was struck down by the state Supreme Court in part because the proposal was coupled with medical marijuana and hemp. This year, recreational pot stood by itself as it went before voters.

In Colorado, where recreational marijuana has been legal for nearly a decade, voters on Tuesday took up a proposal that would allow the use of certain psychedelic substances. If approved, it would make Colorado the second state to take such a step. The vote was too early to call early Wednesday.

Melody Finley, a Republican in Little Rock, Arkansas, said she voted for the state's legalization measure because she thinks it can help some people for certain conditions.

"If you can buy alcohol, you can buy that, too," Finley, 47, a dance instructor, said.

But Rick Huffman, a voter in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, voted against that state's legalization proposal, two years after supporting recreational marijuana on South Dakota's ballot in 2020.

"I've got a kid that's a teenager now," he said. "So I think it'll eventually happen, but maybe I'll wait until my kids grow up."

Associated Press writers Stephen Groves in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Summer Ballentine in Jefferson City, Missouri; James MacPherson in Bismarck, North Dakota; and Dave Kolpack in Fargo, North Dakota, contributed to this report.

Follow the AP's coverage of the 2022 midterm elections at <https://apnews.com/hub/2022-midterm-elections>. And learn more about the issues and factors at play in the midterms at <https://apnews.com/hub/explaining-the-elections>.

Voter ID passes in Nebraska as states settle ballot items

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Residents of Nebraska approved a new photo identification requirement for future elections as voters in several states decided measures that could affect the way ballots are cast in the next presidential election.

The voting-related measures were among more than 130 state proposals appearing on ballots, addressing contentious issues such as abortion, taxes, drug policy and labor laws.

Heading into Tuesday's elections, about two-thirds of states already required some form of identification to vote, though not all of those mandated a photo ID. Nebraska was among the states without an identification requirement, even though Republicans had tried for years to pass one in the Legislature.

The photo ID measure finally made the ballot this year thanks to an initiative petition drive bankrolled by Marlene Ricketts, the mother of term-limited Republican Gov. Pete Ricketts. He said the 2020 election revealed that "people had concern about the integrity of our voting systems," though there was no evidence of widespread fraud.

While Nebraskans opted for stricter voting rules, Arkansas residents rejected a proposed constitutional amendment that would have made it harder to approve future ballot initiatives. The measure would have required a 60% threshold, instead of a simple majority, to pass citizens' initiatives and constitutional amendments.

Voters in South Dakota rejected a similar measure earlier this year, and Arizona voters on Tuesday also were deciding whether to require a 60% threshold to approve future ballot initiatives containing tax increases.

Alabama voters approved a constitutional amendment Tuesday requiring future election law changes to take effect at least six months before a general election.

Ohio voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment prohibiting non-U.S. citizens from voting in local elections, becoming the seventh state to do so. The measure championed by the state's Republican elections chief was in response to an effort to expand noncitizen voting in one small Ohio village, as well as to efforts cropping up in larger cities, such as New York and San Francisco.

Voters in Connecticut approved a measure to expand access to voting. After defeating an advance voting measure in 2014, voters on Tuesday passed a constitutional amendment authorizing the Democratic-led General Assembly to create an early voting law. That would leave Alabama, Mississippi and New Hampshire as the only states without an early in-person voting period available for all voters, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Voters in Michigan were supporting a wide-ranging initiative backed by voting rights advocates. It would expand early voting options, require state-funded return postage and drop boxes for absentee ballots and specify that the Board of State Canvassers has only a "clerical, nondiscretionary" duty to certify election results. The proposal also could preempt Republican attempts to tighten photo identification laws by amending the state constitution to include the current alternative of signing an affidavit.

Votes were still being counted for an Arizona measure that would fortify an existing photo ID law for in-person voting by eliminating an alternative of providing two documents bearing a person's name and address. People voting by mail — the vast majority in Arizona — would have to list their date of birth and either their driver's license number, a state identification number or the last four digits of their Social Security number.

A proposed amendment to Nevada's Constitution would adopt an open primary election to advance the top five vote-getters. Ranked choice voting then would be used to determine the winner of the general election. If no candidate received a majority on the first count, the votes for the bottom candidate would

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be reassigned to voters' next preferences until one candidate has a majority. Similar systems already exist for some elections in Maine and in Alaska. But the Nevada measure, if approved this year, would require a second approval in 2024 to take effect.

In other ballot issues, voters in Illinois and Tennessee were moving in opposite directions on labor policies. While Illinois residents were favoring a proposed constitutional right to collective bargaining, Tennessee voters passed a constitutional amendment forbidding workplace contracts from requiring union fees.

Gun policies also drew contrasting approaches in states. Iowa voters approved a measure embedding the right to bear arms in the state constitution. Oregon voters, meanwhile, were deciding whether to restrict gun rights by prohibiting magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds and requiring safety training and a permit to purchase firearms.

Voters in Alabama, Tennessee and Vermont all approved constitutional measures against slavery and involuntary servitude, intending to end the potential of that being used as a criminal punishment.

Health care also was on the ballot in some states. An Oregon measure would create a constitutional right to affordable health care and obligate the state to ensure access. A measure in South Dakota would expand Medicaid coverage to adults under the terms of the federal health care law enacted more than a decade ago under former President Barack Obama.

California, as is often the case, was home to the nation's most expensive ballot battle. Hundreds of millions of dollars were poured into the campaigns of two competing initiatives to legalize sports betting — one backed by wealthy Native American tribes and the other by online gambling companies and less-affluent tribes. Both were defeated by voters.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

05-13-29-38-59, Mega Ball: 23, Megaplier: 4

(five, thirteen, twenty-nine, thirty-eight, fifty-nine; Mega Ball: twenty-three; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$189,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 1,900,000,000

Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

SDHSAA Playoff=

Class B=

SoDak 16=

Colman-Egan def. Herreid/Selby Area, 25-16, 25-8, 25-13

SoDak 16=

Class A=

Belle Fourche def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-17, 25-15, 20-25, 25-23

Dakota Valley def. Baltic, 25-12, 25-15, 25-19

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Rapid City Christian, 25-19, 25-19, 25-18

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Lakota Tech, 25-12, 25-14, 25-7

Miller def. Groton Area, 25-21, 25-12, 25-9

Platte-Geddes def. Hamlin, 16-25, 25-10, 25-16, 25-21

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Sioux Falls Christian def. Redfield, 25-15, 25-13, 25-9
Wagner def. Winner, 25-14, 25-13, 25-18
Class B=
Burke def. Kadoka Area, 25-17, 25-16, 25-15
Castlewood def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-18, 25-15, 25-15
Chester def. Faith, 25-9, 25-14, 25-11
Freeman def. Jones County, 25-21, 25-15, 25-21
Northwestern def. Faulkton, 25-19, 25-22, 25-11
Warner def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-19, 25-19, 25-15
Wolsey-Wessington def. Timber Lake, 25-14, 25-18, 25-23

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

Republican Dusty Johnson wins 3rd House term in South Dakota

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Republican U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson won reelection Tuesday for his third term representing South Dakota's only U.S. House district, easily winning a race in which Democrats didn't field a candidate.

The 46-year-old Republican faced only Libertarian Collin Duprel, who did not report raising or spending any money in the campaign. Democrat Ryan Ryder, a lawyer, withdrew early from the contest in March after coming under scrutiny for tweets he made from a personal account.

The House seat was not always a lock for Johnson. He faced a competitive primary against a right-wing challenger in state lawmaker Taffy Howard that attracted spending from several national political action committees.

Johnson has worked to shore up his conservative credentials in the heavily Republican state while portraying himself as focused on policy over political brawling. During his time in the House, he has worked for bipartisan agreements as part of a group known as the "Problem Solvers Caucus."

South Dakota's Thune wins reelection to 4th U.S. Senate term

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Republican U.S. Sen. John Thune of South Dakota won reelection to a fourth term Tuesday and will return to a Senate where he is seen as a potential future majority leader.

The 61-year-old Republican held a large fundraising advantage over Democrat Brian Bengs, an Air Force veteran and university professor. Thune is the second-ranking Senate Republican and is seen as a potential pick to succeed Sen. Mitch McConnell once he steps down from leadership.

The most dramatic moment of the campaign for Thune came before it began, when he contemplated retiring rather than running for reelection. He had shown signs of weariness after navigating a Republican Party dominated by former President Donald Trump, who at one point called for a primary challenger to unseat him.

Once he chose to run, Thune easily fended off a pair of primary challengers in June and has ridden out the campaign season in the heavily Republican state by avoiding most engagements with Bengs.

The quiet election year allowed Thune to amass over \$17 million in campaign funds — money that could help line up allies if he moves to become Senate leader.

Only one South Dakota politician has won a fourth Senate term — Republican Sen. Karl Mundt, who held a seat from the 1950s to the 1970s. After voting early Tuesday, Thune said he was "hopeful" he would match Mundt's historic run.

He added that he was "confident" the GOP would gain a Senate majority after Tuesday's midterm elections. "I think the momentum has shifted in the right direction," he told The Associated Press. "We feel really good about where the races are."

Republican's Lankford, Mullin win Oklahoma Senate seats

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Republicans U.S. Sen. James Lankford and U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin both coasted to election victory on Tuesday, with Mullin poised to become the first Native American in the U.S. Senate in nearly 20 years.

In an unusual twist this election cycle, both of Oklahoma's U.S. Senate seats were on the ballot. U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe shook up the state's political scene by announcing this year that he planned to step down before his term was finished.

In the race for Inhofe's seat, Mullin, 45, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, faced former Democratic U.S. Rep. Kendra Horn, 46, an Oklahoma City attorney who in 2018 ousted a two-term GOP incumbent from a seat that had been in Republican hands for four decades.

But winning a congressional seat in an increasingly diverse and progressive city is different than winning a statewide race in Oklahoma, where Republicans now make up more than 50% of registered voters, compared to less than 30% for Democrats. Most polls showed Mullin winning comfortably over Horn, Libertarian Robert Murphy and independent Ray Woods.

"Kendra Horn had an opportunity to do something for our state, and she didn't," said Jessica Perez, 46, of Oklahoma City, who cast her vote for Mullin Tuesday at Oklahoma Christian University.

Mullin will become the first Native American in the U.S. Senate since former U.S. Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado left the Senate in 2005, according to U.S. Senate records.

In Oklahoma's other U.S. Senate race, incumbent Republican Lankford, 54, fended off a challenge from political newcomer Madison Horn, 32, a cybersecurity industry professional who is not related to Kendra Horn, along with Libertarian Kenneth Blevins and independent Michael Delaney.

Lankford, who received some criticism for seeking to delay certification of President Joe Biden's election victory in 2020, faced a feisty primary challenge from a Tulsa pastor who criticized Lankford for not fully embracing the falsehood that the election was stolen from former President Donald Trump.

Noem wins reelection in South Dakota amid 2024 buzz

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem defeated a Democratic state lawmaker on Tuesday to win reelection, leaning heavily on her handling of the coronavirus pandemic in a first term marked by positioning herself for a possible White House bid in 2024.

The Republican governor eased past state Rep. Jamie Smith after raising more than \$15 million via a nationwide fundraising network. Noem has said she would serve a full four-year term if reelected, but she generated speculation about higher political ambitions by becoming a fixture in conservative media and making appearances in key 2024 states. Her fundraising haul was a historic amount of money for a South Dakota gubernatorial candidate.

Noem's campaign centered largely on her handling of the state's economy as well as her record of forgoing most government mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 50-year-old Republican vaulted to national prominence within the GOP during her first term after deriding those government mandates.

"It's my privilege to serve you, to honor our Constitution to keep government limited and to protect the American ideals of freedom and opportunity. Over the last four years, South Dakota has been an example to the nation of the power of those ideals," Noem told the crowd during her victory speech.

She said she looked forward to "the next four years," while also repeatedly taking shots at President Joe Biden. Noem accused him of ruining the country, said she doubted "whether his mind was his own," and threatened that "if he tries to take our guns, he can take them from our cold dead hands."

One of her first priorities for her second term will be delivering on a campaign promise to repeal the state's tax on groceries. On the campaign trail, Noem cast the tax repeal as a way to deliver quick relief to family budgets squeezed by inflation. But in the Legislature, she will have to convince a Republican-controlled Senate that the state government can go without a tax that annually brings in roughly \$100 million.

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Noem said Tuesday that the state has the money to afford the tax cut.

Campaign season got off to a rocky start for Noem as she came under the scrutiny of a state ethics board. In August, the board found evidence that Noem had interfered with a state agency to aid her daughter's real estate appraiser licensure. The board also asked the state's Division of Criminal Investigation to probe her use of the state's airplane, but the prosecutor overseeing the investigation said last month it found nothing to support a criminal prosecution.

The governor has portrayed the complaints as political retribution from former Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg, who filed them as he faced pressure from Noem to resign over his conduct surrounding a fatal car crash with a pedestrian in 2020.

Betty Ammann, a Republican voter, said she was grateful that South Dakota went without many government mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic. She voted for Noem.

"I just think she's looking out for the best for our state," Ammann, a nurse, said.

Smith criticized Noem's out-of-state travels as a sign she is more focused on her personal ambition rather than the job at home. He cast himself as a moderate, focused on the state's practical needs and touted a record of bipartisanship as the Democratic leader in the House.

Pat Kraning, a retired school superintendent and registered Republican, declined to say how he voted Tuesday. But he said he felt South Dakotans' voices and local concerns were getting drowned out amid an uproar over nationalized issues, especially in education. Noem has focused on removing certain teachings on race from public schools and universities, though critics say that topics associated with frameworks like critical race theory are rarely an issue in schools.

"It seems like we've spent a great deal of time in South Dakota discussing national issues which I don't know if they're necessarily relevant day to day," Kraning said.

Smith struggled to raise enough money to compete with Noem. She hit him with ad after ad that labeled him an "extreme liberal" in an effort to peel away moderate voters — a group Smith needed to win over.

Republicans have nearly twice as many registered voters in South Dakota as Democrats, and in some places — including the state's most populated county, Minnehaha — registered Democrats have slipped behind even independents.

Democrats have not won the governor's office since the 1970s.

Smith conceded the race later Tuesday.

Election takeaways: No sweep for the Republicans after all

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For weeks, Republicans predicted a "red wave" would carry them to power in Congress, as voters repudiated majority Democrats for failing to tame skyrocketing inflation and address worries about rising crime.

The reality appeared far different early Wednesday.

Rather than a wholesale rejection of President Joe Biden and his party, the results were far more mixed as returns from Tuesday's midterms trickled in.

Many Democratic incumbents proved surprisingly resilient, outperforming their party's own expectations. Meanwhile, Democrat John Fetterman won an open Senate seat currently held by the GOP, while other key races that will determine control of the chamber remain too early to call.

"When you wake up tomorrow, we will be in the majority and Nancy Pelosi will be in the minority," House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy predicted early Wednesday.

He may be right. But it appeared that likely Republican gains would come on far less favorable terms than anticipated.

Here are some takeaways from this year's election:

TO BE CONTINUED ...

Republicans hoped for a wipeout. They didn't get it. After Democrats racked up several hard-fought wins in swing districts, like Rep. Abigail Spanberger's Virginia seat, the sweeping wins many Republicans

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predicted had yet to materialize early Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the fate of Democrats narrow hold on the Senate was unclear.

Fetterman defeated Dr. Mehmet Oz for a crucial Pennsylvania Senate seat vacated by retiring Republican Sen. Pat Toomey. Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock and former NFL star Herschel Walker, a Republican, were locked in a close contest in Georgia. The Wisconsin race between Republican Sen. Ron Johnson and Democrat Mandela Barnes was too close to call.

And the outcome of the two remaining two seats that will determine which party will hold a Senate majority — Arizona and Nevada — may not be known for days because both states conduct elections in part by mail ballots, which take a long time to count.

Stay tuned.

HISTORY LESSON

It's called history for a reason. The party that celebrates winning the White House is usually mourning a loss in the midterms two years later.

Add to that historical pattern an economy battered by inflation and teetering on recession, throw in fears about crime, and the outcome is close to certain.

For Biden and House Democrats, the likelihood of keeping power in the lower chamber of Congress was always slight. Republicans have expected to gain enough seats to retake the majority. If successful, which was not immediately clear Wednesday morning, they also have plans to neuter Biden's agenda for the next two years.

Since 1906, there have been only three midterms in which the party of the president in power gained House seats: 1934, when the country was struggling with a Depression, 1998 when the U.S. was buoyed by a soaring economy, and 2002, when President George W. Bush had a sky-high approval rating amid the national feeling of unity after the Sept. 11 attacks.

IS FLORIDA STILL A SWING STATE?

Gov. Ron DeSantis and Sen. Marco Rubio, both Republicans, offer the latest evidence that Florida is becoming increasingly red. The two soared to early reelection victories Tuesday, both winning Miami-Dade County, which Democrat Hillary Clinton carried by 29 percentage points in 2016.

Florida has been a classic battleground. It twice helped propel Barack Obama to the White House. But the state, where the number of registered Democrats exceeded Republicans in 2020, has shifted increasingly to the right. That's thanks to GOP inroads with Hispanic voters, as well as an influx of new residents, including many retirees, drawn to its lack of an income tax as well as its sunny weather.

"Democrats really have to think about how they are going to rebuild there. The Obama coalition no longer exists," said Carlos Curbelo, a Republican former member of Congress, who called Florida "off the map for the foreseeable future" to Democrats.

DeSantis won the governor's office in 2018 by only about 30,000 votes. On Tuesday, he flipped at least six counties that he lost that year. Those same counties were carried by Biden just two years ago.

Some Democrats blame some of Tuesday's blowout losses to a lack of investment by their party.

"This is what happens when national Democrats decide to not spend money in the state," said Greg Goddard, a Democratic fundraising consultant from Florida who raised money for Rep. Val Demings' losing challenge of Rubio. "The pathway to Democrats winning future presidential elections is very thin if you do not plan to spend in Florida

WAS IT A 'RED WAVE' OR A RIPPLE?

Whether a red ripple will carry Republicans won't likely be known for days or weeks as states that conduct their elections largely by mail, such as California, continue counting votes.

One thing is certain: It's unlikely to match 2010's tea party wave, which netted 63 seats, or the Newt Gingrich-led House takeover of 1994, which ousted 54 Democrats and flipped the chamber to GOP control for the first time since the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower.

One reason that won't happen? There just aren't that many competitive seats.

The end result? Far less interest in compromise and more gridlock in the halls of Congress.

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WHAT DO REPUBLICANS WANT?

Gingrich's "Contract with America" was celebrated as a cornerstone of the Republicans' 1994 House takeover for offering a concrete list of policies the GOP would pursue if put in power.

Now Republicans are far more circumspect about their aims.

"That's a very good question. And I'll let you know when we take it back," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell he told reporters in January.

McCarthy has offered up a "Commitment to America," a list of priorities that fits on a pocket-sized card he carries with him that is heavy on slogans and light on detail.

Both may be attempting to avoid the plight of Gingrich whose "Contract with America" became a liability when Republicans failed to enact it.

House Republicans have said they intend to investigate Biden and his administration. They have also called for a renewed focus on fiscal restraint, a crackdown on illegal immigration at the southern border and increased domestic energy production.

Much of it may not matter. Biden, after all, has a veto pen.

MOST EXPENSIVE MIDTERMS

The 2022 elections are on track to cost \$16.7 billion at the state and federal level, making them the most expensive midterms ever, according to the nonpartisan OpenSecrets.

For perspective: The contests will nearly double the cost of the 2010 midterm elections, more than double the 2014 midterms and are on pace to roughly equal the 2022 gross domestic product of Mongolia.

At least \$1.1 billion given at the federal level so far this election season has come from a small coterie of donors, many of whom have favored conservative causes.

"When you look at the top 25 individual donors, conservative donors heavily outweigh liberal donors by \$200 million," said Brendan Glavin, a senior data analyst for OpenSecrets. "There's a big skew."

Tech billionaire Peter Thiel (\$32.6 million), shipping goods magnate Richard Uihlein (\$80.7 million), hedge fund manager Ken Griffin (68.5 million) and Timothy Mellon, an heir to to a Gilded Age Fortune who gave \$40 million, are among the top conservative donors.

On the liberal side, hedge fund founder George Soros gave the most (\$128 million), though much of it has yet to be spent. Sam Bankman Fried, a liberal 30-year-old cryptocurrency billionaire, gave \$39.8 million.

Follow the AP's coverage of the 2022 midterm elections at <https://apnews.com/hub/2022-midterm-elections>. And check out <https://apnews.com/hub/explaining-the-elections> to learn more about the issues and factors at play in the midterms.

Slavery rejected in some, not all, states where on ballot

By AARON MORRISON AP National Writer

Voters in three states approved ballot measures that will change their state constitutions to prohibit slavery and involuntary servitude as punishment for crime, while those in a fourth state rejected the move. The measures approved Tuesday curtail the use of prison labor in Alabama, Tennessee and Vermont. In Oregon, "yes" was leading its anti-slavery ballot initiative, but the vote remained too early to call Wednesday morning.

In Louisiana, a former slave-holding state, voters rejected a ballot question known as Amendment 7 that asked whether they supported a constitutional amendment to prohibit the use of involuntary servitude in the criminal justice system.

The initiatives won't force immediate changes in the states' prisons, but they may invite legal challenges over the practice of coercing prisoners to work under threat of sanctions or loss of privileges if they refuse the work.

The results were celebrated among anti-slavery advocates, including those pushing to further amend the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits enslavement and involuntary servitude except as a form of criminal punishment. More than 150 years after enslaved Africans and their descendants were released from bond-

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age through ratification of the 13th Amendment, the slavery exception continues to permit the exploitation of low-cost labor by incarcerated individuals.

"Voters in Oregon and other states have come together across party lines to say that this stain must be removed from state constitutions," Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley, a Democrat, told The Associated Press.

"Now, it is time for all Americans to come together and say that it must be struck from the U.S. Constitution. There should be no exceptions to a ban on slavery," he said.

Coinciding with the creation of the Juneteenth federal holiday last year, Merkley and Rep. Nikema Williams, D-Georgia, reintroduced legislation to revise the 13th Amendment to end the slavery exception. If it wins approval in Congress, the constitutional amendment must be ratified by three-fourths of U.S. states.

After Tuesday's vote, more than a dozen states still have constitutions that include language permitting slavery and involuntary servitude for prisoners. Several other states have no constitutional language for or against the use of forced prison labor.

Voters in Colorado became the first to approve removal of slavery exception language from the state constitution in 2018, followed by Nebraska and Utah two years later.

The movement to end or regulate the use of prison labor has existed for decades, since the time when former Confederate states sought ways to maintain the use of chattel slavery after the Civil War. Southern states used racist laws, referred to as "Black codes," to criminalize, imprison and re-enslave Black Americans over benign behavior.

Today, prison labor is a multibillion-dollar practice. By comparison, workers can make pennies on the dollar. And prisoners who refuse to work can be denied privileges such as phone calls and visits with family, as well as face solitary confinement, all punishments that are eerily similar to those used during antebellum slavery.

"The 13th Amendment didn't actually abolish slavery — what it did was make it invisible," Bianca Tylek, an anti-slavery advocate and the executive director of the criminal justice advocacy group Worth Rises, told the AP in an interview ahead of Election Day.

She said passage of the ballot initiatives, especially in red states like Alabama, "is a great signal for what's possible at the federal level."

"There is a big opportunity here, in this moment," Tylek said.

Aaron Morrison is a New York City-based member of the AP's Race and Ethnicity team. Follow him on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/aaronlmorrison>.

Facebook parent Meta cuts 11,000 jobs, 13% of workforce

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

Facebook parent Meta is laying off 11,000 people, about 13% of its workforce, as it contends with faltering revenue and broader tech industry woes, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a letter to employees Wednesday.

The job cuts come just a week after widespread layoffs at Twitter under its new owner, billionaire Elon Musk. There have been numerous job cuts at other tech companies that hired rapidly during the pandemic.

Zuckerberg as well said that he had made the decision to hire aggressively, anticipating rapid growth even after the pandemic ended.

"Unfortunately, this did not play out the way I expected," Zuckerberg said in a prepared statement. "Not only has online commerce returned to prior trends, but the macroeconomic downturn, increased competition, and ads signal loss have caused our revenue to be much lower than I'd expected. I got this wrong, and I take responsibility for that."

Meta, like other social media companies, enjoyed a financial boost during the pandemic lockdown era because more people stayed home and scrolled on their phones and computers. But as the lockdowns ended and people started going outside again, revenue growth began to falter.

Of particular concern to investors, Meta poured over \$10 billion a year into the "metaverse" as it shifts its focus away from social media. Zuckerberg predicts the metaverse, an immersive digital universe, will

eventually replace smartphones as the primary way people use technology.

Spooked investors have sent company shares tumbling more than 71% since the beginning of the year and the stock now trades at levels last seen in 2015.

An economic slowdown and a grim outlook for online advertising — by far Meta's biggest revenue source — have contributed to Meta's woes as well. This summer, Meta posted its first quarterly revenue decline in history, followed by another, bigger decline in the fall.

Some of the pain is company-specific, while some is tied to broader economic and technological forces.

Last week, Twitter laid off about half of its 7,500 employees, part of a chaotic overhaul as Musk took the helm. He tweeted that there was no choice but to cut the jobs "when the company is losing over \$4M/day," though did not provide details about the losses.

Meta and its advertisers are bracing for a potential recession. There's also the challenge of Apple's privacy tools, which make it more difficult for social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Snap to track people without their consent and target ads to them.

Competition from TikTok is also an a growing threat as younger people flock to the video sharing app over Instagram, which Meta also owns.

"We've cut costs across our business, including scaling back budgets, reducing perks, and shrinking our real estate footprint," Zuckerberg said. "We're restructuring teams to increase our efficiency. But these measures alone won't bring our expenses in line with our revenue growth, so I've also made the hard decision to let people go."

A hiring freeze at the company will be extended through the first quarter of 2023, Zuckerberg said. The company has also slashed its real estate footprint and he said that with so many employees working outside of the office, the company will transition to desk sharing for those that remain.

More cost cuts at Meta will be rolled out in coming months, Zuckerberg said.

Zuckerberg told employees Wednesday that they will receive an email letting them know if they are among those being let go. Access to most company systems will be cut off for people losing their jobs, he said, due to the sensitive nature of that information.

"We're keeping email addresses active throughout the day so everyone can say farewell," Zuckerberg said.

Former employees will receive 16 weeks of base pay, plus two additional weeks for every year with the company, Zuckerberg said. Health insurance for those employees and their families will continue for six months.

Shares of Meta Platforms Inc. jumped almost 5% before the opening bell Wednesday.

Police detain man after eggs thrown at King Charles III

LONDON (AP) — A protester was arrested Wednesday after hurling eggs and vitriol at King Charles III and Camilla, the queen consort, as they walked in the northern England city of York.

The incident happened as the king and his wife were entering York through Micklegate Bar, a medieval gateway where monarchs are traditionally welcomed to the city.

Video footage showed several eggs in motion and smashed on the ground. None appeared to hit the royal couple, who continued to greet crowds.

Several police officers could be seen grappling with a man at a crowd barrier. Britain's PA news agency reported that he booed and shouted "This country was built on the blood of slaves" as he was being detained.

Other members of the crowd tried to drown him out by chanting "Shame on you" and "God save the King."

Charles and Camilla traveled to York as part of a series of engagements around the U.K. marking the start of the new king's reign. They also visited the city's cathedral, York Minster, and unveiled a statue of the king's mother. Queen Elizabeth II, who died in September after 70 years on the throne.

Some LGBTQ fans skip Qatar World Cup, fearing hostility

By MARIAM FAM and LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

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At first, Saskia Niño de Rivera was excited about going to Qatar for a World Cup that would mark a significant professional event for her partner, a sports agent for Mexico soccer players. She even contemplated privately proposing there during a game, and posting photos once they left the country.

But as the lesbian couple learned more about laws on same-sex relations in the conservative Gulf country, the plans no longer sounded like a good idea. Instead, Niño de Rivera proposed at an Amsterdam stadium this summer and opted to skip the World Cup altogether.

"As a lesbian woman, it's really hard for me to feel and think that we are going to a country where we don't know what could happen and how we could be safe," she said. "It was a really hard decision."

Niño de Rivera's concerns are shared by many LGBTQ soccer fans and their allies worldwide. Some have been mulling whether to attend the tournament, or even watch it on television.

Qatar's laws against gay sex and treatment of LGBTQ people are flashpoints in the run-up to the first World Cup to be held in the Middle East, or in any Arab or Muslim country. Qatar has said all are welcome, including LGBTQ fans, but that visitors should respect the nation's culture, in which public displays of affection by anyone are frowned on. With his country facing criticism over a number of issues, Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, recently argued it "has been subjected to an unprecedented campaign" that no host country has ever faced.

An ambassador for the World Cup in Qatar, however, has described homosexuality as a "damage in the mind" in an interview with German public broadcaster ZDF. Aired this week, the comments by former Qatari national team player Khalid Salman highlighted concerns about the conservative country's treatment of gays and lesbians.

Some LGBTQ rights activists are seizing the moment to draw attention, with a heightened sense of urgency, to the conditions of LGBTQ citizens and residents in Qatar. They want to raise concerns about how these people may be treated after the tournament ends and the international spotlight fades.

Dario Minden, who is from Germany, said he's keen on soccer but won't watch a single minute of the tournament as a show of solidarity with LGBTQ people in Qatar. Recently, he jumped at the opportunity to lobby for change.

At a human rights congress hosted by the German soccer federation in Frankfurt, Minden told the Qatari ambassador to Germany that Qatar should abolish its penalties for homosexuality.

"I happen to be a gay football fan and I thought that this is a great opportunity to ... speak in front of such a high representative, to connect the topic with a face," Minden said in an interview.

Rasha Younes, LGBTQ rights senior researcher in the Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch, said that while Qatari officials have offered some reassurances for LGBTQ fans, the possibility of stigma and discrimination remained in housing, access to health care and safely reporting potential sexual violence.

At the same time, she argued, "suggestions that Qatar should make an exception for outsiders are implicit reminders that Qatari authorities do not believe that its LGBT residents deserve basic rights or exist," adding her organization was concerned about conditions for local LGBTQ people, including after the tournament.

Qatari law calls for a prison sentence of one to three years for whoever is "instigating" or "seducing" a male to "commit sodomy," as well as for "inducing or seducing a male or a female in any way to commit illegal or immoral actions."

In the run-up to the World Cup, Qatari security forces have been accused of mistreating LGBTQ people. In a statement, the Qatari government has denied those allegations: "Qatar does not tolerate discrimination against anyone, and our policies and procedures are underpinned by a commitment to human rights for all."

Dr. Nasser Mohamed, an openly gay Qatari activist who now lives in the United States, is among those saying that international attention is disproportionately focused on visitors and not enough on LGBTQ people in Qatar. He publicly came out and has been lobbying to expand the conversation before the World Cup.

"Being in a country that has no LGBT visibility, no conversations about what it's like to be an LGBT person, made me feel like there's something wrong with me," he said in an interview. With the current intense public debates, "I feel like there is a moment of urgency to...put something out there now to actually let

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people know that we're not OK."

Josie Nixon of the You Can Play Project, which advocates for LGBTQ people in sports, said the group was part of a coalition of LGBTQ rights organizations that made demands of FIFA and the Qatari organizers. These included repealing laws targeting LGBTQ people, providing "explicit safety guarantees" against harassment, arrest or detention, and working to ensure the long-term safety of LGBTQ people in the region.

"FIFA and Qatar have taken steps to make sure that LGBTQ fans are safe, but is that enough to change the way Qatar views LGBTQ citizens?" said Nixon, who lives in Colorado. "My answer is no."

Even before the tournament kicks off, questions about what legacy it would leave behind loomed large amid intense international scrutiny over Qatar's human rights record, including treatment of migrant workers. As the World Cup neared, Qatari officials sounded increasingly frustrated, saying their country's achievements and progress were being overlooked and that the attacks raise questions about the motive behind them.

"Qatar believes strongly in the power of sport to bring people together and build bridges of cultural understanding," the Qatari government said in a statement to The Associated Press in response to questions. "The World Cup can help change misconceptions, and we want fans to travel home with a better understanding of our country, culture and region. We believe this tournament ... can show that people of different nationalities, religions and backgrounds in fact have more in common than they think."

The statement added that Qatar is a country of "warm hospitality" and will continue to ensure the safety of all "regardless of background."

FIFA's top officials have recently urged the teams preparing for the World Cup to focus on soccer and avoid letting the game be dragged into ideological or political battles. The officials did not address or identify any specific issue in their message, which angered some human rights activists.

In soccer-crazy Argentina, Juan Pablo Morino, president of the group Gays Passionate About Soccer said he was dismayed by FIFA's decision to organize the World Cup in Qatar.

"In the election of a host, basic parameters of coexistence should be met. It cannot be that any country is a candidate," he said.

In Mexico, Niño de Rivera said she would be supporting her fiancée, who will attend the tournament for work, from afar. That makes her sad.

The decision to sit out the World Cup "has to do with being true to your own values and bringing a lot of money to a country where you're not welcome because of your sexual orientation," she said. She was scared that if they went as a couple, they might have been harassed or worse while having dinner or walking back to the hotel.

"The World Cup is normally an event that brings people together, where it doesn't matter what part of the world you're from... what religion you have; It doesn't matter what community you belong to," she said. "We all speak the same language. We all speak football."

Associated Press writer Debora Rey in Buenos Aires, Argentina, contributed to this report.

AP World Cup coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/world-cup> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports ____

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US to climate summit: American big steps won't be repealed

By SETH BORENSTEIN and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — U.S. President Joe Biden is coming to international climate talks in Egypt this week with a message that historic American action to fight climate change won't shift into reverse, as happened twice before when Democrats lost power.

Current and former Biden top climate officials said the vast majority of the summer's incentive-laden \$375 billion climate-and-health spending package — by far the biggest law passed by Congress to fight global warming — was crafted in a way that will make it hard and unpalatable for future Republican Congresses

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or presidents to reverse it.

Outside experts agree, but say other parts of the Biden climate agenda can be stalled by a Republican Congress and courts.

Twice in the 30-year history of climate negotiations, Democratic administrations helped forged an international agreement, but when they lost the White House, their Republican successors pulled out of those pacts.

And after decades of American promises at past climate summits but little congressional action, the United States for the first time has actual legislation to point to. The climate and health law, known as the Inflation Reduction Act, was approved without a single Republican vote, prompting some advocates to worry it may not withstand GOP attacks if Republicans gain control of the House or Senate.

Then Tuesday's election happened, with a razor-thin contest for control of Congress.

Results are still not quite known, but Democrats showed surprising strength. Sierra Club President Ramon Cruz at the climate summit Wednesday claimed a victory of sorts, saying, "We see in a way that people in the U.S. actually do understand and do support climate action."

If Republicans grab control of Congress, they won't have a veto-proof majority, and even if a Republican takes over the White House in the next few years the tax credits will be in place and spur industry, said Samantha Gross, head of climate and energy studies at the centrist Brookings Institution.

"It's a lot of tax credits and goodies that make it hard to repeal," Gross said.

At the climate negotiations in Egypt, where Biden arrives Friday, his special climate envoy John Kerry said, "Most of what we're doing cannot be changed by anyone else who comes to Washington because most of what we do is in the private sector. The marketplace has made its decision to do what we need to do."

It's all by design, said Gina McCarthy, who until recently was Biden's domestic climate czar.

"About 70% of the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act are about (tax) credits that directly benefit" industries, McCarthy said in an interview with The Associated Press at the climate negotiations.

She said it will be difficult for Republicans to "change the dynamic" to significantly undermine the act. "It is passed, is beneficial. We have Republicans all throughout the country actually doing ribbon cuttings."

Studies show most of the money, new jobs, are going into Republican states, said climate policy analyst Alden Meyer of the E3G think-tank. McCarthy and Kerry are "largely correct" in claiming the law can't be rolled back, he said, and Gross agreed.

Several analyses, inside and outside the government, said the law would cut U.S. emissions by 40% by 2030, compared to 2005 levels, which is not quite the official U.S. goal of 50% to 52% cuts by that time.

But McCarthy is saying, wait, there's more. She said that upcoming but not yet announced carbon pollution regulations and advances by private industries, states and cities will allow the United States to achieve and even exceed that goal, something outside experts are far more skeptical about.

Republicans are likely to push for a sharp increase in oversight of Biden administration policies, including incentives for electric vehicles and loans for clean energy projects such as battery manufacturers, wind and solar farms and production of "clean" hydrogen.

"Republicans are looking for the next Solyndra," said Joseph Brazauskas, a former Trump-era Environmental Protection Agency official, referring to a California solar company that failed soon after receiving more than \$500 million in federal aid under the Obama administration.

"Certainly, congressional oversight is likely to ramp up considerably" under a GOP-led House or Senate, said Brazauskas, who led the Trump EPA's congressional relations office and now is a principal with the Bracewell LLP law firm.

Republicans support many of the tax credits approved under the climate law. But they complain Biden is moving too fast to replace gas-engine cars with electric vehicles and say he hasn't done enough to counter China's influence in the renewable energy supply chain.

Republicans also are likely to probe EPA actions on climate change, air quality and wetlands, citing a Supreme Court ruling last summer that curbed the EPA's authority to address climate change, Brazauskas said. The decision, known as *West Virginia v. EPA*, "has really opened a window for regulatory scrutiny at the agency," he said.

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Democrats say they learned important lessons from the Solyndra episode and don't intend to repeat past mistakes. The loan program that helped Solyndra turned a profit and generates an estimated \$500 million in interest income for the federal government every year.

Even with a Democratic Congress, the Biden Administration couldn't dramatically increase climate aid to poor nations. The rich countries of the world in 2009 promised \$100 billion a year to help poorer nations switch to green energy sources and adapt to a warmer world. They haven't fulfilled that promise, with the United States donating far less than Europe.

That money doesn't include the hottest topic at the Egyptian climate talks: Loss and damage, meaning reparations for climate-related disasters. The United States is historically the No. 1 carbon polluter, while poorer nations with small carbon emissions bear the brunt of climate disasters, like Pakistan, where devastating flooding submerged a third of the nation and displaced millions of people.

Dozens of protesters called for reparations at a demonstration on Wednesday.

"I think the regulatory agenda is tougher and the international climate finance landscape will be very, very bleak," Meyer said.

The U.S. government also released a new draft report about what climate change is doing to America, determining that over the past 50 years, the United States has warmed 68% faster than the planet as a whole. Since 1970, the continental U.S. has experienced 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit of warming, well above the average for the planet, according to a draft of the National Climate Assessment, which is the U.S. government's definitive report on the effects of climate change and represents a range of federal agencies.

The changes in the U.S. reflect a broader global pattern in which land areas and higher latitudes warm faster than the ocean and lower latitudes, the report says.

The effects of human-caused climate change on the United States "are already far-reaching and worsening," the draft report says, but every added amount of warming that can be avoided or delayed will reduce harmful impacts.

The congressionally mandated assessment was last issued under the Trump administration in 2018 and the Biden administration put out a draft of the newer version this week, seeking public comment and peer review. The final report is expected next year.

Risks from accelerating temperatures and precipitation, sea-level rise, climate-fueled extreme weather and other impacts increase as the planet warms, the report says.

"The things Americans value most are at risk," the report says.

Daly reported from Washington.

Griner sent to Russian penal colony to serve sentence

MOSCOW (AP) — American basketball star Brittney Griner has been sent to a penal colony in Russia to serve her sentence for drug possession, her legal team said Wednesday.

A Russian court rejected an appeal of her nine-year sentence last month. The eight-time all-star center with the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury and a two-time Olympic gold medalist was convicted Aug. 4 after police said they found vape canisters containing cannabis oil in her luggage at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport.

Her arrest came at a time of heightened tensions between Moscow and Washington, just days before Russia sent troops into Ukraine, and the politically charged case could lead to a high-stakes prisoner exchange between Washington and Moscow.

Griner's legal team said she left a detention center on Nov. 4 for a penal colony — a common type of Russian prison where detainees work for minimal pay. Her lawyers said Wednesday that they did not know exactly where she was or where she would end up — but that they expected to be notified when she reached her final destination. Such transfers can take days.

The 32-year-old star athlete, who was detained while returning to play for a Russian team during the WNBA's offseason, has admitted that she had the canisters in her luggage. But she testified that she had inadvertently packed them in haste and that she had no criminal intent. Her defense team presented

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written statements that she had been prescribed cannabis to treat pain.

"Every minute that Brittney Griner must endure wrongful detention in Russia is a minute too long," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said. "As we have said before, the U.S. Government made a significant offer to the Russians to resolve the current unacceptable and wrongful detentions of American citizens."

The Associated Press and other news organizations have reported that Washington has offered to exchange Griner and Paul Whelan — an American serving a 16-year sentence in Russia for espionage — for Viktor Bout. Bout is a Russian arms dealer who is serving a 25-year sentence in the U.S. and once earned the nickname the "merchant of death."

Follow AP's coverage of Brittney Griner at: <https://apnews.com/hub/brittney-griner>

Myanmar tops Asian summit's agenda as global issues loom

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Southeast Asian leaders convene in the Cambodian capital Thursday, faced with the challenge of trying to curtail escalating violence in Myanmar while the country's military-led government shows no signs of complying with the group's peace plan.

U.S. President Joe Biden will be on hand for the Phnom Penh summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which comes as Washington and Beijing are increasingly jockeying for influence in the Asia-Pacific region. It sets the stage for the Group of 20 meetings in Bali, Indonesia, that immediately follow and are expected to include Chinese President Xi Jinping and possibly Russian President Vladimir Putin, then the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Bangkok.

In addition to Myanmar, the meetings, which run through the weekend, are expected to focus on ongoing disputes in the South China Sea, pandemic recovery issues, regional trade and climate change.

Neither Xi nor Putin is expected to attend the ASEAN talks or the parallel East Asia Summit, though both China and Russia are thought to be sending high-level delegations headed by Prime Minister Li Keqiang and possibly Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Looming large over ASEAN, the G-20 and APEC are the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and Russia's consequent search for new markets for its energy resources, as well as resulting supply chain and food security issues, China's increasingly aggressive saber-rattling over Taiwan, and rising tension in the Korean Peninsula.

By attending the ASEAN summit in person, Biden will be able to push American interests and also visibly demonstrate Washington's renewed commitment to the region, said Thomas Daniel, an expert with Malaysia's Institute of Strategic and International Studies.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump skipped the summits after 2017 and left the 2017 meetings early, before the plenary session of the East Asia Summit, a key regional strategic dialogue, leaving then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to stand in for him.

"For Southeast Asia it's really important to physically show up, and I think the Americans are very aware of this," Daniel said. "I cannot emphasize how much damage was done by the Trump administration not showing up — and it's not just not showing up, it's sending representatives that are seen as just further downgrades."

ASEAN this year is elevating the U.S. to a "comprehensive strategic partnership" status — a largely symbolic enhancement of their relationship but one that puts Washington on the same level as China, which was granted the distinction last year.

Ahead of the summit, Daniel Kritenbrink, U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said the talks would be an opportunity to work on a "broad range of diplomatic priorities across the region" and to focus on "carrying out everything we've promised rather than coming forward with another long list of new initiatives."

"A high-level U.S. presence at these summits will demonstrate our strong and enduring commitment to the region," he said at a late October roundtable hosted by Washington's Center for Strategic and Inter-

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national Studies.

"From the president to the secretary of state, throughout the entire U.S. government, we know that America's future security and prosperity are entirely dependent on what happens in the Indo-Pacific," he said.

China's Foreign Ministry did not mention the U.S. when outlining details of Li Keqiang's upcoming appearance, saying only that the country is "committed to its foreign policy of maintaining world peace and promoting common developments."

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, whose country has the rotating chairmanship of ASEAN, has invited Ukraine to participate in the summit and the country's foreign minister met with Hun Sen ahead of the event on Wednesday.

Hun Sen's office said he spoke with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy by phone at the start of the month, and that the Ukrainian leader had requested to address the summit by video, but it was not immediately clear if that had been approved.

Kritenbrink applauded the inclusion of Ukraine, and said the U.S. was working with its ASEAN friends to "ensure that Ukraine meaningfully participates and that the (East Asia Summit) partners send a strong message that big countries cannot simply take what they want from smaller neighbors."

He added that the U.S. would talk with ASEAN nations about additional steps to put pressure on Myanmar's regime to push it to stop the killings and move toward a democratic path.

"We are not going to sit idly by while this violence continues," Kritenbrink said.

ASEAN, which includes Myanmar, has tried to play a peacemaking role since shortly after the country's military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi and seized power in February 2021.

At a special meeting at the end of October, the foreign ministers of ASEAN's other members — Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Brunei — acknowledged their efforts to bring peace hadn't succeeded and called for "concrete, practical and time-bound actions" to support the implementation of its five-point peace plan.

It calls for the immediate cessation of violence, a dialogue among all parties, mediation by an ASEAN special envoy, provision of humanitarian aid and a visit to Myanmar by the special envoy to meet all sides.

Myanmar's government initially agreed to it but has made little effort to implement it, aside from seeking humanitarian aid and allowing ASEAN's envoy, Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, to visit. But it refused to allow him to meet with Suu Kyi, who was arrested and is being tried on a variety of charges that critics say are meant to sideline her from politics.

In response, ASEAN has not allowed Myanmar's leaders to participate in its official meetings, and Myanmar has rejected the idea of sending non-political representation to the summit, though working-level officials have joined some pre-summit meetings.

ASEAN foreign ministers in August concluded a meeting with a joint statement criticizing Myanmar for its lack of progress, but little more, deciding to instead leave the issue for the leaders to decide in Phnom Penh.

It could be, however, that the leaders also choose to wait until Indonesia, which has taken a tougher stand on Myanmar, takes the chair of the bloc in 2023, before taking more decisive action.

"There is every chance that they might choose to delay and kick this down the road again," Daniel, the analyst, said.

Bangladesh balances energy needs with climate, conservation

By JULHAS ALAM, AL-EMRUN GARJON and SIBI ARASU Associated Press

RAMPAL, Bangladesh (AP) — Fish, rice, mangrove trees and the lush delta wetlands where the massive Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers drain into the Bay of Bengal.

It's not luxury. But for the farmers and fishermen who live by the world's largest mangrove forest, it's more than enough. Now, the environment is at risk.

A power plant will start burning coal near the Sundarbans this year as part of Bangladesh's plan to meet

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its energy needs and improve living standards, officials say. Home to 168 million people, Bangladesh is among the most densely populated countries in the world. Once the power plant begins functioning at its full capacity, it will generate 1,320 megawatts of power, as much as Bangladesh's largest coal power plant generates now.

The developing world needs its people to live better. But fossil fuel-powered economic growth can create environmental problems and make lives worse.

Popularly called the Rampal coal power plant, the Maitree Super Thermal Power Project will burn some 4.7 million tons of coal annually, emitting about 15 million tons of carbon dioxide and other planet-warming gases. Plus, some 12,000 tons of coal will be shipped by boat through the Sundarbans each day, prompting fears of water pollution.

Low-lying Bangladesh is already hit by tropical cyclones and rising seas and millions are at risk of being displaced by flooding and other extreme weather. Just two weeks ago, 24 people died, 20,000 people were marooned, 10,000 people lost their homes and 15,000 acres of crops were destroyed by the tropical cyclone Sitrang.

"If it turns out bad, we will have to sell our properties and migrate," farmer Luftar Rahman said.

Top scientists say there can be no new fossil fuel projects if the world is going to limit warming to the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) temperature goal set in the Paris Agreement. Even though it is among the lowest-emitting nations in the world, Bangladesh has pledged to reduce its overall emissions by 22% by 2030. The building of this coal spewing power plant is likely to hinder the nation's efforts to reduce its emissions.

But in October, around 80% of the country suffered a blackout for seven hours as a result of the country's power grid collapsing. Such blackouts and long power cuts, sometimes for as long as 10 hours a day, affect businesses including the garment industry, which accounts for 80% of exports. Bangladesh is the world's second-largest garment exporter, after China.

"We are desperately waiting to start generating power at Rampal. This plant will definitely help ease our energy woes," said Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, an energy advisor to the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

Bangladesh wants poor nations to receive funds to help adapt to the devastating effects of a warmer world. Until May of this year, Bangladesh was the chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a partnership of countries highly vulnerable to warming. With much of its land at or just below sea level, the country has already suffered heavy flooding and erratic rainfall. A World Bank report estimated that Bangladesh could suffer \$570 million in damage annually from climate change-related extreme weather events.

In June, Bangladesh stopped running diesel power plants because of rising fuel prices. Bangladesh has two active coal-powered plants, and some experts say another isn't needed.

"We need to be investing in power transmission and distribution systems. That would be much more beneficial for the country at this moment," said Khondaker Golam Moazzem of the Dhaka-based economic think-tank Centre for Policy Dialogue

The country also has cleaner resources at home.

"Bangladesh has huge potential for natural gas. Onshore and offshore exploration and production of gas resources can be a better option compared to coal," said Dhaka-based economist and environmental activist Anu Mohammad.

And renewable energy already powers millions of Bangladeshi homes.

"Bangladesh has actually got one of the fastest growing solar home systems," said Saleemul Huq, director of the Dhaka-based International Centre for Climate Change and Development. "Another option is offshore wind power. With the latest technologies available, it is conceivable that wind power generated in the Bay of Bengal can provide for the needs of not only Bangladesh but also for regions in neighbouring India as well as Myanmar."

The Rampal coal mine will be funded by the governments of Bangladesh and India. The Sundarbans was chosen because of available water and navigation facilities, officials said. The coal for the power plant will come from India as well.

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The Sundarbans, “beautiful forest” in Bengali, evolved over millennia out of the Indian subcontinent’s mighty rivers. The Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna dump rich sediments that they collect over thousands of miles from the Himalayas to the Indian ocean.

“The mangrove forests are a natural barrier to the ill effects of climate change and if they are affected, then the 10 million people who live in this coastal delta region will also suffer,” Mohammad, the Dhaka-based economist and environmental activist, said. “There are many alternatives to power generation. But there is no alternative to the Sundarbans.”

Mangrove forests are more effective than terrestrial forests at sucking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

“During my grandfather’s time, all the rice we needed was harvested from our land. There was enough rice and fish for everyone,” said 60-year-old Abul Kalam, who has lived his entire life in the Sundarbans. “If this power plant comes up, there will be no fish in our region. How can we grow crops when they dump toxic wastewater here?”

Climate data journalist Camille Fasset in Seattle contributed to this report.

Follow AP’s climate and environment coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate-and-environment>

Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP’s climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Abortion rights protected in Michigan, California, Vermont

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Voters in battleground Michigan enshrined abortion rights in the state constitution, joining reliably Democratic California and Vermont in taking that step. An anti-abortion measure in Kentucky was too early to call.

The Tuesday ballot measures came months after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and the constitutional right to abortion it guaranteed to women nationwide. The decision in June has led to near-total bans in a dozen states.

Supporters of the push to protect abortion rights in Michigan collected more signatures than any other ballot initiative in state history to get it before the voters. It puts a definitive end to a 1931 ban on abortion that had been blocked in court but could have been revived. It also affirms the right to make pregnancy-related decisions about abortion and other reproductive services such as birth control without interference.

On Michigan State University’s campus, junior Devin Roberts said that students seemed “fired up” and that he had seen lines of voters spilling out of the school’s polling places throughout the day. The ballot measure was one of the main drivers of the high turnout, he said.

“There’s a lot of energy for Prop 3 on campus right now, whether you agree with abortion or not,” Roberts said. “I think students want to have the same rights that their parents had when they were younger.”

Nationally, about two-thirds of voters say abortion should be legal in most or all cases, according to AP VoteCast, an expansive survey of over 90,000 voters across the country. Only about 1 in 10 say abortion should be illegal in all cases.

About 6 in 10 also say the Supreme Court’s abortion decision made them dissatisfied or angry, compared with fewer who say they were happy or satisfied.

James Miller, 66, of Flint, Michigan, said he thought of his daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters when he voted in favor of the measure.

“I think we should do the right thing for women,” he said. “It’s her body; it’s her privacy.”

Michelle Groesser, of Swartz Creek, Michigan, said she opposes abortion, even though she believes that any ban likely would have some narrow exceptions. “In a perfect world, I personally would want all life preserved,” she said.

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Opponents have contended the Michigan measure could have far-reaching effects on other laws in the state, such as one requiring parental notification of an abortion for someone under age 18. Legal experts say changes to other laws would only happen if someone sued and won, a process that could take years and has no certainty of success.

Even so, the messaging appeared to resonate with some Michigan voters, including Brian Bauer, 64, of Mundy Township, who said the proposal was confusing and voted against it.

Bauer is an abortion opponent who supports some limited exceptions, "but nobody's willing to throw (in) any kind of compromise ... it's either a yes or no vote."

Montana voters, meanwhile, were also considering newborn resuscitative care requirements with possible criminal penalties, including the rare case of an attempted abortion.

In deeply conservative Kentucky, the ballot measure would amend the state constitution to say there is no right to abortion. The Republican-controlled Legislature has already passed a near-total ban on abortion. The measure would not change that, but the results could shadow the legal battle returning to a courtroom a week after Election Day.

Lawmakers added the proposed amendment to the ballot last year, a move that some thought would drive more conservative voters to the polls. But after the Roe decision, abortion-rights supporters raised nearly \$1.5 million to fight it. They were hoping to repeat the surprise outcome this summer in conservative Kansas, where voters overwhelmingly defeated a similar amendment that would have allowed new bans or restrictions.

Initial returns indicated that thousands of Kentucky voters who backed GOP Sen. Rand Paul for reelection opposed the abortion amendment.

At a elementary school in Simpsonville, a small town outside of Louisville, 71-year-old voter Jim Stewart said he voted for Paul, calling him "the only one on TV making sense."

Stewart is a registered Republican and opposed to abortion, but still voted no on the amendment. "You got to have a little choice there."

Al Smith, 83, voted yes: "I don't believe in abortion at all, not for any circumstance," he said.

The reproductive-rights question in Vermont, came after Legislature passed a law in 2019 guaranteeing reproductive rights, including getting pregnant and having access to birth control. Supporters with the Reproductive Liberty Ballot Committee said the overturning of Roe meant "state-level protections are vital to safeguarding access to reproductive health care."

California already had passed several measures aimed at easing access to abortion and set aside millions of taxpayer dollars to help pay for some out-of-state abortion travel. On Tuesday, voters approved language that would explicitly guarantee access to abortion and contraception in the state constitution.

The question for Montana voters was whether to create criminal penalties for health care providers unless they do everything "medically appropriate and reasonable" to save the life of a baby after birth, including the rare possibility of birth after an attempted abortion.

Associated Press writer Tammy Webber in Flint, Michigan and Rebecca Reynolds in Simpsonville, Kentucky, contributed to this report.

Follow the AP's coverage of the 2022 midterm elections at <https://apnews.com/hub/2022-midterm-elections>. And learn more about the issues and factors at play in the midterms at <https://apnews.com/hub/explaining-the-elections>.

Seoul: N. Korea fires ballistic missile toward eastern sea

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired a short-range ballistic missile toward its eastern sea on Wednesday, extending a recent barrage of weapons demonstrations including what it described as simulated attacks on South Korean and U.S. targets last week.

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Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile was launched from the western town of Sukchon, north of the capital, Pyongyang, and flew across the country toward waters off the North's eastern coast.

The South Korean and Japanese militaries assessed that the missile flew about 250 to 290 kilometers (155 to 180 miles) at a maximum altitude of 30 to 50 kilometers (18 to 30 miles). The relatively low trajectory seemed to align with the flight characteristics of some of North Korea's newer short-range weapons designed to evade missile defenses.

Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said the missile landed in waters outside of the country's exclusive economic zone. He said North Korea's intensifying testing activity was "significantly heightening" regional tensions and that Japan lodged a protest with the North through their embassies in Beijing.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said its nuclear envoy, Kim Gunn, held separate telephone calls with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts to discuss trilateral cooperation to counter North Korea's increasing weapons tests and growing nuclear threat. South Korean officials say the North could attempt to further raise pressure by conducting its first nuclear test since 2017 in coming weeks.

The launch came after North Korea fired dozens of missiles last week in an angry reaction to a massive combined aerial exercise between the United States and South Korea that the North described as an invasion rehearsal.

Earlier Wednesday, South Korea's military said the recovered debris of one of the North Korean missiles that flew southward last week was determined to be a Soviet-era anti-aircraft weapon that dates back to the 1960s.

The North's military said on Monday that its launches last week were simulations to "mercilessly" strike key South Korean and U.S. targets such as air bases and operation command systems.

It said those tests included ballistic missiles loaded with dispersion warheads and underground infiltration warheads meant to launch strikes on enemy air bases, ground-to-air missiles designed to "annihilate" enemy aircraft at different altitudes and distances, and strategic cruise missiles that fell off South Korea's southeastern coast.

The North described those launches as an appropriate response to the United States and South Korea's "Vigilant Storm" joint air force drills that wrapped up Saturday, which involved some 240 warplanes, including B-1B supersonic bombers and advanced F-35 fighter jets.

This week, South Korea's military has been conducting annual command post exercises meant to enhance crisis management and operational capabilities to cope with growing North Korean threats. The four-day training is to last until Thursday.

Wednesday's launch also came as vote counting in the U.S. midterm elections was underway. Some experts earlier said the results of the U.S. elections would not likely change the Biden administration's policies on North Korea.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said Wednesday that an analysis of a 3-meter (9.8 foot)-long piece of wreckage fetched from waters near the Koreas' eastern sea boundary on Sunday showed it was one of North Korea's SA-5 surface-to-air missiles. The ministry said a similar missile was used by the Russian military to execute ground attacks during its invasion of Ukraine.

Photos released by the South Korean military show what appears to be a mangled rocket engine and wires sticking out from a broken rocket body that is still attached with fins.

The missile, which was one of more than 20 missiles North Korea fired last Wednesday, flew in the direction of a populated South Korean island and landed near the rivals' tense sea border, triggering air raid sirens and forcing residents on Ulleung island to evacuate.

The South Korean Defense Ministry said it "strongly" condemns the North Korea's firing of the SA-5, which it sees as a violation of a 2018 inter-Korean military agreement on reducing tensions.

The dozens of missiles North Korea fired last week also included an intercontinental ballistic missile that triggered evacuation warnings and halted trains in northern Japan.

Some experts say it's possible that North Korea reached into the inventory of some of its older weapons to support the expanded scale of last week's launches.

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The launches added to North Korea's record pace in weapons testing this year as leader Kim Jong Un exploits the distraction created by Russia's war on Ukraine to accelerate arms development and ramp up pressure on the United States and its regional allies.

"The North Koreans would want to display their range of missile technologies through these tests, but not all launches have to reveal the latest technological advancements," said Soo Kim, a security analyst from California-based RAND Corporation.

"It may be in North Korea's interest to hold some of its modern capabilities in reserve and test them at opportune occasions. Kim, again, is playing a longer game, so to reveal all of his cards – the different types of missiles and capabilities his country has acquired – would not work to his favor," she said.

Nuclear talks between Washington and Pyongyang have stalled since 2019 over disagreements in exchanging the release of U.S.-led sanctions against the North and the North's disarmament steps. North Korea has so far rejected U.S. offers of open-ended talks, insisting that Washington must abandon its "hostile" policy first, a term the North mainly uses to refer to sanctions and U.S.-South Korea military drills.

The North has also aligned with Russia over the war in Ukraine while also blaming the United States for the crisis, saying that the West's "hegemonic policy" has forced Russia to take military action to protect its security interests. However, the North has denied U.S. assessments that it has been sending large supplies of artillery shells and other ammunition to Russia to support the war efforts.

"We regard such moves of the U.S. as part of its hostile attempt to tarnish the image of (North Korea) in the international arena," an unidentified vice director at the ministry's military foreign affairs office said in a statement carried by state media on Monday.

AP writer Mari Yamaguchi contributed to the report from Tokyo.

Dems show surprising strength; control of Congress unclear

By SARA BURNETT, JILL COLVIN and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Control of Congress hung in the balance early Wednesday as Democrats showed surprising strength, defeating Republicans in a series of competitive races and defying expectations that high inflation and President Joe Biden's low approval ratings would drag the party down.

In the most heartening news for Democrats, John Fetterman flipped a Republican-controlled Senate seat that is key to the party's hopes of maintaining control of the chamber. It was too early to call critical Senate seats in Wisconsin, Nevada, Georgia and Arizona that could determine the majority. In the House, meanwhile, Democrats kept seats in districts from Virginia to Kansas to Rhode Island, while many districts in states like New York and California had not been called.

Democrats also were successful in governors' races, winning in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania — battlegrounds critical to Biden's 2020 win over former President Donald Trump. But Republicans held on to governors' mansions in Florida, Texas and Georgia, another battleground state Biden narrowly won two years ago.

With votes still being counted across the country, Republicans still had the opportunity to win control of Congress. But the results were uplifting for Democrats who were braced for sweeping losses, and raised questions about the size of Republicans' governing majority if they win the House.

Rep. Kevin McCarthy, the Republican poised to be House speaker if the GOP takes control of the chamber, was optimistic the GOP would take control, telling supporters, "When you wake up tomorrow, we will be in the majority." Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said, "While many races remain too close to call, it is clear that House Democratic Members and candidates are strongly outperforming expectations across the country."

The outcome of races for House and Senate will determine the future of Biden's agenda and serve as a referendum on his administration as the nation reels from record-high inflation and concerns over the direction of the country. Republican control of the House would likely trigger a round of investigations into Biden and his family, while a GOP Senate takeover would hobble Biden's ability to make judicial appointments.

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Democrats were facing historic headwinds. The party in power almost always suffers losses in the president's first midterm elections, but Democrats had been hoping that anger from the Supreme Court's decision to gut abortion rights might energize their voters to buck historical trends.

In the Pennsylvania Senate race, Fetterman had faced questions about his fitness for office after suffering a stroke just days before the state's primary, but nonetheless bested Republican Dr. Mehmet Oz in a major rebuke to Trump, whose endorsement helped Oz win his competitive primary.

"I'm so humbled," Fetterman, wearing his signature hoodie, told his supporters early Wednesday morning. "This campaign has always been about fighting for everyone who's ever been knocked down that ever got back up."

Democrats also held a crucial Senate seat in New Hampshire, where incumbent Maggie Hassan defeated Republican Don Bolduc, a retired Army general who had initially promoted Trump's lies about the 2020 election but tried to shift away from some of the more extreme positions he took during the GOP primary. Republicans held Senate seats in Ohio and North Carolina.

Also in Pennsylvania, Democratic Attorney General Josh Shapiro beat Republican Doug Mastriano to keep the governorship of a key presidential battleground state blue. Shapiro's victory rebuffed an election denier who some feared would not certify a Democratic presidential win in the state in 2024. Democrats Tony Evers in Wisconsin, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, Kathy Hochul of New York, Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico and Janet Mills of Maine also repelled Republican challengers.

Incumbent Republican governors had some success. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp won reelection, defeating Stacey Abrams in a rematch of their 2018 race. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, two future possible Republican presidential contenders, beat back Democratic challengers to win in the nation's two largest red states.

AP VoteCast, a broad survey of the national electorate, showed that high inflation and concerns about the fragility of democracy were heavily influencing voters. Half of voters said inflation factored significantly, with groceries, gasoline, housing, food and other costs that have shot up in the past year. Slightly fewer — 44% — said the future of democracy was their primary consideration.

Biden didn't entirely shoulder the blame for inflation, with close to half of voters saying the higher-than-usual prices were more because of factors outside of his control. And despite the president bearing criticism from a pessimistic electorate, some of those voters backed Democratic candidates.

Overall, 7 in 10 voters said the ruling overturning the 1973 decision enshrining abortion rights was an important factor in their midterm decisions. VoteCast also showed the reversal was broadly unpopular. About 6 in 10 say they are angry or dissatisfied by it, while about 4 in 10 were pleased. And roughly 6 in 10 say they favor a law guaranteeing access to legal abortion nationwide.

There were no widespread problems with ballots or voter intimidation reported around the country, though there were hiccups typical of most Election Days.

In the first national election since the Jan. 6 insurrection, some who participated in or were in the vicinity of the attack on the U.S. Capitol were poised to win elected office. One of those Republican candidates, J.R. Majewski, who was at the U.S. Capitol during the deadly riot and who misrepresented his military service, lost to Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur.

Democratic Reps. Abigail Spanberger and Jennifer Wexton held off spirited Republican challengers in Virginia districts the GOP had hoped to flip.

The 2022 elections are on track to cost a projected \$16.7 billion at the state and federal level, making them the most expensive midterms ever, according to the nonpartisan campaign finance tracking organization OpenSecrets.

All House seats were up for grabs, as were 34 Senate seats.

Trump lifted Republican Senate candidates to victory in Ohio and North Carolina. JD Vance, the bestselling author of "Hillbilly Elegy," defeated 10-term congressman Tim Ryan, while Rep. Ted Budd beat Cheri Beasley, the former chief justice of the state Supreme Court.

Trump, who inserted himself into races across the country, endorsing more than 300 candidates, had hoped the night would end in a red wave that he could ride to the 2024 Republican presidential nomina-

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tion, but his picks lost high-stakes contests in Pennsylvania, Michigan and New Hampshire. After summoning reporters and his most loyal supporters to a watch party at his Mar-a-Lago club, he ended the night without a triumphant speech. Nonetheless, he took to his social media platform to insist he'd had "A GREAT EVENING."

Biden, meanwhile, spent the night calling Democrats to congratulate them on their wins.

In governors' races, the GOP faced unexpected headwinds in flipping the office in conservative Kansas, while Democrats were nervous about their prospects in the race in Oregon, typically a liberal bastion.

Despite their liberal history, states like Massachusetts, Maryland and Illinois have elected moderate Republican governors in the past. But the Republican candidates this year appeared to be too conservative in these states, handing Democrats easy victories.

Massachusetts and Maryland also saw historic firsts: Democrat Maura Healey became the first woman elected as Massachusetts governor, as well as the first openly lesbian governor of any state, and Wes Moore became the first Black governor of Maryland.

Healey bested Geoff Diehl in Massachusetts and Moore beat Dan Cox in Maryland, while Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker defeated state Sen. Darren Bailey. Bolduc, Cox and Bailey were among the far-right Republicans that Democrats spent tens of millions of dollars to bolster during the primaries, betting they would be easier to beat in general elections than their more moderate rivals.

Associated Press writer Hannah Fingerhut contributed.

Follow the AP's coverage of the 2022 midterm elections at <https://apnews.com/hub/2022-midterm-elections>. And learn more about the issues and factors at play in the midterms at <https://apnews.com/hub/explaining-the-elections>.

Voter ID passes in Nebraska as states settle ballot items

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Residents of Nebraska approved a new photo identification requirement for future elections as voters in several states decided measures that could affect the way ballots are cast in the next presidential election.

The voting-related measures were among more than 130 state proposals appearing on ballots, addressing contentious issues such as abortion, taxes, drug policy and labor laws.

Heading into Tuesday's elections, about two-thirds of states already required some form of identification to vote, though not all of those mandated a photo ID. Nebraska was among the states without an identification requirement, even though Republicans had tried for years to pass one in the Legislature.

The photo ID measure finally made the ballot this year thanks to an initiative petition drive bankrolled by Marlene Ricketts, the mother of term-limited Republican Gov. Pete Ricketts. He said the 2020 election revealed that "people had concern about the integrity of our voting systems," though there was no evidence of widespread fraud.

While Nebraskans opted for stricter voting rules, Arkansas residents rejected a proposed constitutional amendment that would have made it harder to approve future ballot initiatives. The measure would have required a 60% threshold, instead of a simple majority, to pass citizens' initiatives and constitutional amendments.

Voters in South Dakota rejected a similar measure earlier this year, and Arizona voters on Tuesday also were deciding whether to require a 60% threshold to approve future ballot initiatives containing tax increases.

Alabama voters approved a constitutional amendment Tuesday requiring future election law changes to take effect at least six months before a general election.

Ohio voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment prohibiting non-U.S. citizens from voting in local elections, becoming the seventh state to do so. The measure championed by the state's Republican elections chief was in response to an effort to expand noncitizen voting in one small Ohio vil-

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lage, as well as to efforts cropping up in larger cities, such as New York and San Francisco.

Voters in Connecticut approved a measure to expand access to voting. After defeating an advance voting measure in 2014, voters on Tuesday passed a constitutional amendment authorizing the Democratic-led General Assembly to create an early voting law. That would leave Alabama, Mississippi and New Hampshire as the only states without an early in-person voting period available for all voters, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Voters in Michigan were supporting a wide-ranging initiative backed by voting rights advocates. It would expand early voting options, require state-funded return postage and drop boxes for absentee ballots and specify that the Board of State Canvassers has only a "clerical, nondiscretionary" duty to certify election results. The proposal also could preempt Republican attempts to tighten photo identification laws by amending the state constitution to include the current alternative of signing an affidavit.

Votes were still being counted for an Arizona measure that would fortify an existing photo ID law for in-person voting by eliminating an alternative of providing two documents bearing a person's name and address. People voting by mail — the vast majority in Arizona — would have to list their date of birth and either their driver's license number, a state identification number or the last four digits of their Social Security number.

A proposed amendment to Nevada's Constitution would adopt an open primary election to advance the top five vote-getters. Ranked choice voting then would be used to determine the winner of the general election. If no candidate received a majority on the first count, the votes for the bottom candidate would be reassigned to voters' next preferences until one candidate has a majority. Similar systems already exist for some elections in Maine and in Alaska. But the Nevada measure, if approved this year, would require a second approval in 2024 to take effect.

In other ballot issues, voters in Illinois and Tennessee were moving in opposite directions on labor policies. While Illinois residents were favoring a proposed constitutional right to collective bargaining, Tennessee voters passed a constitutional amendment forbidding workplace contracts from requiring union fees.

Gun policies also drew contrasting approaches in states. Iowa voters approved a measure embedding the right to bear arms in the state constitution. Oregon voters, meanwhile, were deciding whether to restrict gun rights by prohibiting magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds and requiring safety training and a permit to purchase firearms.

Voters in Alabama, Tennessee and Vermont all approved constitutional measures against slavery and involuntary servitude, intending to end the potential of that being used as a criminal punishment.

Health care also was on the ballot in some states. An Oregon measure would create a constitutional right to affordable health care and obligate the state to ensure access. A measure in South Dakota would expand Medicaid coverage to adults under the terms of the federal health care law enacted more than a decade ago under former President Barack Obama.

California, as is often the case, was home to the nation's most expensive ballot battle. Hundreds of millions of dollars were poured into the campaigns of two competing initiatives to legalize sports betting — one backed by wealthy Native American tribes and the other by online gambling companies and less-affluent tribes. Both were defeated by voters.

Associated Press writer Julie Carr Smyth contributed to this report.

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EXPLAINER: Laws and customs in Qatar ahead of 2022 World Cup

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

Over a million sports fans will go to Qatar for the World Cup in November and December, a spectacle

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that typically turns host countries into a nonstop party. But this year may be different.

The tiny, conservative Muslim nation may show little tolerance for the booze-fueled hooliganism that has unfolded at tournaments past.

Qatar has sought to portray itself as welcoming to foreigners but traditional Muslim values remain strong in the hereditarily ruled emirate. Qatar's judicial system, based on an interpretation of Islamic law, or Shariah, has drawn Western criticism for its tendency to favor prosecutors and police.

The autocratic country says it will loosen up for the unprecedented influx of tourists. But fans attending the World Cup should be mindful of Qatar's laws and cultural customs, including policies for alcohol, drugs, sexuality and dress code.

Here's a look at the some of them:

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is served only in hotel restaurants and bars that have licenses in Qatar. It is illegal to consume it elsewhere. Non-Muslim residents of Doha who have a liquor license, however, may drink at home. At the World Cup, fans will be allowed to buy Budweiser beer within stadium compounds — though not at concourse concession stands — before and after games. Fans can also drink in the evenings at a designated "fan zone" in downtown Doha. Generally in Qatar, public drunkenness is punishable by hefty fines and jailing. But the head of Qatar's security operations has said that during the tournament, police will turn a blind eye to most offenses but potentially make arrests if someone gets into a drunken brawl or damages public property. The legal drinking age is 21, and bouncers at bars often ask for photo ID or passports upon entry.

DRUGS

Qatar is one of the world's most restrictive nations when it comes to drugs, prohibiting cannabis and even over-the-counter medications like narcotics, sedatives and amphetamines. The sale, trafficking and possession of illegal drugs may lead to severe penalties, including long-term prison sentences followed by deportation and heavy fines. Drug smuggling charges can carry the death penalty. World Cup fans should be aware of these laws when arriving at Hamad International Airport, where authorities scan bags and passengers with new security technology and have arrested those carrying the smallest quantities of drugs.

SEXUALITY

Qatar considers the cohabitation of unmarried women and men a crime, using so-called indecency laws to punish extramarital sex. However, authorities say unmarried couples can share hotel rooms during the World Cup without issue. On the streets, public displays of affection are "frowned upon," the government tourism website says. Holding hands won't land you in jail, but visitors should avoid showing intimacy in public. Qatari law calls for a prison sentence of one to three years for adults convicted of consensual gay or lesbian sex. Crossdressing is also criminalized. World Cup organizers have told The Associated Press that anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, can come "without fear of any sort of repercussions." But one official warned rainbow flags could be confiscated to protect fans from being attacked for promoting gay rights in a region where discrimination runs rampant.

DRESS CODE

Qatar's government tourism website urges men and women to "show respect for local culture by avoiding excessively revealing clothing in public." It asks visitors to cover their shoulders and knees. Those in shorts and sleeveless tops may be turned away from government buildings and malls. Women visiting mosques in the city will receive scarves to cover their heads. It's a different story in hotels, where bikinis are common at hotel pools.

CAUSING OFFENSE

Flashing the middle finger or swearing, particularly when dealing with police or other authorities, can lead to arrest. Most criminal cases in Qatar that entrap unwary foreigners involve such offenses. Many Qatari women and men will not shake hands with the opposite sex; wait for a hand to be offered. Filming and photographing people without their consent, as well as taking pictures of sensitive military or religious sites, may result in prosecution. It's also important to tread carefully when discussing religion and politics with locals. Insulting the royal family can land you in prison. Few Qataris are likely to welcome criticism of their governance system from a tourist. Spreading fake news and harming the country's interests is a

serious and vaguely defined crime, so it's best to steer clear of social media commentary on Qatar.

Elon Musk sells \$3.95 billion worth of Tesla stock

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

Twitter's new owner and Tesla CEO Elon Musk has sold nearly \$4 billion worth of Tesla shares, according to regulatory filings.

Musk, who bought Twitter for \$44 billion, sold 19.5 million shares of the electric car company from Nov. 4 to Nov. 8, according to Tuesday's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

He sold \$7 billion of his Tesla stock in August as he worked to finance the Twitter purchase he was trying to get out of at the time. In all, Musk has sold more than \$19 billion worth of Tesla stock since April, including those in Tuesday's filings, likely to fund his share of the Twitter purchase.

Most of Musk's wealth is tied up in shares of Tesla Inc. On Tuesday, his personal net worth dropped below \$200 billion, according to Forbes, but he is still the world's richest person.

Musk had lined up banks including Morgan Stanley to help finance the Twitter deal. His original share of the deal was about \$15.5 billion, Wedbush Analyst Dan Ives estimated. But if equity investors dropped out, Musk would be on the hook to replace them or throw in more of his own money.

Tesla's shares closed down \$5.78, or 2.9%, at \$191.30. The stock has lost 52% of its value since the start of this year. In comparison, the S&P 500 index has lost about 20% of its value so far this year.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp defeats Stacey Abrams in rematch

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Republican Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp turned back a second electoral challenge from Democratic challenger Stacey Abrams, maintaining GOP control in the South's most politically competitive state and dealing another defeat to the national Democratic star.

"Well, it looks like the reports of my political death have been greatly exaggerated," Kemp told supporters in a sometimes-defiant victory speech Tuesday night after two years of trouble had threatened to snuff out his reelection bid.

Kemp argued in his victory speech that his campaign, which saw him use the power of his office to shower tax cuts and cash on voters while attacking Abrams for being insufficiently supportive of police, was a recipe for Republican success in Georgia. Democrats believed that an increasing share of nonwhite voters would put them on the path to victory in the state.

"This election proves that when Republicans stay focused on real world solutions that put hard-working people first, we can win now, but also in the future, y'all." Kemp said.

Abrams cast her campaign as a fight to "save Georgia," saying the state deserved more, and she touched on key parts of her platform, including voting rights and Medicaid expansion. She said she forced people of all backgrounds to think about change, and she promised to keep up her fight to improve the state, promising that "while we may not write the story today, there will always be another chapter."

"I may no longer be seeking the office of governor, but I will never stop doing everything in my power to make sure the people of Georgia have a voice."

Kemp, who was a developer before serving as a state senator and secretary of state, clinched another term despite attacks from former President Donald Trump. Kemp seemed on shaky ground among Republicans after the 2020 presidential election, when Trump blamed him for not doing enough to overturn President Joe Biden's narrow win in Georgia. Trump helped lure former U.S. Sen. David Perdue into a primary challenge to Kemp, whom he called a "complete and total failure".

But Kemp motored away from Perdue during the GOP primary, winning nearly 74% of the vote. Kemp patiently explained his election actions to Republicans even as he used his office to sign conservative-pleasing bills loosening gun laws, cutting taxes and banning "divisive concepts" in schools.

Kemp continued to highlight his stewardship of the state economy and his decision to relax public restric-

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tions early in the COVID-19 pandemic in his victory speech.

"They came after us," Kemp said of critics of loosening pandemic restrictions. "But the truth was on our side. They attacked us because even when times were tough, and decisions were hard to make, we did the right thing for hard working Georgians and their families. We did not waver."

Kemp also gave billions in tax breaks and handouts using federal and state money. He pushed laws to suspend the state gas tax, give \$1 billion of state income tax refunds and even give \$350 to every person in the state on public assistance. He also pledged another income tax break and a property tax break if reelected, portraying the cash as helping Georgians "fight through 40-year-high inflation and high gas prices" that he blamed on Biden, Abrams and other Democrats.

Nearly half of Georgia voters say the economy is the most pressing issue facing the country, according to AP VoteCast, an expansive survey of more than 3,000 voters in the state.

Roughly a third of Georgians say their family is falling behind financially. A majority of those voters cast ballots for Kemp and Republican U.S. Senate candidate Herschel Walker.

The slight proportion of voters — about 1 in 10 — who say their families are getting ahead financially were more likely to vote for Democratic candidates, including Abrams and U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock.

Rising costs were named as a top concern among the state's voters, with roughly 9 in 10 saying the inflated prices of groceries, gas and other goods were an important factor in how they cast ballots. Among those who said they considered inflation in their voting decision, roughly half said the cost of groceries and food was the most important factor.

Abrams, a lawyer whose 2018 loss to Kemp helped launch her into Democratic stardom, would have been the first Black woman to serve as a governor in the United States if she had won.

Abrams spent the four years since her defeat laying the groundwork for another run. She formed a forceful voting rights advocacy group — Fair Fight Action — and built her own personal wealth as Democrats gobbled up her books and paid to attend her speeches.

Her national profile was so high that she was considered as a possible running mate for Biden or even a candidate for president herself. That helped Abrams outraise Kemp with the help of a state law that allows candidates for governor to accept unlimited contributions through an associated committee.

Abrams raised \$85 million through Sept. 30, but even Kemp's \$60 million would have by far been a record for a governor's race in Georgia, as he sought to build a national fundraising base. And Abrams' financial advantage was never enough to run away with the race — Kemp led in polls throughout.

Abrams, 48, rolled out a campaign that she once described as "rife with plans," including a big pay raise for teachers, legalizing casino and sports gambling to pay for more college aid and expanding Medicaid health insurance. At the same time, Abrams pledged to tighten Georgia's gun laws and roll back abortion restrictions, arguing Kemp was far from moderate.

Roughly 7 in 10 voters also identified the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn the constitutional right to an abortion as an important factor in their vote. About a quarter of voters described it as the single most important factor; these voters were more likely to cast a ballot for Warnock and Abrams.

Kemp launched frequent attacks on Abrams, accusing her of not supporting police. A sizable majority of voters identified crime as a factor in their how they cast ballots, AP VoteCast found. More than 8 in 10 voters described it as an important issue.

Associated Press writers Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta and Amanda Seitz in Washington, D.C. contributed.

Learn more about the issues and factors at play in the midterms at <https://apnews.com/hub/explaining-the-elections>. And follow the AP's election coverage of the 2022 elections at <https://apnews.com/hub/2022-midterm-elections>.

Democrat Kathy Hochul becomes 1st woman elected NY governor

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

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NEW YORK (AP) — Democrat Kathy Hochul has become the first woman elected New York governor, winning the office outright that she took over in 2021 when former Gov. Andrew Cuomo resigned.

She defeated Republican congressman Lee Zeldin, an ally of Donald Trump who ran a campaign focused on fear of violent crime.

"Tonight you made your voices heard loud and clear. And, and you made me the first woman ever elected to be the governor of the state of New York. But I'm not here to make history, I'm here to make a difference," Hochul told supporters Tuesday night.

"I have felt a weight on my shoulders to make sure that every little girl and all the women of the state who've had to bang up against glass ceilings everywhere they turn, to know that a woman could be elected in her own right and successfully govern a state as rough and tumble as New York."

Hochul, a Buffalo native, had been expected to win in a state where there are more than twice as many registered Democrats as Republicans. New Yorkers haven't elected a Republican as governor since Gov. George Pataki won a third term in 2002. But Zeldin made the race competitive, closing in on Hochul in the final weeks and appearing to spur her to speak more about public safety.

"It's it's been a battle where we've been focused on ideals. We've been bringing our message without apology or regret," Zeldin said at his election night party Tuesday. He took the stage before The Associated Press had called the race.

Hochul's formidable campaign fundraising allowed her to buy TV ads portraying herself as a defender of abortion rights and describing Zeldin as "extreme and dangerous" because of his ties to Trump and his vote against certifying the 2020 election results.

As a nod to the history Hochul hoped to make as the first woman to be elected governor, she appeared at a rally days before the election with Vice President Kamala Harris, the first woman to be elected to the country's second-highest office, and Hillary Clinton, the first woman to be a major party's presidential nominee and New York's first female senator. Hochul is among eight women who have won statewide elections in New York, a group she initially joined when she was elected lieutenant governor in 2014. She became the first woman to serve as governor when she took over for Cuomo.

Hochul's steady path was upset in the final weeks as the race tightened. Democrats faced national headwinds in this year's midterm elections as the party in power, which typically bears the brunt of voter frustrations. This year, those frustrations include stubborn inflation and a shaky economy, but in New York, concerns about crime took precedence.

Though Hochul has been governor for a year, she is not as well known as her predecessor.

A former congresswoman, she served as Cuomo's lieutenant governor before taking over in August 2021 and has tried to cast herself as a fresh start from Cuomo. He resigned amid sexual harassment allegations, which he denies.

Hochul's campaign fundraising brought in more than \$50 million, about double what Zeldin reported, but outside groups spent heavily in the race — especially two outside groups boosting Zeldin that took in about \$9 million from Estée Lauder heir Ronald Lauder.

Zeldin is an Army Reserve lieutenant colonel who has represented eastern Long Island in Congress since 2015 and was a vocal defender of Trump during his two impeachments.

As a gubernatorial candidate, Zeldin tried to sidestep his ties to Trump, appearing with the former president at a closed-door campaign fundraiser but not at any public rallies, as candidates elsewhere have done. He brushed aside questions from reporters after Trump endorsed him, saying "it shouldn't have been news" because the former president had backed him previously.

Instead, Zeldin focused almost exclusively on sending a message that violent crime is out of control, casting blame on policies passed by Democrats in Albany who control the Legislature, along with Hochul and Cuomo.

The issue became personal for Zeldin in the final month of the election, when two teenage boys were wounded in a drive-by-shooting in front of his Long Island home.

He has called for toughening the state's bail laws and declaring a crime "emergency" that would allow him to suspend laws that curb solitary confinement in jails and that stopped automatically treating 16 and

17-year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system.

Hochul meanwhile, poured blame on Republicans and conservatives on the U.S. Supreme Court for opposing gun control measures. She led an effort to tighten licensing rules for semiautomatic rifles after a racist mass shooting killed 10 Black people at a supermarket in her home town of Buffalo last spring.

Hochul was dogged by an early scandal in her administration, when her first lieutenant governor, Brian Benjamin, was arrested in April. Benjamin, who was accused of funneling state aid to a supporter in exchange for campaign contributions, denied wrongdoing but resigned. His arrest has not been raised on the campaign trail since Hochul handily won the Democratic primary in June.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders 1st woman elected Arkansas governor

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Former White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders was elected Arkansas governor on Tuesday, becoming the first woman to lead the state and the highest profile Trump administration official in elected office.

Sanders defeated Democratic nominee Chris Jones in the race for governor in her predominantly Republican home state, where former President Donald Trump remains popular. Sanders had been heavily favored to win the race, which also included Libertarian nominee Ricky Dale Harrington.

Sanders shattered state fundraising records with her campaign, which focused primarily on national issues. Sanders, the daughter of former Gov. Mike Huckabee, regularly promised to use the office to fight President Joe Biden and the “radical left.”

In her acceptance speech on Tuesday night, however, Sanders didn’t mention either the former or current president and instead shared stories about supporters she met during her campaign bid.

“This election is about taking Arkansas to the top,” Sanders said. “I know that Arkansas can be first, and I’m committed to being the leader who takes us there.”

Stan Hall, a retired postal worker, said he voted for Sanders though he wanted her to talk more about state issues rather than criticizing Biden or talking up her time working for Trump.

“I think, just state your own feelings on what you’re going to try and do and improve things,” Hall said. “Everybody knows who she was and what she did, so to keep beating that drum was a little bit much for me.”

Sanders succeeds Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who is leaving office in January due to term limits. Hutchinson, who endorsed Sanders’ bid, is considering running for president in 2024 and has frequently split with Trump.

Trump publicly encouraged Sanders to run for governor when she left the White House in 2019 to return to Arkansas.

But Sanders was a known figure in the state long before Trump. She appeared in ads for her father and worked on his campaigns. She managed Sen. John Boozman’s 2010 election and worked as an adviser to Sen. Tom Cotton’s in 2014.

Sanders briefly left the campaign trail in September after undergoing surgery for thyroid cancer. Her doctor said Sanders was cancer free after the surgery.

During Sanders’ nearly two-year tenure at the White House, she scaled back daily televised briefings after repeatedly sparring with reporters who aggressively questioned her. She faced questions about her credibility, particularly after special counsel Robert Mueller’s report revealed that Sanders admitted making an unfounded claim to reporters about FBI agents’ reaction to director James Comey’s firing. But she also earned reporters’ respect working behind the scenes to develop relationships with the media.

Sanders embraced Trump’s rhetoric during her bid for governor and adopted many of his favorite targets, including critical race theory and the national news media. But she’s avoided criticizing Hutchinson, even after the former president labeled Hutchinson a RINO — Republican In Name Only — for vetoing an anti-transgender law.

Sanders said she would have signed that measure — a ban on gender affirming care for minors — into law.

She's stopped short of agreeing with Trump that his loss in the 2020 presidential election was stolen, though she's said the former president has the right to make that claim.

Jones, an ordained Baptist minister and nuclear engineer, had presented himself to voters as a more unifying figure than Sanders. He launched his campaign with a video that went viral where he talked about his family's history in the state. He ran on promises to expand preschool access and broadband.

Speaking to supporters on Tuesday night, Jones did not concede the race.

"We're going to count every last vote in this race," Jones said. "Why? Because Arkansas deserves it and Arkansas is worth it."

Kathy Balkman, a retired educator in Little Rock, said she voted for Jones and cited Sanders' time as press secretary as a reason.

"She was very confrontational, and I don't see that she has any skills to not work confrontationally in our state," said Balkman, a Democrat who said she's voted previously for the state's current Republican governor. ____

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Check out <https://apnews.com/hub/explaining-the-elections> to learn more about the issues and factors at play in the 2022 midterm elections.

Massachusetts' Healey is 1st lesbian elected governor in US

By STEVE LeBLANC Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Democratic Attorney General Maura Healey has been elected governor of Massachusetts, making history as the nation's first openly lesbian governor.

Healey, the state's first woman and openly gay candidate elected to the office, defeated Republican Geoff Diehl, a former state representative who had the endorsement of former President Donald Trump.

Her election returns the governor's office to Democrats after eight years of Republican leadership under the popular Gov. Charlie Baker, who opted not to seek reelection.

Healey and her running mate, Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll, were among three all-female governor/lieutenant governor tickets in the U.S. that began Election Day with a chance to become the first such pairing elected to lead a state.

The Republican all-female ticket of Sarah Huckabee Sanders for governor and Leslie Rutledge for lieutenant governor won in Arkansas. In Ohio, the ticket of Democrat Nan Whaley and running mate Cheryl Stephens lost to Republican Gov. Mike DeWine.

Healey was also one of two openly lesbian candidates who ran to be a governor in the country. Healey and Democrat Tina Kotek, a candidate for governor in Oregon, each began the day with a chance to become the first open lesbian elected governor of a state.

Healey addressed supporters at a downtown Boston hotel after her victory Tuesday night.

"To those who voted for me and to those who didn't I want you to know that I'll be a governor for everyone and I'll work with anyone who's up for making a difference in this state," Healey said.

Healey also addressed the historic nature of her win.

"Tonight I want to say something to every little girl and every young LGBTQ person out there. I hope tonight shows you that you can be whatever, whoever you want to be and nothing and no one can ever get in your way except you own imagination and that's not going to happen." Healey said.

"I stand before you tonight proud to be the first woman and the first gay person ever elected governor of Massachusetts," she added.

Diehl told supporters at a Boston hotel that he had called Healey to congratulate her on her win.

"The people of the commonwealth have spoken. I respect their choice and I ask everyone who has supported me and Leah to give her the same opportunity that I would have asked for if the shoe had been on the other foot," he said, referring to his running mate Leah Allen.

"Despite the outcome, I'm proud of the race we ran," he added. "We highlighted issues that are important for people across the state."

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Healey — elected eight years ago as the nation's first openly gay attorney general — snapped what's become known in Massachusetts as the "curse of the attorney general." Since 1958, six former Massachusetts attorneys general have sought the governor's office. All failed.

During the campaign, Healey pledged to expand job training programs, make child care more affordable and modernize schools. Healey has also said she would protect "access to safe and legal abortion in Massachusetts" in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

The 51-year-old has also checked off what she considers a series of accomplishments during her time as the state's top law enforcement officer, including protecting students and homeowners from predatory lenders and suing Exxon Mobil over whether the oil giant misled investors and the public about its knowledge of climate change.

Healey also targeted OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma and members of the Sackler family over allegations they deceived patients and doctors about the risks of opioids.

During the campaign, the Democrat warned Diehl would "bring Trumpism to Massachusetts." Diehl served as co-chair for former President Donald Trump's first presidential campaign in Massachusetts and won his endorsement for governor in a state that roundly rejected Trump in 2016 and 2020.

Although Healey is the first woman in Massachusetts elected governor, she's not the first to serve in the office. Republican Jane Swift, then lieutenant governor, became acting governor in 2001 when Gov. Paul Cellucci resigned to become ambassador to Canada. Swift was never elected governor.

Since 1991, Republicans had held the corner office at the Statehouse for all but eight years when Democrat Deval Patrick was governor.

In the race for secretary of the commonwealth, incumbent Democrat William Galvin defeated Republican Rayla Campbell, who would have been the first Black person to serve in the post.

In the contest for state auditor, Republican Anthony Amore conceded to Democratic state Sen. Diana DiZoglio, while incumbent Democratic state Treasurer Deborah Goldberg has been elected to another four-year term.

Asian shares mixed as market await vote results, price data

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian shares were mixed on Wednesday as investors awaited the outcome of the U.S. midterm elections and a major inflation update due later in the week.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index slipped 0.2% and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong also shed 0.2%, to 16,517.04. The Shanghai Composite index edged 0.1% higher to 3,066.99, while the S&P/ASX 200 in Sydney climbed 0.7% to 7,006.70.

The Kospi in Seoul surged 1% to 2,424.02.

All eyes were on the elections, which could determine how much is done in the next several years in Washington, and possibly beyond. Markets tend to abhor uncertainty.

With Americans heading to the polls across the country amid high inflation and worries about a possible recession, analysts say investors appear to be betting that Republicans will gain control of at least one house of Congress. That combined with a Democratic White House could lead to little getting done in Washington, which may be bad for society but could also keep the status quo on economic policy.

On Wall Street, trading was tentative through the day, and Wall Street's benchmark index flipped between an even bigger gain and a modest loss during the afternoon.

The S&P 500 rose 0.6% to 3,828.11, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 1% to 33,160.83 and the Nasdaq composite gained 0.5%, to 10,616.20.

If Republicans do end up winning control of at least the House of Representatives, the ensuing reaction in financial markets could be modest, according to economists at Goldman Sachs. Stocks have already rallied in anticipation of it, with two straight gains of at least 1% before Election Day. But a surprise win by Democrats could upset the market if it leads investors to expect higher corporate taxes and other policy changes.

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But a Republican win could also mean less help from Congress during a possible recession than under a Congress controlled by Democrats. And economists are forecasting a sharp downturn in coming months as interest rate hikes meant to tame inflation put the brakes on business activity and spending.

The important milestone for markets this week than U.S. Election Day may be Thursday's report on inflation, which will affect the swift interest-rate hikes the Federal Reserve is pushing through to get it under control.

By raising rates, the Fed is intentionally slowing the economy by making it more expensive to borrow money. High rates also tend to drag down prices for stocks and other investments while raising the risk of a recession.

The Fed has already hiked its key overnight rate to a range of 3.75% to 4%, up from virtually zero in March, and more investors are expecting it to top 5% next year.

A softer reading than expected on Thursday could give the Fed leeway to loosen up a bit. Economists expect the report to show a continued, slight moderation from a peak set during the summer. But a worse-than-expected reading could have the opposite effect.

Stocks are also moving on corporate profit reports, as earnings season enters its tail end. Take-Two Interactive sank 13.7% after reporting weaker results for the latest quarter than expected.

Shares of companies entwined with the cryptocurrency economy also fell sharply, with Coinbase Global losing 10.8% and Robinhood Markets falling 19%.

They dropped with crypto prices after the world's biggest crypto exchange by daily volume, Binance, said it intends to buy one of its bigger rivals, FTX.

Binance is making the purchase to help FTX manage a crunch where users have been pulling money out amid fears about its financial strength. It's the latest crisis of confidence to slam the crypto industry this year, as prices have tumbled in part on worries about higher interest rates.

Bitcoin at one point sank below \$17,500 before pulling back to \$18,267, down 12.2% from a day earlier, according to CoinDesk.

In other trading Wednesday, U.S. benchmark crude oil gave up 19 cents to \$88.72 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Brent crude, the international pricing standard, lost 9 cents to \$95.27 per barrel in London.

The dollar slipped to 145.31 Japanese yen from 145.34 yen. The euro rose to \$1.0082 from \$1.0074.

Tropical Storm Nicole churns toward Bahamas, Florida

By FREIDA FRISARO and JULIE WALKER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Nicole churned toward the northwestern Bahamas and Florida's Atlantic coastline on Tuesday, gradually gaining strength as it neared hurricane strength, forecasters said.

Nicole reached 70 mph (110 kph) late Tuesday, just shy of the 74 mph (119 kph) to become a Category 1 hurricane.

A range of warnings and watches remain in place. Many areas are still reeling from damage caused by Hurricane Ian, which hit Florida's southwestern Gulf Coast as a Category 4 storm in late September before dumping heavy amounts of rain across much of the central part of the state. Forecasters said heavy rain could fall on areas still recovering from Ian's flooding.

Hurricane warnings were in effect for the Abacos, Berry Islands, Bimini and Grand Bahama Island, the Miami-based National Hurricane Center said in an advisory. Other areas of the Bahamas, including Andros Island, New Providence and Eleuthera remained under a tropical storm warning.

Residents in at least three Florida counties — Flagler, Palm Beach and Volusia — were ordered to evacuate from barrier islands, low-lying areas and mobile homes. The evacuation orders are set to take effect Wednesday. Officials at Orlando International Airport, the seventh busiest in the U.S., said commercial operations would stop Wednesday afternoon until it was safe to resume flights.

"This incoming storm is a direct threat to both property and life," said Volusia County Manager George Recktenwald. "Our infrastructure, particularly along the coastline, is very vulnerable because of Hurricane

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Ian.”

In the Bahamas, long lines formed at gas stations and grocery stores earlier Tuesday, said Eliane Hall, who works at a hotel in Great Abaco island.

“We just boarded it up,” she said of the hotel, adding that the impact of Hurricane Dorian, a Category 5 storm that struck in 2019, was still fresh in many people’s minds. “We’re still affected,” she said.

Authorities said they were especially concerned about those now living in about 100 motorhomes in Grand Bahama after Dorian destroyed their homes, and about the migrant community in Great Abaco’s March Harbor that Capt. Stephen Russell, emergency management authority director, said has grown from 50 acres (20 hectares) to 200 acres (81 hectares) since Dorian. The previous community of Haitian migrants was among the hardest hit by the 2019 storm given the large number of flimsy structures in which many lived.

The hurricane center said the storm’s track shifted slightly north overnight, but the exact path remains uncertain as it approaches Florida, where it is expected to make landfall as a Category 1 hurricane late Wednesday or early Thursday.

By Tuesday night, hurricane warnings were issued for a large portion of Florida’s Atlantic Coast, from Boca Raton to north of Daytona Beach. Tropical storm warnings are in place for other parts of the Florida coast, all the way to Altamaha Sound, Georgia.

The warning area also stretches inland, covering Florida’s Lake Okeechobee, with tropical storm watches in effect on the state’s Gulf Coast from Bonita Beach in southwestern Florida to Indian Pass in the Panhandle. The tropical storm watch extends north to the South Santee River in South Carolina.

Jack Beven, a National Hurricane Center forecaster, said the storm has a “very large cyclonic envelope,” meaning that even if it makes landfall along the central Florida coastline, the effects will be felt as far north as Georgia.

NASA announced that because of the storm, next week’s planned launch of its much-anticipated moon rocket will be pushed back two days to Nov. 16. The 322-foot (98-meter) rocket will send an empty crew capsule around the moon and back in a dramatic flight test before astronauts climb aboard in a couple of years.

However, the storm did not have any impact on voting in Florida on Tuesday.

Officials in the Bahamas opened more than two dozen shelters across the archipelago on Tuesday as they closed schools and government offices in Abaco, Bimini, the Berry Islands and Grand Bahama.

Authorities warned that some airports and seaports will close as the storm nears and not reopen until Thursday, and they urged people in shantytowns to seek secure shelter.

Communities in Abaco are expected to receive a direct hit from Nicole as they still struggle to recover from Dorian.

“We don’t have time to beg and plead for persons to move,” Russell said.

Some counties in Florida were offering sandbags to residents. In Indian River County, which is north of West Palm Beach, shelters were set to open at 7 a.m. Wednesday, though no mandatory evacuation orders had been issued by late morning Tuesday, said spokesman Mason Kozac.

Any evacuations would be strictly voluntary, with residents “having a conversation with themselves about whether they need to leave or not,” Kozac said.

The mandatory evacuation order in Palm Beach County affects 52,000 residents of mobile homes and 67,000 residents of barrier islands, officials said in an afternoon news conference. Shelters up and down the coast were opening at 7 a.m. Wednesday, officials said.

Schools will be closed in multiple counties across Florida as the storm approaches. Some announced closures through Friday, already an off day because of the Veteran’s Day holiday. Other districts have said they would cancel classes on Thursday. The University of Central Florida, one of the largest U.S. universities with 70,000 students and 12,000 employees, was closing on Wednesday and Thursday.

Disney World outside Orlando planned to close its Typhoon Lagoon water park and two miniature golf courses on Thursday.

In Seminole County, north of Orlando, Hurricane Ian caused unprecedented flooding, and officials are

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concerned the impending storm could bring a new round of flooding and wind damage.

"The water on the ground has saturated the root structures of many trees. The winds could bring down trees and those could bring down power lines," Alan Harris, Seminole County's emergency manager, said at a Tuesday news conference.

In South Carolina, forecasters warned several days of onshore winds from Nicole could pile seawater into places like downtown Charleston. Thursday morning's high tide was predicted to be higher than the water level from Hurricane Ian.

At 10 p.m. Tuesday, the storm was about 150 miles (240 kilometers) east-northeast of the northwestern Bahamas and 325 miles (525 kilometers) east of West Palm Beach, Florida. It was moving west-southwest at 10 mph (17 kph).

Tropical storm-force winds extend outward up to 380 miles (610 kilometers) from the center of the storm, the National Hurricane Center's advisory said.

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through Nov. 30. The last storm to hit Florida in November was Tropical Storm Eta, which made landfall in Cedar Key, on the state's Gulf Coast, on Nov. 12, 2020.

Since record keeping began in 1853, Florida has had only two hurricanes make landfall in November, said Maria Torres, a spokesperson for the Hurricane Center. The first was the Yankee Hurricane in 1935, and the second was Hurricane Kate, which struck Florida's Panhandle as a Category 2 storm in 1985.

Walker reported from New York City. Associated Press writers Danica Coto in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Mike Schneider in Orlando, Florida, Terry Spencer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina contributed to this report.

For more AP coverage of hurricanes: <https://apnews.com/hub/hurricanes>

Twitter to add 'official' mark to verified big accounts

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

Twitter said Tuesday it will add a gray "official" label to some high-profile accounts to indicate that they are authentic, the latest twist in new owner Elon Musk's chaotic overhaul of the platform's verification system.

The site's current system of using what are known as "blue checks" confirming an account's authenticity will soon go away for those who don't pay a monthly fee. The checkmarks will be available at a yet-to-be-announced date for anyone willing to pay a \$7.99-a-month subscription, which will also include some bonus features, such as fewer ads and the ability to have tweets given greater visibility than those coming from non-subscribers.

The platform's current verification system has been in place since 2009 and was created to ensure high-profile and public-facing accounts are who they say they are.

Experts have expressed concern that making the checkmark available to anyone for a fee could lead to impersonations and the spreading of misinformation and scams. The gray label — a color that tends to blend into the background whether you use light or dark mode to scroll Twitter — is an apparent compromise. But it might lead to more confusion, as Twitter users accustomed to the blue check as a mark of authenticity will now have to look for the less obvious "official" designation.

Esther Crawford, a Twitter employee who has been working on the verification overhaul, said Tuesday on Twitter that the "official" label will be added to "select accounts" when the new system launches.

"Not all previously verified accounts will get the 'Official' label and the label is not available for purchase," said Crawford, who recently was the subject of a viral photo showing her sleeping on the floor of a Twitter office while working to meet Musk's deadlines.

Crawford said those receiving the label include government accounts, commercial companies, business partners, major media outlets, publishers and some public figures.

There are about 423,000 verified accounts under the outgoing system. Many of those belong to celebrities, businesses and politicians, as well as media outlets.

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But a large chunk of verified accounts belong to individual journalists, some with tiny followings at local newspapers and news sites around the world. The idea was to verify reporters so their identities couldn't be used to push false information on Twitter.

Musk had previously floated designating official accounts in a way other than the blue check.

Powerball ticket sold in California snags record \$2.04B win

By STEFANIE DAZIO and SCOTT McFETRIDGE Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Someone who bought a Powerball ticket in Southern California has won a record \$2.04 billion Powerball jackpot after more than three months without anyone hitting the top prize.

The winning numbers were selected Tuesday morning, nearly 10 hours after the scheduled Monday night drawing because of problems processing sales data at one of the game's member lotteries. Lottery officials acknowledged the unprecedented delay for such a high-profile drawing but said the game's security process took precedence.

"Protecting the integrity of the draw is of utmost importance, and we were able to do that during this historic drawing with the cooperation of all participating lotteries," said Drew Svitko, the chairman of the Powerball Product Group and executive director of the Pennsylvania Lottery.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Minnesota Lottery acknowledged their sales verification system caused the lengthy delay.

The winning numbers drawn Tuesday morning at the Florida Lottery draw studio in Tallahassee were: white balls 10, 33, 41, 47 and 56, and the red Powerball was 10.

The jackpot ticket was sold at Joe's Service Center in Altadena, an unincorporated community in the foothills northeast of Los Angeles. For selling the winning ticket, business owner Joe Chahayed will receive a maximum Powerball bonus of \$1 million.

"I'm very surprised. Very excited. Very happy," said Chahayed, who wore a bright yellow California Lottery shirt and cap.

Chahayed said he didn't know who won the giant prize but hopes it's someone local.

"I wish I knew the person but most people who buy tickets from me are from the neighborhood. I hope one of them will be the winner," he said.

Chahayed said he would spend his \$1 million on his five children and donate some to the community.

Under California rules, the name of the winner must be disclosed but no other information, including the winner's address, has to be made public.

Thomas Murrell said he had stopped at Joe's Tuesday morning with the intention of buying gas and \$200 worth of Powerball tickets, in case no one had won the giant jackpot.

"I know Joe. I've known him for years and talk to him all the time," Murrell said. "Joe's always been a lucky guy. He's a good guy. I'm not surprised it happened here."

The \$2.04 billion jackpot was by far the largest lottery prize ever won, topping the previous record \$1.586 billion prize won by three Powerball ticketholders in 2016. Only four previous jackpots have topped \$1 billion, but none of those are close to the current prize, which started at \$20 million back on Aug. 6 and has grown over three winless months. No one has won the jackpot since Aug. 3.

The jackpot was initially reported as an estimated \$1.9 billion on Monday, but the prize was increased to \$2.04 billion Tuesday morning after updated calculations.

The Multi-State Lottery Association said the scheduled drawing was delayed from 10:59 p.m. EST Monday to 8:57 EST a.m. Tuesday because a participating lottery wasn't able to process its sales data. After Minnesota completed its pre-draw procedures, the drawing was able to go ahead.

Marie Hinton, a Minnesota Lottery spokeswoman, said the lottery was reviewing what happened and hoped to report its findings by Wednesday.

Terry Rich, a former director of the Iowa Lottery who also served on the Powerball board, said the delay was likely due to a two-part verification system of ticket sales that makes use of an outside vendor to ensure all is in order before the game's numbers are drawn.

"Each state must verify through a dual process that all of the sales and dollars match before the Multi-

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State Lottery Association can do the draw," said Rich, who headed the Iowa Lottery for 10 years and was president of the North American Lottery Association. "This is a state-by-state procedure, which separates the whole process and has been very effective."

Rich said state lotteries deal with similar problems several times a year but the delays usually don't attract much attention because the potential jackpots are far less than was up for grabs this week.

The winning numbers and recorded video of the drawing were posted to the Powerball's YouTube channel. The \$2.04 billion prize is for a winner who chooses an annuity, paid annually over 29 years. Nearly all winners instead opt for cash, which was valued at \$997.6 million.

The odds of winning the jackpot are 1 in 292.2 million.

The game is played in 45 states, as well as Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

McFetridge reported from Des Moines, Iowa.

World Series, football dominate week's TV ratings

NEW YORK (AP) — Here are the 20 most-watched programs in prime-time television for the week of Oct. 31-Nov. 6, according to the Nielsen company.

1. NFL Football: Tennessee at Kansas City, NBC, 17.69 million.
2. "NFL Pregame" (Sunday), NBC, 13.81 million.
3. World Series Game 5: Houston at Philadelphia, Fox, 12.77 million.
4. World Series Game 6: Philadelphia at Houston, Fox, 12.55 million.
5. World Series Game 4: Houston at Philadelphia, Fox, 11.81 million.
6. World Series Game 3: Houston at Philadelphia, Fox, 11.16 million.
7. "Football Night in America, Part 3," NBC, 10.678 million.
8. "60 Minutes," CBS, 10.676 million.
9. NFL Football: Cincinnati at Cleveland, ESPN, 10.01 million.
10. College Football: Alabama at LSU, ESPN, 7.58 million.
11. "Football Night in America, Part 2," NBC, 6.98 million.
12. "Young Sheldon," CBS, 6.89 million.
13. "FBI," CBS, 6.88 million.
14. "Chicago Med," NBC, 6.58 million.
15. "Chicago Fire," NBC, 6.56 million.
16. "The Voice" (Monday), NBC, 6.26 million.
17. "Ghosts," CBS, 6.15 million.
18. "Blue Bloods," CBS, 6.09 million.
19. "The Voice" (Tuesday), NBC, 5.81 million.
20. "Fire Country," CBS, 5.53 million.

Takeaways: Bold proposals and 'net zero' criticism at COP27

By PETER PRENGAMAN Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — Bold proposals to confront climate change were floated—and ignored or rejected. The often bogus "net zero" claims by companies and local governments were called out. And the fate of an activist on a water and hunger strike continued to get attention, though the Egyptian government showed no signs of backing down.

These were some of the top storylines Tuesday at the U.N. climate summit being held in the Red Sea city of Sharm el-Sheikh. Known as COP27, the gathering of world leaders comes at a time of contrasts, competing needs and competition for attention.

Extreme weather events, exacerbated by climate change, are becoming more frequent and destructive. At the same time, the war in Ukraine has upended the green energy policies of many countries. And add to it all competing news events, such as the Midterm elections in the United States. All of these realities

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were palpable in the arguments leaders made.

TREATY ABOUT FOSSIL FUELS

While the science of climate change is well established, and leaders have been debating how to confront it for decades—this is the 27th summit, after all—greenhouse gas emissions continue to go up. At the same time, many people, from climate scientists to the secretary general of the United Nations, have repeatedly said that the world must not undertake new projects to produce fossil fuels. Instead, the world must move toward cleaner forms of energy, such as wind, solar and nuclear, on a bigger scale.

Against that backdrop, Tuvalu Prime Minister Kausea Natano had a proposal: a non-proliferation treaty to stop future production of fossil fuels.

“We all know that the leading cause of climate crisis is fossil fuels,” said Natano, adding: “It’s getting too hot and there is very (little) time to slow and reverse the increasing temperature.”

Nations like Tuvalu, a Pacific island nation impacted by climate change, has moral authority at climate talks. But the prospects of getting such a proposal to gain traction are slim. Indeed, the idea didn’t get much engagement.

CARBON PROFITS TAX

A bold proposal that did garner vigorous interaction centered around the idea of taxing global corporations that are making big profits amid rising energy prices since Russia invaded Ukraine earlier this year.

“Profligate producers of fossil fuels have benefited from extortionate profits at the expense of human civilization,” said Gaston Browne, prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda.

Browne then cited a bit of “Macbeth” by William Shakespeare to underscore his frustration with a lack of action by developed nations that are most responsible for the emissions that warm the planet.

“Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time. And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death,” Browne said.

Other leaders made clear they were not interested in talking taxes.

“I think this is not the place now to develop tax rules, but rather to jointly develop measures to protect against the consequences of climate change,” German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters.

GREENWASHING CALLED OUT

Companies and local governments have made bold promises to slash emissions and get to “net zero” by a certain date.

There are potential problems with those claims, however, starting with the reality that zeroing out emissions doesn’t necessarily mean that polluting by a certain company goes down. After all, a company can pollute and then pay to offset their emissions by supporting projects, such as tree planting, and get their net emissions to zero.

That dynamic was one of many reasons that a UN group on Tuesday released a report with recommendations so that net zero promises don’t end up “undermined by false claims, ambiguity and greenwash.”

Among several recommendations: businesses can’t claim to be net zero if they continue to invest or build new fossil fuel supplies, are responsible for deforestation or other environmentally destructive projects or buy carbon offset credits that don’t have rigorous standards.

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who never minces words, certainly didn’t when talking about the need for reform.

“Using bogus ‘net zero’ pledges to cover up massive fossil fuel expansion is reprehensible. It is rank deception,” said Guterres. “This toxic cover-up could push our world over the climate cliff. The sham must end.”

EGYPTIAN ACTIVIST

The sister of imprisoned pro-democracy activist Alaa Abdel-Fattah on Tuesday warned journalists that she feared the Egyptian government would force-feed her brother to avoid the embarrassment of him dying while the spotlight was on the country.

Abdel-Fattah, jailed much of the last decade, added a water strike to his ongoing hunger strike to coincide with the beginning of the summit.

“Force feeding is torture. Nothing should happen against his will as long as he’s able to say to say so,” sister Sanaa Seif told The Associated Press on the sidelines of the conference.

Seif, who has been imprisoned in Egypt for her activism in the past as well and now lives in Britain, came to Sharm el-Sheikh to raise her brother's case, speaking to international media and other activists. Amnesty International warned that he could die within days if not freed.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz have raised the activist's case in their talks with the Egyptian leader, their offices said.

Still, the government doesn't appear ready to budge.

Speaking to the U.S. news channel CNBC on Monday, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shukry said Abdel-Fattah would be provided "the health care that is available to all inmates." He said that the hunger and water strike was "a matter of a personal choice" and suggested it might not be real.

Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP's climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Treaty against fossil fuels floated at UN climate summit

By FRANK JORDANS and WANJOHI KABUKURU Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — The world should confront climate change the way it does nuclear weapons, by agreeing to a non-proliferation treaty that stops further production of fossil fuels, a small island nation leader urged Tuesday.

The proposal by Tuvalu came as vulnerable nations pushed for more action and money at international climate talks in Egypt, while big polluters remained divided over who should pay for the damage industrial greenhouse gas emissions have done to the planet.

"We all know that the leading cause of climate crisis is fossil fuels," Tuvalu Prime Minister Kausea Natano told his fellow leaders.

The Pacific country has "joined Vanuatu and other nations calling for a fossil fuels non-proliferation treaty," Natano said. "It's getting too hot and there is very (little) time to slow and reverse the increasing temperature. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize fast-acting strategies."

Vanuatu and Tuvalu, along with other vulnerable nations, have been flexing their moral authority against the backdrop of recent climate-related disasters. The idea of a non-proliferation treaty for coal, oil and natural gas has previously been advanced by campaigners, religious authorities including the Vatican, and some scientists, but Natano's speech gave it a boost in front of a global audience.

A year ago at climate talks in Glasgow, a proposal to call for a "phase out" of coal — the dirtiest of the fossil fuels — was changed at the last minute to "phase down" by a demand from India, earning the wrath of vulnerable countries.

Since then the global energy crunch triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine has prompted a scramble by some countries and companies seeking to tap fresh gas and oil sources.

Pushing back against that, vulnerable nations also called for a global tax on the profits of fossil fuel corporations that are making billions of dollars daily from sky-high energy prices.

"It is about time that these companies are made to pay a global carbon tax on their profits as a source of funding for loss and damage," said Gaston Browne, prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda. "Profligate producers of fossil fuels have benefited from extortionate profits at the expense of human civilization."

The idea of a windfall tax on carbon profits has gained traction in recent months amid sky-high earnings for oil and gas corporations even as consumers struggle to pay for heating their homes and filling their cars. For the first time, U.N. climate conference delegates are to discuss demands by developing nations that the richest, most polluting countries pay compensation for damage wreaked on them by climate change, which in climate negotiations is called "loss and damage."

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley said fossil fuel companies should contribute to those funds, which would provide vulnerable countries with financial aid for the climate-related losses they are suffering.

Other leaders rejected the idea.

"I think this is not the place now to develop tax rules, but rather to jointly develop measures to protect

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against the consequences of climate change," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters.

If the small islands can't get a global tax on fossil fuel profits, Antigua's Browne suggested going to international courts to get polluters to pay. Scientists from Dartmouth College calculated specific damages for all the world's countries and how much was caused by other nations, saying it would work well in international court cases.

Browne quoted William Shakespeare's "Macbeth" in sharing his frustration with lack of action.

"Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time. And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death," Browne said.

Despite 27 climate summits "tomorrow has not come," he said.

Speaking for a country that has suffered from the consequences of climate change recently, Somalia's president said it faces "one of the worst droughts in modern history."

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said more than 7 million Somalis, or about half the population, cannot meet their basic food needs as the Horn of Africa region has seen two years of failed rains.

"We are trying desperately to respond," he said. The drought has killed thousands of people, many of them children. It is also reshaping Somalia's landscape as the country struggles with one of the world's fastest urbanization rates as many people flee parched areas.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif told fellow leaders how his country was struck by catastrophic floods in recent months that affected 33 million people and caused more than \$30 billion in economic damage.

"This all happened despite our very low carbon footprints," Sharif said, insisting: "Of course it was a manmade disaster."

Sharif called for additional financial support for his country and others suffering from the effects of climate change, saying money to help Pakistan rebuild after the floods should be on top of other aid and not come in the form of loans. Further debts, he said "would be a financial death trap."

The president of Malawi, meanwhile, praised those leaders present in Egypt for simply showing up.

"The temptation to abstain from COP this year was great," President Lazarus Chakwera said, referring to the talks by their U.N. acronym, "because of the great and unprecedented economic hardships your citizens are suffering."

"But you resisted this temptation and chose the path of courage," he said.

Chakwera said any agreements forged at the two-week meeting should recognize the different abilities of countries such as the United States and China, and developing nations like his own.

There is growing pressure on Beijing to step up its climate efforts given its massive economic clout.

So far, the world's biggest polluter has insisted that it cannot be held to the same standards as developed economies like the United States or Europe because it is still lifting millions of its citizens out of poverty.

Beijing's climate envoy said Tuesday that the meeting in Egypt should focus on "implementation" of existing pledges.

"The developed countries will take the lead in effectively scaling up their emission reduction targets and achieving carbon neutrality ahead of time," Xie Zhenhua said, according to an official translation of the speech.

Xie said it was up to developed countries to "achieve substantive results" on measures for adapting to climate change and financial aid for the poor that are "of greatest concern to developing countries."

The U.S. mid-term elections were hanging over the talks, with many environmental campaigners worried that defeat for the Democrats could make it harder for President Joe Biden to pursue his ambitious climate agenda.

Also hanging over the conference was the fate of one of Egypt's most prominent jailed pro-democracy activists, Alaa Abdel-Fattah, who has been imprisoned for most of the past decade. He stopped even drinking water Sunday, the first day of the conference, vowing he is willing to die if not released, his family said.

Numerous world leaders raised his case in meetings with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, and the head of the U.N. human rights office called for his immediate release.

Egypt's longtime history of suppressing dissent has raised controversy over its hosting the annual conference, with many climate activists complaining that restrictions by the host are quieting civil society.

Seth Borenstein and Samy Magdy contributed to this report.

Follow AP's climate and environment coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate-and-environment>

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Zelenskyy open to talks with Russia — on Ukraine's terms

By ANDREW MELDRUM and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's president has suggested he's open to peace talks with Russia, softening his refusal to negotiate with Moscow as long as President Vladimir Putin is in power while sticking to Kyiv's core demands.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy's appeal to the international community to "force Russia into real peace talks" reflected a change in rhetoric. In late September, after Russia illegally annexed four Ukrainian regions, he signed a decree stating "the impossibility of holding talks" with Putin.

But the preconditions the Ukrainian leader listed late Monday appear to be non-starters for Moscow, so it's hard to see how Zelenskyy's latest comments would advance any talks.

Zelenskyy reiterated that his conditions for dialogue were the return of all of Ukraine's occupied lands, compensation for war damage and the prosecution of war crimes. He didn't specify how world leaders should coerce Russia into talks.

Western weapons and aid have been key to Ukraine's ability to fight off Russia's invasion, which some initially expected would tear through the country with relative ease. That means Kyiv cannot ignore how the war is seen in the U.S. and the European Union, according to political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko.

"Zelenskyy is trying to maneuver because the promise of negotiations does not oblige Kyiv to anything, but it makes it possible to maintain the support of Western partners," Fesenko, head of the Kyiv-based Penta Center independent think tank, said.

"A categorical refusal to hold talks plays into the Kremlin's hands, so Zelenskyy is changing the tactics and talks about the possibility of a dialogue, but on conditions that make it all very clear," he added.

While support for Ukraine has garnered strong bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress, a growing conservative opposition could complicate that next year if Republicans take control of the House in Tuesday's elections.

Recent comments by Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy that lawmakers would not cut a "blank check" to Ukraine reflect the party's growing skepticism about the cost of support.

In private, Republican lawmakers who support aid to Ukraine see an opportunity to pass one more tranche of assistance this year with the current Congress.

Russia and Ukraine held several rounds of talks in Belarus and Turkey early in the war, which is now nearing its nine-month mark, and Zelenskyy repeatedly called for a personal meeting with Putin — which the Kremlin brushed off.

The talks stalled after the last meeting of the delegations, held in Istanbul in March, yielded no results.

Zelenskyy said Monday that Kyiv has "repeatedly proposed (talks) and to which we always received crazy Russian responses with new terrorist attacks, shelling or blackmail."

Russia resumed calls for talks after it started losing ground to a Ukrainian counteroffensive in the east and the south in September. Zelenskyy rejected the possibility of negotiating with Putin later that month after the Russian leader illegally claimed four regions of Ukraine as Russian territory.

Zelenskyy said Monday that Ukraine's conditions for dialogue included the "restoration of (Ukraine's) territorial integrity ... compensation for all war damage, punishment for every war criminal and guarantees

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that it will not happen again.”

Russia’s deputy foreign minister, Andrei Rudenko, said Tuesday that Moscow was not setting any conditions for the resumption of talks. He accused Kyiv of lacking “good will.”

“This is their choice. We have always declared our readiness for such negotiations,” Rudenko said.

Putin and other Russian officials have repeatedly claimed that the United States is preventing Ukraine from engaging in peace talks, which several countries have offered to mediate.

In an interview released Tuesday, Ukrainian presidential advisor Mykhailo Podolyak said Western countries wouldn’t push Kyiv to negotiate on Moscow’s terms.

“Ukraine is receiving rather effective weapons from its partners, first and foremost the U.S.,” Podolyak said. “We’re pushing the Russian army out of our territory. And given that, it’s nonsense to force us to negotiate, and de facto to concede to Russia’s ultimatum! No one will do that.”

In other developments:

— In the eastern Donetsk region of Ukraine, which the Russians are struggling to take full control of, Moscow’s shelling killed three civilians and wounded seven others over the past 24 hours, according to Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko.

Kyrylenko said the fatalities occurred in the city of Bakhmut, a key target of Russia’s grinding offensive in Donetsk, and the town of Krasnohorivka. Ukraine’s deputy defense minister last week described the Bakhmut area as “the epicenter” of fighting in eastern Ukraine.

— Elsewhere, two civilians were seriously wounded by unexploded mines in Ukraine’s northeastern Kharkiv region, where Kyiv’s forces retook broad swaths of territory in September, Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said.

— In the partially occupied Kherson region in the south, where Ukraine’s troops are conducting a successful counteroffensive, Russian-installed authorities said they have completed the evacuation of residents ahead of anticipated Ukrainian advances. The Kremlin-appointed administration has sought to relocate tens of thousands.

— Satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press show a rapid expansion of a cemetery in southern Ukraine in the months after Russian forces seized the port city of Mariupol. It’s unclear how many people were buried there.

— The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations reassured Ukrainian farmers that extending a wartime deal that allowed Ukrainian grain and other commodities to be shipped on the Black Sea was a priority for the U.N.

The agreement brokered by the U.N. and Turkey has allowed more than 10 million tons of grain to leave Ukrainian ports and travel along a designated corridor. It is set to expire on Nov. 19. A Russian diplomat on Tuesday cited Moscow’s dissatisfaction with its implementation and said the Kremlin had not decided whether to extend it.

During a visit to Kyiv, U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield was asked whether she was telling the Ukrainians about American ideas to end the war. She replied: “Russia started this and Russia can end this, and they can end it by pulling their troops out and stopping committing the atrocities that they are committing against the Ukrainian people.”

She announced \$25 million in additional U.S. assistance to help Ukrainians get through the winter.

Karmanau reported from Tallinn, Estonia. Associated Press writer Farnoush Amiri contributed from Washington.

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Review: In ‘Wakanda Forever,’ an empire mourns and rebuilds

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

Made in the wake of tragedy, “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” reverberates with the agony of loss,

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piercing the usually less consequential superhero realm. Like someone going through the stages of grief, Ryan Coogler's movie is at turns mournful and rootless, full of rage and blessed with clarity. In the fantastical Marvel Cinematic Universe where mortality is almost always a plaything, wrestling with the genuine article, in the death of T'Challa star Chadwick Boseman, makes for an unusually uncertain, soul-searching kind of blockbuster-scale entertainment.

It's a fine line, of course, between paying tribute and trading on it. I did cringe a little when the Marvel logo unspooled with images of Boseman within the letters: Eulogy as branding. That "Black Panther," a cultural phenomenon and a box-office smash, would get a sequel, at all, was momentarily in doubt after Boseman's unexpected death from colon cancer in 2020. Radically reworked by Coogler and co-writer Joe Robert Cole, "Wakanda Forever" pushed ahead in hopes of honoring both Boseman and the rich Afrocentric world of the landmark original. In its admirably muddled way, it succeeds in both.

Part of the profound appeal of Coogler's first "Black Panther" resided in its deft channeling of the real world into mythology. It fed centuries of colonialism and exploitation into a big-screen spectacle of identity and resistance. In an invented African nation, Coogler conjured both a fanciful could-have-been history and emotional right-now reality.

"Wakanda Forever," which opens in theaters Thursday, expands on that, weaving in a Latin American perspective with a similar degree of cultural specificity in the introduction of the Aztec-inspired antagonist Namor (Tenoch Huerta), king of the ancient underwater world of Talokan. At the same time, Boseman's death is poignantly filtered into the story from the start, beginning with off-screen death throes.

"Time is running out," we hear whispered while the screen is still black. Shuri (Letitia Wright), T'Challa's tech-wiz sister, is frantically trying to craft something in her AI lab to save her brother. But in a moment, their mother, Queen Ramonda (Angela Bassett), informs her: "Your brother is with the ancestors." He's laid to rest in a glorious, celebratory procession, carried through a multi-tiered channel of white-clad, singing-and-dancing Wakandans. It's as stunning as anything Coogler has shot.

After this prologue, "Wakanda Forever" shifts to a year later. "Black Panther" took some of the spy-thriller shape of a Bond movie, and the sequel carries that on in a new geopolitical context. At the United Nations, the United States and France are pressuring for access to vibranium, the rare metal that Wakanda has built its empire on. Soon after, a U.S. military expedition discovers vibranium at the bottom of the ocean. But just as they're celebrating, a mysterious tribe of blue underwater people, led by Namor, a pointy-eared monarch in green short-shorts with wings on his ankles, ruthlessly wipe out the entire expedition.

You can feel "Wakanda Forever" searching for a way forward in these early scenes. After such an anguished beginning, how much care can we summon for the whereabouts of magical ores? And more blue people? "Avatar," you might think, has already laid claim to them. What steadies the film is Bassett. Her awesome presence leads "Wakanda Forever" through grief with a staunch defense of Wakanda that rebalances the newly king-less kingdom. She carries on.

What follows is a globe-trotting plot that draws the film away from perhaps its greatest asset in Wakanda but uncovers new places of latent power among historically exploited people. Shuri and Okoye (Danai Gurira), the Dora Milaje general, travel to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to seek the student (Dominique Thorne) who created a vibranium detector. In the Washington D.C. area, Wakanda's friendly CIA officer (Martin Freeman) experiences new scrutiny from his boss, played by an unannounced comic actress familiar to Beltway politics.

But, mostly, a series of exchanges draw Wakanda and Talokan closer. Are they friends and foes? They are, at least, a captivating tweak to the mythology of Atlantis. Talokan, dark and watery, is no Wakanda, though, and there's less hint this time of a larger society. Still, Huerta brings a magnetism to Namor. In many ways, he's a corollary to Michael B. Jordan's Killmonger, a non-villain whose fury is in many ways justified. His anger appeals to the still-grieving Shuri who finds herself ready, after T'Challa's death, to "burn the world."

As in the first "Black Panther," the question again hangs in the balance of whether, in a pain-ridden and prejudiced world, rage is the answer. This time, it applies to another powerful civilization, too. "Wakanda

Forever," where the role of Black Panther is passed down, is in more ways than one about the transfer of power.

Wakanda and Talokan are brought together a little haphazardly in conflict, as Namor pressures the African nation to join his brewing surface war. "Wakanda Forever" proceeds as a murky, middle-act film that may ultimately serve as a bridge to future "Black Panther" chapters. But along the way, there are countless marvels that Coogler conjures with returning magic-workers like production designer Hannah Beachler and costume designer Ruth E. Carter. How the Talokan are flung into the air by whales. The fierce friendliness of Gurira's performance. Lupita Nyong'o is unfortunately less central here, but every time her Nakia (who has been laying low in Haiti) is present, she graces the film.

"Wakanda Forever" is overlong, a little unwieldy and somewhat mystifyingly steers toward a climax on a barge in the middle of the Atlantic. But Coogler's fluid command of mixing intimacy with spectacle remains gripping. He extends the rich detail and non-binary complexity that distinguished "Black Panther" in sometimes awkward but often thrilling ways. "Wakanda Forever," grappling in the aftermath of loss, ultimately seeks something rare in the battle-ready superhero landscape: Peace.

"Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," a Walt Disney Co. release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for sequences of strong violence, action and some language. Running time: 161 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Discovery of bronzes rewrites Italy's Etruscan-Roman history

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italian authorities on Tuesday announced the extraordinary discovery of 2,000-year-old bronze statues in an ancient Tuscan thermal spring and said the find will "rewrite history" about the transition from the Etruscan civilization to the Roman Empire.

The discovery, in the sacred baths of the San Casciano dei Bagni archaeological dig near Siena, is one of the most significant ever in the Mediterranean and certainly the most important since the 1972 underwater discovery of the famed Riace bronze warriors, said Massimo Osanna, the Culture Ministry's director of museums.

Thanks to the mud that protected them, the two-dozen figurines and other bronze objects were found in a perfect state of conservation, bearing delicate facial features, inscriptions and rippled tunics. Alongside the figures were 5,000 coins in gold, silver and bronze, the ministry said.

As evidence of the importance of the find, the ministry announced the construction of a new museum in the area to house the antiquities.

Jacopo Tabolli, who coordinated the dig for the University for Foreigners in Siena, said the discovery was significant because it sheds new light on the end of the Etruscan civilization and the expansion of the Roman Empire in today's central Italy between the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.

The period was marked by wars and conflicts across what is today's Tuscany, Umbria and Lazio regions, and yet, the bronze statues show evidence that Etruscan and Roman families prayed together to deities in the sacred sanctuary of the thermal springs. The statues, including depictions of Apollo and Igea, the ancient Greek god and goddess of health, bear both Etruscan and Latin inscriptions.

"While there were social and civil wars being fought outside the sanctuary ... inside the sanctuary the great elite Etruscan and Roman families prayed together in a context of peace surrounded by conflict," Tabolli said. "This possibility to rewrite the relationship and dialectic between the Etruscan and Romans is an exceptional opportunity."

Some of the two dozen bronzes are entire human-like figures of deities, while others are of individual body parts and organs which would have been offered up as votive offerings to the gods for intervention for medical cures via the thermal waters, the ministry said in a statement.

"This is almost an X-ray of the human insides from the lungs to the intestines," said Osanna, gesturing

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to a lung at the restoration laboratory where the bronzes are being treated. "There are ears and other anatomical parts like hands. So, all these things that curative waters and the intervention of the divinities would have been able to save."

The find represents the largest deposit of bronzes from this era in Italy, notable also because most surviving antiquities from the period are primarily in terracotta, the ministry said.

"It's a discovery that will rewrite history," Tabolli said in a statement.

The discovery comes 50 years after the Riace bronze warriors were found by a recreational diver in the waters off southern Calabria and went on to become one of Italy's most spectacular archaeological finds. The 5th century bronzes, currently on display at the national archaeological museum in Reggio Calabria, feature two naked life-sized and life-like Greek warriors, with rippled muscles and intricate, curly beards.

EXPLAINER: What's behind Italy's migrant sea rescue standoff

By COLLEEN BARRY and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Italy's new far-right-led government has blocked humanitarian rescue ships from accessing its ports, resulting in a standoff with charities that patrol the deadly central Mediterranean, rescuing people in trouble at sea.

Nongovernmental organizations, as well as human rights and international law experts, say vessels are legally required to rescue people in distress and coastal nations are required to provide a place of safety for them to disembark. Italy claims the flag countries of the ships are responsible for taking on the migrants and that charity vessels just encourage people-smuggling.

Here are some of the issues behind the standoff:

WHAT IS GOING ON NOW IN THE MEDITERRANEAN?

Two charity rescue boats that entered Italian waters this weekend were directed to the Sicilian port of Catania, where Italian authorities allowed the disembarkation only of migrants it deemed vulnerable — families with children, unaccompanied minors and people needing medical care.

Those boats are now refusing to leave until the rest of the migrants are allowed to get off as well, but Italy is not budging. A third charity ship, carrying 89 people rescued at sea, unloaded all of the people it rescued in Calabria on Tuesday. The reason for the different treatment was not immediately apparent. A fourth boat remains in international waters for the 17th day with 234 people on board, its requests for a safe port unanswered.

WHAT IS ITALY'S FAR-RIGHT-LED GOVERNMENT SAYING ABOUT RESCUES?

Italy says it is not responsible for taking on migrants rescued by charity rescue ships. It says that responsibility falls to the countries whose flag the ships fly. Italian Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi described the ships as "islands" and anyone on them as falling under the jurisdiction of the flag countries.

Humanitarian groups, maritime legal experts and human rights activists all reject that interpretation of a flag state's jurisdiction.

Italy's new far-right-led government paved the way to closing its ports to private rescue ships by telling port authorities that two of the ships — the Ocean Viking and the Humanity 1 — did not follow European norms while carrying out rescues. Piantedosi claimed they did not await instruction by search and rescue authorities.

The groups have denied the claim, saying they followed correct protocols to inform the authorities — in Italy, Malta or Libya, depending on the search-and-rescue area — once a boat in difficulty has been identified. Often, they say, national authorities never answer their calls for help.

HOW HAVE PAST ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS HANDLED RESCUES AT SEA?

The new government's confrontational posture is reminiscent of the standoffs orchestrated by Matteo Salvini when he was briefly interior minister from 2018-19.

Salvini's refusal to open ports resulted in ships having to travel to France or Spain to disembark migrants, adding up to three days to the migrants' journeys. A German captain, Carola Rackete, famously defied Salvini and entered an Italian port despite orders not to, citing an emergency situation on board.

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Salvini, who is infrastructure minister in charge of ports in the new government, is facing trial on charges of kidnapping for refusing to let the Spanish migrant rescue ship Open Arms dock in an Italian port in 2019. Another case against him has been dismissed.

Other Italian governments have delayed ships' arrivals to get agreements with other European Union countries to take migrants before they land, or conducted inspections that the charity groups argue seek to prevent them from conducting rescues.

WHAT DOES INTERNATIONAL LAW SAY?

Article 98 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea requires every shipmaster "to render assistance to any person found at sea in danger of being lost." Charity ships say rescuing migrants from flimsy, unseaworthy smuggling boats, or in many cases straight from the water, is their legal obligation.

International Maritime Law also requires coastal states to run adequate search and rescue services, including by cooperating with other nations in the same region during rescues.

Rescues are only considered complete after survivors are disembarked to the nearest place of safety, to be assigned by the maritime authority in charge of search-and-rescue coordination. But NGOs say their requests for a place of safety in the Mediterranean Sea are increasingly delayed, ignored or denied by both Italy and Malta.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH LIBYA?

Libya, with European support, is responsible for a massive search-and-rescue area in the Central Mediterranean since 2018. But human rights activists and maritime law experts say the war-torn country - currently lacking a central government- cannot adequately and safely perform search and rescue missions. People smugglers have also been linked to members of the Libyan coast guard in charge of interceptions at sea.

U.N. agencies say that Libya cannot be considered a "place of safety" for the disembarkation of people rescued at sea, due to the inhumane conditions at the detention centers they are returned to. Many migrants and refugees have spoken of enduring horrific abuses in Libya, including beatings, rape and killings. Despite millions spent by the EU to improve conditions, little has changed.

HOW MANY MIGRANTS HAVE NGO VESSELS RESCUED?

The International Organization for Migration says charity ship rescues accounted for only 15% of the 88,000 migrants who have reached Italy by sea so far this year. Most arrived on their own, or were rescued by the Italian Coast Guard or other national rescue ships.

But many don't survive the dangerous crossing, with some 1,300 migrants dying or missing in the Central Mediterranean this year, according to the IOM's missing migrants project.

Although the number of arrivals is far below the peak of 2016 when 180,000 people arrived on Italian shores, the death rate remains high.

Non-governmental groups say they are needed in the Mediterranean, the deadliest known migration route in the world, to fill the rescue gap left by European countries who have increasingly relied on North African nations to stop migrants from crossing.

Brito contributed from Barcelona, Spain.

Follow all AP stories about global migration at <https://apnews.com/hub/migration>.

Today in History: November 9, East Germany opens its borders

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Nov. 9, the 313th day of 2022. There are 52 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 9, 1989, communist East Germany threw open its borders, allowing citizens to travel freely to the West; joyous Germans danced atop the Berlin Wall.

On this date:

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In 1620, the passengers and crew of the Mayflower sighted Cape Cod.

In 1872, fire destroyed nearly 800 buildings in Boston.

In 1918, it was announced that Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II would abdicate; he then fled to the Netherlands.

In 1935, United Mine Workers president John L. Lewis and other labor leaders formed the Committee for Industrial Organization (later renamed the Congress of Industrial Organizations).

In 1938, Nazis looted and burned synagogues as well as Jewish-owned stores and houses in Germany and Austria in a pogrom or deliberate persecution that became known as "Kristallnacht."

In 1965, the great Northeast blackout began as a series of power failures lasting up to 13 1/2 hours, leaving 30 million people in seven states and part of Canada without electricity.

In 1970, former French President Charles de Gaulle died at age 79.

In 1976, the U.N. General Assembly approved resolutions condemning apartheid in South Africa, including one characterizing the white-ruled government as "illegitimate."

In 2007, President Gen. Pervez Musharraf (pur-VEHZ' moo-SHAH'-ruhv) of Pakistan placed opposition leader Benazir Bhutto (BEN'-uh-zeer BOO'-toh) under house arrest for a day, and rounded up thousands of her supporters to block a mass rally against his emergency rule.

In 2011, after 46 seasons as Penn State's head football coach and a record 409 victories, Joe Paterno was fired along with the university president, Graham Spanier, over their handling of child sex abuse allegations against former assistant coach Jerry Sandusky.

In 2016, Democrat Hillary Clinton conceded the presidential election to Republican Donald Trump, telling supporters in New York that her defeat was "painful, and it will be for a long time." But Clinton told her faithful to accept Trump and the election results, urging them to give him "an open mind and a chance to lead."

In 2020, President Donald Trump fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper, injecting more uncertainty to a rocky transition period as Joe Biden prepared to assume the presidency; Trump said Christopher Miller, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, would serve as acting secretary.

Ten years ago: Retired four-star Army Gen. David Petraeus abruptly resigned as CIA director after an affair with his biographer, Paula Broadwell, was revealed by an FBI investigation. Thousands of union bakers went on strike against Hostess Brands, Inc., to protest cuts to wages and benefits under a new contract offer. (Hostess responded by shutting down its operations and selling its assets to new owners who revived the Hostess brand.)

Five years ago: During a visit to Beijing, President Donald Trump criticized what he called a "very one-sided and unfair" trade relationship between the U.S. and China, but said he didn't blame China for having taken advantage of the U.S. Actor John Hillerman, best known for his supporting role on the TV series "Magnum, P.I.," died at the age of 84 at his home in Houston.

One year ago: A federal judge rejected former President Donald Trump's request to block the release of documents to the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol riot. The Oklahoma Supreme Court overturned a \$465 million opioid ruling against drugmaker Johnson & Johnson. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service struck down a Trump-era rule that would have opened millions of acres of forest in Oregon, Washington and California to potential logging. Max Cleland, who lost three limbs to a hand grenade in Vietnam and later became a groundbreaking Veterans Administration chief and U.S. senator from, died at his Atlanta home at 79. Brian Williams, who anchored NBC's "Nightly News" before losing that job in 2015 for making false claims about his wartime experiences, announced that he was leaving the network after 28 years.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer Whitey Herzog is 91. Movie director Bille August is 74. Actor Robert David Hall is 74. Actor Lou Ferrigno is 71. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, is 70. Gospel singer Donnie McClurkin is 63. Rock musician Dee Plakas (L7) is 62. Actor Ion Overman is 53. Rapper Pepa (Salt-N-Pepa) is 58. Rapper Scarface (Geto Boys) is 52. Blues singer Susan Tedeschi (teh-DEHS'-kee) is 52. Actor Jason Antoon is 51. Actor Eric Dane is 50. Singer Nick Lachey (98 Degrees) is 49. Country musician Barry Knox (Parmalee) is 45. R&B singer Sisqo (Dru Hill) is 44. Country singer Corey Smith is 43. Country singer Chris Lane is 38. Actor Emily Tyra is 35. Actor Nikki Blonsky is 34. Actor-model Analeigh (AH'-nuh-lee) Tipton is 34.