

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Community Calendar

Wednesday, Nov. 30

- Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, au gratin potatoes, carrots, apple sauce, whole wheat bread.
- School Breakfast: Egg omelets.
- School Lunch: Garlic cheese, bread, cooked carrots.
- Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.
- UMC: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.
- St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Advent Service, 7 p.m.

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



Thursday, Dec. 1

- Senior Menu: Chicken and rice casserole, green beans, spinach salad, chocolate pudding with bananas, whole wheat bread.
- School Breakfast: Muffins
- School Lunch: Spaghetti
- Emmanuel Lutheran Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 2

- Senior Menu: Swiss steak with gravy, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit, whole wheat bread.
- School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage
- School Lunch: Cheese breadstick, marinara sauce.
- North Area Honor Band at NSU
- JH GBB at Britton, 7th at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade game.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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*Olive Grove's
6th Annual*

*Christmas
Tour of Homes
& Holiday
Party*

**Charlie & Jenn Dirks
Tigh & Adrienne Flihs
Tom & Barb Paepke
Wage Memorial Library & City Office**

**SATURDAY,
DEC. 3, 2022**

**TOUR OF
HOMES
4-7 P.M.**

**HOLIDAY
PARTY
4-CLOSE**

**Silent Basket Items
Bidding closes at 8:30 p.m.
Live Auction begins at 8:30 p.m.**

**Coffee, Apple Cider and Goodies at the Club House
A variety of snacks served.**

**\$15 tickets available at
Lori's Pharmacy, Groton
Groton Ford
Hair & Company, Aberdeen
Olive Grove Golf Clubhouse**

**Come on out for a fun evening!
Support your local golf course!**

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December Community Calendar

Thursday, Dec. 1

Senior Menu: Chicken and rice casserole, green beans, spinach salad, chocolate pudding with bananas, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins

School Lunch: Spaghetti

Emmanuel Lutheran Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 2

Senior Menu: Swiss steak with gravy, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage

School Lunch: Cheese breadstick, marinara sauce.

North Area Honor Band at NSU

JH GBB at Britton, 7th at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade game.

Saturday, Dec. 3

North Area Honor Band at NSU

Wrestling Tournament at Clark, 10 a.m.

Junior High GBB Jamboree in Groton, 10 a.m. (Schools Participating: Clark/Willow Lake, Enemy Swim Day School (K-8), Mobridge-Pollock Schools, Waubay-Summit, Groton Area)

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

Olive Grove Tour of Homes, 4 p.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 4

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

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

Emmanuel Lutheran worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

United Methodist Worship with Communion (Conde, 8:30 a.m.; Groton, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.)

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45

a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

Open Gym: Grade JK-8, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Grades 6-12, 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 5

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

School Breakfast: Mini pancakes.

School Lunch: Chicken legs, mashed potatoes.

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

GBB at Sisseton, 6 p.m.

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

Groton UMC Advent Bible Study, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 6

Senior Menu: Baked codfish, parsley buttered potatoes, seasoned cabbage, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sandwich

School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn.

St. John's Ladies Aid Christmas Party, noon.

JHGBB hosts Northwestern. 7th grade at 6:15 p.m. followed by 8th grade

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Groton UMC Bible Study Christmas Party, 10 a.m.; Conde Advent Bible Study, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 7

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, garlic toast, pears, sherbert.

School Breakfast: Eggs and breakfast potatoes.

School Lunch: Sloppy joes, potato wedges.

St. John's Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Advent Service, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

Groton Chamber board meets at noon at City Hall Community Coffee Hour at Groton UMC, 9:30 a.m.

Confirmation UMYF Angel Tree Shopping, 6 p.m.

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Frosted Sugar Cookie and Candy Cane Chill Blizzards!



SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Groton: (605) 397-8627

DID YOU KNOW . . .

You can use the GDI Fitness Center by paying by the month and you can cancel any time without penalty. Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460 for details!

Thursday, Dec. 8

Senior Menu: Beef stew, biscuit, Waldorf salad, sherbert.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Chicken sandwich, sweet potatoes.

MS/HS Christmas Concert, 7 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 9

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, chocolate cake, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Biscuits and gravy

School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, green beans.

GBB at Hamlin (8th grade at 4 p.m. followed by 7th grade in multipurpose gym; C game at 4 p.m. followed by JV and varsity)

Saturday, Dec. 10

Wrestling Invitational at LaMoure, 10 a.m.

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

Santa Day in Groton at Professional Management Services, 9 a.m.

City Holiday Lighting Contest, 7 p.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 11

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

St. John's Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.; Christian Lit. Circle, 9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

Open Gym: Grade JK-8, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Grades 6-12, 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 12

Senior Menu: Hearty vegetable beef soup, chicken salad sandwich, Mandarin oranges, peanut butter cookie.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, try taters.

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

JHGBB at Warner. 7th grade at 5:30 p.m. followed by 8th grade

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the community center, 1 p.m.

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

Groton UMC Advent Bible Study, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 13

Senior Menu: Scalloped potato with ham, green peas, sunset salad, oatmeal raisin cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Doughnuts.

School Lunch: Cheese burger bake, peas.

Emmanuel Lutheran council, 7 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Conde UMC Advent Bible Study, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 14

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle casserole, peas and carrots, Swedish apple pie square, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Hash brown, pizza.

School Lunch: Turkey gravy over mashed potatoes, cranberries, fresh baked bun.

St. John's Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Advent Service, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran Confirmation, 6 p.m.

Community Coffee Hour at Groton UMC, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Gingerbread Bash, 5 p.m.; Christmas Caroling Event, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 15

Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe on wheat bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit sauce.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal with toppings.

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TREE TRIMMING & REMOVAL
STUMP GRINDING
STORM DAMAGE CLEANUP

605/228-3861

www.aberdeentreeservice.com



School Lunch: Hamburgers, fires.
NEC Wrestling Tournament at Webster, 4 p.m.
JHGBB at Tiospa Zina (7th grade at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade)
Boys Basketball hosts Sisseton, 6 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 16

Senior Menu: Hot turkey combo, mashed potatoes with gravy, 7 layer salad, fruit.
School Breakfast: Cereal
School Lunch: Pizza, cooked carrots.

Saturday, Dec. 17

Emmanuel Lutheran worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.
Wrestling Tournament at Sioux Valley, 10 a.m.
Basketball at Jamestown College (Boys play Enderlin at 1:15 pm.; Girls play Kenmare at 2:40 p.m.)
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 18

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.; Christmas Program at 5 p.m. with banquet to follow.
St. John's worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Zion's worship with communion, 11 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran worship with Sunday school program, 9 a.m.; Worship at Avantara, 3 p.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.
United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:30 am.; Groton worship with Sunday school Christmas program, 10:30 a.m.; Noon meal at Groton.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
Open Gym: Grade JK-8, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Grades 6-12, 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 19

Senior Menu: Swedish meat balls, mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.
School Lunch: Taco salads.
Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
JHGBB hosts Sisseton (7th at 6 p.m. followed by 8th)
Senior Citizens meet at the community center with Christmas potluck at noon
The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Groton UMC Advent Bible Study, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 20

Senior Menu: Meat loaf, baked potato with sour cream, creamed peas, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: French toast.
School Lunch: Meatballs, mashed potatoes.
St. John's Quilting, 9 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran newsletter deadline
GBB hosts Aberdeen Roncalli (7th grade at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade in GHS Gym; JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity in Arena)
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
Conde UMC Ad Council; Conde Advent Bible Study, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 21- FIRST DAY OF WINTER

Senior Menu: chicken tetrazzini, mixed vegetables, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Egg omelets.
School Lunch: Chicken strips, sweet potato fries.
St. John's Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Advent Service and Christmas program, 7 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.; Longest Night Service, 7:15 p.m.
Community Coffee Hour at Groton UMC, 9:30 a.m.

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Thursday, Dec. 22

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, lettuce salad with dressing, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, chips.

End of Second Quarter

Elementary Christmas Concert, 1 p.m.

Boys Basketball at Roncalli, 6 p.m.

Wrestling Tri-angular at Redfield with Webster and Groton, 6 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 23

Senior Menu: Baked chicken, rice pilaf, cauliflower and pea salad, banana, whole wheat bread.

No School, Christmas Vacation begins

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

Saturday, Dec. 24

St. John's Christmas Eve service, 5 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran Christmas Eve service with communion, 7 p.m.

Groton United Methodist service, 5 p.m.

Conde United Methodist service, 7 p.m.

Groton CM&A Candlelight service, 5 p.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 25 - CHRISTMAS DAY

Groton CM&A: Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.

Zion worship, 9 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran worship with communion, 9 a.m.

No worship at United Methodist Churches

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

Monday, Dec. 26

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

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

Tuesday, Dec. 27

Senior Menu: Potato soup, ham salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, pineapple tidbits.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 28

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, beets, peaches, dinner roll.

Community Coffee Hour at Groton UMC, 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, Dec. 29

Senior Menu: New England ham dinner, fruit cocktail, ice cream, dinner roll.

Friday, Dec. 30

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

Girls Basketball hosts Waverley-South Shore (JV at 5 p.m. followed by varsity)

Saturday, Dec. 31

Wrestling Invitational at Webster, 9:30 a.m.

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

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

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Gov. Noem Signs Executive Order Banning TikTok

PIERRE, S.D. – Yesterday, Governor Kristi Noem signed Executive Order 2022-10, which bans the Chinese social media platform TikTok for state government agencies, employees, and contractors using state devices. This order is in response to the growing national security threat posed by TikTok due to its data gathering operations on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

“South Dakota will have no part in the intelligence gathering operations of nations who hate us,” said Governor Kristi Noem. “The Chinese Communist Party uses information that it gathers on TikTok to manipulate the American people, and they gather data off the devices that access the platform.”

The order takes effect immediately and would apply to employees and agencies of the State of South Dakota, including persons and entities who contract with the state, commissions, and authorities or agents thereof. The order prohibits downloading or using the TikTok application or visiting the website on state-owned or state-leased electronic devices capable of internet connectivity.

“Because of our serious duty to protect the private data of South Dakota citizens, we must take this action immediately. I hope other states will follow South Dakota’s lead, and Congress should take broader action, as well,” continued Governor Noem.



**‘TIS THE
SEASON TO
SHOP LOCAL**

GROTON
Chamber Of Commerce

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Don't tell me my computer is a vintage!

I've had this big 27" iMac computer since 2014. It's done a good job over the years, but it started to show its age. I decided to "retire" it from the office and got a Macbook air laptop computer. The iMac basically sat in the corner, retired. A few years ago, I kind of wanted to get it going. The hard drive was going out so I decided to have it replaced. There was a problem. They called the computer a vintage and that parts were not being made for it any more. They, meaning the people at the Apple Store at the Mall of America. They did do a search over the United States and they did find one hard drive. I said I'd take it.

I took the iMac and used it as a computer at home. It worked, but it still was not speedy.

Then earlier this summer, my laptop hard drive crashed. Now it was time to bring the iMac out of retirement and bring it down to the office. I have to say I really like the large screen as I can have multiple windows open at once. But I kept seeing this colored wheel spin and spin and spin. And without notice, it would decide to restart. I kept thinking that maybe if I increased the RAM memory, that it would give me some speed. I continued to fight with it until finally, over Thanksgiving vacation, I took some time to talk with an Apple tech person. Once again, they called it a vintage and I should consider moving to a newer model. From what he told me, the operating system I have now may, I repeat, MAY, be the last update available for this unit. Would it be wise to stick money into a vintage or get a new one? That was the question of the day. They did have memory for it - about \$400. Yikes, that was a lot. So I did some further research and found memory for \$100. Ah - much more reasonable. And I would go from 8 gig to 32 gig - the maximum that the iMac could handle.

Tuesday I got my box of memory. I installed it. Wow! What a difference. The computer is even quieter as it is not constantly swaping memory through the hard drive. Right now I'm using about half of my memory. So you can see I'm doing a lot of things on the computer. But that colored wheel is virtually gone. It still shows its ugly head once in a while, but it quickly disappears. I can move around from program to program without having to wait.

It's going so well it's like I have a new machine. So don't call my iMac a vintage. It's been revived twice now. Maybe it has nine lives? Well, probably not, but in the meantime, I have gained more time to save up for a new computer.

Part 2

Well, I certainly enjoyed my time working on the daily and weekly in fast action. So I finished up for the night when I noticed this little red dot in the upper right hand corner of my screen over the icloud icon. I clicked on it and there were updates available. I looked over the updates and then saw something I didn't like. Two bad words! The next update for one of my program is NOT COMPATABLE. Upon further review, the operating system that I currently have is indeed, the final one available for this computer. Here I was on Cloud 9 and then poof, the cloud disappeared.

So I guess I will have to save up for a new computer. What scares me is what programs that I currently use will not be compatible with the new operating system. I have had programs that also hit the end of the line. But I guess, in the meantime, I will enjoy the life that is left in my vintage unit. It has served us well!

Conde National League

Nov. 28 Team Standings: Tigers 25, Cubs 22, Braves 21, Mets 21, Giants 21

Men's High Games: Ryan Bethke 245, 215; Chad Furney 197; Russ Bethke 179.

Men's High Series: Ryan Bethke 653, Russ Bethke 514, Chad Furney 458.

Women's High Games: Joyce Walter 185, Deb Fredrickson 176, Sam Bahr 154

Women's High Series: Joyce Walter 448, Deb Fredrickson 383, Sam Bahr 375.

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Groton Senior Citizens

The November 14 meeting of the Groton Seniors was held with eight members present. Bev Sombke made a birthday cake for Marilyn Thorson; however, Marilyn was unable to attend due to an illness. The meal was planned for Thanksgiving. The winners of the games: Pinochle- Ruby Donovan, Canosta- Pat Larson, Heckle Hearts- Darlene Daily. Door prizes Ruby Donovan, Eunice McCollister, and David Kleinsasor. Marilyn's birthday cake was served for lunch.

The Thanksgiving potluck dinner was held November 21 with 13 members present. President Sarge led the flag pledge and table prayer. The group received a \$10 donation from the Lee Raines book. After dinner, the Christmas tree was decorated and Bingo was played. Eunice McCollister won black out. Cards were played after bingo. Door prizes were Marilyn Thorson, Tony Goldade and Dick Donovan. Leftover pie was served before going home.

-Elda Stange

Wildlife Forever Welcomes South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks as Newest State Host

PIERRE, S.D. – Wildlife Forever is pleased to welcome South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) as the newest state host for the Art of Conservation® Fish Art Contest. South Dakota students in Kindergarten through 12th grade can compete in the free contest for a chance to win state and national honors and prizes.

South Dakota state winners will be chosen by a panel of judges from GFP and their partner organizations. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will be selected in four grade categories: Kindergarten – 3rd grade, 4th – 6th grade, 7th – 9th grade and 10th – 12th grade. State winners will advance to the National Competition to be judged for top honors.

"We are proud to add South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks as a state host. Angling is a way of life in South Dakota, and we are looking forward to exposing more students to the joys of fishing and the importance of conservation through Fish Art," said Addison Motta, Education and Communications Manager at Wildlife Forever.

GFP provides management of parks, fisheries, and wildlife resources to conserve the state's outdoor heritage and connect people and families to the outdoors. GFP's education programs include Fish SD, a program focused on basic fishing skills and an appreciation for the sport of angling designed for grades 4-12.

"Hosting the Fish Art Contest is a great opportunity to include a new cross-curricular program to our repertoire. The program allows us to reach students through art, writing, and science in situations where their outdoor access may be limited," said Laurie Root, Community Program Naturalist at GFP.

The deadline to enter the contest is February 28, 2022. Students and educators should visit www.FishArt.org for entry forms and contest rules. To host the Fish Art or Songbird Art Contest in your state, contact Wildlife Forever for more details.

About the Fish Art Program: The award-winning Wildlife Forever Art of Conservation Fish Art® Contest, is supported by Title Sponsor Bass Pro Shops, International Game Fish Association, the USDA Forest Service, the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, and National Fish Habitat Partnership. Bringing youth, art, and conservation together, the Fish Art program is free to enter. Visit www.FishArt.org.

About Wildlife Forever: Our mission is to conserve America's outdoor heritage through conservation education, preservation of habitat and management of fish and wildlife. Wildlife Forever is a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to investing resources on the ground. Recent audits reveal that 96% of every dollar supports our award-winning conservation programs. Join Today and learn more about the Art of Conservation® Fish Art Contest™ and Songbird Art Contest™, Clean Drain Dry Initiative™ and Prairie City USA® at www.WildlifeForever.org.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Noem's TikTok ban kills tourism account, leaves other state entities mulling options

BY MAKENZIE HUBER AND JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 29, 2022

The South Dakota Department of Tourism deleted its TikTok account Tuesday, abandoning the 61,200 followers and 1.7 million likes the state agency cultivated on the popular social media app.

And South Dakota State University is meeting with its general counsel on how to handle its 9,000-follower TikTok account — all after Gov. Kristi Noem banned the video-sharing app for state government agencies, employees and contractors using state devices in an executive order Tuesday.

The order raises questions for South Dakota's six public universities, many of which have official TikTok accounts, athletic department accounts, other departmental accounts and student media accounts.

South Dakota universities use the platform to recruit potential students, said Mike Lockrem, director of SDSU marketing and communications.

"We do use TikTok quite a bit," Lockrem said. "We'll work with our general counsel in the next couple days to understand what this means before we make any decisions."

Tourism, other offices affected

The state Department of Tourism has partnered with influencers on TikTok to visit the state and recently celebrated TikTok star "Corn Kid" in September, inviting him to the World's Only Corn Palace in Mitchell where Gov. Noem declared him South Dakota's official "Corn-bassador."

"We have removed our TikTok account pursuant to the governor's executive order today," said Katlyn Svendsen, Department of Tourism public relations director, in an emailed statement. "We have an endless supply of other safe tools and productive resources to reach audiences to tell South Dakota's story."

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Tourism, other offices affected

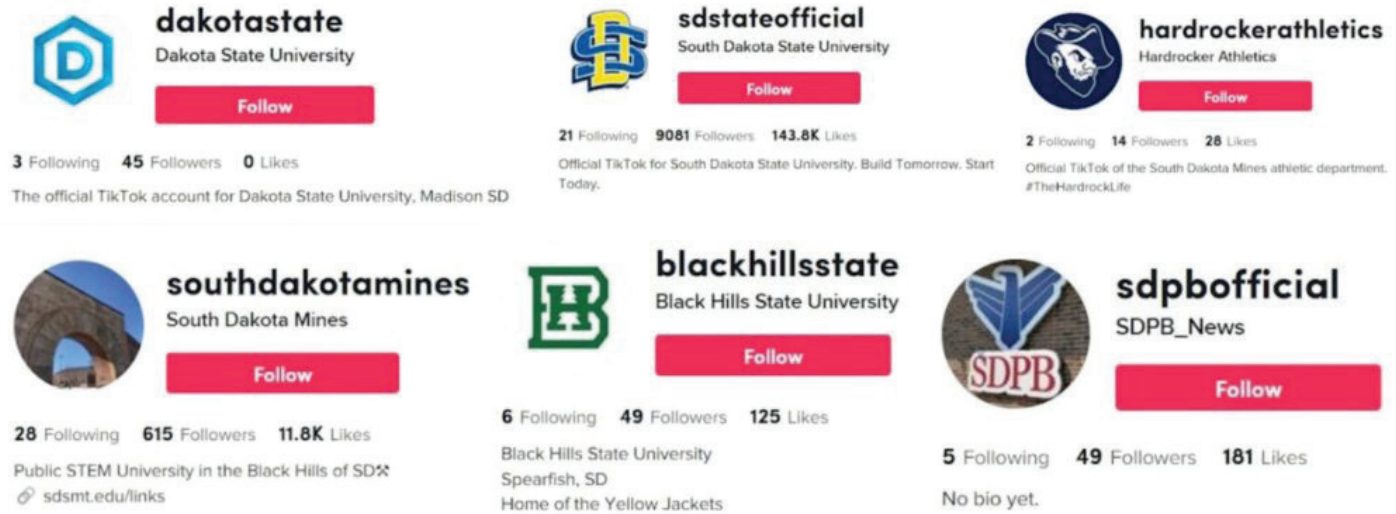
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Some of the TikTok accounts that appear to be affiliated with state entities in South Dakota. (TikTok screenshots)

endless supply of other safe tools and productive resources to reach audiences to tell South Dakota's story. – Katlyn Svendsen, South Dakota Department of Tourism

Executive Order 2022-10 prohibits downloading or using the TikTok app or visiting the TikTok website on state-owned or state-leased electronic devices, such as cell phones, computers or any device capable of connecting to the internet.

Another affected state agency is South Dakota Public Broadcasting, which uses TikTok to reach new audiences with its content.

"We're just going to take direction and figure something else out," said Cara Hetland, SDPB director of radio and journalism content. "If my staff wants to use their personal devices to continue the TikTok account, maybe they can, but they can't use the state network. ... All of state government is on the state network. I'm going to respect that decision."

The ban takes effect immediately.

Most SDSU employees managing the university's TikTok account log in through their personal phones, rather than a state-owned or leased device, Lockrem said. The state reimburses employees a portion of their monthly personal phone bill if they use it for work. Lockrem does not know if the ban extends to personal phones that get such a reimbursement.

"At this point, we're just instructing people to use their common sense," said Shuree Mortenson, Board of Regents public relations representative. She expects to have further guidance this week.

Security concerns

TikTok has been a source of national security concerns for years, with the head of the FBI recently warning that the Chinese government could potentially use the video-sharing app to influence American users or control their devices.

TikTok is owned by Chinese firm ByteDance, which denies that it can use location information to track U.S. users.

"South Dakota will have no part in the intelligence gathering operations of nations who hate us," Noem said in a news release. "The Chinese Communist Party uses information that it gathers on TikTok to manipulate the American people, and they gather data off the devices that access the platform."

TikTok hit 1 billion monthly active users in September 2021. After launching in 2017, the app is one of the fastest-growing in the world and surpassed Google as the most visited website on the internet in 2021.

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“We have removed our TikTok account pursuant to the governor’s executive order today. We have an endless supply of other safe tools and productive resources to reach audiences to tell South Dakota’s story.

– Katlyn Svendsen, South Dakota Department of Tourism

The app is widely popular among younger generations, such as Gen Z and younger Millennials.

Noem is not the first governor to ban the app on state devices, nor is she the first politician to label it a security threat. Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts issued a similar executive order in 2020. Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and Wisconsin Rep. Mike Gallagher proposed a national ban in early November, and Missouri Rep. Josh Hawley has pushed to ban TikTok on government devices.

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, introduced legislation in September that would prohibit TikTok from accessing user data on U.S. citizens from China. Like Hawley’s bill, it would also ban the use of TikTok on federal government devices.

Former President Donald Trump, meanwhile, famously threatened to ban the app as a national security threat in 2020.

State Sen. Reynold Nesiba, D-Sioux Falls, said he’s never used TikTok because of his concerns about security, and he’s generally supportive of moves to protect state information.

The state spends “a considerable amount of money” to protect its IT infrastructure, he said, so a TikTok ban is “a good idea.”

“It would be better if it were a part of a comprehensive IT policy for all state employees,” Nesiba said. “This, to me, feels like we’re picking off one thing, when we should be having a broader conversation with legislators, members of the executive branch and judicial branch to figure out how do we use IT? How do we protect all of our systems?”

Political implications

Northern State University Professor of Political Science Jon Schaff agrees that TikTok stands apart from other social media apps for its connections to the Chinese Communist Party. The enforcement of such a ban, however, is an open question.

Could Schaff show a TikTok video to his students, for example? What might happen to him if he did?

Most of the activism to ban or restrict TikTok has come from Republicans, and Schaff said it’s clear that Noem has an interest in being a conservative voice on the national stage, so “it’s hard to divorce anything Kristi Noem does at this point from national politics.”

“I don’t know what the practical impact might be,” Schaff said. “To the extent that it can’t be enforced, it becomes a kind of window dressing and it becomes Noem positioning herself.”

Noem spokesman Ian Fury did not immediately respond to requests for comment on how the ban will be enforced, whether state agencies or universities can operate TikTok accounts using personal devices, or whether the Governor’s Office tallied the number of state-run TikTok accounts prior to issuing the order.



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.



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.

Judge rules against widow in COVID-19 worker's comp case Virus contraction at Sioux Falls slaughterhouse not a 'workplace injury'

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 29, 2022 8:40 AM

The widow of a slaughterhouse worker who died of COVID-19 is not entitled to a worker's compensation hearing, a Minnehaha County judge ruled Monday.

Second Circuit Judge Jon Sogn sided with Smithfield Foods in the case, which originated as a claim for death benefits through the South Dakota Department of Labor (DOL).

The DOL denied the claim, citing a 2021 law offering blanket immunity from liability to employers, schools and establishment owners for any claims tied to COVID-19 unless the claim involved intentional exposure to the virus.

Lawyers for Karen Franken, whose husband Craig died in April of 2020 after contracting the virus, had argued that Smithfield's actions in the early pandemic turned COVID-19 into a workplace-related injury.

An administrative law judge with the DOL dismissed Franken's claim without a hearing.

In their appeal to circuit court, Franken's lawyers asked Judge Sogn to force a contested case hearing with the DOL.

"We never had the opportunity to present evidence as to the time and place of the injury," Mark Welter told Judge Sogn in a hearing last week. "These would be questions of fact."

Franken had also argued that the law was unconstitutional for denying due process rights, and that lawmakers didn't intend to bar worker's compensation claims.

Lawyers for Smithfield, meanwhile, argued that the South Dakota liability waiver covers both lawsuits and worker's compensation claims, which are dealt with in a separate chapter of South Dakota law and classified as "administrative special proceedings."

They also argued that the COVID-19 infection ought not be classified as a workplace injury for insurance purposes, that Franken failed to give proper notice of the constitutional challenge to the South Dakota Attorney General's Office, and that the retroactivity of the 2021 law was clear.

Sogn ruled in Smithfield's favor on nearly all counts. The South Dakota Supreme Court has granted worker's compensation claims for workplace illness, Sogn wrote, but only when there was a clear tie between the illness and the workplace. South Dakota law defines occupational illness as a disease "peculiar to the occupation in which the employee was engaged," he wrote, which wouldn't apply to a virus conceivably present in any shared workplace.

The judge also pointed out that while the liability law references lawsuits and not administrative hearings, its language does include the phrase "COVID-19 is not an occupational disease under state law."

Sogn did offer Franken one victory. The administrative law judge who dismissed her claim did so "with prejudice," meaning she'd be unable to reframe her arguments and file the claim a second time. Franken should be allowed to try again, Judge Sogn ruled.



Smithfield Foods in Sioux Falls, as seen on Nov. 21, 2022. (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)



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.

U.S. House to intervene in rail workers strike, heeding Biden call

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - NOVEMBER 29, 2022 1:42 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Monday said the House will take up legislation to ratify an agreement between rail workers and operators in order to avert a nationwide rail strike.

"This week, the House will take up a bill adopting the Tentative Agreement — with no poison pills or changes to the negotiated terms — and send it to the Senate," the California Democrat said in a statement. "It is my hope that this necessary, strike-averting legislation will earn a strongly bipartisan vote, giving America's families confidence in our commitment to protecting their financial futures."

The announcement follows President Joe Biden's call on Monday directing Congress to adopt the agreement reached in September, which was based on recommendations from an emergency board that Biden established in July.

That agreement would give workers a 24% raise over five years, from 2020 to 2024; one additional personal day; and some protection from the rail carriers' punitive attendance policies so that workers can take time off for medical needs without fear of discipline.

But paid sick leave was not on the table and the board recommended to the unions that they withdraw their proposal to have 15 paid sick days. The way rail unions work is that all 12 unions — representing 115,000 freight rail workers — need to agree on a contract, and if one doesn't agree, workers represented by the others don't cross the picket line.

Eight of the 12 voted to adopt and ratify the union's tentative agreement, so the unions went into a cooling-off period that was set to end Dec. 9, meaning the unions then could strike.

The unions that did not ratify the September deal are the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division-International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen and International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, which represent about more than half of rail workers.

"The most common sticking point for BMWED, BRS and IBB Members has been the lack of quality-of-life improvements, namely the lack of paid sick leave," according to BMWED's website. "BMWED, BRS and IBB have made paid sick leave proposals to the railroads, but the railroads have made it clear that they will neither engage in any meaningful discussions nor accept any sort of proposal regarding such."

Biden said that he is concerned about no paid sick leave for rail workers and that he has pressed for legislation to enact it.

"Every other developed country in the world has such protections for its workers," Biden said in a statement. "But at this critical moment for our economy, in the holiday season, we cannot let our strongly held conviction for better outcomes for workers deny workers the benefits of the bargain they reached, and hurl this nation into a devastating rail freight shutdown."

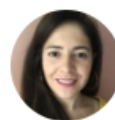
These negotiations over employee pay, ability to take time off for medical appointments and paid sick leave have been going on since 2019, between labor unions representing railway employees and the National Carriers' Conference Committee, which represents the railway carriers.

Congress has the ability to intervene, due to the Railway Labor Act, which governs disputes between railway carriers and labor unions.

"We are reluctant to bypass the standard ratification process for the Tentative Agreement — but we must act to prevent a catastrophic nationwide rail strike, which would grind our economy to a halt," Pelosi said.



The Capitol in Washington, D.C. (Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)



ARIANA FIGUEROA  

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

COMMENTARY

Social studies debate shows concerning shift from standards to curriculum

SAMANTHA WALDER

NOVEMBER 29, 2022 11:07 AM Educators and parents alike have provided concerning feedback for the Proposed K-12 Social Studies Content Standards. South Dakota is at the midpoint of a statutorily required public comment process with four input sessions being held throughout the state. I testified to the South Dakota Board of Educational Standards in September, and due to time constraints, I could not testify at the November meeting.

As I shared with my Social Studies Standards Revision Commission colleagues this summer, I am concerned about a fundamental shift in recommending curriculum, not standards, for approval to the Board of Educational Standards.

The public comment process is an integral part of the standards adoption feedback cycle. According to state law, our secretary of the Department of Education shall prepare, and submit for approval by the Board of Education, a standards revision cycle and content standards. All the public schools in the state shall provide instruction in substantial conformity to the accreditation benchmarks adopted. Schools need to be accredited for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, funding and ensuring students have valid diplomas upon graduation.

Furthermore, as outlined in state law directing the Department of Education to promulgate rules and requirements for accreditation, the legislative intent is clear on local control. "Nothing [in this section] authorizes the board to require the use of specifically designated curriculum or methods of instruction." This language is directly from our Legislature and puts trust in the local educators. Through policy, teachers are held accountable by principals who are held accountable by superintendents and school boards to make the best decisions for their community.

Although there are many other concerns with the proposal, I turn your attention to the unprecedented overreach into our classrooms.

Assignments such as, "Students can write an informative essay of 500- 700 words on a historical figure" may be perfectly appropriate assignments chosen by teachers in a classroom after the school board adopts curriculum. Standards are not curriculum. Standards are not textbooks. Standards are not assignments. Standards are broadly written to guide school districts in their work and, in South Dakota, allow local districts to determine their own curriculum, instructional units of study, and method of instruction.

This example assignment is one of many lines in the proposal that would require a specific assignment or method of instruction which is in direct opposition to legislative intent in codified law. At the Nov. 21 meeting, the out-of-state proponents agreed with my concern and called the document proposed curriculum multiple times. Of particular note, both David Steiner, the director of education policy at Johns Hopkins, and David Goodwin, the director of the Association of Classical Christian Schools, called the document a curriculum.

As there are different legislative directives in different states, Mr. Steiner and Mr. Goodwin may not be aware that the State Board of Education cannot adopt a curriculum for South Dakota.

The discussion at the South Dakota Board of Education Standards should NOT be about a classical education method of instruction or which foundational documents of democracy should be in a curriculum. Local teachers and administrators can already make these choices and are doing so within our current standards and accreditation accountability system.

Schools choose any model method of instruction and curriculum to meet the standards and are held accountable by accreditation from the Department of Education. For example, we have Lakota immersion, Spanish immersion, Mass Customized Learning or STEM-based pathways, online, self-contained or content-specialized elementary classrooms, and the list of the unique methods of instruction used in South Dakota is as diverse as our great state.

If adopted, the proposed standards would be an unprecedented subversion of local control and outside the realm of the conservative principle our state prides itself on. Furthermore, we are setting precedence here for much more than our education system. As a mom of two South Dakota children, I want them to stay in South Dakota knowing that no matter which industry they choose, their expertise will be valued when decisions are made.

In the spirit of the promise of compromise, I recommend the South Dakota Department of Education reconvene the summer of 2022 commission members alongside the summer of 2021 committee of teachers under the direction of the secretary of education to find consensus, taking into consideration the 968 public comments provided as well as testimony delivered at the two public hearings.

Thank you to all the families, community members, and educators for being willing to work together to continue to make South Dakota great for many more generations.



SAMANTHA WALDER

Dr. Samantha Walder, of Tea, is a mother, wife, educator and lifelong South Dakotan. Walder is in her 15th year in education, her eighth as an elementary principal, and served as the only principal on the Social Studies Standards Revision Commission. Walder graduated from Castlewood High School, and holds undergraduate degrees in history and political science with a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from South Dakota State University. Walder earned her educational specialist in the principalship and doctorate in the superintendency from the University of South Dakota.

More than \$37 billion in disaster aid under scrutiny in congressional lame duck

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - NOVEMBER 29, 2022 6:13 PM

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration wants Congress to approve more than \$37 billion to help communities throughout the country recover from various natural disasters, including Hurricanes Ian, which battered Florida and the Southeast U.S. in late September, and Fiona, which hit Puerto Rico.

The supplemental funding request comes on top of a \$9 billion COVID-19 funding request and a third request for nearly \$38 billion in additional relief for Ukraine that the White House sent up to Capitol Hill in mid-November.

The most-likely timeline for the three requests to move forward is next month, when Congress must pass spending legislation before a stopgap government funding bill expires on Dec. 16. If some sort of spending package isn't law before then, a partial government shutdown would begin.

President Joe Biden met with congressional leaders at the White House on Tuesday to discuss the bills that must pass during the current lame-duck session of Congress, including the spending package.

The Biden administration wrote in the 43-page natural disaster funding request that the federal government needs "to help our communities recover and rebuild from extreme weather events and natural disasters."

"That's why we are requesting \$37.3 billion to fund critical disaster response and rebuilding efforts in Florida, Puerto Rico, and other communities across America that have faced severe flooding, wildfires, drought, and extreme heat over the past year," the White House budget office wrote in the document.

"As the President often says, we must be there for these communities every step of the way — for as long as it takes."

Hurricanes, floods, drought, fire

The disaster request would funnel \$29.6 billion to various federal departments and agencies to continue Hurricanes Ian and Fiona recovery efforts.

Another \$7.7 billion would go towards other major disasters and unmet needs, including \$100 million for the U.S. Agriculture Department to help with ongoing flood recovery in Kentucky.

The White House proposed Congress provide the U.S. Department of Energy with \$270 million to help local, state and tribal governments with electric grid resilience and to offset the impacts of extreme drought on hydropower out West.

Under the disaster request, which must be approved by Congress, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security would get \$2.9 billion to "provide survivor claims related to the Hermit's Peak fire in New Mexico."

The U.S. Interior Department would receive \$262 million to address flooding at the Bureau of Indian Education TóHajiilee Community School in New Mexico and for other natural disasters, like landslides on Denali Park Road in Alaska.

The White House also wants U.S. lawmakers to approve \$73 million for Interior to continue recovery efforts related to Alaska typhoon Merbok.

The \$29.6 billion request for Hurricanes Ian and Fiona recovery would be divvied up between several U.S. departments, including \$3.5 billion for Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery through



Dina Lewis rescues items from her home after it was destroyed by Hurricane Ida on Aug. 30, 2021, in Laplace, Louisiana. (Photo by

Scott Olson/Getty Images)

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the Department of Housing and Urban Development and \$2.1 billion for the Agriculture Department to provide financial aid for crop damage as well as "payments beyond crop insurance."

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which includes FEMA, would get \$15 billion to continue hurricane relief and to make payments from the National Flood Insurance Program to policyholders.

Leaders meet

Biden said at the beginning of the Tuesday meeting in the Roosevelt Room that he hoped the four leaders and his administration could "work together to fund the government, COVID, and the war in Ukraine — all controversial and consequential issues."

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, said afterward outside the White House they and their GOP counterparts agreed to try to get a full-year government funding bill to Biden before leaving for the winter break.

But House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy said after Pelosi and Schumer spoke that he would be willing to push off major government funding decisions until next year, when his party regains control of that chamber.

"If we can't get common sense in appropriations bills then yes, we'll support a CR and fix this come January," McCarthy said, referring to continuing resolutions or short-term government funding bills.

McCarthy said he would not back "a blank check for anything" and noted he wanted "to make sure whatever funding" Congress spends on Ukraine aid "goes to the right places."

Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby, the top Republican on the panel that will draft the spending package, said Tuesday afternoon that natural disaster funding is a possibility since so many states have been affected this year.

"Florida stands out with a lot of others and I'm sure it's going to be part of the conversation," he said, noting that bipartisan talks over government funding are picking up.

Shelby said that he expects Republicans will back some additional aid to Ukraine, saying that when "people are fighting for freedom like that, we should never turn our back."



JENNIFER SHUTT ✉️ 🐦

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

Same-sex marriage protected under bill passed by U.S. Senate with GOP support

South Dakota senators vote against legislation

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - NOVEMBER 29, 2022 6:27 PM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate approved legislation Tuesday that would enshrine protections for same-sex and interracial marriages, codifying many of the rights that would disappear if the U.S. Supreme Court were to overturn those landmark decisions the way it overturned the nationwide right to an abortion this summer.

The 61-36 bipartisan vote sends the bill back to the U.S. House, where lawmakers expect to give it their final stamp of approval soon, before sending it to President Joe Biden. The House voted 267-157 in July to approve the original bill, but must vote again after a bipartisan group of senators added in religious liberty protections.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, wore the same tie Tuesday he wore to his daughter's wedding and recounted a conversation he had with his daughter and her wife following the death of former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

"I remember that awful feeling around the dinner table and I distinctly remember the question my daughter and her wife asked, 'Could our right to marry be undone?'" Schumer said.

"It's a scary, but necessary acknowledgment that despite all the progress we've made, the constitutional right to same-sex marriage is not even a decade old and exists only by the virtue of a very narrow 5-4 Supreme Court decision," Schumer continued. "And we all know the court has changed since that decision."

Retiring Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt, retiring North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr, West Virginia's Shelley Moore Capito, Maine's Susan Collins, Iowa's Joni Ernst, Wyoming's Cynthia Lummis, Alaska's Lisa Murkowski, retiring Ohio Sen. Rob Portman, Utah's Mitt Romney, Alaska's Dan Sullivan, North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis and Indiana's Todd Young voted for the bill.

South Dakota Republican Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds voted against the bill.

Repeal of Defense of Marriage Act

The legislation would repeal the 1996 law known as the Defense of Marriage Act that defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The federal law also allowed states to ignore same-sex unions legally performed in other states.

It would ensure that if the U.S. Supreme Court were to overturn the cases that have legalized same-sex and interracial marriages, the federal government would continue to recognize those unions, a step necessary for hundreds of federal benefits including Social Security and veterans benefits.

The bill, known as the Respect for Marriage Act, would require states to recognize same-sex and interracial marriages performed in states that keep the unions legal, though it wouldn't require states to keep same-sex or interracial marriages legal if the U.S. Supreme Court were to overturn those cases.

Cathryn Oakley, Human Rights Campaign state legislative director and senior counsel, said during a briefing in mid-November the bill is a "very important" part of the legislation LGBTQ rights advocates have been pressing Congress to pass for years.

She also sought to clarify misconceptions the legislation will allow any two people to enter a same-sex or interracial marriage anywhere in the country, should the U.S. Supreme Court overturn those cases.

"Congress has done everything in this bill that it can responsibly do," Oakley said. "What they do not have the ability to responsibly do, is to tell states that they must marry two people of the same sex."

Oakley said U.S. lawmakers "are taking the maximum responsible action that they can take at this point" under the powers they have within the U.S. Constitution.

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State bans

More than 30 states have constitutional amendments, state laws, or both that ban same-sex marriages, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin are among the states with state constitutional amendments that would prohibit same-sex marriages.

Indiana, Iowa and Pennsylvania are among the states with laws that would prohibit same-sex marriages.

Those laws and state constitutional provisions are currently unenforceable under the U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 ruling that established same-sex marriages as protected under the Constitution. But they could go into effect again were the justices to overturn that case. States that still have laws banning interracial marriages on the books cannot enforce those laws under the 1967 Loving v. Virginia ruling.

Missouri Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft criticized his state's senior senator, Blunt, for voting for the legislation, saying he was "flabbergasted" by the move and noting that the state's constitutional amendment bars the unions.

Ashcroft said during an interview with The Missouri Independent he tried to call Blunt to lobby him in opposition to the bill but had been unable to reach him, so he sent a letter instead.

The legislation the U.S. Senate approved Tuesday was spurred by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision this summer to overturn the two cases that kept abortion legal nationwide, protected as a constitutional right, for nearly half a century.

Justice Clarence Thomas sparked the concern when he wrote in his concurring opinion in the abortion case the justices "should reconsider all of this Court's substantive due process precedents" that included similar legal reasoning as the abortion cases.

Thomas listed *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the case that established married couples have a constitutional right to decide if and how to use birth control; *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the 2015 case that legalized same-sex marriage; and *Lawrence v. Texas*, which overturned state anti-sodomy laws, as three cases he specifically thought the court should revisit.

LGBTQ rights advocates immediately called on Congress to ensure that any future Supreme Court rulings wouldn't completely erode marriage rights.

Republicans on board

The U.S. House approved the legislation in July and the U.S. Senate was on track to vote on the marriage equality bill before the November midterm elections, but Schumer held off at the request of a bipartisan group of senators who added the religious liberty language and who were working to get at least 10 Republicans on board to pass the chamber's legislative filibuster.

Sens. Tammy Baldwin, a Wisconsin Democrat; Collins; Portman; Kyrsten Sinema, an Arizona Democrat; and Tillis wrote at the time they were "confident that when our legislation comes to the Senate floor for a vote, we will have the bipartisan support to pass the bill."

The religious liberty protections now in the bill would protect "all religious liberty and conscience protections available under the Constitution or Federal law," according to a summary of the changes.

The legislation would insulate religious organizations, certain religious nonprofits and their employees from being required "to provide services, accommodations, advantages, facilities, goods, or privileges for the solemnization or celebration of a marriage."

It would prevent changes to tax-exempt status since "a church, university, or other nonprofit's eligibility for tax-exempt status is unrelated to marriage, so its status would not be affected by this legislation," according to the summary.

The bill passed its first procedural vote in the Senate in mid-November when 12 GOP senators joined Democrats to move past the legislative filibuster.

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GOP amendments

Before the Senate approved the bill Tuesday, lawmakers voted down three Republican amendments. Senators voted 48-49 to reject a proposal from Utah Sen. Mike Lee that would have barred the federal government from taking "any discriminatory action," like eliminating a tax benefit, for any person who "speaks, or acts, in accordance with a sincerely held religious belief, or moral conviction, that marriage is" between one man and one woman or two individuals as recognized under federal law.

Lee argued ahead of the vote that lawmakers "would do a disservice to all Americans if we elevate the rights of one group at the expense of another."

The Senate voted 45-52 to reject a proposal from Oklahoma Sen. James Lankford that would have changed who was required to comply with the law from any person acting under "color of state law" to a state, territory, or tribe.

Lankford said Tuesday that the "color of state law" language could refer to any organization that a state contracts with to perform a government function, such as private prisons, adoption agencies, foster care agencies, or homeless shelters.

Lankford's amendment would have also removed a section of the bill that would allow people "harmed" by a violation of the law to sue. Lankford said the legislation didn't define what "harmed" would mean.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio's amendment to eliminate the section of the bill that would allow anyone "harmed by a violation" of the law to sue in a U.S. district court was rejected following a 45-52 vote.

Rubio argued in a written statement that while the legislation included language that "would protect nonprofits whose 'principal purpose' is the 'study, practice, or advancement of religion,' it would not protect other faith-based organizations."

Baldwin urged senators to reject the three amendments ahead of the vote, saying they would "upend the months of good-faith negotiations and they would disrupt our carefully crafted bipartisan compromise."

The religious liberty language added to the bill, Baldwin said, ensures protection for "religious liberties afforded under our Constitution and federal law."

"We are not pushing this legislation to make history," she said. "We are doing this to make a difference for millions upon millions of Americans."



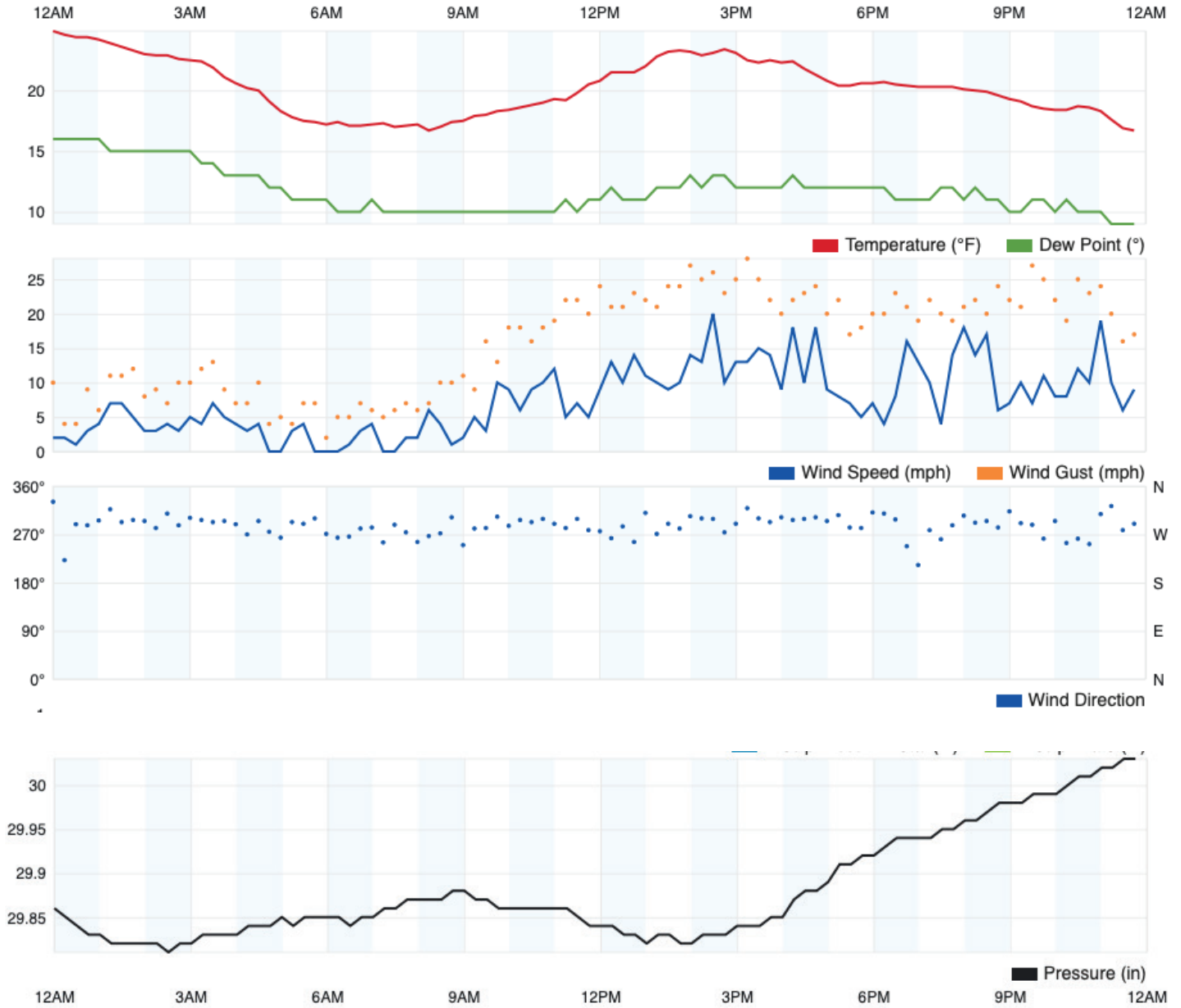
JENNIFER SHUTT  

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Wednesday



Scattered
Flurries and
Blustery then
Sunny

High: 22 °F

Wednesday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 10 °F↑

Thursday



Mostly Sunny

High: 44 °F

Thursday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 20 °F

Friday



Mostly Cloudy
then Chance
Snow and
Blustery

High: 28 °F

Friday
Night



Chance Snow
then Mostly
Cloudy

Low: -2 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 21 °F

Wednesday



Clearing

Windy
Early

Hi: 19-29

Thursday



Windy
Early

Hi: 38-57

Lo: 7-17

Friday



Windy
& Turning
Colder
1 - 2" Accumulation

Hi: 21-38

Lo: -5 to +5

Saturday



Breezy

Hi: 18-36

Lo: 9-20

Sunday



Hi: 31-44

Lo: 7-15

Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov/abr



Graphic Created
11/30/2022 2:10 AM

Expect up and down temperatures, with off and on breezy to windy conditions over the next few days. Falling temperatures will accompany some light snow accumulations Friday but generally expect dry conditions.

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Today in Weather History

November 30, 1981: A two-day winter storm, beginning as rain, changing to freezing rain and then to snow, completely paralyzed the eastern half of South Dakota, as well as west central Minnesota Monday, November 30 through Tuesday, December 1, 1981. Snow accumulations of between eight and twelve inches were common in South Dakota. Wind with gusts to near 50 mph whipped the snow into blizzard conditions. The Governor of South Dakota closed east-west Interstate 90 to all traffic. Hundreds of motorists were stranded. One person died during snow removal after the storm. Some storm total snowfall amounts included 8 inches at Kennebec, 7 inches at Pierre and Faulkton, 4 inches at Aberdeen, and 2 inches at Watertown. The winter precipitation was caused by a storm center that moved from Kansas Monday through Iowa Monday night and into Wisconsin Tuesday morning, December 1st. The same storm produced heavy snow and blizzard conditions over a large area of the central Plains. Travel was especially difficult because of the snow. Many roads were impassible and motorists were forced to find shelter.

November 30, 1991: The third major winter storm of the season moved from the central plains to eastern South Dakota. The storm generally dropped between 4 and 8 inches of snow over the eastern third of South Dakota from the 28th to the 30th. New snow accumulations of 2 to 5 inches occurred over most of the rest of the state. Some specific snow reports across the area included Aberdeen with 2 inches and Watertown with 3 inches. Five inches fell at Clear Lake and 3 inches fell near Summit. Strong winds developed after the snow fell, producing widespread blowing and drifting snow, especially across the northeast corner of South Dakota.

November 30, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 12 inches fell across a large part of northern South Dakota and into western Big Stone County in Minnesota, causing travel problems and school closings. Several accidents also occurred due to the slippery roads. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Milbank and Ortonville; 8 inches at McLaughlin, Ipswich, Summit, and Mellette; 9 inches northwest of Britton, Clear Lake, and Pollock; 10 inches at Leola and Faulkton; 11 inches at Aberdeen and Webster; and 12 inches at Houghton.

November 30, 1925: An extremely rare late November hurricane began to affect the west coast of Florida as it strengthened during the day. The storm made landfall very early on December 1st south of Tampa Bay, weakened to a tropical storm as it crossed central Florida, and exited around St. Augustine. The storm regained Hurricane strength off Jacksonville late on the 1st. Heavy rain continued over northeast Florida on the 2nd. Gale force winds were reported from the Keys to Jacksonville and over 50 people lost their lives, mostly on ships at sea. Damage along the coast south of Jacksonville was heavy and excessive rain and wind seriously damaged citrus and truck crops.

1875 - A severe early season cold wave set November records in the northeastern U.S. The temperature dipped to 5 above zero at New York City, 2 below at Boston MA, and 13 below at Eastport ME. (David Ludlum)

1957 - Lee slope winds enhanced by Hurricane Nina gusted to 82 mph at Honolulu, Hawaii, a record wind gust for that location. Wainiha, on the island of Kauai, was deluged with 20.42 inches of rain, and 35 foot waves pounded some Kauai beaches, even though the eye of the hurricane was never within 120 miles of the islands. (30th-1st) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - A record November snowstorm struck the Washington D.C. area. It produced up to a foot of snow in a 12 hour period. (David Ludlum)

1976 - MacLeod Harbor, AK, reported a precipitation total for November of 70.99 inches, which established a state record for any month of the year. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - Showers produced heavy rain in the northeastern U.S. Up to three inches of rain drenched the Brandywine Creek Basin of Pennsylvania, and rainfall totals in Vermont ranged up to two inches at Dorsett. Snow fell heavily across Upper Michigan as gale force winds prevailed over Lake Superior. A storm moving into the northwestern U.S. produced gale force winds along the northern and central Pacific coast. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Snow in the Upper Great Lakes Region pushed the precipitation total for the month at Marquette, MI, past their previous November record of 7.67 inches. Santa Anna winds in southern California gusted to 75 mph at Laguna Peak. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

HE SATISFIES

God did not create any need He could not satisfy! He did not create food that would simply taste good. He created food that would taste good and satisfy our hunger – food that would nourish and sustain us, comforts us, and brings us enjoyment. Every hunger or need that we have - whether spiritual, emotional, physical, or social - can be fulfilled out of the abundance of His creation. That includes this life and the life to come. He is a needs-meeting God.

Listen to the Psalmist: "For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things." If we are thirsty, we must drink the water that He provides to quench our thirst through His Son. If we are hungry, we must eat the Bread of Life which is His Son. Unless we ask the Lord to become our Savior, we will live lives that are empty, unsatisfied, and unfulfilled. Only when we are willing to allow Him to fill the needs He has placed deep within us with His Son will we become complete.

There is a story of a little boy returning home from the store with a jar of honey. After struggling for quite some time to open it, he finally succeeded. He stuck his finger into the jar to taste its contents. An older man watching him from a distance approached him.

"Is it sweet?" he asked. "Yes, Sir," came the reply. "How sweet?" asked the man.

"Well, Sir, I can't describe it. It's so sweet it more than satisfies my need for candy. But I'll tell you what. You stick your finger in the jar and taste it for yourself, and then you'll know."

'Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!' He alone can satisfy our every need.

Prayer: Lord, fill the emptiness in our lives with Your presence as You become our Redeemer, Savior and Lord. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. Psalm 107:9



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

Biden making new commitments at Tribal Nations Summit

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden plans to make new commitments to Native American nations during the government's first in-person summit on tribal affairs in six years.

The changes include uniform standards for federal agencies to consult with tribes, a plan to revitalize Native languages and new efforts to strengthen the tribal rights that are outlined in existing treaties with the U.S. government. Biden, a Democrat, is scheduled to address the White House Tribal Nations Summit on Wednesday, the opening day of the two-day summit.

The gathering coincides with National Native American Heritage Month, which is celebrated in November. Leaders and representatives from hundreds of Native American tribes are expected to attend.

The Biden administration said its goal is to build on previous progress and create opportunities for lasting change in Indian Country. However, the lasting nature of Biden's commitments isn't guaranteed without codified laws and regulations.

"It changes with each president," said Jonathan Nez, the leader of the Navajo Nation in the U.S. Southwest. "And even if it's legislated, it takes a significant effort especially when, at times, tribal issues take the back seat to larger, national issues."

Federal agencies recently have been creating tribal advisory councils and reimagining consultation policies that go beyond a "check the box" exercise. Some of the more significant changes involve incorporating Indigenous knowledge and practices into decision-making and federal research.

Nez has been advocating for a speedier process to get infrastructure projects, including internet access, on the Navajo Nation, which stretches 27,000 square miles (70,000 square kilometers) into New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. He said it requires constant advocacy.

"You've got some new congressional officials who just got elected also, so there's going to be more educating that has to be done," he said.

The Biden administration also planned to announce Wednesday that the Commerce Department will work with tribes to co-manage public resources like water and fisheries. The Agriculture Department and the Interior Department have signed 20 co-stewardship agreements with tribes, and another 60 are under review, the administration said.

A new report being released in conjunction with the summit will outline best practices on integrating tribal treaty rights, like hunting and fishing on ancestral lands, into the decision-making process for federal agencies.

The tribal nations summit wasn't held during then-President Donald Trump's administration. The Biden administration held one virtually last year as the coronavirus pandemic ravaged the U.S. and highlighted deepening and long-standing inequities in tribal communities.

Both administrations signed off on legislation that infused much-needed funding into Indian Country to help address health care, lost revenue, housing, internet access and other needs. The 574 federally recognized tribes in the U.S. received a combined \$20 billion in American Rescue Plan Act funding under the Biden administration.

Trump, a Republican, signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, which provided \$8 billion to tribes and Alaska Native corporations but had more rigid guidelines on how it could be spent. The Treasury Department was sued over how that funding was allocated and faced harsh criticism for the time it took to get the money to tribes.

Biden's Treasury Department said it prioritized tribal engagement and feedback in distributing funding from the latest aid package. A report being released Wednesday by the administration outlines how tribes spent the money on more than 3,000 projects and services.

The Karuk Tribe in northwestern California, for example, used some of the aid for permanent and tem-

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porary housing after a wildfire that burned 200 homes in the Klamath Mountains displaced tribal members. The Native Village of Deering and other tribal governments in Alaska pooled funds to ensure access to preschool and free meals, along with extra servings in an area where food has been scarce.

Other tribal communities across the U.S. have spent the money on housing for tribal members, transportation to veterans hospitals, after-school facilities, language and culture programs, emergency services and health care facilities.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

20-23-37-46-52, Mega Ball: 6, Megaplier: 4

(twenty, twenty-three, thirty-seven, forty-six, fifty-two; Mega Ball: six; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$333,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 65,000,000

South Dakota Court Sending Class-Action Notices to Hideaway Hills Mine Collapse Victims

Letter from court outlines key details, next steps in lawsuit

RAPID CITY, S.D., Nov. 29, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Homeowners in the Hideaway Hills neighborhood near Black Hawk have begun receiving legal notices providing details about a class-action lawsuit that seeks to recover damages to their homes from unstable land conditions caused by the mining operations of the state of South Dakota.

The notices were prepared and ordered by the Meade County 4th Judicial District Court after the South Dakota Supreme Court rejected the state's petition for intermediate appeal and cleared the way for the lawsuit to move forward. A copy of the Court's Order is available here: <https://www.scribd.com/document/610890863/Hideaway-Hills-Order-Re-Class-Notification>. The Court's Notice is available here: <https://www.scribd.com/document/610890668/Hideaway-Hills-Class-Action-Notice>.

The case is Andrew Morse and John and Emily Clarke et al. v. State of South Dakota, No. 46CIV-20-000295 in the Meade County 4th Judicial District.

South Dakota Gov. Noem bans TikTok from state-owned devices

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem on Tuesday issued an executive order banning state employees and contractors from accessing the video platform TikTok on state-owned devices, citing its ties to China.

TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company that moved its headquarters to Singapore in 2020. It has been targeted by Republicans who say the Chinese government could access its user data like browsing history and location. U.S. armed forces also have prohibited the app on military devices.

TikTok, which has exploded in popularity with a nearly addictive scroll of videos, has also struggled to detect ads that contain blatant misinformation about U.S. elections, according to a recent report from nonprofit Global Witness and the Cybersecurity for Democracy team at New York University.

"The Chinese Communist Party uses information that it gathers on TikTok to manipulate the American people, and they gather data off the devices that access the platform," Noem said in a statement.

ByteDance did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Noem's order and statement.

TikTok Chief Operating Officer Vanessa Pappas, based in Los Angeles, has previously said the company protects all data of American users and that Chinese government officials have no access to it.

Former President Donald Trump issued blanket-style orders against Chinese tech companies, but the White House under Joe Biden has replaced them with a narrower approach. U.S. officials and the company are now in talks over a possible agreement that would resolve American security concerns.

Jiang Zemin, who guided China's economic rise, dies

By JOE McDONALD Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Jiang Zemin, who led China out of isolation after the army crushed the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests in 1989 and supported economic reforms that led to a decade of explosive growth, died Wednesday. He was 96.

Jiang, who was president for a decade until 2003 and led the ruling Communist Party for 13 years until 2002, died of leukemia and multiple organ failure in Shanghai, state media reported. The party declared him a "great proletarian revolutionary" and "long-tested communist fighter."

Jiang's death comes after the party faced its most widespread public show of opposition in decades when crowds called for leader Xi Jinping to resign during weekend protests against anti-virus controls that are confining millions of people to their homes.

A surprise choice to lead a divided Communist Party after the 1989 turmoil, Jiang saw China through history-making changes including a revival of market-oriented reforms, the return of Hong Kong from British rule in 1997 and Beijing's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001.

Even as China opened to the outside, Jiang's government stamped out dissent. It jailed human rights, labor and pro-democracy activists and banned the Falun Gong spiritual movement, which the ruling party saw as a threat to its monopoly on power.

Jiang gave up his last official title in 2004 but remained a force behind the scenes in wrangling that led to the rise of Xi, who took power in 2012. Xi has tightened political control, crushed China's little remaining dissent and reasserted the dominance of state industry.

Jiang was responsible for China "getting onto a global platform and rehabilitating itself after 1989," said Kerry Brown, a Chinese politics expert at King's College London. "He will be remembered as someone who made probably a pretty positive contribution."

Rumors that Jiang might be in poor health spread after he missed a ruling party congress in October at which Xi, China's most powerful figure since at least the 1980s, broke with tradition and awarded himself a third five-year term as leader.

Jiang was on the verge of retirement as the party secretary for Shanghai in 1989 when he was drafted by then-paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to pull together the party and nation. He succeeded Zhao Ziyang, who was dismissed by Deng due to his sympathy for the student-led Tiananmen protesters.

In 13 years as party general secretary, China's most powerful post, Jiang guided the country's rise to economic power by welcoming capitalists into the party and pulling in foreign investment after China joined the WTO. China passed Germany and then Japan to become the second-largest economy after the United States.

Jiang captured a political prize when Beijing was picked as the site of the 2008 Summer Olympics after failing in an earlier bid.

Portly and owlish in oversize glasses, Jiang was an ebullient figure who played the piano and enjoyed singing, in contrast to his more reserved successors, Hu Jintao and Xi.

He spoke enthusiastic if halting English and would recite the Gettysburg Address for foreign visitors. On a visit to Britain, he tried to coax Queen Elizabeth II into singing karaoke.

A former soap factory manager, Jiang capped his career with the communist era's first orderly succession, handing over his post as party leader in 2002 to Hu, who also took the ceremonial title of president the following year.

Still, he was said to be frustrated that Deng picked Hu, blocking Jiang from installing his own successor. Jiang tried to hold onto influence by staying on as chairman of the Central Military Commission, which controls the 2 million-member People's Liberation Army. He gave up that post in 2004 following complaints

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he might divide the government.

After leaving office, Jiang had influence over promotions through his network of proteges. He was considered successful in elevating allies to the party's seven-member Standing Committee, China's inner circle of power, when Xi became leader in 2012.

Jiang faded from view and last appeared publicly alongside current and former leaders atop Beijing's Tiananmen Gate at a 2019 military parade celebrating the party's 70th anniversary in power.

Jiang was born Aug. 17, 1926, in the affluent eastern city of Yangzhou. Official biographies downplay his family's middle-class background, emphasizing instead his uncle and adoptive father, Jiang Shangqing, an early revolutionary who was killed in battle in 1939.

After graduating from the electrical machinery department of Jiaotong University in Shanghai in 1947, Jiang advanced through the ranks of state-controlled industries, working in a food factory, then soap-making and China's biggest automobile plant.

Like many technocratic officials, Jiang spent part of the ultra-radical 1966-76 Cultural Revolution as a farm laborer. His career revived after that and in 1983 he was named minister of the electronics industry, then a key but backward sector the government hoped to revive by inviting foreign investment.

As mayor of Shanghai between 1985 and 1989, Jiang impressed foreign visitors as a representative of a new breed of outward-looking Chinese leaders.

A tough political fighter, Jiang defied predictions that his stint as leader would be short. He consolidated power by promoting members of his "Shanghai faction" and giving the military double-digit annual percentage increases in spending.

Foreign leaders and CEOs who shunned Beijing after the Tiananmen crackdown were persuaded to return.

When Deng emerged from retirement in 1992 to push for reviving market-style reform, Jiang also took up the cause.

He supported Premier Zhu Rongji, the party's No. 3 leader, who forced through painful changes that slashed as many as 40 million jobs from state industry in the late 1990s.

Zhu launched the privatization of urban housing, igniting a building boom that transformed Chinese cities into forests of high-rises and propelled economic growth.

After 12 years of negotiations and a flight by Zhu to Washington to lobby the Clinton administration for support, China joined the WTO in 2001, cementing its position as a magnet for foreign investment.

China's economic boom split society into winners and losers as waves of rural residents migrated to factory jobs in cities, the economy grew sevenfold and urban incomes by nearly as much.

Protests, once rare, spread as millions lost state jobs and farmers complained about rising taxes and fees. Divorce rates climbed. Corruption flourished.

Despite a genial public image, Jiang dealt severely with challenges to ruling party power.

His highest-profile target was Falun Gong, a meditation group founded in the early 1990s. Chinese leaders were spooked by its ability to attract tens of thousands of followers, including military officers.

Activists who tried to form an opposition China Democracy Party, a move permitted by Chinese law, were sentenced to up to 12 years in prison on subversion charges.

"Stability above all else," Jiang ordered, in a phrase his successors have used to justify intensive social controls.

It fell to Jiang, standing beside Britain's Prince Charles, to preside over the return of Hong Kong on July 1, 1997, symbolizing the end of 150 years of European colonialism. The nearby Portuguese territory of Macao was returned to China in 1999.

Hong Kong was promised autonomy and became a springboard for mainland companies that want to do business abroad. Meanwhile, Jiang turned to coercion with Taiwan, the self-ruled island Beijing says is part of its territory.

During Taiwan's first direct presidential election in 1996, Jiang's government tried to intimidate voters by firing missiles into nearby shipping lanes. The United States responded by sending warships to the area in a show of support.

At the same time, trade between the mainland and Taiwan grew to billions of dollars a year.

One of Jiang's sons, Jiang Mianheng, courted controversy as a telecommunications dealmaker in the late 1990s, when critics accused him of misusing his father's status to promote his career, a common complaint against the children of party leaders.

Jiang is survived by his two sons and his wife, Wang Yeping, who worked in government bureaucracies in charge of state industries.

Hawaii volcano eruption has some on alert, draws onlookers

By CALEB JONES and JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

HILO, Hawaii (AP) — The first eruption in 38 years of the world's largest active volcano is attracting onlookers to a national park for "spectacular" views of the event, and it's also dredging up bad memories among some Hawaii residents who have been through harrowing volcanic experiences in the past.

It was just four years ago that Nicole Skilling fled her home near a community where more than 700 residences were destroyed by lava. She relocated to the South Kona area, only to find herself packing her car with food and supplies this week after Mauna Loa erupted late Sunday.

Officials were initially concerned that lava flowing down the side of the volcano would head toward South Kona, but scientists later assured the public that the eruption migrated to a rift zone on Mauna Loa's northeast flank and wasn't threatening any communities.

Still, the uncertainty is somewhat unnerving.

"It just happened last night, so I really haven't had a lot of time to worry about it yet, basically," Skilling said Monday. "And thankfully, right now, it's at the northeast rift zone. But if it breaks on the west side, that's when we're talking about coming into a large populated area. ... That's why I do have a little bit of PTSD."

Even though there were no evacuation orders, some people decided to leave their homes, prompting officials to open shelters in the Kona and Kau areas. Very few if any stayed in them overnight, Hawaii County Mayor Mitch Roth said, and they would be closing Tuesday.

Despite that, some in the area were preparing for unpredictable changes.

Kamakani Rivera-Kekololio, who lives in the south Kona community of Hookena, was keeping supplies like food and blankets in his car.

"We're being makaukau for anything," Rivera-Kekololio said, using the Hawaiian word for "ready."

Ken Hon, scientist-in-charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, said Tuesday that the lava was flowing "not super fast" at less than 1 mph, though the exact speed wasn't yet clear. It was moving downhill about 6 miles (10 kilometers) from Saddle Road, which connects the east and west sides of the island. The flow was likely to slow down about 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) from the road when it hits flatter ground.

It was not clear when or if the lava will reach the road. It could hit flatter ground later Tuesday or Wednesday, according to Hon.

"We're not even sure it will reach the highway, but that is certainly the next step in progress if it continues on these trends," he said, adding that it's also possible a fissure could open up and drain away some of the supply feeding the flow.

The smell of volcanic gases and sulfur was thick in the air Tuesday along Saddle Road, where people were watching a wide stream of lava creep closer. Clouds cleared to reveal a large plume of gas and ash rising from an open summit vent above the flow.

Gov. David Ige issued an emergency proclamation.

"We're thankful the lava flow is not affecting residential areas at this time, allowing schools and businesses to remain open," he said in a statement. "I'm issuing this Emergency Proclamation now to allow responders to respond quickly or limit access, if necessary, as the eruption continues."

Hon said lava crossed the Mauna Loa Observatory access road Monday night and cut off power to the facility. It could move toward the county seat of Hilo, he added, but that could take a week or longer.

Meanwhile, scientists are trying to measure the gas emitted from the eruption.

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"It's just very early in this eruption right now," Hon said.

The eruption is drawing visitors to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, which is open 24 hours a day. "The viewing has been spectacular" especially before sunrise and at night, park spokeswoman Jessica Ferracane said.

Visitors there are currently able to witness two eruptive events: the glow from Kilauea's lava lake and lava from a Mauna Loa fissure.

"This is a rare time where we have two eruptions happening simultaneously," Ferracane said.

People in the northern Hilo neighborhood closest to the Mauna Loa eruption were cautious, but not overly scared Tuesday.

Lindsay Cloyd, 33, said it makes her a bit nervous, but she feels safe and is also in awe of the forces of nature happening in her backyard.

Originally from Utah and living in Hawaii for only a few years, she has never been part of an eruption.

"I feel so humbled and small," she said, adding that "it's a profound, incredible experience to get to be here while that's happening."

Down the street, Thomas Schneider, 38, an optical engineer at the Gemini Observatory on Mauna Kea, just finished building his new home in the neighborhood.

The threat of lava never came up when he was buying the property, but he'd lived in Hilo for over a decade and knew the risks.

"If you were to look around my property you would see lava rock formations sticking out," he said. "We live on an active volcano, so everywhere is kind of a lava zone."

Mauna Loa's last eruption came close to his neighborhood but stopped short.

He said he's not afraid.

"I've been waiting since I moved here to see Mauna Loa go off, it's supposed to be spectacular," he said. "It's kind of exciting that it's finally erupting."

Crunch time: UN puts baguette on cultural heritage list

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The humble baguette — the crunchy ambassador for French baking around the world — is being added to the U.N.'s list of intangible cultural heritage as a cherished tradition to be preserved by humanity.

UNESCO experts gathering in Morocco this week decided that the simple French flute — made only of flour, water, salt, and yeast — deserved U.N. recognition, after France's culture ministry warned of a "continuous decline" in the number of traditional bakeries, with some 400 closing every year over the past half-century.

The U.N. cultural agency's chief, Audrey Azoulay, said the decision honors more than just bread; it recognizes the "savoir-faire of artisanal bakers" and "a daily ritual."

"It is important that these craft knowledge and social practices can continue to exist in the future," added Azoulay, a former French culture minister.

With the bread's new status, the French government said it planned to create an artisanal baguette day, called the "Open Bakehouse Day," to connect the French better with their heritage.

Back in France, bakers seemed proud, if unsurprised.

"Of course, it should be on the list because the baguette symbolizes the world. It's universal," said Asma Farhat, baker at Julien's Bakery near Paris' Champs-Elysee avenue.

"If there's no baguette, you can't have a proper meal. In the morning you can toast it, for lunch it's a sandwich, and then it accompanies dinner."

Despite the decline in traditional bakery numbers, France's 67 million people still remain voracious baguette consumers — purchased at a variety of sales points, including in supermarkets. The problem is, observers say, that they can often be poor in quality.

"It's very easy to get bad baguette in France. It's the traditional baguette from the traditional bakery

that's in danger. It's about quality not quantity," said one Paris resident, Marine Fourchier, 52.

In January, French supermarket chain Leclerc was criticized by traditional bakers and farmers for its much publicized 29-cent baguette, accused of sacrificing the quality of the famed 65-centimeter (26-inch) loaf. A baguette normally costs just over 90 euro cents (just over \$1), seen by some as an index on the health of the French economy.

The baguette is serious business. France's "Bread Observatory" — a venerable institution that closely follows the fortunes of the flute — notes that the French munch through 320 baguettes of one form or another every second. That's an average of half a baguette per person per day, and 10 billion every year.

Although it seems like the quintessential French product, the baguette was said to have been invented by Vienna-born baker August Zang in 1839. Zang put in place France's steam oven, making it possible to produce bread with a brittle crust yet fluffy interior.

The product's zenith did not come until the 1920s, with the advent of a French law preventing bakers from working before 4 a.m. The baguette's long, thin shape meant it could be made more quickly than its stodgy cousins, so it was the only bread that bakers could make in time for breakfast.

The "artisanal know-how and culture of baguette bread" was inscribed at the Morocco meeting among other global cultural heritage items, including Japan's Fuyu-odori ritual dances, and Cuba's light rum masters.

China vows crackdown on 'hostile forces' as public tests Xi

BEIJING (AP) — China's ruling Communist Party has vowed to "resolutely crack down on infiltration and sabotage activities by hostile forces," following the largest street demonstrations in decades staged by citizens fed up with strict anti-virus restrictions.

The statement from the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission released late Tuesday comes amid a massive show of force by security services to deter a recurrence of the protests that broke out over the weekend in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and several other cities.

While it did not directly address the protests, the statement serves as a reminder of the party's determination to enforce its rule.

Hundreds of SUVs, vans and armored vehicles with flashing lights were parked along city streets Wednesday while police and paramilitary forces conducted random ID checks and searched people's mobile phones for photos, banned apps or other potential evidence that they had taken part in the demonstrations.

The number of people who have been detained at the demonstrations and in follow-up police actions is not known.

The commission's statement, issued after an expanded session Monday presided over by its head Chen Wenqing, a member of the party's 24-member Politburo, said the meeting aimed to review the outcomes of October's 20th party congress.

At that event, Xi granted himself a third five-year term as secretary general, potentially making him China's leader for life, while stacking key bodies with loyalists and eliminating opposing voices.

"The meeting emphasized that political and legal organs must take effective measures to ... resolutely safeguard national security and social stability," the statement said.

"We must resolutely crack down on infiltration and sabotage activities by hostile forces in accordance with the law, resolutely crack down on illegal and criminal acts that disrupt social order and effectively maintain overall social stability," it said.

Yet, less than a month after seemingly ensuring his political future and unrivaled dominance, Xi, who has signaled he favors regime stability above all, is facing his biggest public challenge yet.

He and the party have yet to directly address the unrest, which spread to college campuses and the semi-autonomous southern city of Hong Kong, as well as sparking sympathy protests abroad.

Most protesters focused their ire on the "zero-COVID" policy that has placed millions under lockdown and quarantine, limiting their access to food and medicine while ravaging the economy and severely restricting travel. Many mocked the government's ever-changing line of reasoning, as well as claims that "hostile

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outside foreign forces" were stirring the wave of anger.

Yet bolder voices called for greater freedom and democracy and for Xi, China's most powerful leader in decades, as well as the party he leads, to step down — speech considered subversive and punishable with lengthy prison terms. Some held up blank pieces of white paper to demonstrate their lack of free speech rights.

The weekend protests were sparked by anger over the deaths of at least 10 people in a fire on Nov. 24 in China's far west that prompted angry questions online about whether firefighters or victims trying to escape were blocked by anti-virus controls.

Authorities eased some controls and announced a new push to vaccinate vulnerable groups after the demonstrations, but maintained they would stick to the "zero-COVID" strategy.

The party had already promised last month to reduce disruptions, but a spike in infections swiftly prompted party cadres under intense pressure to tighten controls in an effort to prevent outbreaks. The National Health Commission on Wednesday reported 37,612 cases detected over the previous 24 hours, while the death toll remained unchanged at 5,233.

Beijing's Tsinghua University, where students protested over the weekend, and other schools in the capital and the southern province of Guangdong sent students home in an apparent attempt to defuse tensions. Chinese leaders are wary of universities, which have been hotbeds of activism including the Tiananmen protests.

Police appeared to be trying to keep their crackdown out of sight, possibly to avoid encouraging others by drawing attention to the scale of the protests. Videos and posts on Chinese social media about protests were deleted by the party's vast online censorship apparatus.

"Zero COVID" has helped keep case numbers lower than those of the United States and other major countries, but global health experts including the head of the World Health Organization increasingly say it is unsustainable. China dismissed the remarks as irresponsible.

Beijing needs to make its approach "very targeted" to reduce economic disruption, the head of the International Monetary Fund told The Associated Press in an interview Tuesday.

Economists and health experts, however, warn that Beijing can't relax controls that keep most travelers out of China until tens of millions of older people are vaccinated. They say that means "zero COVID" might not end for as much as another year.

On Wednesday, U.S. Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns said restrictions were, among other things, making it impossible for U.S. diplomats to meet with American prisoners being held in China, as is mandated by international treaty. Because of a lack of commercial airline routes into the country, the embassy has to use monthly charter flights to move its personnel in and out.

"COVID is really dominating every aspect of life" in China, he said in an online discussion with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

On the protests, Burns said the embassy was observing their progress and the government's response, but said, "We believe the Chinese people have a right to protest peacefully."

"They have a right to make their views known. They have a right to be heard. That's a fundamental right around the world. It should be. And that right should not be hindered with, and it shouldn't be interfered with," he said.

Burns also referenced instances of Chinese police harassing and detaining foreign reporters covering the protests.

"We support freedom of the press as well as freedom of speech," he said.

Asked about foreign expressions of support for the protesters, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian defended China's approach to handling COVID-19 and said other nations should mind their own business.

"We hope they will first heed their own peoples' voices and interests instead of pointing fingers at others," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing.

NATO seeks to ease war impact on Bosnia, Georgia, Moldova

LORNE COOK, STEPHEN McGRATH and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

BUCHAREST (AP) — NATO turned its attention on Wednesday to three countries shaken by Russia's invasion of Ukraine — Bosnia, Georgia and Moldova — as the military alliance struggles to extend its security umbrella across Europe.

At talks in Romania, the foreign ministers of the three countries met with their NATO counterparts to discuss ways that the world's biggest security organization might be able to help, as the war in Ukraine exposes them to political, energy and territorial uncertainty.

While the cause of the problems facing Bosnia, Georgia, and Moldova is clear, their needs and the way that NATO might be able to help them are not. No straightforward proposals about what might be done were offered by NATO ministers as they arrived at the Palace of the Parliament in the capital Bucharest.

Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra said the meeting is aimed at ensuring "more safety and security on the European continent," and "is a signal ... on how important it is to create stability not only for NATO countries itself, but also beyond."

Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky told reporters that it was important not to let a "gray zone be here, to be taken over by other forces."

Bosnia has long been wracked by political instability, but protests rocked the Bosnian Serb half of the ethnically divided country last month after some voters alleged that a pro-Russian Bosnian Serb leader rigged an election in the Serb entity, Republika Srpska.

Bosnian Foreign Minister Bisera Turkovic said her country, where a government is in the process of being formed following the elections, "is very concerned about the future."

"We have proxies, or we had the proxies, in our government, Russian proxies. So division in the country is deep and we hope that we will be able to overcome it. NATO's presence is extremely important for Bosnia-Herzegovina because it is a guarantor of our security," she said.

NATO has promised Georgia that, like Ukraine, it will join the 30-nation alliance one day, but Russian troops swept into Georgia after that pledge was made 14 years ago. A breakaway Georgian region has this year threatened to hold a referendum on joining Russia.

Russia's war in Ukraine has had a troubling effect on Moldova, which is currently facing a severe energy crisis due to its reliance on Russian energy.

In recent weeks it has suffered massive power outages as a result of Russian strikes on Ukraine's energy grid. Russian missiles have also traversed its skies, and in April blasts occurred in the country's Russian-backed breakaway region of Transnistria — where Moscow bases around 1,500 troops.

Things are moving more positively in other parts of Europe. Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom said that he and his counterparts from Finland and Turkey had held "a very good" meeting aimed at unblocking Turkish opposition to his country joining NATO.

Billstrom said that he plans to travel to Ankara soon for further talks. NATO is eager to add the two Nordic nations to its ranks. They applied to join in April, amid concern that Russia might target them next. Turkey and Hungary are the holdouts on ratifying their applications. The 28 other member nations have already done so.

Storms cause major tornadoes, flooding around the South

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Residents in several towns across Louisiana and Mississippi took cover as tornado sirens blared late Tuesday, and forecasters warned of the threat of strong twisters capable of tracking long distances on the ground as a severe weather outbreak erupted in the Deep South.

There were no immediate reports of severe damage or injuries as multiple tornado warnings were issued starting Tuesday afternoon and continuing into the nighttime hours as heavy thunderstorms rolled from eastern Texas to Georgia and as far north as Indiana. The National Weather Service confirmed that tornadoes hit the ground in Mississippi on Tuesday evening and Alabama was in the forecast path of the

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storms during the overnight hours.

More than 25 million people were at risk as the vast storm system. The national Storm Prediction Center said in its storm outlook that affected cities could include New Orleans; Memphis and Nashville in Tennessee; and Birmingham, Alabama.

The NWS received reports of people trapped at a grocery store in Caledonia, Mississippi, just after 6 p.m. Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency Director Cindy Lawrence told WTVA-TV the people inside the grocery store made it out safely. Lawrence also said a family trapped in a house about a mile (1.6 kilometers) from the store escaped.

Additional reports of property damage near Columbus were received by the NWS, according to Lance Perrilloux, a forecaster with the agency.

Heavy rain and hail as big as tennis balls were also possible as forecasters said the weather outbreak was expected to continue into Wednesday.

In west Alabama, a suspected tornado damaged numerous homes in Hale County, according to storm damage reports to the National Weather Service. About 29,000 customers were without power early Wednesday morning.

And in the west Alabama town of Eutaw, video from WBMA-TV from showed large sections of the roof missing from an apartment complex, where residents stood outside in the middle of the night.

"We've got power lines, trees just all over the road," Eutaw Police Chief Tommy Johnson told WBRC-TV. "In the morning when we get a little daylight, we're going to do a door-by-door search to make sure no one is trapped inside or anything like that."

So far, though, there were no reports of injuries. "We haven't got any reports of anyone hurt or anything," he said.

Craig Ceecee, a meteorologist at Mississippi State University, peered out at "incredibly black" skies through the door of a tornado shelter in Starkville. He estimated that about 100 people had already arrived as a lightning storm persisted outside.

The Oktibbeha County Emergency Management agency is operating the shelter, about three miles (5 kilometers) from the university's campus. Ceecee said the dome-shaped multipurpose facility capable of withstanding 250 mph (400 kph) winds.

Before Tuesday's storm, Ceecee built a database of Mississippi tornado shelters. He said there are several towns without any.

"I've had to go through events without (shelters), and trust me, they were scary," Ceecee said.

In the small town of Tchula, Mississippi, hail stones crashed against the windows of City Hall, as the mayor and other residents took cover during a tornado warning. "It was hitting against the window, and you could tell that it was nice-sized balls of it," Mayor Ann Polk said after the storm passed.

It's rare that federal forecasters warn of major tornadoes with the potential for carving damages across long distances, as they did in Tuesday's forecasts. Tornado watches covering much of Louisiana and Mississippi were announced due to "a particularly dangerous situation," the NWS said.

"Supercells are expected to develop this afternoon and track northeastward across much of northeast Louisiana and central Mississippi," the weather service said. "Parameters appear favorable for strong and long-tracked tornadoes this afternoon and early evening."

The most intense wave of the storm was projected to move through Mississippi between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., said Sarah Sickles, an NWS forecaster in Jackson, the state capital.

"Multiple rounds of severe thunderstorms — some capable of long-tracked tornadoes with EF3+ damage potential — will be possible this afternoon into tonight over parts of the lower Mississippi Valley region and Mid-South," the Norman, Oklahoma-based Storm Prediction Center said.

Tornadoes with an EF3 rating on the Enhanced Fujita tornado scale can produce wind gusts of up to 165 mph (266 kph).

All remaining classes at Mississippi State University's main campus in Starkville switched to remote instruction Tuesday due to the weather. A Mississippi State women's basketball game against the University of Louisiana-Monroe was to be played on campus, but the venue was closed to spectators. Alcorn State

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University and the University of Southern Mississippi Hattiesburg were closing early.

Some of Mississippi's public school systems also closed early.

Flood watches were issued for parts of southeast Mississippi and southwest Alabama, where 3 to 5 inches of rain (8 to 13 centimeters) could lead to flash flooding, the National Weather Service said.

Meanwhile, heavy snow was snarling traffic in some parts of the Upper Midwest.

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport tweeted Tuesday afternoon that its runways were closed due to fast snowfall rates and reduced visibility. Air traffic websites showed some inbound planes circling or diverting to other airports such as St. Cloud, Minnesota, and Fargo, North Dakota. The National Weather Service reported nearly 4 inches (10) of snow on the ground at the airport by noon.

UK royals traveling to Boston with eye on environment prize

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The first overseas trip by the Prince and Princess of Wales since the death of Queen Elizabeth II begins Wednesday, an occasion to show the world as much about who they are not as who they are.

With their three-day visit to Boston, focused on Prince William's initiative to find the environmental entrepreneurs of a new generation, supplemented with trips to an anti-poverty program, child development researchers and local flood defenses, the couple hope to demonstrate that they aren't the last remnants of a dying institution. Instead, Americans will see the younger face of a monarchy that is tackling important issues as it seeks to remain relevant in modern, multicultural Britain.

The visit comes less than three months after the death of Elizabeth, whose personal popularity dampened criticism of the crown during her 70-year reign. King Charles III, William's father, has made clear that his will be a slimmed-down monarchy, with less pomp and ceremony than its predecessors.

"I think this is less about saving the Earth and more about saving the royal family," Boston University professor Arianne Chernock, an expert in modern British history, said. "To be honest, we've seen Charles as king and his first months in that position trying to feel his way, find his way towards being a more relevant, more modern monarch. And I think we see something similar happening with William and Kate."

Part of that reset involves reclaiming the hearts and minds of people in America, where William's younger brother, Prince Harry, and sister-in-law, Meghan, have dominated the media since moving to California in 2020. Harry and Meghan have criticized the royal family for alleged racism and insensitive treatment and built their own media profile by making films and podcasts for Netflix and Spotify.

The Netflix series "The Crown" has also resurrected some of the more troubled times of the House of Windsor, including the collapse of Charles' marriage to the late Princess Diana, William's mother, amid mutual allegations of infidelity.

But William and Kate are keen to tell a different story, about their work on environmental issues, mental health and early childhood education.

During a gala concert celebrating the queen's Platinum Jubilee in June, William delivered a speech highlighting his grandmother's and father's pioneering work on the environment, as images of jungles and oceans were projected on the walls of Buckingham Palace behind him.

Kate last week wrote an opinion piece on the need to improve the lives of young children that appeared in The Daily Telegraph, one of Britain's most influential newspapers, alongside a photo of the princess sitting cross-legged among a group of elementary school students.

"Over the past 10 years, talking to a wide range of experts about how we deal with societal issues like poor mental and physical health, I have become more and more sure of one thing: If we are going to create a healthier and happier society for future generations, we must start by understanding and acknowledging the unique importance of the first five years of life," she wrote.

William and Kate's last visit to the United States was in 2014, not long after their wedding. During that trip, the glamorous young couple were feted as they toured the eastern U.S.

Eight years later, now in their 40s and with three young children, the prince and princess are finally

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having a return engagement.

The choice of Boston, the birthplace of President John F. Kennedy, as their destination is symbolic. Kennedy's 1962 speech setting out the goal of putting men on the moon by the end of that decade inspired William's Earthshot Prize, aimed at finding solutions to climate change and other environmental problems by the end of this one.

The mission begins Wednesday, when William and Kate will meet with Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and visit the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library and Museum with the late president's daughter, Caroline Kennedy.

Later in the week, they will visit Roca Inc., highlighting the racial equity group's efforts to improve the lives of young people by addressing issues such as poverty, incarceration and trauma from urban violence. They will also visit Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, a leader in research into the long-term impact of early childhood experiences.

But throughout the trip, William's eye will be on the Earthshot Prize.

By focusing on the environment and climate change in particular, the royals are likely to strike a nerve in the U.S., where many people still deny the existence of human-made global warming, said author, social commentator and Washington Post contributor Sally Quinn. The ability of the royals to shine a light on the issue and fuse their fame with entertainers such as Billie Eilish, who is set to headline the awards show, is likely to make people pay attention.

If nothing else, it will put a face to the issue and make it more graspable than the technical presentations of scientists, Quinn said.

"Obviously the media and the attention will be good, not just because they're celebrities and because they're royals, but because they are serious people who care about issues," Quinn said. "I mean, they're not frivolous. They're not partygoers. They're not out dancing on tables every night. They're really hard-working royals, and they're issues that they care about."

Earthshot offers 1 million pounds (\$1.2 million) in prize money to the winners of five separate categories: nature protection, clean air, ocean revival, waste elimination and climate change. The winners and all 15 finalists also receive help in expanding their projects to meet global demand.

The winners are set to be announced Friday at Boston's MGM Music Hall as part of a glitzy show headlined by Eilish, Annie Lennox, Ellie Goulding and Chloe x Halle. The show will also feature videos narrated by naturalist David Attenborough and actor Cate Blanchett.

The BBC's Clara Amfo and American actor-producer Daniel Dae Kim were selected as co-hosts. The prize presenters include actors Rami Malek, Catherine O'Hara and Shailene Woodley.

The ceremony is scheduled to be broadcast Sunday on the BBC in the U.K., PBS in the U.S. and Multi-choice across Africa.

"We're in this moment where there are lots of possibilities for how the royal family imagines itself going forward, and everyone really does feel that Kate and William are the future of this institution," Chernock said. "And so we have to pay really careful attention to the ways, in the absence of Queen Elizabeth, that they present themselves to the public anew."

Egyptians call on British Museum to return Rosetta Stone

By JACK B. JEFFERY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The debate over who owns ancient artifacts has been an increasing challenge to museums across Europe and America, and the spotlight has fallen on the most visited piece in the British Museum: The Rosetta Stone.

The inscriptions on the dark grey granite slab became the seminal breakthrough in deciphering ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics after it was taken from Egypt by forces of the British empire in 1801.

Now, as Britain's largest museum marks the 200-year anniversary of the decipherment of hieroglyphics, thousands of Egyptians are demanding the stone's return.

"The British Museum's holding of the stone is a symbol of Western cultural violence against Egypt," said Monica Hanna, dean at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport, and organizer

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of one of two petitions calling for the stone's return.

The acquisition of the Rosetta Stone was tied up in the imperial battles between Britain and France. After Napoleon Bonaparte's military occupation of Egypt, French scientists uncovered the stone in 1799 in the northern town of Rashid, known by the French as Rosetta. When British forces defeated the French in Egypt, the stone and over a dozen other antiquities were handed over to the British under the terms of an 1801 surrender deal between the generals of the two sides.

It has remained in the British Museum since.

Hanna's petition, with 4,200 signatures, says the stone was seized illegally and constitutes a "spoil of war." The claim is echoed in a near identical petition by Zahi Hawass, Egypt's former minister for antiquities affairs, which has more than 100,000 signatures. Hawass argues that Egypt had no say in the 1801 agreement.

The British Museum refutes this. In a statement, the Museum said the 1801 treaty includes the signature of a representative of Egypt. It refers to an Ottoman admiral who fought alongside the British against the French. The Ottoman sultan in Istanbul was nominally the ruler of Egypt at the time of Napoleon's invasion.

The Museum also said Egypt's government has not submitted a request for its return. It added that there are 28 known copies of the same engraved decree and 21 of them remain in Egypt.

The contention over the original stone copy stems from its unrivaled significance to Egyptology. Carved in the 2nd century B.C., the slab contains three translations of a decree relating to a settlement between the then-ruling Ptolemies and a sect of Egyptian priests. The first inscription is in classic hieroglyphics, the next is in a simplified hieroglyphic script known as Demotic, and the third is in Ancient Greek.

Through knowledge of the latter, academics were able to decipher the hieroglyphic symbols, with French Egyptologist Jean-Francois Champollion eventually cracking the language in 1822.

"Scholars from the previous 18th century had been longing to find a bilingual text written in a known language," said Ilona Regulski, the head of Egyptian Written Culture at the British Museum. Regulski is the lead curator of the museum's winter exhibition, "Hieroglyphs Unlocking Ancient Egypt," celebrating the 200th anniversary of Champollion's breakthrough.

The stone is one of more than 100,000 Egyptian and Sudanese relics housed in the British Museum. A large percentage were obtained during Britain's colonial rule over the region from 1883 to 1953.

It has grown increasingly common for museums and collectors to return artifacts to their country of origin, with new instances reported nearly monthly. Often, it's the result of a court ruling, while some cases are voluntary, symbolizing an act of atonement for historical wrongs.

New York's Metropolitan Museum returned 16 antiquities to Egypt in September after a U.S. investigation concluded they had been illegally trafficked. On Monday, London's Horniman Museum signed over 72 objects, including 12 Benin Bronzes, to Nigeria following a request from its government.

Nicholas Donnell, a Boston-based attorney specializing in cases concerning art and artifacts, said no common international legal framework exists for such disputes. Unless there is clear evidence an artifact was acquired illegally, repatriation is largely at the discretion of the museum.

"Given the treaty and the timeframe, the Rosetta Stone is a hard legal battle to win," said Donnell.

The British Museum has acknowledged that several repatriation requests have been made to it from various countries for artifacts, but it did not provide The Associated Press with any details on their status or number. It also did not confirm whether it has ever repatriated an artifact from its collection.

For Nigel Hetherington, an archaeologist and CEO of the online academic forum Past Preserves, the museum's lack of transparency suggests other motives.

"It's about money, maintaining relevance and a fear that in returning certain items people will stop coming," he said.

Western museums have long pointed to superior facilities and larger crowd draws to justify their holding of world treasures. Amid turmoil following the 2011 uprising that toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak, Egypt saw an uptick in artifact smuggling, which cost the country an estimated \$3 billion between 2011 and 2013, according to the U.S.-based Antiquities Coalition. In 2015, it was discovered that cleaners at Cairo's

Egyptian Museum had damaged the burial mask of Pharaoh Tutankhamun by attempting to re-attach the beard with super glue.

But President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi's government has since invested heavily in its antiquities. Egypt has successfully reclaimed thousands of internationally smuggled artifacts and plans to open a newly built, state-of-the-art museum where tens of thousands of objects can be housed. The Grand Egyptian Museum has been under construction for well over a decade and there have been repeated delays to its opening.

Egypt's plethora of ancient monuments, from the pyramids of Giza to the towering statues of Abu Simbel at the Sudanese border, are the magnet for a tourism industry that drew in \$13 billion in 2021.

For Hanna, Egyptians' right to access their own history should remain the priority. "How many Egyptians can travel to London or New York?" she said.

Egyptian authorities did not respond to a request for comment regarding Egypt's policy toward the Rosetta Stone or other Egyptian artifacts displayed abroad. Hawass and Hanna said they are not pinning hopes on the government to secure its return.

"The Rosetta Stone is the icon of Egyptian identity," said Hawass. "I will use the media and the intellectuals to tell the (British) museum they have no right."

Holocaust survivors offered DNA tests to help find family

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For decades, Jackie Young had been searching.

Orphaned as an infant, he spent the first few years of his life in a Nazi internment camp in what is now the Czech Republic. After World War II he was taken to England, adopted and given a new name.

As an adult, he struggled to learn of his origins and his family. He had some scant information about his birth mother, who died in a concentration camp. But about his father? Nothing. Just a blank space on a birth certificate.

That changed earlier this year when genealogists were able to use a DNA sample to help find a name — and some relatives he never knew he had.

Having that answer to a lifelong question has been "amazing," said Young, now 80 and living in London. It "opened the door that I thought would never get opened."

Now there's an effort underway to bring that possibility to other Holocaust survivors and their children.

The New York-based Center for Jewish History is launching the DNA Reunion Project, offering DNA testing kits for free through an application on its website. For those who use the kits it is also offering a chance to get some guidance on next steps from the genealogists who worked with Young.

Those genealogists, Jennifer Mendelsohn and Adina Newman, have been doing this kind of work over the last several years, and run a Facebook group about Jewish DNA and genetic genealogy.

The advent of DNA technology has opened up a new world of possibilities in addition to the paper trails and archives that Holocaust survivors and their descendants have used to learn about family connections severed by genocide, Newman said.

"There are times when people are separated and they don't even realize they're separated. Maybe a name change occurred so they didn't know to look for the other person," she said. "There are cases that simply cannot be solved without DNA."

While interest in genealogy and family trees is widespread, there's a particular poignancy in doing this work in a community where so many family ties have been ripped apart because of the Holocaust, Mendelsohn said.

Her earliest effort in this arena was for her husband's grandmother, who had lost her mother in a concentration camp. That effort led to aunts and cousins that no one in her husband's family had known about.

Her husband's uncle, she said, called afterwards and said, "You know, I've never seen a photograph of my grandmother. Now that I see photographs of her sisters, it's so comforting to me. I can imagine what she look like."

"How do you explain why that's powerful? It just is. People had nothing. Their families were erased. And

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now we can bring them back a little bit," Mendelsohn said.

She and Newman take pains to emphasize that there are no guarantees. Doing the testing or searching archives doesn't mean a guarantee of finding living relatives or new information. But it offers a chance.

They and the center are encouraging people to take that chance, especially as time passes and the number of living survivors declines.

"It really is the last moment where these survivors can be given some modicum of justice," said Gavriel Rosenfeld, president of the center.

"We feel the urgency of this," Newman said. "I wanted to start yesterday, and that's why it's like, no time like the present."

Rosenfeld said the center had allocated an initial \$15,000 for the DNA kits in this initial pilot effort, which would cover about 500 of them. He said they would look to scale up further if they see enough interest.

Ken Engel thinks there will be. He leads a group in Minnesota for the children of Holocaust survivors and has already told his membership about the program.

"This is an important effort," Engel said. "It may reveal and disclose wonderful information for them that they never knew about, may make them feel more settled or more connected to the past."

Young definitely feels that way.

"I've been wanting to know all my life," he said. "If I hadn't known what I do know now, I think I would still felt that my left arm or my right arm wasn't fully formed. Family is everything, it's the major pillar of life in humanity."

Chinese spaceship with 3 aboard docks with space station

BEIJING (AP) — Three Chinese astronauts docked early Wednesday with their country's space station, where they will overlap for several days with the three-member crew already onboard and expand the facility to its maximum size.

Docking with the Tiangong station came at 5:42 a.m. Wednesday, about 6 1/2 hours after the Shenzhou-15 spaceship blasted off atop a Long March-2F carrier rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center.

The six-month mission, commanded by Fei Junlong and crewed by Deng Qingming and Zhang Lu, will be the last in the station's construction phase, according to the China Manned Space Agency. The station's third and final module docked earlier this month, one of the last steps in China's effort to maintain a constant crewed presence in orbit.

The crew of the Shenzhou-15 will spend several days working with the existing three-member crew of the Tiangong station, who will return to Earth after their six-month mission.

Fei, 57, is a veteran of the 2005 four-day Shenzhou-6 mission, the second time China sent a human into space. Deng and Zhang are making their first space flights.

The station has now expanded to its maximum size, with three modules and three spacecraft attached for a total mass of nearly 100 tons.

Tiangong can accommodate six astronauts at a time and the handover will take about a week. That marks the station's first in-orbit crew rotation.

China has not yet said what further work is needed to complete the station. Next year, it plans to launch the Xuntian space telescope, which, while not part of Tiangong, will orbit in sequence with the station and can dock occasionally with it for maintenance.

Without the attached spacecraft, the Chinese station weighs about 66 tons — a fraction of the International Space Station, which launched its first module in 1998 and weighs around 465 tons.

With a lifespan of 10 to 15 years, Tiangong could one day be the only space station still up and running if the International Space Station retires in the coming years as planned.

While China's crewed space program is officially three decades old this year, it truly got underway in 2003, when China became only the third country after the U.S. and Russia to put a human into space using its own resources.

The program is run by the ruling Communist Party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army, and

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has proceeded almost entirely without outside support. The U.S. excluded China from the International Space Station because of its program's military ties, although China has engaged in limited cooperation with other nations' space agencies.

China has also chalked up uncrewed mission successes: Its Yutu 2 rover was the first to explore the little-known far side of the moon.

China's Chang'e 5 probe also returned lunar rocks to Earth in December 2020 for the first time since the 1970s, and another Chinese rover is searching for evidence of life on Mars.

Officials are reporting considering an eventual crewed mission to the moon, although no timeline has been offered, even as NASA presses ahead with its Artemis lunar exploration program that aims to send four astronauts around the moon in 2024 and land humans there as early as 2025.

While proceeding smoothly for the most part, China's space program has also drawn controversy. Beijing brushed off complaints that it has allowed rocket stages to fall to Earth uncontrolled after NASA accused it of "failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space debris." In that case, parts of a Chinese rocket landed in the Indian Ocean.

China is also reportedly developing a highly secret space plane and its increasing space capabilities feature in the latest Pentagon defense strategy, which said the program was a component of China's "holistic approach to joint warfare."

No longer fringe, small-town voters fear democracy's demise

By TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

HUDSON, Wis. (AP) — A word -- "Hope" -- is stitched onto a throw pillow in the little hilltop farmhouse. Photographs of children and grandchildren speckle the walls. In the kitchen, an envelope is decorated with a hand-drawn heart. "Happy Birthday, My Love," it reads.

Out front, past a pair of century-old cottonwoods, the neighbors' cornfields reach into the distance.

John Kraft loves this place. He loves the quiet and the space. He loves that you can drive for miles without passing another car.

But out there? Out beyond the cornfields, to the little western Wisconsin towns turning into commuter suburbs, and to the cities growing ever larger?

Out there, he says, is a country that many Americans wouldn't recognize.

It's a dark place, dangerous, where freedom is under attack by a tyrannical government, few officials can be trusted and clans of neighbors might someday have to band together to protect one another. It's a country where the most basic beliefs -- in faith, family, liberty -- are threatened.

And it's not just about politics anymore.

"It's no longer left versus right, Democrat versus Republican," says Kraft, a software architect and data analyst. "It's straight up good versus evil."

He knows how he sounds. He's felt the contempt of people who see him as a fanatic, a conspiracy theorist.

But he's a hero in a growing right-wing conservative movement that has rocketed to prominence here in St. Croix County.

Just a couple years ago, their talk of Marxism, government crackdowns and secret plans to destroy family values would have put them at the far fringes of the Republican party.

But not anymore. Today, despite midterm elections that failed to see the sweeping Republican victories that many had predicted, they remain a cornerstone of the conservative electoral base. Across the country, victories went to candidates who believe in QAnon and candidates who believe the separation of church and state is a fallacy. In Wisconsin, a U.S. senator who dabbles in conspiracy theories and pseudoscience was re-elected - crushing his opponent in St. Croix County.

They are farmers and business analysts. They are stay-at-home mothers, graphic designers and insurance salesmen.

They live in communities where crime is almost nonexistent and Cub Scouts hold \$5 spaghetti-lunch fundraisers at American Legion halls.

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And they live with something else.

Sometimes it's anger. Sometimes sadness. Every once in a while it's fear.

All of this can be hard to see, hidden behind the throw pillows and the gently rolling hills. But spend some time in this corner of Wisconsin. Have a drink or two in the small-town bars. Sit with parents cheering kids at the county rodeo. Attend Sunday services.

Try to see America through their eyes.

There's a joke people sometimes tell around here: Democrats take Exit 1 off I-94; Republicans go at least three exits farther.

The first exit off the freeway leads to Hudson, a onetime ragged-at-the-edges riverside town that has become a place of carefully tended 19th-century homes and tourists wandering main street boutiques. With 14,000 people, it's the largest town in St. Croix County. It's also replete with Democrats.

The Republicans start at Exit 4, the joke says, beyond a neutral zone of generic sprawl: a Target, a Home Depot, a thicket of chain restaurants.

"For some people out here, Hudson might be (as far away as) South Dakota or California," says Mark Carlson, who lives off exit 16 in an old log cabin now covered in light blue siding. He doesn't go into Hudson often. "I don't meet many liberals."

Carlson is a friendly man who exudes gentleness, loves to cook, rarely leaves home without a pistol and believes despotism looms over America.

"There's a plan to lead us from within toward socialism, Marxism, communism-type of government," says Carlson, a St. Croix County supervisor who recently retired after 20 years working at a juvenile detention facility and is now a part-time Uber driver.

He was swept into office earlier this year when insurgent right-wing conservatives created a powerful local voting bloc, energized by fury over COVID lockdowns, vaccination mandates and the unrest that shook the country after George Floyd was murdered by a policeman in Minneapolis, just 45 minutes away.

In early 2020 they took control of the county Republican party, driving away leaders they deride as pawns of a weak-kneed establishment, and helped put well over a dozen people in elected positions across the county.

In their America, the U.S. government orchestrated COVID fears to cement its power, the IRS is buying up huge stocks of ammunition and former President Barack Obama may be the country's most powerful person.

But they are not caricatures. Not even Carlson, a bearded, gun-owning white guy who voted for former President Donald Trump.

"I'm just a normal person," he says, sitting on a sofa, next to a picture window overlooking the large garden that he and his wife tend. "They don't realize that we mean well."

He's a complicated man. While even he admits he might accurately be called a right-wing extremist, he calls peaceful Black protesters "righteous" for taking to the streets after Floyd's murder. He doubts there was fraud in the midterm elections. He drives a Tesla. He loves AC/DC and makes his own organic yogurt. In an area where Islam is sometimes viewed with open hostility, he's a conservative Christian who says he'd back the area's small Muslim community if they wanted to open a mosque here.

"Build your mosque, of course! That's the American way!"

He believes, deeply, that America doesn't need to be bitterly divided.

"Liberalism and conservatism aren't that far apart. You can be pro-American, pro-constitutional. You just want bigger government programs. I want less."

"We can work together," he says. "We don't have to, like, hate each other."

Repeatedly, he and the county's other right-wing conservatives insist they don't want violence.

But violence often seems to be looming as they talk, hazy images of government thugs or Antifa rioters or health officers seizing children from parents.

And weapons are a big part of their self-proclaimed "patriot" movement. The Second Amendment and the belief that Americans have a right to overthrow tyrannical governments are foundational principles.

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"I'm not a big gun guy," says Carlson, whose weapons include pistols, a shotgun, an AR-15 rifle, 10 loaded magazines and about 1,000 additional rounds. "For a lot of people that's just a start."

That cocktail of weaponry and politics concerns plenty of people outside of their circles.

Liberal voters, along with many establishment Republicans, worry that men in tactical clothing can now occasionally be seen at public gatherings. They worry that some people are now too afraid to be campaign volunteers. They worry that many locals think twice about wearing Democratic T-shirts in public, even in Hudson.

Paul Hambleton, who lives in Hudson and works with the county Democratic party, found comfort in the midterm election results, which even some Republicans say could signal a repudiation of Trump and his most extreme supporters.

"I don't feel the menace like I was feeling it before" the vote, Hambleton says. "I think this election showed that people can be brave, that they can stick their necks out."

He spent years teaching in small-town St. Croix County, where the population has grown from 43,000 in 1980 to about 95,000 today. He watched over the years as the student body shifted. Farmers' children gave way to the children of people who commute to work in the Twin Cities. Racial minorities became a small but growing presence.

He understands why the changes might make some people nervous.

"There is a rural way of life that people feel is being threatened here, a small town way of life," he says.

But he's also a hunter who saw how hard it was to buy ammunition after the 2020 protests, when firearm sales soared across America. For nearly two years, the shelves were almost bare.

"I found that menacing," says Hambleton. "Because no way is that deer hunters buying up so much ammunition."

When the newly empowered conservatives get together it's often at an Irish bar in a freeway strip mall. Next door is the little county GOP office where you can pick up Republican yard signs and \$15 travel mugs that proclaim "Normal Is Not Coming Back -- Jesus Is."

Paddy Ryan's is the closest thing they have to a clubhouse. One afternoon in late summer, Matt Rust was there talking about the media.

"I think they're an arm of a much larger global effort by very rich powerful people to control as much of the world as possible," says Rust, a designer and product developer who can quote large parts of the U.S. Constitution from memory. "And I don't think that's anything new. It's always been that way," from ancient Persian rulers to Adolf Hitler.

"Is that a conspiracy or is that just human nature?" he asks. "I think it's just human nature."

Today, polls indicate that well over 60% of Republicans don't believe President Joe Biden was legitimately elected. Around a third refuse to get the COVID vaccine.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, the Georgia Republican known for her conspiratorial accusations and violent rhetoric, is a political star. Trump has embraced QAnon and its universe of conspiracies. In Wisconsin, Sen. Ron Johnson, a fierce denier of the 2020 election who has suggested the dangers of COVID are overblown, won his third term on Nov. 8.

This seems impossible to many Americans. How can you dismiss the avalanche of evidence that voter fraud was nearly non-existent in 2020? How do you ignore thousands of scientists insisting vaccines are safe? How do you believe QAnon, a movement born from anonymous internet posts?

But news in this world doesn't come from the Associated Press or CNN. It only rarely comes from major conservative media, like Fox News.

Where does it come from?

"The internet," Scott Miller, a 40-year-old sales analyst and a prominent local gun-rights activist. "That's where everybody gets their news these days."

Very often that means right-wing podcasts and videos that bounce around in social media feeds or on the encrypted messaging service Telegram.

It's a media microcosm with its own vocabulary -- Event 201, the Regime, democide, the Parallel Economy

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-- that invites blank stares from outsiders.

While many reports are little more than angry recitations of right-wing talking points, some are sophisticated and believable.

Take "Selection Code," a highly produced hour-long attack on the 2020 election underwritten by Trump ally Mike Lindell, the MyPillow CEO. It has the look of a "60 Minutes" piece, tells a complex story and uses unexpected sources to make some of its main points.

Like Hillary Clinton.

"As we look at our election system, I think it's fair to say there are many legitimate questions about its accuracy, about its integrity," the then-senator is shown saying in a 2005 Senate speech, questioning the re-election of former President George W. Bush.

Miller laughs.

"I'll give the Democrats credit. At least they had the courage to stand up and point it out."

Cornfields come right up to the country church, deep in rural St. Croix County and just down the road from a truck stop Denny's. The closest town, Wilson, is little more than a half-dozen streets, a post office and the Wingin' It Bar and Grill.

From the pulpit of Calvary Assembly of God, Pastor Rick Mannon preaches a Christianity that resonates deeply among the insurgent conservatives, with strict lines of good and evil and little hesitation to wade into cultural and political issues. He pushed back hard against COVID restrictions.

It's an outpost in the culture wars tearing at America, and a haven for people who feel shoved aside by a changing nation.

"If Christians don't get involved in politics, then we shouldn't have a say," Mannon says in an interview. "We can't just let evil win."

Religion, once one of America's tightest social bonds, has changed dramatically over the past few decades, with the overall number of people who identify as Christian plunging from the early 1970s, even as membership in conservative Christian denominations surged.

From churches like Calvary Assembly, they've watched as gay marriage was legalized, as trans rights became a national issue, as Christianity, at least in their eyes, came under attack by pronoun-proclaiming liberals.

It's hard to overstate how much cultural changes have shaped the right wing of American conservatism.

Beliefs about family and sexuality that were commonplace when Kraft was growing up in a Milwaukee suburb in the late 1970s and early 1980s, tinkering with electronics with his father, now can mark people like him as outcasts in the wider world.

"If you say anything negative about trans people, or if you say 'I feel sorry for you. This is a clinical diagnosis' ... Well, you are a bigot," says Kraft, 58, a member of Mannon's congregation. "People with normal, mainstream family values- - churchgoing, believing in God -- suddenly it's something they should be ostracized for."

But in today's world, words like "normal" don't mean what they once did.

That infuriates Kraft, who energized the Republican Party of St. Croix County as its leader but stepped down last year after a quote on the party's website - "If you want peace, prepare for war" - set off a public firestorm. He moved to a neighboring county earlier this year.

He ticks off the accusations leveled at people like him: sexist, homophobic, racist.

But such talk, he says, has lost its power.

"Now it's just noise. It's lost all its meaning."

The plans, if they are mentioned at all, are spoken of quietly.

But sit in enough small-town bars, drive enough small-town roads, and you'll occasionally hear people talk about what they intend to do if things go really bad for America.

There are the solar panels if the electricity grid fails. There's extra gasoline for cars and diesel for gen-

erators. There are shelves of non-perishable food, sometimes enough to last for months.

There are the guns, though that is almost never discussed with outsiders.

"I've got enough," says one man, sitting in a Hudson coffee shop.

"I would rather not get into that with a reporter," says Kraft.

The fears here are mostly about crime and civil unrest. People still talk about the 2020 protests, when they say you could stand in Hudson and see the distant glow of fires in Minneapolis. That frightened many people, and not just conservative Republicans.

But there are other fears, too. About government crackdowns. About firearm seizures. About the possibility that people might have to take up arms against their own government.

Those prospects seem distant, murky, including to the self-declared patriots. The most dire possibilities are spoken about only theoretically.

Still, they are spoken about.

"I pray it will always be that the overthrow is at the ballot box," says Carlson, who seems genuinely pained at the idea of violence.

"We don't want to use guns," he continues. "That would be just horrible."

Congress prepares to take up bill preventing rail strike

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress is moving swiftly to prevent a looming U.S. rail workers strike, reluctantly intervening in a labor dispute to stop what would surely be a devastating blow to the nation's economy if the transportation of fuel, food and other critical goods were disrupted.

The House was expected to act first on Wednesday after President Joe Biden asked Congress to step in. The bill lawmakers are considering would impose a compromise labor agreement brokered by his administration that was ultimately voted down by four of the 12 unions representing more than 100,000 employees at large freight rail carriers. The unions have threatened to strike if an agreement can't be reached before a Dec. 9 deadline.

Lawmakers from both parties expressed reservations, but the intervention was particularly difficult for some Democratic lawmakers who have traditionally sought to align themselves with the politically powerful labor unions.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent who caucuses with Democrats, announced that he would object to fast-tracking the president's proposal until he can get a roll-call vote on an amendment that would guarantee seven paid sick days for rail workers. Some of the more liberal lawmakers in the House such as Reps. Jamaal Bowman of New York and Cori Bush of Missouri tweeted that they couldn't support the measure.

Still, the bill was expected to receive a significant bipartisan vote. That show of support began when the Republican and Democratic leaders of the House and Senate met with Biden on Tuesday at the White House.

"We all agreed that we should try to avoid this rail shutdown as soon as possible," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said as he returned to the Capitol.

A letter from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Democratic colleagues promised two votes, reflecting the consternation she was hearing from members. The first vote will be on adopting the tentative labor agreement. The second will be on a measure to add seven days of paid sick leave for railroaders to the agreement.

"It is with great reluctance that we must now move to bypass the standard ratification process for the Tentative Agreement," Pelosi wrote. "However, we must act to prevent a catastrophic strike that would touch the lives of nearly every family: erasing hundreds of thousands of jobs, including union jobs; keeping food and medicine off the shelves; and stopping small businesses from getting their goods to market."

The compromise agreement that was supported by the railroads and a majority of the unions provides for 24% raises and \$5,000 in bonuses retroactive to 2020 along with one additional paid leave day. The

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raises would be the biggest rail workers have received in more than four decades. Workers would have to pay a larger share of their health insurance costs, but their premiums would be capped at 15% of the total cost of the insurance plan. But the agreement didn't resolve workers' concerns about demanding schedules that make it hard to take a day off and the lack of paid sick time.

Lawmakers from both parties grumbled about stepping into the dispute, but they also said they had little choice.

"The bottom line is we are now forced with this kind of terrible situation where we have to choose between an imperfect deal that has already been negotiated or an economic catastrophe," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

"This is about whether we shut down the railroads of America, which will have extreme negative effects on our economy," said Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland, the No. 2 Democrat in the House. "We should have a bipartisan vote."

Republicans needled the Biden administration and Democrats for Congress being asked to step in now to avert an economic crisis. But many indicated they were ready to do so.

"This has got to be tough for Democrats in that they generally kowtow to unions," said Sen. Mike Braun, R-Ind.

"At this late hour, it's clear that there is little we can do other than to support the measure," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla.

Business groups including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Farm Bureau Federation said earlier this week in a letter to congressional leaders they must be prepared to intervene and that a stoppage of rail service for any duration would represent a \$2 billion per day hit to the economy.

On several past occasions, Congress has intervened in labor disputes by enacting legislation to delay or prohibit railway and airline strikes.

Railroad unions on Tuesday decried Biden's call for Congress to intervene in their contract dispute, saying it undercuts their efforts to address workers' quality-of-life concerns.

Conductor Gabe Christenson, who is co-chairman of the Railroad Workers United coalition that includes workers from all the rail unions, said Biden and the Democrats are siding with the railroads over workers.

"The 'most labor-friendly president in history' has proven that he and the Democratic Party are not the friends of labor they have touted themselves to be," Christenson said.

Election certification delays few, but a 'test run' for 2024

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

Before November, election officials prepared for the possibility that Republicans who embraced former President Donald Trump's lies about voter fraud would challenge the verdict of voters by refusing to certify the results.

Three weeks after the end of voting, such challenges are playing out in just two states, Arizona and Pennsylvania, where Democrats won the marquee races for governor and U.S. Senate.

Legal experts predict the bids are doomed because local governmental bodies typically don't have the option to vote against certifying the results of their elections. It also reflects the limited ability of election conspiracy theorists to disrupt the midterms. One rural Arizona county has drawn court challenges after its refusal to certify, but another flirting with blocking certification backed off amid legal threats.

In Pennsylvania, a handful of the state's 67 counties have delayed certification because of recounts demanded by local conspiracy theorists in scattered precincts. But in most states, certification has gone smoothly.

"Before Election Day, I thought Republicans would exploit the certification process to undermine election results," said Marc Elias, a Democratic attorney who has sued to compel the lone Arizona county to certify.

That there's only one county delaying so far in that important battleground state, where Republican candidates who denied Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential race ran unsuccessfully for governor and secretary of state, is "good news, and a bit of a surprise," Elias said.

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The outcome is a reflection of the diminished opportunities election conspiracy theorists have to control elections after a number of their candidates were routed in statewide elections for positions overseeing voting. They're largely left with a growing footprint in conservative, rural counties. Still, that's enough to cause headaches for having the election results certified on a statewide basis, raising concerns about how rural counties might respond after the next presidential election.

"It is one of the few places where election deniers have a lever of power," Rick Hasen, a law professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, said of the local political bodies charged with certifying election results in most states. "It's a good test run for 2024, showing state courts they're going to have to step in."

The movement that embraces Trump's lies about voting hoped it would have many more levers after November. Candidates who backed Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election ran for top posts with power over state voting — including secretary of state, which in most states is the top election position — in five of the six swing states that were key to Trump's 2020 loss. They lost every race in each of those states.

In 2020, Trump tried unsuccessfully to get Republican governors and secretaries of state to overrule their own voters and declare him the winner of some of the states won by Biden. With 2024 on the horizon, Trump now has fewer officials in his party to pressure if he becomes the nominee.

A Democrat, Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, defeated Trump-backed Republican Kari Lake in the race for Arizona governor, flipping it out of the GOP category, and a Democrat also won the race to replace Hobbs. A Democrat defeated an election conspiracy theorist running for Nevada secretary of state, shifting another swing-state election office from the GOP.

On the local level, the picture is blurrier. There are more than 10,000 local election offices in the country that follow guidelines set by secretaries of state or other agencies that their states designate as the top election authorities. That's where conspiracy theorists won at least some new offices and still have the power to disrupt proceedings.

During the June primary in New Mexico, rural Otero County refused to certify the results of its election, preventing the state from making the winners official until the state Supreme Court ordered it to act. That set a template that election lawyers feared would be vastly replicated in the weeks after the midterms. But this time even Otero certified its winners without complaint.

In Michigan, where a GOP slate of election conspiracy theorists was defeated in statewide races, the Republican candidate for secretary of state, Kristina Karamo, implored the state's bipartisan board of canvassers not to certify the election during a hearing earlier this week. Karamo insisted there had been widespread fraud, even though she lost her race against Democratic Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson by more than 13 percentage points.

Tony Daunt, the Republican chair of the certification board, responded by blasting candidates who "feed into this nonsense" by making "claims that fire everybody up because it's a short-term gain for them, and that's dangerous to our system." The board unanimously certified the election.

In Pennsylvania, the most prominent certification hiccup has come in Luzerne County, north of Philadelphia, which voted for Trump by 14 percentage points in 2020. County commissioners delayed certifying the election on Monday after one Democrat abstained from voting following an Election Day fiasco in which the election office ran out of ballots.

But the Democrat, Daniel Schramm, later told reporters he would vote to certify on Wednesday, after having time to confirm that the foul-up didn't disenfranchise any voters. Certification is being delayed in a few other counties after local Republican committees and voters requested recounts.

In Arizona, the two Republicans on Cochise County's three-member county commission blew past Monday's certification deadline, saying they needed more information on the certification of vote tabulators, even though there have been no problems with voting or ballot counting in their county.

The secretary of state's office has sued, saying that it must certify the state's elections by Dec. 8. If Cochise, which voted for Trump in 2020 by nearly 20 percentage points, declines to include its conservative electorate in the total and a court doesn't force it to, that would change the tally in one of the state's congressional seats from being narrowly won by a Republican to narrowly being taken by a Democrat.

"The only legal effect this has is to disenfranchise all their voters," said David Becker of the Center for

Election Innovation.

The efforts to delay certification are dangerous even if they're doomed to fail, Becker and others said. They continue to sow discontent and distrust of voting and democracy.

David Levine, a former election official who is a fellow with the Alliance for Securing Democracy, noted that conspiracy theories about elections have reached such a fever pitch in Arizona that Bill Gates, the Republican chair of the county commission in Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix, has been given additional security by the local sheriff.

"When you give legitimacy to baseless accusations about the election process, there is a concern that more of that will occur," Levine said.

Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix, certified its election results on Monday, after dozens of attendees demanded the board not do it. Some complained about printer malfunctions in the county, the state's most populous, that led to confusion and long lines on Election Day — even though Maricopa officials said everyone had a chance to vote and that all legal ballots were counted.

In other counties, activists also spoke out against certification, though unsuccessfully. In Yavapai County, north of Phoenix, a woman who gave her name as Nancy Littlefield, wearing a hoodie patterned on the American flag, made clear that part of her objections were because she simply didn't like the outcome of the election.

She urged Yavapai board members not to certify the vote because "I moved from California so I could be free and live my life and have my voice heard."

San Francisco will allow police to deploy robots that kill

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Supervisors in San Francisco voted Tuesday to give city police the ability to use potentially lethal, remote-controlled robots in emergency situations -- following an emotionally charged debate that reflected divisions on the politically liberal board over support for law enforcement.

The vote was 8-3, with the majority agreeing to grant police the option despite strong objections from civil liberties and other police oversight groups. Opponents said the authority would lead to the further militarization of a police force already too aggressive with poor and minority communities.

Supervisor Connie Chan, a member of the committee that forwarded the proposal to the full board, said she understood concerns over use of force but that "according to state law, we are required to approve the use of these equipments. So here we are, and it's definitely not a easy discussion."

The San Francisco Police Department said it does not have pre-armed robots and has no plans to arm robots with guns. But the department could deploy robots equipped with explosive charges "to contact, incapacitate, or disorient violent, armed, or dangerous suspect" when lives are at stake, SFPD spokesperson Allison Maxie said in a statement.

"Robots equipped in this manner would only be used in extreme circumstances to save or prevent further loss of innocent lives," she said.

Supervisors amended the proposal Tuesday to specify that officers could use robots only after using alternative force or de-escalation tactics, or concluding they would not be able to subdue the suspect through those alternative means. Only a limited number of high-ranking officers could authorize use of robots as a deadly force option.

San Francisco police currently have a dozen functioning ground robots used to assess bombs or provide eyes in low visibility situations, the department says. They were acquired between 2010 and 2017, and not once have they been used to deliver an explosive device, police officials said.

But explicit authorization was required after a new California law went into effect this year requiring police and sheriffs departments to inventory military-grade equipment and seek approval for their use.

The state law was authored last year by San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu while he was an assembly member. It is aimed at giving the public a forum and voice in the acquisition and use of military-grade weapons that have a negative effect on communities, according to the legislation.

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A federal program has long dispensed grenade launchers, camouflage uniforms, bayonets, armored vehicles and other surplus military equipment to help local law enforcement.

In 2017, then-President Donald Trump signed an order reviving the Pentagon program after his predecessor, Barack Obama, curtailed it in 2015, triggered in part by outrage over the use of military gear during protests in Ferguson, Missouri, after the shooting death of Michael Brown.

San Francisco police said late Tuesday that no robots were obtained from military surplus, but some were purchased with federal grant money.

Like many places around the U.S., San Francisco is trying to balance public safety with treasured civilian rights such as privacy and the ability to live free of excessive police oversight. In September, supervisors agreed to a trial run allowing police to access in real time private surveillance camera feeds in certain circumstances.

Debate on Tuesday ran more than two hours with members on both sides accusing the other of reckless fear mongering.

Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, who voted in favor of the policy authorization, said he was troubled by rhetoric painting the police department as untrustworthy and dangerous.

"I think there's larger questions raised when progressives and progressive policies start looking to the public like they are anti-police," he said. "I think that is bad for progressives. I think it's bad for this Board of Supervisors. I think it's bad for Democrats nationally."

Board President Shamann Walton, who voted against the proposal, pushed back, saying it made him not anti-police, but "pro people of color."

"We continuously are being asked to do things in the name of increasing weaponry and opportunities for negative interaction between the police department and people of color," he said. "This is just one of those things."

The San Francisco Public Defender's office sent a letter Monday to the board saying that granting police "the ability to kill community members remotely" goes against the city's progressive values. The office wanted the board to reinstate language barring police from using robots against any person in an act of force.

On the other side of the San Francisco Bay, the Oakland Police Department has dropped a similar proposal after public backlash.

The first time a robot was used to deliver explosives in the U.S. was in 2016, when Dallas police sent in an armed robot that killed a holed-up sniper who had killed five officers in an ambush.

Colorado governor visits shooting site as community heals

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press/Report for America

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — In a crowded brewery, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis embraced Richard Fierro, the veteran hailed as a hero after tackling a shooter who killed five people and injured 17 others at the LGBTQ enclave Club Q last week.

There was a festive atmosphere Tuesday at Atrevida Beer, owned by Fierro, where patrons clutched pints of beer, a long line stretched across the room to the door, and above the bar was printed a message: "Diversity, it's on tap."

Fierro's event, where Polis and the Colorado Springs mayor both made an appearance, was the paradigm of a catchphrase Fierro has repeated since the shooting: "Be nice, hug each other, take care of your neighbor."

The hugs seemed contagious. Fierro squeezed Wyatt Kent, a drag queen whose 23rd birthday was being celebrated the night of the shooting, and chatted with his family.

Kent, who's drag name is Potted Plant, was still reeling from the horrific night. Kent remembered shots, then collapsing below Kelly Loving, who had been shot in the chest. Squeezing her hand as they asked Siri to call 911, Kent then held Loving's head, repeating "one more breath, just one more breath" before paramedics arrived.

The bleeding from Loving's chest, was "like a hole in an air mattress," said Kent, pausing and looking

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away. Loving was among the five dead, along with Daniel Aston, who Kent was in a relationship with. Aston had left strawberries, roses and a card for Kent's birthday before he was killed.

Kent, who'd written 119 poems about Aston, went completely numb in the days afterward. Then, they began connecting with Aston's family and friends, those "who loved him, it's really healing," they said.

Club Q's community had been a steadfast support network, said Kent, one which has continued to undergird the community's healing since the tragedy.

"If I pour myself out into others they will pour themselves out back into me," said Kent, "and that's what this community has always done."

The broader Colorado Springs community is pouring out support for the survivors, too. At his brewery, Fierro was honored with \$50,000 from a local credit union.

"I've never had that much money in my life," said an astonished Fierro, who reiterated that "everyone in (Club Q) was a hero."

Matt Gendron, chief engagement officer at Ent Credit Union and who's employee had been in Club Q that night, said that Fierro "saved the lives of many people, including one of our family members."

Earlier that day, Polis solemnly walked along a line of flowers, crosses and signs bearing the photos and names of the victims outside Club Q in Colorado Springs.

When he reached the end, he picked up a piece of pink chalk and drew a heart and wrote "We remember" on the pavement in front of the memorial, which had been covered with tarps to protect it from snow until his arrival.

"Five people are lost forever. We celebrate their lives. We mourn them," Polis said while speaking to reporters afterward at the site.

Polis, who spoke earlier in the day to relatives of those killed as well as the injured, wore a gay pride ribbon pinned to the zipper of his puffy jacket. The Democrat, who became the first openly gay man elected governor in the U.S. in 2018, said he was concerned about rhetoric associating mainly transgender people with grooming and pedophilia and feared it could "inspire acts against the LGBTQ community."

But he was also optimistic about the future of the club, a sanctuary for the LGBTQ community in the mostly conservative city of 480,000, located about 70 miles (110 kilometers) south of Denver.

"Club Q will be back and the community will be back," he said.

The attacker opened fire Nov. 19 with a semiautomatic rifle inside the gay nightclub before being subdued by patrons and arrested by police who arrived within minutes, authorities have said.

The motive remains under investigation and one person is in custody.

Anderson Lee Aldrich, 22, was being held without bond on suspicion of murder and hate crimes. Aldrich was arrested at the club after being stopped and beaten by patrons.

Hate crime charges would require proving that the shooter was motivated by bias, such as against the victims' actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

Prosecutors have not yet filed formal charges against Aldrich, who is nonbinary and uses they/them pronouns, according to court filings by his lawyers.

Aldrich was arrested last year after a relative reported Aldrich was threatening her with a homemade bomb and other weapons, according to authorities.

Ring doorbell video obtained by The Associated Press shows Aldrich arriving at their mother's front door with a big black bag the day of the 2021 bomb threat, telling her the police were nearby and adding, "This is where I stand. Today I die."

Authorities at the time said no explosives were found.

Oath Keepers' Rhodes guilty of Jan. 6 seditious conspiracy

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes was convicted Tuesday of seditious conspiracy for a violent plot to overturn President Joe Biden's election, handing the Justice Department a major victory in its massive prosecution of the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection.

A Washington, D.C., jury found Rhodes guilty of sedition after three days of deliberations in the nearly

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two-month-long trial that showcased the far-right extremist group's efforts to keep Republican Donald Trump in the White House at all costs.

Rhodes was acquitted of two other conspiracy charges. A co-defendant — Kelly Meggs, who led the antigovernment group's Florida chapter — was also convicted of seditious conspiracy, while three other associates were cleared of that charge. Jurors found all five defendants guilty of obstruction of an official proceeding: Congress' certification of Biden's electoral victory.

The verdict, while mixed, marks a significant milestone for the Justice Department and is likely to clear the path for prosecutors to move ahead at full steam in upcoming trials of other extremists accused of sedition.

Rhodes and Meggs are the first people in nearly three decades to be found guilty at trial of seditious conspiracy — a rarely used Civil War-era charge that can be difficult to prove. The offense calls for up to 20 years behind bars.

It could embolden investigators, whose work has expanded beyond those who attacked the Capitol to focus on others linked to Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election. U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland recently named a veteran prosecutor, Jack Smith, to serve as special counsel to oversee key aspects of a probe into efforts to subvert the election as well as a separate investigation into the retention of classified documents at Trump's Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago.

Garland said after the verdict that the Justice Department "is committed to holding accountable those criminally responsible for the assault on our democracy on January 6, 2021."

"Democracy depends on the peaceful transfer of power. By attempting to block the certification of the 2020 presidential election results, the defendants flouted and trampled the rule of law," Steven M. D'Antuono, assistant director in charge of the FBI Washington Field Office, said in an emailed statement. "This case shows that force and violence are no match for our country's justice system."

Using dozens of encrypted messages, recordings and surveillance video, prosecutors made the case that Rhodes began shortly after the 2020 election to prepare an armed rebellion to stop the transfer of presidential power.

Over seven weeks of testimony, jurors heard how Rhodes rallied his followers to fight to defend Trump, discussed the prospect of a "bloody" civil war and warned the Oath Keepers may have to "rise up in insurrection" to defeat Biden if Trump didn't act.

Defense attorneys accused prosecutors of twisting their clients' words and insisted the Oath Keepers came to Washington only to provide security for figures such as Roger Stone, a longtime Trump ally. The defense focused heavily on seeking to show that Rhodes' rhetoric was just bluster and that the Oath Keepers had no plan before Jan. 6 to attack the Capitol.

Rhodes intends to appeal, defense attorney James Lee Bright told reporters. Another Rhodes lawyer, Ed Tarpley, described the verdict as a "mixed bag," adding, "This is not a total victory for the government in any way, shape or form."

"We feel like we presented a case that showed through evidence and testimony that Mr. Rhodes did not commit the crime of seditious conspiracy," Tarpley said.

On trial alongside Rhodes, of Granbury, Texas, and Meggs, were Kenneth Harrelson, another Florida Oath Keeper; Thomas Caldwell, a retired Navy intelligence officer from Virginia; and Jessica Watkins, who led an Ohio militia group.

Caldwell was convicted on two counts and acquitted on three others, including seditious conspiracy. His attorney, David Fischer, called the verdict "major victory" for his client and a "major defeat" for the Justice Department. He also said he would appeal the two convictions.

Jury selection for a second group of Oath Keepers facing seditious conspiracy charges is scheduled to begin next week. Several members of the Proud Boys, including the former national chairman Enrique Tarrío, are also scheduled to go to trial on the sedition charge in December.

In an extraordinary move, Rhodes took the stand to tell jurors there was no plan to attack the Capitol and insist that his followers who went inside the building went rogue.

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Rhodes testified that he had no idea that his followers were going to join the mob and storm the Capitol and said he was upset after he found out that some did. Rhodes said they were acting "stupid" and outside their mission for the day.

Prosecutors said the Oath Keepers saw an opportunity to advance their plot to stop the transfer of power and sprang into action when the mob started storming the Capitol. The Capitol attack was a "means to an end" for the Oath Keepers, Assistant U.S. Attorney Kathryn Rakoczy told jurors in her closing argument.

Jurors heard how Rhodes spent thousands of dollars on an AR-platform rifle, magazines, mounts, sights and other equipment on his way to Washington ahead of the riot. They watched surveillance footage from the Virginia hotel where some Oath Keepers stashed weapons for "quick reaction force" teams prosecutors said were ready to get weapons into the city quickly if they were needed. The weapons were never deployed.

On Jan. 6, Oath Keepers wearing combat gear were seen on camera shouldering their way through the crowd and into the Capitol. Rhodes remained outside like a "general surveying his troops on the battlefield," a prosecutor said. After the riot, Rhodes and other Oath Keepers went to an Olive Garden restaurant to celebrate, according to prosecutors.

The trial revealed new details about Rhodes' efforts to pressure Trump to fight to stay in White House in the weeks leading up to Jan. 6. Shortly after the election, in a group chat that included Stone called "FOS" or "Friends of Stone," Rhodes wrote, "So will you step up and push Trump to FINALLY take decisive action?"

Another man testified that after the riot, Rhodes tried to persuade him to pass along a message to Trump that urged the president not to give up his fight to hold onto power. The intermediary — a man who told jurors he had an indirect way to reach the president — recorded his meeting with Rhodes and went to the FBI instead of giving the message to Trump.

"If he's not going to do the right thing and he's just gonna let himself be removed illegally then we should have brought rifles," Rhodes said during that meeting, according to a recording played for jurors. "We should have fixed it right then and there. I'd hang (expletive) Pelosi from the lamppost," Rhodes said, referring to Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Three other Oath Keepers previously pleaded guilty to seditious conspiracy. The last time the Justice Department had secured such a conviction at trial, though, was in the 1995 prosecution of Islamic militants who plotted to bomb New York City landmarks.

Pulisic goal advances US in World Cup with 1-0 win over Iran

By RONALD BLUM AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Christian Pulisic kicked the ball, scored the goal and crashed into the goalkeeper, a collision that sent the American star to a hospital and the United States into the second round of the World Cup.

More than an hour later, he contacted his teammates by FaceTime to join the celebration.

Pulisic's 38th-minute goal had held up, and the United States had beaten Iran 1-0 on Tuesday night in their politically charged rematch to advance to the World Cup's knockout stage.

"Every single player is ready to lay their body on the line to make sure this team is successful," midfielder Weston McKennie said.

After finishing second in Group B with five points, two behind England, the U.S. plays the Netherlands on Saturday with the chance to reach the quarterfinals for the first time since 2002.

"I always say it's us against the world," winger Tim Weah said, "cause no one believed that the U.S. could play good football."

Back in the World Cup after missing the 2018 tournament, the U.S. needed a victory to reach the round of 16. Iran finished third in the group with three points and has failed to advance in six World Cup appearances.

"The dream is over," Iran coach Carlos Queiroz said.

McKennie started the play for the goal when he lofted the ball from just past the center circle to Sergio

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Dest at the edge of the 6-yard box. Dest headed the ball in front of the net on a bounce as Pulisic charged up the center of the field past Ramin Rezaeian and Majid Hosseini.

Twisting his body, Pulisic redirected the ball with his right foot for his 22nd international goal and first in World Cup play. His momentum carried him into goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand.

"Christian makes those runs. That's what he does. That's the special quality he has," U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter said. "As soon as the ball is wide, he goes in with intensity to the penalty box and good things happen."

Pulisic was sprawled on the field and for about three minutes as he received treatment. He tried to continue playing but was substituted at the start of the second half and taken by athletic trainer Harris Patel for abdominal scans at Hamad General Hospital, where Pulisic followed the game on phone apps. The U.S. Soccer Federation said Pulisic was diagnosed with a pelvic contusion, returned to the team hotel and is day to day.

"I sent him a text and checked on him, and he said, 'Best believe I'll be ready on Saturday,'" McKennie said.

Weah nearly doubled the lead in the seventh minute of first-half stoppage time but was ruled offside.

Raucous Iranian fans with horns and drums in the crowd of 42,127 filled the lower bowl behind one goal at Al Thumama Stadium, a circular venue shaped like a gahfiya, a traditional hat.

While the U.S. outshot Iran 9-0 in the first half, Iran had a 4-3 advantage in the second, knowing it needed only a draw to advance. Berhalter inserted Walker Zimmerman in the 82nd minute and shifted to a five-man defense.

Nine minutes of stoppage time were announced. Morteza Pournajafi's diving header in the third minute went just wide. In the eighth minute, Cameron Carter-Vickers had a hand on Mehdi Taremi's shoulder as the striker slid into Matt Turner, and the ball squibbed through the goalkeeper only for Zimmerman to clear it. Spanish referee Antonio Mateu denied Iran's appeal for a video review, and the final whistle blew after the 10th extra minute.

"I hope that our fans and our people in Iran forgive us," Taremi said.

Turner gave the U.S. consecutive World Cup shutouts for the first time since 1930. Inside the locker room, teammates tried to speak with Pulisic.

"Everyone was screaming, so we couldn't really hear too, too much," Turner said. "He left everything, put everything on the line there and was able to get the ball across the line."

LINEUPS

Carter-Vickers, a son of former NBA player Howard Carter, made his World Cup debut in place of Zimmerman and gave the U.S. an entirely Europe-based lineup for the second time in a competitive match since Major League Soccer began in 1996, the first since the 2011 CONCACAF Gold Cup against Jamaica.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Josh Sargent injured his right ankle in a 74th-minute challenge by Hosseini and left three minutes later.

UP NEXT

The U.S. is 1-4 against the Netherlands, all friendlies.

Landmark same-sex marriage bill wins Senate passage

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate passed bipartisan legislation Tuesday to protect same-sex marriages, an extraordinary sign of shifting national politics on the issue and a measure of relief for the hundreds of thousands of same-sex couples who have married since the Supreme Court's 2015 decision that legalized gay marriage nationwide.

The bill, which would ensure that same-sex and interracial marriages are enshrined in federal law, was approved 61-36 on Tuesday, including support from 12 Republicans. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the legislation was "a long time coming" and part of America's "difficult but inexorable march towards greater equality."

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Democrats are moving quickly, while the party still holds the majority in both chambers of Congress. The legislation now moves to the House for a final vote.

President Joe Biden praised the bipartisan vote and said he will sign the bill "promptly and proudly" if it is passed by the House. He said it will ensure that LGBTQ youth "will grow up knowing that they, too, can lead full, happy lives and build families of their own."

The bill has gained steady momentum since the Supreme Court's June decision that overturned the federal right to an abortion, a ruling that included a concurring opinion from Justice Clarence Thomas that suggested same-sex marriage could also come under threat. Bipartisan Senate negotiations got a kick-start this summer when 47 Republicans unexpectedly voted for a House bill and gave supporters new optimism.

The legislation would not force any state to allow same-sex couples to marry. But it would require states to recognize all marriages that were legal where they were performed, and protect current same-sex unions, if the court's 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision were to be overturned. It's a stunning bipartisan endorsement, and evidence of societal change, after years of bitter divisiveness on the issue.

A new law protecting same-sex marriages would also be a major victory for Democrats as they relinquish their two years of consolidated power in Washington, and a massive win for advocates who have been pushing for decades for federal legislation. It comes as the LGBTQ community has faced violent attacks, such as the shooting last weekend at a gay nightclub in Colorado that killed five people and injured at least 17.

"Our community really needs a win, we have been through a lot," said Kelley Robinson, the incoming president of Human Rights Campaign, which advocates on LGBTQ issues. "As a queer person who is married, I feel a sense of relief right now. I know my family is safe."

Robinson was in the Senate chamber for the vote with her wife, Becky, and toddler son. "It was more emotional than I expected," she said.

The vote was personal for many senators, too. Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin, a Democrat who is the first openly gay senator and was the lead sponsor of the bill, tearfully hugged Schumer and others as the final vote was called. Baldwin, who has been working on gay rights issues for almost four decades, tweeted thanks to the same-sex and interracial couples who she said made the moment possible.

"By living as your true selves, you changed the hearts and minds of people around you," she wrote.

Schumer said on Tuesday that he was wearing the tie he wore at his daughter's wedding, "one of the happiest moments of my life." He also recalled the "harrowing conversation" he had with his daughter and her wife in September 2020 when they heard that liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had passed away. "Could our right to marry be undone?" they asked at the time.

With conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett replacing Ginsburg, the court has now overturned Roe v. Wade and the federal right to an abortion, stoking fears about Obergefell and other rights protected by the court. But sentiment has shifted on same-sex marriage, with more than two-thirds of the public now in support.

Still, Schumer said it was notable that the Senate was even having the debate after years of Republican opposition. "A decade ago, it would have strained all of our imaginations to envision both sides talking about protecting the rights of same-sex married couples," he said.

Passage came after the Senate rejected three Republican amendments to protect the rights of religious institutions and others to still oppose such marriages. Supporters of the legislation argued those amendments were unnecessary because the bill had already been amended to clarify that it does not affect rights of private individuals or businesses that are currently enshrined in law. The bill would also make clear that a marriage is between two people, an effort to ward off some far-right criticism that the legislation could endorse polygamy.

Republican Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina, who has been lobbying his fellow GOP senators to support the legislation for months, pointed to the number of religious groups supporting the bill, including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Some of those groups were part of negotiations on the bipartisan amendment.

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"They see this as a step forward for religious freedom," Tillis says.

The nearly 17-million member, Utah-based faith said in a statement this month that church doctrine would continue to consider same-sex relationships to be against God's commandments.

Most Republicans still oppose the legislation, saying it is unnecessary and citing concerns about religious liberty. And some conservative groups stepped up opposition in recent weeks, lobbying Republican supporters to switch their votes.

"Marriage is the exclusive, lifelong, conjugal union between one man and one woman, and any departure from that design hurts the indispensable goal of having every child raised in a stable home by the mom and dad who conceived him," the Heritage Foundation's Roger Severino, vice president of domestic policy, wrote in a recent blog post arguing against the bill.

In an effort to win the 10 Republican votes necessary to overcome a filibuster in the 50-50 Senate, Democrats delayed consideration until after the midterm elections, hoping that would relieve political pressure on GOP senators who might be wavering.

Eventual support from 12 Republicans gave Democrats the votes they needed.

Along with Tillis, Maine Sen. Susan Collins and Ohio Sen. Rob Portman supported the bill early on and have lobbied their GOP colleagues to support it. Also voting for the legislation were Republican Sens. Richard Burr of North Carolina, Todd Young of Indiana, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, Mitt Romney of Utah, Joni Ernst of Iowa, Roy Blunt of Missouri, Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming and Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan of Alaska.

Just before passage, Collins thanked her fellow Republicans who supported it. "I know it has not been easy, but they have done the right thing," Collins said.

Lummis, one of the more conservative members of the Senate, spoke ahead of the final vote about her "fairly brutal self soul searching" before supporting the bill. She said that she accepts her church's beliefs that a marriage is between a man and a woman, but noted that the country was founded on the separation of church and state.

"We do well by taking this step, not embracing or validating each other's devoutly held views, but by the simple act of tolerating them," Lummis said.

Baldwin said earlier this month that the newfound openness from many Republicans on the subject reminds her "of the arc of the LGBTQ movement to begin with, in the early days when people weren't out and people knew gay people by myths and stereotypes."

"And slowly laws have followed," she said. "It is history."

Drug slows Alzheimer's but can it make a real difference?

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

An experimental Alzheimer's drug modestly slowed the brain disease's inevitable worsening, researchers reported Tuesday -- but it remains unclear how much difference that might make in people's lives.

Japanese drugmaker Eisai and its U.S. partner Biogen had announced earlier this fall that the drug lecanemab appeared to work, a badly needed bright spot after repeated disappointments in the quest for better Alzheimer's treatments.

Now the companies are providing full results of the study of nearly 1,800 people in the earliest stages of the mind-robbing disease. The data was presented at an Alzheimer's meeting in San Francisco and published in The New England Journal of Medicine. U.S. regulators could approve the drug as soon as January.

Every two weeks for 18 months, study participants received intravenous lecanemab or a dummy infusion. Researchers tracked them using an 18-point scale that measures cognitive and functional ability.

Those given lecanemab declined more slowly -- a difference of not quite half a point on that scale, concluded the research team led by Dr. Christopher van Dyck at Yale University.

That's a hard-to-understand change, but measured a different way, lecanemab delayed patients' worsening by about five months over the course of the study, Eisai's Dr. Michael Irizarry told The Associated Press. Also, lecanemab recipients were 31% less likely to advance to the next stage of the disease during

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the study.

"That translates to more time in earlier stages" when people function better, Irizarry said.

But doctors are divided over how much difference those changes may make for patients and families.

"It is unlikely that the small difference reported in this trial will be noticeable by individual patients," said Dr. Madhav Thambisetty of the National Institute on Aging, who noted he wasn't speaking for the government agency.

He said many researchers believe a meaningful improvement would require at least a difference of a full point on that 18-point scale.

But Dr. Ron Petersen, an Alzheimer's expert at the Mayo Clinic, said the drug's effect was "a modest one but I think it's clinically meaningful" -- because even a few months' delay in progression could give someone a little more time when they're functioning independently.

The trial is important because it shows a drug that attacks a sticky protein called amyloid -- considered one of several culprits behind Alzheimer's -- can delay disease progression, said Maria Carrillo, chief science officer for the Alzheimer's Association.

"We all understand that this is not a cure and we're all trying to really grasp what it means to slow Alzheimer's, because this is a first," Carrillo said.

But any delay in cognitive decline early on could be meaningful for "how much time we have with our loved ones in a stage of disease where we can still enjoy family and outings, vacations, bucket lists," she said.

Amyloid-targeting drugs can cause side effects that include swelling and bleeding in the brain, and lecanemab did as well. One type of this swelling was seen in about 13% of recipients. Eisai said most were mild or asymptomatic.

Also, two deaths have been publicly reported among lecanemab users who also were taking blood-thinning medications for other health problems. Eisai said Tuesday the deaths can't be attributed to the Alzheimer's drug.

But Mayo's Petersen said if lecanemab is approved for use in the U.S., he'd avoid prescribing it to people on blood thinners at least initially.

And Thambisetty said the death reports raise concern about how the drug may be tolerated outside of research studies "where patients are likely to be sicker and have multiple other medical conditions."

The Food and Drug Administration is considering approving lecanemab under its fast-track program, with a decision expected in early January. If approved, it would be the second anti-amyloid drug on the market.

Nearly all treatments available for the 6 million Americans with Alzheimer's -- and millions more worldwide -- only temporarily ease symptoms. Scientists don't yet know exactly how Alzheimer's forms but one theory is that gunky amyloid buildup plays a key role, although drug after drug that targets it has failed.

In a contentious move last year, the FDA approved the first amyloid-targeting drug, Biogen's Aduhelm, despite lack of evidence of better patient outcomes. Insurers and many doctors have hesitated to prescribe the pricey drug -- another reason experts have anxiously awaited word of how well the newer lecanemab may work.

If the FDA approves lecanemab, patients and their families will need a voice in deciding whether it's worth the hassle of IV infusions and the risk of side effects for the chance of at least some delay in progression, Petersen said.

"I don't think we're going to stop the disease in its tracks" with just amyloid-targeting drugs, he added, saying it will take a combination of medications that target additional Alzheimer's culprits.

Researchers are preparing to test lecanemab with other experimental drugs, and how it works in high-risk people before they show the first signs of memory problems.

Kim Kardashian and Ye settle divorce, averting custody trial

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kim Kardashian and Ye have reached a settlement in their divorce, averting a trial

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that had been set for next month, court documents filed Tuesday showed.

The former couple and their attorneys filed documents asking for a judge's approval of terms they have agreed on, including \$200,000 per month child support payments from Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, to Kardashian.

The two will have joint custody, and neither will pay the other spousal support, according to the documents filed in Los Angeles Superior Court.

The judge declared the two legally single at Kardashian's request in March, ending their eight-year marriage, but issues of property and custody remained that were to be worked out in a trial starting Dec. 14.

The two have four children whose ages range from 3 to 9 years old.

Kardashian and Ye will equally split the expenses for the kids' private security and private school, including college, according to the settlement proposal.

They will also each pay their own debts the settlement said. The two had a pre-nuptial agreement and kept their property largely separate.

The couple began dating in 2012 and had their first child in 2013. West proposed later that year using the giant screen at the empty waterfront ballpark of the San Francisco Giants, and the two married May 24, 2014, in a ceremony at a Renaissance fortress in Florence, Italy.

The two appeared to be headed for a cordial split with agreed-upon terms when Kardashian first filed for divorce in February of 2021. Neither discussed the split publicly until early this year, when Ye started lashing out on social media against Kardashian, her family, and then-boyfriend Pete Davidson. Among his complaints were that he was not being allowed to make major parenting decisions and was being excluded from birthday parties and other events for their children.

Ye, who has fired two lawyers since the divorce filing, also raised several technical issues and demands, including seeking the right to question any new husband of Kardashian's under oath, which Judge Steve Cochran promptly rejected.

The settlement comes soon after several companies have cut ties with Ye over offensive and antisemitic remarks that have further eroded an already withering public image.

His latest lawyer, Nicholas Salick, did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the settlement.

It was the third marriage for Kardashian, the reality TV superstar, businesswoman and influencer, and the first marriage for the rap and fashion mogul Ye. Theirs was one of the most closely followed celebrity unions in recent decades.

Trump's dinner disaster sparks new rules for his campaign

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump is betting he can win his way back to the White House by reviving the outsider appeal that fueled his success in 2016.

But his dinner with a Holocaust-denying white nationalist and a rapper who has spewed antisemitic conspiracies is demonstrating the risks of that approach. It underscores the dangers of his limited campaign operation and leaves the former president subject to stinging criticism from fellow Republicans who increasingly see him as a liability for their party after a lackluster showing in this year's midterm elections.

In an acknowledgment of the severity of the backlash and an effort to prevent a repeat, Trump's campaign is putting new protocols in place to ensure that those who meet with him are approved and fully vetted, according to people familiar with the plans who requested anonymity to share internal strategy. The changes will include expediting a system, borrowed from Trump's White House, in which a senior campaign official will be present with him at all times, according to one of the people.

The decision follows the anger and handwringing from people close to Trump over how the former president became embroiled in scandal just two weeks after launching his third campaign for the White House under the cloud of numerous investigations. And it highlights their concerns about Trump's vulnerability as GOP strategists and officials increasingly conclude that new leadership is the party's best hope for winning in future elections.

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"Republicans, we're looking to 2024 and we're looking for a winner," said New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, who blasted Trump's dinner as "absolutely reprehensible."

"I think it makes him even less electable in November of 2024," he said.

Trump has repeatedly said he did not know until after the fact that he had had dinner with Nick Fuentes, the far-right activist who has used his online platform to spew antisemitic and white nationalist rhetoric. Fuentes arrived by car with Ye, the rapper formerly known as Kanye West, and was waved into the club by security, even though only Ye had been on the security list, according to one of the people present and others briefed on the events. (Fuentes apparently did not show his ID and the car's driver, a frequent guest at the club, got in using a credit card after misplacing her license.)

Some aides had advised Trump against meeting with Ye, who has made his own antisemitic comments. But the two have a longstanding relationship and Trump rebuffed the advice. They were supposed to meet one-on-one in the club's library, but Trump, eager to show off his celebrity guest to his paying club members, decided to divert the group to the club's main patio dining area. Fuentes joined the dinner at Ye's invitation.

Trump is no stranger to controversies of his own creation. His 2016 campaign was fueled by an endless cycle of outrage. Trump would make an inflammatory statement, calling for Muslims to be banned from entering the country, saying John McCain was "not a war hero" because he was captured in Vietnam, or asserting an Indiana-born federal judge had "an absolute conflict" on a case because of his "Mexican heritage." Those comments would spur days of media coverage as critics responded with outrage, keeping Trump in the news.

But the political landscape is fundamentally different now. Trump is no longer a political outsider or newcomer. He's a member of a most elite circle — the former presidents club — and a seasoned politician mounting what is now his third campaign for the office. And after nearly eight years of his dominating the news cycle, many in his party and the voting public are tired of the constant drama and chaos.

"If you have people who are constantly creating distractions and taking you off message and forcing people to answer questions like the ones that you're asking, that's not a good thing," South Dakota Sen. John Thune, the No. 2 Senate Republican, told reporters on Capitol Hill on Tuesday.

And while Trump has advised aides that he wants to try to recapture the energy of his first campaign, when he was the anti-establishment outsider fighting better-financed and organized rivals, the Mar-a-Lago episode revealed the limits of his threadbare operation, which has yet to hold a single public event since Trump's announcement two weeks ago.

Trump's team had planned to wait until the new year to begin building out a more robust and regimented campaign operation. But while no travel has been planned through the end of the year, aides are stepping up their efforts to ensure the people he meets with have been screened and that the former president is staffed by a rotating set of campaign aides — something that had not been expected to begin until January.

In the aftermath of the dinner meeting, several GOP senators had said those responsible for the meeting should be fired. Longtime allies not involved in the campaign questioned how Fuentes was able to access the club and why nobody seemed aware of his presence or warned Trump against meeting with him.

So far, Trump has refused to condemn the views of either visitor, despite growing condemnation from his party, including calls for an apology from his former Vice President Mike Pence.

In an interview with Fox News Digital Tuesday, Trump said again that he had "never heard of" Fuentes. "I had no idea what his views were and they weren't expressed at the table in our very quick dinner, or it wouldn't have been accepted," he said.

On Tuesday, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell told reporters, "There is no room in the Republican Party for antisemitism or white supremacy," and "anyone meeting with people advocating that point of view, in my judgment, are highly unlikely to ever be elected president of the United States."

"The president can have meetings with who he wants," added House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy, "but I don't think anyone should have a meeting with Nick Fuentes, and his views are nowhere within the Republican Party and within this country itself."

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Trump, who generally views backtracking as a sign of weakness, has a long history of failing to condemn bigotry and hate speech in what some have attributed to concerns about alienating parts of his base who are open to such views.

Amid pressure to denounce David Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan leader who endorsed his 2016 campaign, for instance, Trump was heard assuring former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie "that he would get to it, but that it didn't have to happen too quickly," reporter Maggie Haberman recounted in her book, "Confidence Man." "A lot of these people vote," Trump reportedly said.

"Mr. Trump isn't going to change, and the next two years will inevitably feature many more such damaging episodes," The Wall Street Journal editorial board wrote on Sunday. "Republicans who continue to go along for the ride with Mr. Trump are teeing themselves up for disaster in 2024."

EXPLAINER: What to know on Congress' bid to bar rail strike

By HOPE YEN and JOSH FUNK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is asking Congress to intervene to avert a potentially crippling freight rail strike before Christmas and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is calling a vote this week to do so, even if it means handing a defeat to Democratic allies in the labor movement.

The legislation urged by Biden and being voted on Wednesday by the House would impose a compromise labor agreement brokered by his administration that was ultimately voted down by four of the 12 unions that represent about 115,000 workers at the freight railroads.

A look at Congress' options to intervene, the potential impact on consumers, and what happens next:
WHY DID BIDEN ASK CONGRESS TO ACT NOW?

In urging Congress to impose the deal that union leaders had agreed to in September, Biden pushed an aggressive option that would immediately resolve an impasse between freight railroads and the unions over paid sick leave that threatened a rail stoppage starting Dec. 9.

The other options included extending a cooling-off period to allow both sides to continue negotiating or forcing the parties to enter arbitration. Biden also could have urged Congress to impose a less generous proposal for workers that was issued by a presidential board of arbitrators in August. Or he could have proposed adding the sick time or other benefits unions have been asking for, but sweetening the deal for railroad workers at this point would have been a harder sell with Republicans.

The main reason for Biden to act now is that nearly every industry would be hurt by a rail shutdown and many commuters would be stranded as well. Railroads haul about 40% of the nation's freight, and the railroads estimated that a rail strike would cost the economy \$2 billion a day. Also, rail would begin to stop taking shipments of hazardous materials and perishable goods up to a week before next Friday's strike deadline. That's why business groups in particular were urging Biden and Congress to act this week.

Biden, who described himself as a "proud, pro-labor president" in calling for congressional action, said intervention was needed now.

"It's not an easy call, but I think we have to do it. The economy's at risk," he said Tuesday.

WHAT POWER DOES CONGRESS HAVE TO INTERVENE?

Congress can step in to resolve disputes between labor unions and railroads under the 1926 Railway Labor Act, as part of its power under the Constitution to regulate commerce. That law was written to prevent disruptions in interstate commerce.

Congress has previously intervened 18 times in such disputes after the process has proceeded without success to a Presidential Emergency Board, which issues recommendations that the parties may choose to reject.

The last time Congress ended a rail strike was in 1992, sending the case to arbitration. Biden was one of only six senators to vote against that legislation, citing unfavorable terms for workers. President George H.W. Bush signed the legislation into law to end a two-day strike that had begun forcing layoffs at coal mines and auto assembly plants and threatened a broader stoppage of Amtrak passenger service.

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If Congress acts in this go-around, it will end talks between the railroads and four rail unions that rejected the deal Biden helped broker before the original strike deadline in September. Eight other unions have approved their five-year deals with the railroads and are in the process of getting back pay for their workers for the 24% raises that are retroactive to 2020.

WHAT IS THE MAIN STICKING POINT BETWEEN UNIONS AND FREIGHT RAIL?

The main sticking points in the negotiations have been related to quality of life concerns. Workers have complained about the demanding schedules in the industry that make it hard for some of them ever to take a day off, and the rail unions have been pushing for the railroads to add paid sick time for workers. Railroads have refused to consider adding sick time because they don't want to spend more on these deals than what they have already offered, and the railroads say the unions have agreed over the decades to forgo paid sick time in favor of higher wages and strong short-term disability benefits.

The demanding schedules piece is the biggest issue for engineers and conductors because they're on call 24-7. Some of the other unions have more regular schedules already. But all the unions that rejected their deals have been pushing to add sick time on top of the September deals.

Workers also say their jobs have become significantly more demanding because the railroads have eliminated nearly one-third of their jobs over the past six years as they overhauled their operations.

WHAT OPTIONS IS CONGRESS CONSIDERING AND WHEN WILL IT ACT?

Biden asked Congress to impose the compromise agreement that had been backed by business and labor leaders in September. The Democrat-controlled House is expected on Wednesday to pass the legislation, which leaves out provisions demanded by four rail unions to boost sick leave, and send it to the Senate.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and some progressive Democrats in the House are criticizing the compromise agreement as falling short, but Biden has urged swift passage "without any modifications or delay." In a tweet Tuesday, Sanders threatened to slow down the measure if he doesn't get a vote on an amendment that would add paid sick leave.

Some Republican lawmakers, meanwhile, had urged congressional intervention in September to impose recommendations of the presidential emergency board that were less favorable to workers. Under Biden's brokered deal, for instance, engineers and conductors would get three unpaid days off a year to tend to medical appointments as long as they are scheduled 30 days in advance. The railroads also promised to negotiate further with those unions about improving the way regular days off are scheduled.

Biden on Tuesday said he was "confident" that a rail strike will be avoided.

Jeff Davis, a senior fellow at the Eno Center for Transportation, said he expects senators from both parties will ultimately have to accept the House-passed measure by the time it reaches the Senate floor, likely early next week, to avoid added delay and devastating consequences from a rail stoppage.

If there is no resolution by next Tuesday, Davis said, Amtrak would have to start shutting down long-distance passenger trains while freight rail would have to stop accepting hazmat shipments, including petroleum and liquified natural gas.

"There will be intense pressure to support the legislation," he said.

Sen. Roger Wicker, the top Republican on the Commerce Committee, this week praised Biden's call to Congress to act. Wicker said while no one side was fully happy with the compromise contract deal, "the responsible thing to do is avoid the strike."

WHAT HAPPENS IF UNIONS ARE STILL UNHAPPY WITH THE FINAL TERMS?

Unions have little recourse if Congress moves forward in imposing the terms of the September deal. While dissatisfied with that deal, they also face potentially greater risks if negotiations were to extend without resolution into January, when the House comes under Republican control.

In his statement Monday, Biden noted that he's been pushing for a separate federal paid leave policy for the past two years and will continue to do so, though the prospects remain uncertain.

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On Tuesday, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division union said it was "deeply disappointed by and disagrees" with Biden over the exclusion of paid sick leave. "This cannot continue," its statement said. "There must be a change."

NASA cancels greenhouse gas monitoring satellite due to cost

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

NASA is canceling a planned satellite that was going to intensely monitor greenhouse gases over the Americas because it got too costly and complicated.

But the space agency said it will still be watching human-caused carbon pollution but in different ways.

NASA on Tuesday announced that its GeoCarb mission, which was supposed to be a low-cost satellite to monitor carbon dioxide, methane and how plant life changes over North and South America, was being killed because of cost overruns.

When it was announced six years ago, it was supposed to cost \$166 million, but the latest NASA figures show costs would balloon to more than \$600 million and it was years late, according to NASA Earth Sciences Director Karen St. Germain.

Unlike other satellites that monitor greenhouse gases from low Earth orbit and get different parts of the globe in a big picture, GeoCarb was supposed to be at a much higher altitude of 22,236 miles (35,786 kilometers) from one fixed place in orbit and focus intently on North and South America. That different and further perspective proved too difficult and costly to get done on budget and on time, St. Germain said.

The equipment alone has more than doubled in price and then there were non-technical issues that would have added more, she said. The agency has already spent \$170 million on the now-canceled program and won't spend any more.

"This doesn't reflect any reduction in our commitment to the science, the observations associated with greenhouse gases and climate change," St. Germain said in an interview Tuesday. "We're still committed to doing that science. But we're going to have to do it a different way because we don't see this instrument coming together."

Monitoring of greenhouse gases, the main cause of global warming, is important on many levels. It can help spot leaks, say of methane, or hold to account companies and countries that have pledged to reduce emissions. Beyond governments, many private companies now do satellite monitoring of greenhouse gases.

Instead of its project, NASA is looking to launch a yet-to-be-decided Earth-focused mission, designed to be bigger and less risky. The space agency also is getting methane data from a special instrument on the International Space Station that was meant to look at mineral dust but is monitoring the potent greenhouse gas as a bonus, plus there are methane monitoring satellites from the European and Japanese space agency and some commercial and non-profit firms, she said.

NASA also has two dedicated satellites that monitor carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas.

Justice Department intervenes for struggling water system

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS and MICHAEL GOLDBERG Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — The Justice Department made a rare intervention Tuesday to try to bring improvements in the beleaguered water system in Mississippi's capital city, which nearly collapsed in late summer and continues to struggle.

The department filed a proposal to appoint a third-party manager for the Jackson water system. That is meant to be an interim step while the federal government, the city of Jackson and the Mississippi State Department of Health try to negotiate a court-enforced consent decree, the department said in a news release. The goal is to achieve long-term sustainability of the system and the city's compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act and other laws.

The city and the state health department have signed the proposal, which needs approval of a federal judge.

The Justice Department on Tuesday also filed a complaint on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection

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Agency against Jackson, alleging that the city has failed to provide drinking water that is reliably compliant with the Safe Drinking Water Act. According to the agreement, that litigation will be put on hold six months while all parties try to improve the water system.

Attorney General Merrick B. Garland said in the news release that the Justice Department is "taking action in federal court to address long-standing failures in the city of Jackson's public drinking water system."

"The Department of Justice takes seriously its responsibility to keep the American people safe and to protect their civil rights," Garland said. "Together with our partners at EPA, we will continue to seek justice for the residents of Jackson, Mississippi. And we will continue to prioritize cases in the communities most burdened by environmental harm."

In a federal complaint Sept. 27, the NAACP said Mississippi officials "all but assured" a drinking water calamity by depriving Jackson of badly needed funds to upgrade its infrastructure.

The EPA announced in late October that it was investigating whether Mississippi state agencies have discriminated against Jackson by refusing to fund water system improvements in the city of 150,000, where more than 80% of residents are Black and about a quarter of the population lives in poverty.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves, a Republican, said Tuesday that the Jackson water problems were caused by a "crisis of incompetence" in the Democratic-led city.

"It is excellent news for anyone who cares about the people of Jackson that the mayor will no longer be overseeing the city's water system," Reeves said.

Like many American cities, Jackson struggles with aging infrastructure with water lines that crack or collapse. Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba, a Democrat in the Republican-led state, said the city's water problems come from decades of deferred maintenance.

Jackson frequently has boil-water notices because of loss of pressure or other problems that can contaminate the water. Some of the mandates are in place for only a few days, while others last weeks. Some only affect specific neighborhoods, usually because of broken pipes in the area. Others affect all customers on the water system.

Edward "Ted" Henifin was appointed Tuesday as interim third-party manager of the Jackson water system and Water Sewer Business Administration, the city's water billing department. An online profile of Henifin says he is a registered professional engineer who served 15 years as general manager of the Hampton Roads Sanitation District in Virginia. Before that, he served as director of public works for the city of Hampton, Virginia.

The proposal lists 13 projects that Henifin will in charge of implementing. The projects are meant to improve the water system's near-term stability, according to a news release. Among the most pressing priorities is a winterization project to make the system less vulnerable. A cold snap in 2021 left tens of thousands of people in Jackson without running water after pipes froze.

EPA Administrator Michael Regan, who has been to Jackson four times in the past year, said the Justice Department's action "marks a critical moment on the path to securing clean, safe water for Jackson residents," adding that he is grateful to Garland for acting quickly on the city's water crisis.

In May, the Justice Department created an environmental justice division, following up on President Joe Biden's 2020 campaign promise to elevate environmental justice issues in an all-of-government approach. The Justice Department said in July that it was investigating illegal dumping in Black and Latino neighborhoods in Houston, the nation's fourth largest city.

Jackson has had water problems for decades. Most of the city lost running water for several days after heavy rainfall exacerbated problems at the city's main water treatment plant in late August. When that happened, Jackson had already been under a boil-water advisory for a month because health inspectors had found cloudy water that could make people ill.

The boil-water advisory was lifted in mid-September, but many people remain skeptical about water quality.

Vangela M. Wade, president and CEO of the Mississippi Center for Justice, said the Justice Department announcement Tuesday is "an important and necessary move to ensure that residents of Jackson and surrounding communities have access to safe drinking water — a vital necessity for all communities to thrive."

"Unfortunately," Wade said, "the deplorable and unsafe condition of Jackson's water system didn't hap-

pen overnight but stems from decades of neglect and the intentional disinvestment of resources for the majority-Black municipality.”

Virginia Walmart mass shooting survivor files \$50M lawsuit

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — A Walmart employee who survived last week’s mass shooting at a store in Virginia has filed a \$50 million lawsuit against the company for allegedly continuing to employ the shooter — a store supervisor — “who had known propensities for violence, threats and strange behavior.”

The lawsuit, which appears to be the first to stem from the shooting, was filed Tuesday in Chesapeake Circuit Court by Donya Prioleau.

Walmart, which is headquartered in Bentonville, Arkansas, said in a statement that it was reviewing the complaint and will respond “as appropriate with the court.”

“The entire Walmart family is heartbroken by the loss of the valued members of our team,” the company said. “Our deepest sympathies go out to our associates and everyone impacted, including those who were injured. We are focused on supporting all our associates with significant resources, including counseling.”

Prioleau’s suit alleges that she has experienced post-traumatic stress disorder, including physical and emotional distress, from witnessing the rampage in the store’s breakroom on Nov. 22. Her lawsuit offers fresh details of the terrifying attack and provides a long list of troubling signs displayed by the shooter that she claims managers failed to address.

“Bullets whizzed by Plaintiff Donya Prioleau’s face and left side, barely missing her,” the lawsuit states. “She witnessed several of her coworkers being brutally murdered on either side of her.”

The lawsuit adds: “Ms. Prioleau looked at one of her coworkers in the eyes right after she had been shot in the neck. Ms. Prioleau saw the bullet wound in her coworker’s neck, the blood rushing out of it, and the shocked look on her coworker’s helpless face.”

Store supervisor Andre Bing, 31, fatally shot six employees and wounded several others before he died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot, police said.

The lawsuit alleges that Bing “had a personal vendetta against several Walmart employees and kept a ‘kill list’ of potential targets prior to the shooting.”

The list is in reference to a “death note” found on Bing’s phone and released Friday by authorities. The note appeared to contain specific references to people he worked with, but authorities redacted their names.

Bing was a Walmart team leader who had worked for the company since 2010. He was responsible for managing the overnight stocking crew, including Prioleau, who started her job in May 2021, the lawsuit says.

The lawsuit claims management knew or should have known about Bing’s disturbing behavior and lists several instances of alarming conduct.

“Prior to the shooting, Mr. Bing repeatedly asked coworkers if they had received their active shooter training,” the suit states. “When coworkers responded that they had, Mr. Bing just smiled and walked away without saying anything.”

Bing “made comments to other Walmart employees and managers suggesting that he would be violent if fired or disciplined,” according to the suit, which also says Bing “was disciplined leading up to the shooting, making his violent outburst predictable.”

In another instance, Bing told co-workers “he ran over a turtle with a lawnmower just to see its (guts) spray out, which made him hungry and reminded him of ramen noodles,” the lawsuit says.

Bing was previously disciplined for bad behavior and harassing employees, but Walmart “kept employing him anyway,” the suit says.

In her court filing, Prioleau states that she and her mother attempted to take action against Bing.

Prioleau had submitted a formal complaint on a Walmart Global Ethics Statement Form indicating that Bing had “bizarrely and inappropriately commented on Ms. Prioleau’s age,” the lawsuit stated.

The lawsuit alleges that Bing told her: “Isn’t your lady clock ticking? Shouldn’t you be having kids?”

Prioleau also complained that Bing had harassed her for “being poor and being short,” according to the

lawsuit.

The lawsuit states that she also informed Walmart that Bing called her a “bitch” under his breath.

In September, Prioleau’s mother expressed concerns to a Walmart manager about her daughter’s safety “because it appeared their concerns were falling on deaf ears,” the lawsuit states.

The manager said “there was nothing that could be done about Mr. Bing because he was liked by management,” according to the suit.

Before the shooting, Bing told co-workers that “the government was watching him,” the suit says. “He kept black tape on his phone camera so no one could spy on him.”

In the note left on his phone, Bing claimed he was harassed and said he was pushed to the brink by a perception that his phone was hacked. The note also accused colleagues of mocking him.

Bing’s death note rambles at times through 11 paragraphs, with references to nontraditional cancer treatments and songwriting. He says people unfairly compared him to serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer.

Jessica Wilczewski, a Walmart employee who witnessed the shooting, told The Associated Press last week that Bing seemed to target certain people.

“The way he was acting — he was going hunting,” she said.

In a note to employees on Tuesday, Walmart president and CEO John Furner wrote that the people who were killed were “amazing, irreplaceable members of our family.”

“The Walmart Foundation also intends to contribute \$1 million to the United Way of South Hampton Roads’ Hope & Healing Fund, which will support those impacted by the shooting and the broader Chesapeake community,” Furner wrote.

Study: U.S. gun death rates hit highest levels in decades

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. gun death rate last year hit its highest mark in nearly three decades, and the rate among women has been growing faster than that of men, according to study published Tuesday.

The increase among women — most dramatically, in Black women — is playing a tragic and under-recognized role in a tally that skews overwhelmingly male, the researchers said.

“Women can get lost in the discussion because so many of the fatalities are men,” said one of the authors, Dr. Eric Fleegler of Harvard Medical School.

Among Black women, the rate of firearm-related homicides more than tripled since 2010, and the rate of gun-related suicides more than doubled since 2015, Fleegler and his co-authors wrote in the paper published by JAMA Network Open.

The research is one of the most comprehensive analyses of U.S. gun deaths in years, said David Hemmenway, director of the Harvard University’s Injury Control Research Center.

In October, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released data on U.S. firearm deaths last year, counting more than 47,000 — the most in at least 40 years.

The U.S. population is growing, but researchers say the rate of gun deaths has been getting worse, too. America’s gun-related homicide and suicide rates both rose 8% last year, each hitting levels not seen since the early 1990s.

In the new study, the researchers examined trends in firearm deaths since 1990. They found gun deaths began to steadily increase in 2005, but the rise accelerated recently, with a 20% jump from 2019 to 2021.

Why did gun deaths rise so dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic? That’s “a straightforward question with probably a complicated answer that no one really knows the answer to,” said Fleegler, an emergency medicine physician at Boston Children’s Hospital.

Factors could include disruption of people’s work and personal lives, higher gun sales, stress, and mental health issues, experts said.

The researchers counted more than 1.1 million gun deaths over those 32 years — about the same as the number of American deaths attributed to COVID-19 in the last three years.

About 14% of those killed by guns were women, but the rate increase among them is more pronounced.

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There were about 7 gun deaths per 100,000 women last year, up from about 4 per 100,000 in 2010 — an increase of 71%. The comparable increase for men was 45%, the rate rising to about 26 per 100,000 from about 18 per 100,000 in 2010.

For Black women, the firearm suicide rate rose from about 1.5 per 100,000 in 2015 to about 3 per 100,000 last year. Their homicide death rate last year was more than 18 per 100,000, compared with about 4 per 100,000 for Hispanic women and 2 per 100,000 for white women.

The highest homicide gun death rates continue to be in young Black men, at 142 per 100,000 for those in their early 20s. The highest gun suicide death rates are in white men in their early 80s, at 45 per 100,000, the researchers said.

In a commentary accompanying the study, three University of Michigan researchers said the paper confirmed racial and sexual differences in U.S. gun deaths and that homicide deaths are concentrated in cities and suicides are more common in rural areas.

"Firearm violence is a worsening problem in the United States," and will require a range of efforts to control, they wrote.

'The Phantom of the Opera' extends its long Broadway goodbye

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The masked man of Broadway is going out strong.

"The Phantom of the Opera" — Broadway's longest-running show — has postponed its final performance by eight weeks, pushing its final curtain from February to April after ticket demand spiked. Last week, the show raked in an eye-popping \$2.2 million with a full house.

The musical — a fixture on Broadway since 1988, weathering recessions, war and cultural shifts — will now play its final Broadway performance on April 16. When it closes, it will have played 13,981 performances.

"We are all thrilled that not only the show's wonderful fans have been snapping up the remaining tickets, but also that a new, younger audience is equally eager to see this legendary production before it disappears," lead producer Cameron Mackintosh said in a statement.

Producers said there would be no more postponements. "This is the only possible extension for the Broadway champion, as the theater will then be closed for major renovations after the show's incredible 35-year run."

Based on a novel by Gaston Leroux, "Phantom" tells the story of a deformed composer who haunts the Paris Opera House and falls madly in love with an innocent young soprano, Christine. Andrew Lloyd Webber's lavish songs include "Masquerade," "Angel of Music," "All I Ask of You" and "The Music of the Night."

The closing of "Phantom" would mean the longest-running show crown would go to "Chicago," which started in 1996. "The Lion King" is next, having begun performances in 1997.

Broadway took a pounding during the pandemic, with all theaters closed for more than 18 months. Some of the most popular shows — "Hamilton," "The Lion King" and "Wicked" — have rebounded well, but other shows have struggled. Breaking even usually requires a steady stream of tourists, especially for the costly "Phantom," and visitors to the city haven't returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Netherlands beats host Qatar 2-0 to advance at World Cup

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

AL KHOR, Qatar (AP) — The Netherlands still has a long way to go to match the "total football" teams of the 1970s, or even the more offensive "Oranje" squads that reached the World Cup final in 2010 and finished third in 2014.

Still, a 2-0 win over Qatar on Tuesday ensured the Dutch advanced to the round of 16 by finishing first in Group A while the Qataris, who were already eliminated, became the first host to lose all three of its group matches at the World Cup.

"If you play against Qatar everybody will think and expect that you'll win 5-0 or more, but this tournament has shown that it's very difficult," Netherlands midfielder Davy Klaassen, who earned player of the

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match honors, said through an interpreter.

"We're very critical of ourselves and we need to improve," Klaassen added. "But we have progressed and we're going to move on."

Cody Gakpo put the Netherlands ahead midway through the first half with his third goal in as many matches and Frenkie de Jong doubled the advantage five minutes into the second half.

The Netherlands, a three-time runner-up at the World Cup, will next face the United States for a spot in the quarterfinals.

Qatar, which was making its tournament debut, won the 2019 Asian Cup. But the team's Spanish coach, Félix Sánchez, said that the Asian Cup can't be compared to the World Cup.

"We came here trying to compete and we managed to do that," Sánchez said, adding that he wasn't sure about his future status with the team.

"One of the things about our national team is that we have a long-term plan that doesn't depend on me or anyone else," Sánchez said. "We're going to rest for a few days and we're going to keep working and planning."

The Netherlands, which failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, finished with seven points at the top of the group. Senegal, which beat Ecuador 2-1 in the other group game, advanced in second place with six points. Ecuador was eliminated with four points and Qatar ended up with zero.

The attendance at Al Bayt Stadium, which also hosted Qatar's loss to Ecuador in the tournament opener, was given as 66,784 — nearly at full capacity. There were small pockets of orange-clad Netherlands supporters, and Qatar fans behind one of the goals chanted in unison and jumped up and down.

At one point during the second half, Qatar fans held aloft a large Palestinian flag that said "Free Palestine" on it.

In the 26th minute, Gakpo took control outside the area, dribbled forward and unleashed a powerful side-footed shot between two defenders that entered inside the right post.

Gakpo became the fourth Dutch player to score in three consecutive World Cup games after Johan Neeskens (1974), Dennis Bergkamp (1994) and Wesley Sneijder (2010). He also became only the second player to open the scoring for his team three times in the same group stage after Alessandro Altobelli for Italy in 1986.

"Cody Gakpo has everything it takes to become a star," 71-year-old Netherlands coach Louis van Gaal said. "Plus he has a wonderful personality. He's open minded to everything."

De Jong's goal came when he sprinted forward uncontested to knock in a rebound from close range following a shot from Memphis Depay.

A possible third goal for the Netherlands by Steven Berghuis was waved off following a video review for a handball in the buildup.

Berghuis then hit the bar in added time.

While the Netherlands dominated the possession and created many more chances, Qatar did push forward on occasion and there was a nervous moment for the Dutch when goalkeeper Andries Noppert had trouble collecting a long-range shot from Ismael Mohamed after Gakpo's goal.

TOP SCORER

Gakpo drew level with France standout Kylian Mbappé and Ecuador veteran Enner Valencia atop the tournament scoring chart.

For club and country in all competitions this season, Gakpo has been involved in 35 goals in 29 appearances with 17 goals scored and 18 assists.

That should make the 23-year-old PSV Eindhoven forward the target for an expensive transfer in the upcoming months.

FULL FITNESS

Van Gaal said his team was boosted by the return to full fitness of Depay and midfielder Marten de Roon.

"The next phase, which is the real, most important part, we can start with a positive feeling," the coach said.

NEXT

The Netherlands will play the U.S. on Saturday at Khalifa International Stadium.

Twitter ends enforcement of COVID misinformation policy

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

Twitter will no longer enforce its policy against COVID-19 misinformation, raising concerns among public health experts and social media researchers that the change could have serious consequences if it discourages vaccination and other efforts to combat the still-spreading virus.

Eagle-eyed users spotted the change Monday night, noting that a one-sentence update had been made to Twitter's online rules: "Effective November 23, 2022, Twitter is no longer enforcing the COVID-19 misleading information policy."

By Tuesday, some Twitter accounts were testing the new boundaries and celebrating the platform's hands-off approach, which comes after Twitter was purchased by Elon Musk.

"This policy was used to silence people across the world who questioned the media narrative surrounding the virus and treatment options," tweeted Dr. Simone Gold, a physician and leading purveyor of COVID-19 misinformation. "A win for free speech and medical freedom!"

Twitter's decision to no longer remove false claims about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines disappointed public health officials, however, who said it could lead to more false claims about the virus, or the safety and effectiveness of vaccines.

"Bad news," tweeted epidemiologist Eric Feigl-Ding, who urged people not to flee Twitter but to keep up the fight against bad information about the virus. "Stay folks — do NOT cede the town square to them!"

While Twitter's efforts to stop false claims about COVID weren't perfect, the company's decision to reverse course is an abdication of its duty to its users, said Paul Russo, a social media researcher and dean of the Katz School of Science and Health at Yeshiva University in New York.

Russo added that it's the latest of several recent moves by Twitter that could ultimately scare away some users and even advertisers. Some big names in business have already paused their ads on Twitter over questions about its direction under Musk.

"It is 100% the responsibility of the platform to protect its users from harmful content," Russo said. "This is absolutely unacceptable."

The virus, meanwhile, continues to spread. Nationally, new COVID cases averaged nearly 38,800 a day as of Monday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University — far lower than last winter but a vast undercount because of reduced testing and reporting. About 28,100 people with COVID were hospitalized daily and about 313 died, according to the most recent federal daily averages.

Cases and deaths were up from two weeks earlier. Yet a fifth of the U.S. population hasn't been vaccinated, most Americans haven't gotten the latest boosters, and many have stopped wearing masks.

Musk, who has himself spread COVID misinformation on Twitter, has signaled an interest in rolling back many of the platform's previous rules meant to combat misinformation.

Last week, Musk said he would grant "amnesty" to account holders who had been kicked off Twitter. He's also reinstated the accounts for several people who spread COVID misinformation, including that of Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, whose personal account was suspended this year for repeatedly violating Twitter's COVID rules.

Greene's most recent tweets include ones questioning the effectiveness of masks and making baseless claims about the safety of COVID vaccines.

Since the pandemic began, platforms like Twitter and Facebook have struggled to respond to a torrent of misinformation about the virus, its origins and the response to it.

Under the policy enacted in January 2020, Twitter prohibited false claims about COVID-19 that the platform determined could lead to real-world harms. More than 11,000 accounts were suspended for violating the rules, and nearly 100,000 pieces of content were removed from the platform, according to Twitter's latest numbers.

Despite its rules prohibiting COVID misinformation, Twitter has struggled with enforcement. Posts making bogus claims about home remedies or vaccines could still be found, and it was difficult on Tuesday to identify exactly how the platform's rules may have changed.

Messages left with San Francisco-based Twitter seeking more information about its policy on COVID-19 misinformation were not immediately returned Tuesday.

A search for common terms associated with COVID misinformation on Tuesday yielded lots of misleading content, but also automatic links to helpful resources about the virus as well as authoritative sources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House COVID-19 coordinator, said Tuesday that the problem of COVID-19 misinformation is far larger than one platform, and that policies prohibiting COVID misinformation weren't the best solution anyway.

Speaking at a Knight Foundation forum Tuesday, Jha said misinformation about the virus spread for a number of reasons, including legitimate uncertainty about a deadly illness. Simply prohibiting certain kinds of content isn't going to help people find good information, or make them feel more confident about what they're hearing from their medical providers, he said.

"I think we all have a collective responsibility," Jha said of combating misinformation about COVID. "The consequences of not getting this right — of spreading that misinformation — is literally tens of thousands of people dying unnecessarily."

Supreme Court wrestles with Biden's deportation policy

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Tuesday wrestled with a politically tinged dispute over a Biden administration policy that would prioritize deportation of people in the country illegally who pose the greatest public safety risk.

It was not clear after arguments that stretched past two hours and turned highly contentious at times whether the justices would allow the policy to take effect, or side with Republican-led states that have so far succeeded in blocking it.

At the center of the case is a September 2021 directive from the Department of Homeland Security that paused deportations unless individuals had committed acts of terrorism, espionage or "egregious threats to public safety." The guidance, issued after Joe Biden became president, updated a Trump-era policy that removed people in the country illegally regardless of criminal history or community ties.

On Tuesday, the administration's top Supreme Court lawyer told the justices that federal law does "not create an unyielding mandate to apprehend and remove" every one of the more than 11 million immigrants living in the country illegally.

Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar said it would be "incredibly destabilizing on the ground" for the high court to require that. Congress has not given DHS enough money to vastly increase the number of people it holds and deports, the Biden administration has said.

But Texas Solicitor General Judd Stone told the court the administration is violating federal law that requires the detention and deportation of people who are in the U.S. illegally and who have been convicted of any serious crime, not just the most serious, specifically defined ones.

Chief Justice John Roberts was among the conservative justices who pushed back strongly on the Biden administration's arguments. "It's our job to say what the law is, not whether or not it can be possibly implemented or whether there are difficulties there, and I don't think we should change that responsibility just because Congress and the executive can't agree on something ... I don't think we should let them off the hook," he said.

Yet Roberts, in questioning Stone, also called Prelogar's argument compelling.

"It's impossible for the executive to do what you want it to do, right?" Roberts asked.

Roberts wasn't totally satisfied when Stone said the number of people potentially affected total 60,000 to 80,000.

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Justice Brett Kavanaugh said that whatever the actual number, "the resources still aren't there."

The court's three liberal justices, on the other hand, were sympathetic to the Biden administration's arguments. Justice Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan, made clear they believed that Texas and Louisiana, which joined Texas in suing over the directive, weren't even entitled to bring their case.

The case is the latest example of a Republican litigation strategy that has succeeded in slowing Biden administration initiatives by going to GOP-friendly courts. Kagan picked up on that during arguments, saying that Texas could file its suit in a courthouse where it was guaranteed to get a sympathetic hearing and that one judge stopped "a federal immigration policy in its tracks."

In a separate ongoing legal dispute, three judges chosen by then-President Donald Trump are among the four Republican-appointed judges who have so far prevented the administration's student loan cancellation program from taking effect.

The states said they would face added costs of having to detain people the federal government might allow to remain free inside the United States, despite their criminal records.

Federal appeals courts had reached conflicting decisions over DHS guidance.

The federal appeals court in Cincinnati earlier overturned a district judge's order that put the policy on hold in a lawsuit filed by Arizona, Ohio and Montana.

But in the separate suit filed by Texas and Louisiana, a federal judge in Texas ordered a nationwide halt to the guidance and a federal appellate panel in New Orleans declined to step in.

In July, the court voted 5-4 to leave the immigration policy frozen nationwide. Conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett joined the court's three liberals in saying they would have allowed the Biden administration to put in place the guidance.

At the same time, the court said it would hear arguments in the case in late November.

The justices have several questions to sort through, whether the states should have been permitted to file their challenge in the first place, whether the policy violates immigration law and, if it does, whether it was appropriate for the Texas-based judge to block it.

On that last point, Prelogar said the judge's decision to "vacate" the policy was wrong, and her argument questioned whether judges have been getting it all wrong for decades.

The issue touched a nerve, especially among Roberts, Kavanaugh and Ketanji Brown Jackson, the justices who once served on the federal appeals court in Washington that regularly vacates policies it determines are unlawful.

"Fairly radical," Roberts said. "Pretty astonishing," Kavanaugh said. Jackson, more restrained, also questioned Prelogar's reasoning.

"There seems to be a kind of D.C. Circuit cartel," Kagan joked.

A decision in *U.S. v. Texas*, 22-58, is expected by late June.

NATO renews membership vow to Ukraine, pledges arms and aid

By STEPHEN McGRATH, LORNE COOK and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — NATO doubled down Tuesday on its commitment to one day include Ukraine, a pledge that some officials and analysts believe helped prompt Russia's invasion this year. The world's largest security alliance also pledged to send more aid to Ukrainian forces locked in battle with Russian troops.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with NATO foreign ministers in Romania to drum up support for Ukraine as Russia bombards energy infrastructure going into the frigid winter. Russia cannot stop the alliance's expansion, NATO leaders said.

"NATO's door is open," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said before chairing the meeting in the capital, Bucharest.

He highlighted that North Macedonia and Montenegro had recently joined NATO, and said Russian President Vladimir Putin "will get Finland and Sweden as NATO members" soon. The Nordic neighbors applied for membership in April, concerned that Russia might target them next.

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"Russia does not have a veto" on countries joining, Stoltenberg said. "We stand by that, too, on membership for Ukraine."

When they met in Bucharest in 2008, NATO leaders said Ukraine and Georgia would join the alliance one day.

Some officials and analysts believe that declaration — pressed on the NATO allies by former U.S. President George W. Bush — was partly responsible for the war that Russia launched on Ukraine in February. In justifying his invasion on Feb. 24, Putin cited threats to Russia's security from Ukraine's ambitions to join NATO.

Stoltenberg said NATO expansion would not be hindered.

"President Putin cannot deny sovereign nations to make their own sovereign decisions that are not a threat to Russia," the former Norwegian prime minister said. "I think what he's afraid of is democracy and freedom, and that's the main challenge for him."

Ukraine applied for "accelerated accession" to NATO on Sept. 30 but will not join anytime soon.. With the Crimean Peninsula annexed, and Russian troops and pro-Moscow separatists holding parts of the south and east, it's not clear what Ukraine's borders would even look like.

Many of NATO's 30 members believe the focus now must solely be on defeating Russia, and Stoltenberg stressed that any attempt to move ahead on membership could divide them.

"We are in the midst of a war and therefore we should do nothing that can undermine the unity of allies to provide military, humanitarian, financial support to Ukraine, because we must prevent President Putin from winning," he said.

Beyond Ukraine's immediate needs, NATO wants to see how it can help the country longer-term, by upgrading its Soviet-era equipment to the alliance's modern standards and providing more military training.

Slovak Foreign Minister Rastislav Kacer said the allies must help Ukraine so "the transition to full membership will be very smooth and easy" once both NATO and Kyiv are ready for accession talks.

In a statement, the ministers vowed to help Ukraine rebuild once the war is over, saying: "we will continue to strengthen our partnership with Ukraine as it advances its Euro-Atlantic aspirations."

Ukraine, for its part, called for more supplies of weapons to defend itself with, and quickly.

"Faster, faster and faster," Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said. "We appreciate what has been done, but the war goes on."

"In a nutshell," he said, "Patriots and transformers is what Ukraine needs the most." Stoltenberg confirmed that deliveries of such sophisticated missile systems are under consideration.

The U.S. is open to providing Patriots, said a senior U.S. defense official who briefed Pentagon reporters on Tuesday, speaking on condition of anonymity. While Ukraine has asked for the system for months, the U.S. and its allies have been hesitant to provide it to avoid further provoking Russia.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Tuesday that his country's offer to send Patriot surface-to-air missile systems to Poland remains on the table, despite Warsaw's suggestion that they should go to Ukraine instead.

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of the Russian Security Council, said Tuesday on his Telegram channel: "If, as Stoltenberg hinted, NATO supplies the Kyiv fanatics with Patriot complexes along with NATO personnel, they will immediately become a legitimate target of our armed forces. I hope the Atlantic impotents understand this."

At the Romania meeting, ministers made pledges of military support for Ukraine, others for financial and nonlethal aid.

Slovakia said it was providing 30 armored personnel carriers and more artillery.

The U.S. announced \$53 million to buy electrical parts for Ukraine's electrical grid. The network has been battered countrywide since early October by targeted Russian strikes, in what U.S. officials call a Russian campaign to weaponize the coming winter cold.

Estonia's foreign minister, Urmas Reinsalu, went a step further than most, calling on his NATO partners to pledge 1% of their GDP to Ukraine in military support, saying it would make "a strategic difference."

Most NATO allies, however, are struggling to spend 2% of GDP on their own defense budgets.

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The foreign ministers of NATO candidates Finland and Sweden are joining the talks. NATO is eager to add the two Nordic nations to the defensive forces lined up against Russia. Turkey and Hungary are the holdouts on ratifying their applications. The 28 other member nations have already done so.

US OKs \$1B arms sale to Qatar during key World Cup match

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration on Tuesday approved a \$1 billion arms sale to Qatar in a transaction unveiled during halftime of the key World Cup 2022 match in Doha between Iran and the United States.

The State Department announced it had signed off on Qatar's purchase of 10 defensive drone systems, 200 interceptors and related equipment just as the second half of the US-Iran game began. Qatar, along with other Gulf Arab states, faces threats from Iranian-backed proxies in the region.

The department said in a statement the sale would "support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the security of a friendly country that continues to be an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East."

It will "improve Qatar's capability to meet current and future threats by providing electronic and kinetic defeat capabilities against Unmanned Aircraft Systems. Qatar will have no difficulty absorbing these articles and/or services into its armed forces," the department said.

EXPLAINER: What hazards are posed by Hawaii's Mauna Loa?

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Lava is shooting 100 feet to 200 feet (30 to 60 meters) into the air as Hawaii's Mauna Loa, the world's largest active volcano, erupts for the first time in nearly 40 years.

For now, lava is not threatening any homes or communities and no evacuation orders have been issued. Lava could eventually reach neighborhoods as it flows downhill though it could take a week or more for molten rock to reach populated areas.

Mauna Loa is spewing sulfur dioxide and other volcanic gases. They form volcanic smog, or vog, when they mix with vapor, oxygen and dust in sunlight. As a result, state health officials are urging people to cut back on outdoor exercise and other activities that cause heavy breathing.

Mauna Loa last erupted in 1984. Its smaller, more active neighbor, Kilauea volcano, has been erupting continuously for more than a year since September 2021.

WHERE IS MAUNA LOA?

Mauna Loa is one of five volcanoes that together make up the Big Island of Hawaii, which is the southernmost island in the Hawaiian archipelago. It's not the tallest (that title goes to Mauna Kea) but it's the largest and makes up about half of the island's land mass.

It sits immediately north of Kilauea volcano, which is well-known for a 2018 eruption that destroyed 700 homes and sent rivers of lava spreading across farms and into the ocean.

Mauna Loa last erupted 38 years ago. The current eruption is its 34th since written history began in 1843.

The Big Island is mostly rural and hosts cattle ranches and coffee farms but it is also home to a few small cities, including the county seat of Hilo, which has a population of 45,000.

It's about 200 miles (320 kilometers) south of Hawaii's most populous island, Oahu, where the state capital, Honolulu, and beach resort Waikiki are both located.

Mauna Loa's volume is estimated to be at least 18,000 cubic miles (75,000 cubic kilometers), making it the world's largest volcano when measured from the ocean floor to its summit.

WHERE IS MAUNA LOA ERUPTING FROM?

The eruption began Sunday night at its summit after a series of large earthquakes. It then spread to vents that formed in a rift zone where the mountain is splitting apart and it's easier for magma to emerge.

These vents are on the mountain's northeast side and lava emerging there could head toward Hilo, which is on the east side of the island.

Ken Hon, scientist-in-charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, said he doesn't expect additional

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vents to form on the volcano's southwest rift zone during this eruption. That means communities to the west would be spared lava flows this time.

Mauna Loa also erupted from the northeast in 1984. That time, lava headed toward Hilo but stopped a few miles short of the city.

Historically, each Mauna Loa eruption has lasted a few weeks. Hon expects the current eruption to follow this pattern.

IS MAUNA LOA EXPLODING LIKE MOUNT ST. HELENS?

Mauna Loa is not exploding like Washington state's Mount St. Helens did in 1980, killing 57 people. That eruption sent ash soaring over 80,000 feet (24,384 meters) and raining down as far as 250 miles (400 kilometers) away.

The magma in Mount St. Helens tends to be stickier and traps more gas, making it much more likely to explode when it rises. It's of a variety called composite volcanoes, which form concave cones.

Mauna Loa's magma tends to be hotter, drier and more fluid. That allows the magma's gas to escape and lava to flow down the side the volcano the way it is starting to do now. Mauna Loa is a shield volcano, named because the long, broad flanks built by repeated lava flows give it the appearance of a warrior's shield.

In 1989, Alaska's Redoubt Volcano, another composite volcano, belched an 8-mile cloud of ash that clogged all four engines of a KLM Royal Dutch Airlines jet. The plane fell 13,000 feet before all engines restarted and the plane landed without injury to the 245 people aboard.

Mauna Loa released some ash this time but on a vastly smaller scale than these examples from composite volcanoes.

WHAT HAZARDS ARE POSED BY MAUNA LOA'S ERUPTION?

-Lava: Molten rock could cover houses, farms or neighborhoods, depending on where it flows. But lava from the northeast rift zone will likely take at least a week to reach populated areas, allowing people time to evacuate if needed.

-Volcanic gas: Mauna Loa is releasing volcanic gases, mostly sulfur dioxide. The gases are present in their highest concentrations in the immediate area around the summit crater or vents. But they also combine with other particles to form vog, which can spread across the Big Island and even waft over to the state's other islands.

Vog can give healthy people burning eyes, headaches and sore throats. It can send those with asthma or other respiratory problems to the hospital.

-Glass particles: When hot lava erupts from a fissure and rapidly cools, it forms glass particles named "Pele's hair" and "Pele's tears" after the Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes.

The particles tend not to travel far from volcanic vents — maybe only a few hundred yards or a mile — and won't threaten many people, said Aaron Pietruszka, an associate specialist at the University of Hawaii's Department of Earth Sciences.

"It just literally looks like hair strands. And that's where the fluid lava is stretched by the wind to make long, thin strands," said Pietruszka.

The glass bits — as short as a few millimeters or as long as a few inches — can be sharp.

"You wouldn't want to be digging your hands in it because you could get a cut," Pietruszka said.

An N95 or KF94 mask would protect against these glass particles but not against volcanic gas, said Dr. Libby Char, the director of the state Department of Health.

"Pele's hair" specimens from Kilauea volcano's eruption are visible at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

HOW SIGNIFICANT ARE MAUNA LOA'S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS?

Mauna Loa released about 15,000 tons of carbon dioxide per day during its 1984 eruption, according to USGS data.

That's equivalent to the annual emissions from 2,400 sport utility vehicles.

Scientists say all of Earth's volcanoes combined emit less than one percent of the carbon dioxide that humans produce each year.

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Clarence Gilyard, 'Die Hard' and 'Matlock' actor, dies at 66

NEW YORK (AP) — Clarence Gilyard Jr., a popular supporting actor whose credits include the blockbuster films "Die Hard" and "Top Gun" and the hit television series "Matlock" and "Walker, Texas Ranger," has died at age 66.

His death was announced this week by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he taught stage and screen acting. Additional details were not immediately available Tuesday.

"Professor Gilyard was a beacon of light and strength for everyone around him at UNLV," the school's film chair, Heather Addison, said in a statement. "Whenever we asked him how he was, he would cheerfully declare that he was 'Blessed!' But we are truly the ones who were blessed to be his colleagues and students for so many years."

Gilyard was a Moses Lake, Washington, native. He had a prolific career as an actor, starting in the 1980s with appearances in "Diff'rent Strokes," "The Facts of Life" and other shows. He then appeared in two of the biggest movies of the decade: "Top Gun," in which he played Sundown, a radar intercept officer, and "Die Hard," when he was featured as a villainous computer maven whose one liners included "You didn't bring me along for my charming personality."

In the 1990s, he was on the side of law enforcement in "Matlock," playing opposite Andy Griffith, and "Walker, Texas Ranger," which starred Chuck Norris. His other credits include "The Karate Kid: Part II," a stage production of "Driving Miss Daisy" and an appearance alongside "Die Hard" star Bruce Willis in a commercial for DieHard batteries.

US bat species devastated by fungus now listed as endangered

By JOHN FLESHER AP Environmental Writer

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP) — The Biden administration declared the northern long-eared bat endangered on Tuesday in a last-ditch effort to save a species driven to the brink of extinction by white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease.

"White-nose syndrome is decimating cave-dwelling bat species like the northern long-eared bat at unprecedented rates," said Martha Williams, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The agency is "deeply committed to working with partners on a balanced approach that reduces the impacts of disease and protects the survivors to recover northern long-eared bat populations," she said.

First documented in the U.S. in 2006, the disease has infected 12 types of bats and killed millions. The northern long-eared bat is among the hardest hit, with estimated declines of 97% or higher in affected populations. The bat is found in 37 eastern and north-central states, plus Washington, D.C., and much of Canada.

Named for white, fuzzy spots that appear on infected bats, white-nose syndrome attacks bats' wings, muzzles and ears when they hibernate in caves and abandoned mines.

It causes them to wake early from hibernation and to sometimes fly outside. They can burn up their winter fat stores and eventually starve.

The disease has spread across nearly 80% of the geographical range where northern long-eared bats live and is expected to cover it all by 2025.

Another species ravaged by the fungus is the tricolored bat, which the government proposed to classify as endangered in September. A third, the little brown bat, is being evaluated for a potential listing.

Bats are believed to give U.S. agriculture an annual boost of \$3 billion by gobbling pests and pollinating some plants.

The Fish and Wildlife Service designated the northern long-eared bat as threatened in 2015. With its situation increasingly dire, the agency proposed an endangered listing in March and considered public comments before deciding to proceed. The reclassification takes effect Jan. 30, 2023.

"This species is in dire straits but we never want to give up hope," said Winifred Frick, chief scientist with Bat Conservation International, a nonprofit group. "We can do amazing things when we work hard and have legal protections in place to protect these small colonies that are left."

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In many cases, the service identifies "critical habitat" areas considered particularly important for the survival of an endangered species. Officials decided against doing so for the northern long-eared bat because habitat loss isn't the primary reason for its decline, spokeswoman Georgia Parham said. Calling attention to their winter hibernation spots could make things worse, she added.

Recovery efforts will focus on wooded areas where the bats roost in summer — usually alone or in small groups, nestling beneath bark or in tree cavities and crevices. Emerging at dusk, they feed on moths, beetles and other insects.

Under the Endangered Species Act, federal agencies are required to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service to be sure projects that they fund or authorize — such as timber harvests, prescribed fires and highway construction — will not jeopardize a listed species' existence.

For nonfederal landowners, actions that could result in unintentional kills could be allowed but will require permits.

The Fish and Wildlife Service said that it will also work with wind energy companies to reduce the likelihood that bats will strike turbines. These collisions are currently a threat in roughly half of the northern long-eared bat's range, an area likely to grow as wind energy development expands.

The service has approved nearly two dozen plans allowing wind energy and forestry projects to proceed after steps were taken to make them more bat-friendly, said Karen Herrington, Midwest regional coordinator for threatened and endangered species.

Operators can limit the danger by curtailing blade rotation during bats' migration season and when winds are low.

Research continues for methods to fight white-nose syndrome, including development of a vaccine. The service has distributed more than \$46 million for the campaign, which involves around 150 agencies, private organizations and Native American tribes.

"We have to find a cure for white-nose syndrome that is killing our bats and we have to protect the forests where they live," said Ryan Shannon, senior attorney with the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity. "This endangered listing will help on both counts."

World Cup Viewer's Guide: Messi tries to avoid elimination

By JENNA FRYER AP National Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Two of the best players on the planet go head-to-head when Lionel Messi of Argentina and Robert Lewandowski of Poland meet with World Cup implications in what is likely Messi's final attempt to win the tournament.

That match is part of an intense Wednesday at the World Cup: Mexico could be eliminated from the group stage for the first time since 1978 and Saudi Arabia has a chance to advance after its opening-game upset over Argentina.

But the spectacle will be at Stadium 974 in Doha, where Messi and Lewandowski square off.

Poland leads the group and a draw is enough to advance to the round of 16. But after the shocking loss to Saudi Arabia in its opening match, Argentina is only guaranteed to advance with a victory. A draw could get Argentina into the next round depending on the other result.

A loss? Well, that would mean elimination and humiliation. Messi is playing in his record-tying fifth World Cup and, at 35 years old, he's unlikely to play in a sixth.

He knows it, too, and the devoted Argentina fanbase shed tears after Messi scored the crucial second-half goal to seal a 2-0 win over Mexico last week. Argentina has not been eliminated from the group stage since 2002.

"I think when the groups were drawn and we were put together, the whole world has been waiting for this match," Poland coach Czeslaw Michniewicz said.

Poland is trying to advance out of the group stage for the first time since 1986, and the Poles last went unbeaten in all three first round games in 1982 en route to the semifinals. Lewandowski failed to convert a penalty in a 0-0 draw with Mexico, but he scored his first career World Cup goal in a 2-0 win over Saudi

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Arabia.

Messi and Lewandowski have never before played each other at the international level, but have gone head-to-head three times at the club level in the Champions League. Messi scored twice for Barcelona in a 2015 win and Lewandowski scored once each for Bayern Munich in victories over Barcelona in 2015 and 2020.

Michniewicz said the match is much bigger than two players and it will be team effort, not Messi or Lewandowski, that decides the game.

"It's not Messi versus Lewandowski. It's not tennis, it's not 1-on-1. They are not serving to each other," the Poland coach said. "Robert needs his teammates, like Leo does. They rely on their teammates, they can't do this alone, although these individual players can do a lot themselves."

MEXICO-SAUDI ARABIA

Mexico came to the World Cup with goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa desperate to advance past the round of 16 and play in an elusive "quinto partido" — a fifth game.

If Mexico doesn't make something happen against Saudi Arabia, there might not even be a "cuarto partido."

El Tri hasn't advanced to the quarterfinals since Mexico hosted the 1986 tournament, but the team is now on the verge of elimination in group play. A loss to Saudi Arabia would end Mexico's bid for an eighth straight trip to the World Cup's knockout rounds.

The last time Mexico played at soccer's biggest tournament and didn't advance out of its group was in 1978.

But Mexico needs to do more than just win. Even with a victory, Mexico needs Poland to beat Argentina, and maybe even goal difference will determine Mexico's fate.

One problem: Mexico has yet to score any goals in Qatar. El Tri hasn't scored in 384 straight minutes at the World Cup, dating back to their second group match at the 2018 tournament in Russia.

"In the next game we have no more chances," Mexico forward Henry Martin said. "We have to score the goals that we can, and not worry what happens in the other game."

Saudi Arabia pulled off one of the tournament's biggest upsets ever when it beat Argentina 2-1 in its opener. The team reached the knockout stage in 1994 in its World Cup debut but hasn't made it past the group stage since.

Saudi Arabia can advance with a win. A draw would also be enough if Poland beats Argentina.

"We will play to the last second of this tournament and we will not give up," Saudi Arabia coach Herve Renard said.

TUNISIA-FRANCE

The reigning World Cup champions have already advanced to the round of 16 and that could give France a chance to rest some players against Tunisia in its final game of group play.

France beat Australia and Denmark in its opening games and it almost guaranteed Les Bleus to finish on top of Group D. After arriving in Qatar with Paul Pogba, N'Golo Kante, Karim Benzema and Christopher Nkunku all ruled out with injuries, France lost Lucas Hernandez after only 13 minutes of its opening game with a ruptured ACL.

France could choose to rest Kylian Mbappe, Olivier Giroud and Antoine Griezmann.

"There will be changes. Everyone's ready to play," France coach Didier Deschamps said.

France has not won all three of its World Cup group matches since claiming its first title in 1998.

Tunisia hasn't even won three matches in its World Cup history, but the team needs to beat France to have any chance of advancing.

Tunisia coach Jalel Kadri said before the tournament it was his "personal mission" to advance past the group stage and hinted he would quit otherwise.

"Let's wait for the result of the match and we'll see. Hopefully I'll be able to answer your question after the match," Kadri said ahead of the match against France. "We are still alive and we are still present."

The Tunisians have never been past the group stage in five World Cups and their two wins were 40 years apart — against Mexico in 1978 and against Panama four years ago in Russia.

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AUSTRALIA-DENMARK

Australia has reached the round of 16 at the World Cup only once, in 2006. In fact, the Socceroos have only won three times in their last 18 World Cup matches.

"It was amazing to get that result and get that third win in a World Cup for Australia. But we're not happy and satisfied with that," striker Mitchell Duke said. "We want more and we do believe that we can get out of the group and we can get a result against Denmark and that's our main objective now."

A win on Wednesday against Denmark would advance Australia and a draw would also be enough unless France loses to Tunisia.

Denmark, which reached the semifinals at last year's European Championship, would also advance with a win over Australia. Denmark wants to qualify for the knockout stage at back-to-back World Cup tournaments for a second time, last done in 1998 and 2002.

The Danes have only failed to qualify from the group stage in one of their previous five appearances at the tournament. Denmark had a 0-0 draw against Tunisia in its opening game and followed with a 2-1 loss to France.

"It is very clear and it is very easy. We don't have to make any calculations or think other options," Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand said. "It is straightforward. We will try to win the match, that is it."

Census: Christians a minority in England; non-religious grow

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Fewer than half the people in England and Wales consider themselves Christian, according to the most recent census — the first time a minority of the population has followed the country's official religion.

Britain has become less religious — and less white — in the decade since the last census, figures from the 2021 census released Tuesday by the Office for National Statistics revealed.

Some 46.2% of the population of England and Wales described themselves as Christian on the day of the 2021 census, down from 59.3% a decade earlier. The Muslim population grew from 4.9% to 6.5% of the total, while 1.7% identified as Hindu, up from 1.5%.

More than 1 in 3 people — 37% — said they had no religion, up from 25% in 2011.

The other parts of the U.K., Scotland and Northern Ireland, report their census results separately.

Secularism campaigners said the shift should trigger a rethink of the way religion is entrenched in British society. The U.K. has state-funded Church of England schools, Anglican bishops sit in Parliament's upper chamber, and the monarch is "defender of the faith" and supreme governor of the church.

Andrew Copson, chief executive of the charity Humanists U.K., said "the dramatic growth of the non-religious" had made the U.K. "almost certainly one of the least religious countries on Earth."

"One of the most striking things about these results is how at odds the population is from the state itself," he said. "No state in Europe has such a religious set-up as we do in terms of law and public policy, while at the same time having such a non-religious population."

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell, one of the most senior clerics in the Church of England, said the data was "not a great surprise," but was a challenge to Christians to work harder to promote their faith.

"We have left behind the era when many people almost automatically identified as Christian, but other surveys consistently show how the same people still seek spiritual truth and wisdom and a set of values to live by," he said.

Almost 82% of people in England and Wales identified as white in the census, down from 86% in 2011. Some 9% said they were Asian, 4% Black and 3% from "mixed or multiple" ethnic backgrounds, while 2% identified with another ethnic group.

China sends students home, police patrol to curb protests

By JOE McDONALD, DAKE KANG and HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

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BEIJING (AP) — Chinese universities sent students home and police fanned out in Beijing and Shanghai to prevent more protests Tuesday after crowds angered by severe anti-virus restrictions called for leader Xi Jinping to resign in the biggest show of public dissent in decades.

Authorities have eased some controls after demonstrations in at least eight mainland cities and Hong Kong but maintained they would stick to a “zero-COVID” strategy that has confined millions of people to their homes for months at a time. Security forces have detained an unknown number of people and stepped up surveillance.

With police out in force, there was no word of protests Tuesday in Beijing, Shanghai or other major mainland cities that were the scene last weekend of the most widespread protests since the army crushed the 1989 student-led Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement.

In Hong Kong, about a dozen people, mostly from the mainland, protested at a university.

Beijing’s Tsinghua University, where students protested over the weekend, and other schools in the capital and the southern province of Guangdong sent students home. The schools said they were being protected from COVID-19, but dispersing them to far-flung hometowns also reduces the likelihood of more demonstrations. Chinese leaders are wary of universities, which have been hotbeds of activism including the Tiananmen protests.

On Sunday, Tsinghua students were told they could go home early for the semester. The school, which is Xi’s alma mater, arranged buses to take them to the train station or airport.

Nine student dorms at Tsinghua were closed Monday after some students positive for COVID-19, according to one who noted the closure would make it hard for crowds to gather. The student gave only his surname, Chen, for fear of retribution from authorities.

Beijing Forestry University also said it would arrange for students to return home. It said its faculty and students all tested negative for the virus.

At least 10 universities have sent students home. Schools said classes and final exams would be conducted online.

Authorities hope to “defuse the situation” by clearing out campuses, said Dali Yang, an expert on Chinese politics at the University of Chicago.

Depending on how tough a position the government takes, groups might take turns protesting, he said.

Police appeared to be trying to keep their crackdown out of sight, possibly to avoid drawing attention to the scale of the protests or encouraging others. Videos and posts on Chinese social media about protests were deleted by the ruling party’s vast online censorship apparatus.

There were no announcements about detentions, though reporters saw protesters taken away by police, and authorities warned some detained protesters against demonstrating again.

In Shanghai, police stopped pedestrians and checked their phones Monday night, according to a witness, possibly looking for apps such as Twitter that are banned in China or images of protests. The witness, who insisted on anonymity for fear of arrest, said he was on his way to a protest but found no crowd there when he arrived.

Images viewed by The Associated Press of photos from a weekend protest showed police shoving people into cars. Some people were also swept up in police raids after demonstrations ended.

One person who lived near the site of a protest in Shanghai was detained Sunday and held until Tuesday morning, according to two friends who insisted on anonymity for fear of retribution from authorities.

In Beijing, police on Monday visited a resident who attended a protest the previous night, according to a friend who refused to be identified for fear of retaliation. He said the police questioned the resident and warned him not to go to more protests.

On Tuesday, protesters at the University of Hong Kong chanted against virus restrictions and held up sheets of paper with critical slogans. Some spectators joined in their chants.

The protesters held signs that read, “Say no to COVID panic” and “No dictatorship but democracy.”

One chanted: “We’re not foreign forces but your classmates.” Chinese authorities often try to discredit domestic critics by saying they work for foreign powers.

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"Zero COVID" has helped keep case numbers lower than those of the United States and other major countries, but global health experts increasingly say it is unsustainable.

Beijing needs to make its approach "very targeted" to reduce economic disruption, the head of the International Monetary Fund told The Associated Press in an interview Tuesday.

"We see the importance of moving away from massive lockdowns," said IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva in Berlin. "So that targeting allows to contain the spread of COVID without significant economic costs."

Economists and health experts, however, warn that Beijing can't relax controls that keep most travelers out of China until tens of millions of elderly people are vaccinated. They say that means "zero COVID" might not end for as much as another year.

On Tuesday, the National Health Commission announced plans to encourage the elderly to be vaccinated with publicity campaigns, outreach through community centers and mobile vaccination sites to reach people who can't leave home.

Public tolerance of the restrictions has eroded as some people confined at home said they struggled to get access to food and medicine.

The Chinese Communist Party promised last month to reduce disruptions, but a spike in infections prompted cities to tighten controls.

The weekend protests were sparked by anger over the deaths of at least 10 people in a fire in China's far west last week that prompted angry questions online about whether firefighters or victims trying to escape were blocked by anti-virus controls.

Most protesters complained about excessive restrictions, but some turned their anger at Xi, China's most powerful leader since at least the 1980s.

In a video that was verified by The Associated Press, a crowd in Shanghai on Saturday chanted, "Xi Jinping! Step down! CCP! Step down!" Such direct criticism of Xi is unprecedented.

Sympathy protests were held overseas, and foreign governments have called on Beijing for restraint.

"We support the right of people everywhere to peacefully protest, to make known their views, their concerns, their frustrations," said U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken during a visit to Bucharest, Romania.

Meanwhile, the British government summoned China's ambassador as a protest over the arrest and beating of a BBC cameraman in Shanghai.

Media freedom "is something very, very much at the heart of the U.K.'s belief system," said Foreign Secretary James Cleverly.

Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Zhao Lijian disputed the British version of events. Zhao said the journalist, Edward Lawrence, failed to identify himself and accused the BBC of twisting the story.

Asked about criticism of the crackdown, Zhao defended Beijing's anti-virus strategy and said the public's legal rights were protected by law.

The government is trying to "provide maximum protection to people's lives and health while minimizing the COVID impact on social and economic development," he said.

Wang Dan, a former student leader of the 1989 demonstrations who lives in exile, said the protest "symbolizes the beginning of a new era in China ... in which Chinese civil society has decided not to be silent and to confront tyranny."

But he warned at a news conference in Taipei, Taiwan, that authorities were likely to respond with "stronger force to violently suppress protesters." _____

Kang reported from Shanghai and Wu from Taipei, Taiwan. Associated Press writers Kanis Leung in Hong Kong, Jill Lawless in London, David McHugh in Berlin, and Ellen Knickmeyer in Bucharest, Romania, contributed.

EXPLAINER: How could allies help Netanyahu beat charges?

By ELEANOR H. REICH Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to return to office, from

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where he could try to make his yearslong legal troubles disappear through new legislation advanced by his far-right and ultra-Orthodox allies. Critics say such a legal crusade is an assault on Israel's democracy.

Netanyahu, 73, who is on trial for corruption, will likely be buoyed by a loyal and comfortable governing majority that could grant him a lifeline from conviction.

Defenders of the justice system say the proposed changes would allow legislators to abuse their authority and disrupt the tenuous balance of powers that keeps them in check.

"It brings us to a situation where our entire democracy boils down to elections, but once you are elected you can do whatever you want," said Amir Fuchs, senior researcher at Jerusalem's Israel Democracy Institute think tank. "It is not a normal situation in any democracy."

Israel's right wing has for years sought to change the justice system, portraying it as an interventionist and left-leaning roadblock to its legislative agenda. The makeup of the expected coalition now clears a path for such changes.

Netanyahu is on trial for fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three scandals involving wealthy associates and powerful media moguls. He denies wrongdoing and has portrayed himself as a victim of a witch hunt by law enforcement and the justice system.

Netanyahu's political rivals say such allegations of purportedly politicized prosecutors and judges are part of a campaign to erode the public's faith in the legal system and ultimately weaken it.

Netanyahu has claimed that proposed legal changes would not impact the outcome of his trial. While on trial, he is bound by a conflict of interest arrangement limiting his dealings with the justice system, although it is unclear if that will be enforced.

Here's a look at the legal maneuvers that could help Netanyahu:

THE OVERRIDE CLAUSE

The most contentious change would target Israel's Supreme Court in what critics say is a direct blow to Israel's democracy.

Netanyahu's partners say the Supreme Court steps in far too often to throw out right-leaning laws. They say voters choose their lawmakers to create legislation and having the Supreme Court challenge those laws is an affront to the people's choice.

Israel has no constitution, relying instead on a set of "basic laws" that enshrine rights and freedoms. The courts are tasked with verifying that legislation measures up to those laws. The Supreme Court is seen as the final recourse for minorities and other groups challenging legislation they perceive as discriminatory.

The override clause, expected to be among the coalition's first steps, would allow the government to treat some decisions by the Supreme Court as nonbinding. Under the proposal, still being negotiated, the coalition could override rulings with any majority, giving the governing bloc overwhelming power to disturb Israel's system of checks and balances.

Yaniv Roznai, a law professor at Reichman University near Tel Aviv, said that while an override clause would have no direct impact on the trial, it could undermine and weaken the judiciary. Many worry this imbalance would allow Netanyahu's allies to take actions to clear him.

THE "FRENCH LAW"

Netanyahu's allies plan to craft a law that would postpone the prosecution of a sitting prime minister for alleged crimes until he leaves office. It's dubbed the "French law" because in France, sitting presidents are immune from prosecution.

Sitting Israeli prime ministers can be prosecuted. But unlike in France, Israeli leaders have no term limits, meaning the shield of immunity could possibly last for years. Netanyahu is Israel's longest-serving leader, having ruled for 15 years and he has no plans to retire.

Under the plan, a prime minister could be prosecuted for some crimes, but it excludes corruption charges. Fuchs, the researcher, said that makes the law appear tailor-made for Netanyahu.

CHANGING THE PENAL CODE

Netanyahu's allies have pledged to remove from the penal code the very charge Netanyahu is accused of in three cases: fraud and breach of trust.

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They say the crime is poorly defined, giving the court too much discretion when deciding on a conviction. They say it places lawmakers overly at risk for unjustified prosecution.

Critics say erasing the charge would remove a safeguard against corruption. They argue that targeting the very charge Netanyahu is accused of could erode the rule of law, opening the door to further changes to the legal code to rescue other lawmakers.

Yoav Sapir, a former Israeli chief public defender, said cancelling an offense has a retroactive effect. That could lead to charges in all three of Netanyahu's cases being dropped and having two out of three cases thrown out entirely.

RECONFIGURING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Today, Israel's attorney general consults with the government on the legal viability of legislation and represents it in court, while also being tasked with protecting the public interest from any harm posed by government authorities. The attorney general is nominated by the government and must be cleared by a professional committee made up of former justice officials and others.

Netanyahu's allies want to split the post of attorney general into three separate jobs, while making at least two of the positions political appointments.

The current attorney general, Gali Baharav-Miara, was nominated by the outgoing government and she appears to have backed her predecessor's decision to indict Netanyahu. And while firing her is complicated and has bad optics, splitting the position would keep her in her post until the end of her term in 2028 while shifting some of her responsibilities to a political appointee who could decide to halt the trial.

OUTSIZED LEVERAGE

Netanyahu's legal woes give outsized leverage to his prospective coalition partners, who have been driving a hard bargain in tougher than expected talks now underway to form a government.

His allies are asking for influential portfolios, such as defense, finance and public security. They also want to grant legal immunity to soldiers operating against Palestinians, allow gender segregation in certain public spaces and increase government stipends for tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews who instead of working study Jewish texts.

Ultra-Orthodox and far-right parties could hold the key to Netanyahu's legal salvation, granting them great power in deciding the next government's agenda and shaping Israel's future.

Apple Music reveals top music in 2022 and listener charts

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — "Stay," the smash hit by The Kid Laroi and Justin Bieber topped Apple Music's global song chart in 2022 as the giant music streamer released its end-of-year lists and provided listeners with data on their own most listened-to tunes.

"Stay," which stayed atop the Billboard Hot 100 for seven weeks this summer, was No. 1 on Apple Music's top 100 global songs chart, staying on top for 51 days straight. Elton John and Dua Lipa's "Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)" was No. 1 on the streamer's Shazam chart and "We Don't Talk About Bruno" from the movie musical "Encanto" was the song with the most-read lyrics in 2022 on the platform.

Joining "Stay" at the very top of the global songs list were "As It Was" by Harry Styles, "Wait For U" by Future featuring Drake and Tems, "Super Gremlin" by Kodak Black, "Easy on Me" by Adele, and "Heat Wave" by Glass Animals. Hip-hop continued to lead the different genres on the global top 100 with 32 songs, followed by pop with 23 songs and R&B/soul in third place with 11 songs.

The data shows the growing presence of non-English-language tunes, with African songs on the rise on the Shazam chart as well as the global daily 100, while Japanese-language songs made big gains on the most-read lyrics chart.

"It's really the rise of what was once very niche genres creeping into the mainstream, which is an exciting new development on the platform," said Rachel Newman, global head of editorial.

Twenty-one non-English songs were in the global Top 100, more than double the number of songs last year. Fifty-five Latin songs reached the Global Daily Top 100 in 2022 — up 22% from 2021. In 2022, six of

the the 50 J-pop songs to reach the chart placed in the top 10; last year none were in the top 10.

The streamer began notifying users Tuesday that Apple Music Replay was ready. The feature lets users see and hear their favorite songs, albums, artists and playlists from the past year as well as total minutes on the service. One new feature is that superfans can discover whether they are in the top 100 listeners of their favorite artist or genre.

Replay — Apple's alternative to Spotify's Wrapped playlist — has been redesigned with new, sleek functionality and optimized for sharing on social media like TikTok or Instagram. The charts are dynamic all year, so listeners can check any time to see how their music is charting. Eligibility is based on a threshold of plays and time spent listening.

In November, Apple Music crowned the Puerto Rican reggaeton superstar Bad Bunny its Artist of the Year, thanks in large part to his latest album, "Un Verano Sin Ti," which became Apple Music's most streamed album of 2022 and its biggest Latin album of all time.

Apple Music had a big 2022 itself, hitting a milestone in October when it recorded its 100 millionth song on the streaming service. That's more than YouTube Music's 80 million songs, Spotify's 82 million tracks and podcasts, and Amazon Music's 90 million songs.

"One hundred million songs for us is really significant because I think it is such a kind of great reflection of just how diverse and enormous the music world is these days," Newman said. "It's the largest and most diverse collection of music in any kind of format ever in the history of music, which is just pretty astounding."

Streaming service Pandora also revealed its top songs Tuesday: "Wait For U" was its top track of 2022 and Bad Bunny had the most songs on the top 100 list with five.

Nigerian stowaways found on ship's rudder in Canary Islands

By RENATA BRITO Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Three stowaways were found on a ship's rudder in the Canary Islands after an 11-day ocean voyage from Nigeria, Spain's maritime rescue service said.

The men found on the Alithini II oil tanker at the Las Palmas port on Monday afternoon appeared to have symptoms of dehydration and hypothermia and were transferred to hospitals on the island for medical attention, according to Spain's Maritime Safety and Rescue Society.

The survivors were all from Nigeria, the Spanish government's delegation in the Canary Islands told The Associated Press. One of them remained hospitalized Tuesday.

The maritime rescue agency, known in Spain as Salvamento Marítimo, shared a photo of the three men sitting on top of the rudder under the ship's massive hull with their feet hanging only a few centimeters (inches) from the water.

According to the MarineTraffic tracking website, the Malta-flagged vessel left Lagos, Nigeria on Nov. 17 and arrived in Las Palmas on Monday. The distance between the ports is roughly 4,600 kilometers (2,800 miles).

Other people were previously discovered clinging to rudders while risking their lives to reach the Spanish islands located off northwest Africa. Salvamento Marítimo has dealt with six similar cases in the last two years, according to Sofía Hernández who heads the service's coordination center in Las Palmas.

Migrants may seek cover inside the box-like structure around the rudder, Hernández explained, but are still vulnerable to bad weather and rough seas. "It is very dangerous," she told the AP.

A ship's fluctuating draft level - the vertical distance between the waterline and the bottom of the hull - is another hazard for such stowaways. The levels vary depending on the weight of the cargo onboard.

"We are talking about several meters difference. This part could have been perfectly submerged in the water," Hernández said.

In 2020 14-year-old Nigerian boy was interviewed by Spain's El País newspaper after surviving two weeks on a ship's rudder. He had also departed from Lagos.

"It's not the first time nor will it be the last," tweeted Txema Santana, a journalist and migration advisor

to the regional government of the Canary Islands.

In cases like these, the ship owner is responsible for bringing the stowaways back to their point of departure, according to the Spanish government delegation in the islands.

Thousands of migrants and refugees from North and West Africa have reached the Canary Islands irregularly in recent years. Most make the dangerous Atlantic crossing on crowded boats after departing from the coast of Morocco, the Western Sahara, Mauritania and even Senegal.

More than 11,600 people have reached the Spanish islands by boat so far this year, according to figures released by Spain's Interior Ministry.

Houston lifts boil-water order affecting more than 2 million

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston officials lifted an order Tuesday that had called for more than 2 million people in the nation's fourth-largest city to boil their tap water before drinking or using it.

The boil order had been in effect since Sunday, when a power outage at a purification plant caused pressure to drop.

The order led to the closure of businesses and schools, including the Houston Independent School District, which canceled classes Monday and Tuesday. The city rescinded the order shortly before 7 a.m. Tuesday.

The city said water quality samples sent to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality confirmed the tap water meets regulatory standards and is safe to drink.

At a news conference Monday, Mayor Sylvester Turner said the city issued the notice, which affects all of Houston and some adjacent areas, in an "abundance of caution" after two transformers — a main one and its backup — "uniquely and coincidentally" failed at a water plant. The problem affected the plant's ability to treat and pump water into the transmission system, resulting in low pressure.

Because the issue was within the plant's system, backup power generators would not have made a difference, Turner said. Since the transformers were down, they couldn't transmit power to the plant.

The power system at the water plant undergoes regular maintenance, Turner said, but he did not give a timeline for how often. The mayor said he has ordered a diagnostic review of the system to understand how the problem was possible and how it can be prevented.

Sixteen sensors marked dips under the minimum pressure levels required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, 14 of them for only 2 minutes and two of them for nearly 30 minutes, Turner said.

Typically, there is enough pressure for water to flow out of leaky pipes. When pressure is lost, however, contamination like bacteria sitting near pipes can be sucked into the system, creating a health risk.

4 World Cup matches in 1 day? An AP reporter's challenge

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

LUSAIL, Qatar (AP) — Qatar's World Cup is the most compact in history, with all eight stadiums radiating from the capital city in a country smaller than the U.S. state of Connecticut and the two farthest stadiums barely 41 miles (66 kilometers) apart.

That led to a question during the tournament's group stage: Can a fan actually go to all four matches in a single day? On Monday, I decided to find out.

FIRST MATCH - CAMEROON VS SERBIA

After downing two large coffees, my odyssey began. It was 11:22 a.m. and I had over an hour and a half until the first game: Cameroon versus Serbia with a 1 p.m. kickoff at Al Janoub Stadium, located about 19 miles (30 kilometers) and a 90 minute ride south from my hotel in central Doha.

I took Doha's brand new metro, free for World Cup ticket holders, to the stadium. The underground tunnel spit me out onto the city's bright desert outskirts. It was so hot — 32 degrees Celsius or nearly 90 degrees Fahrenheit — that you understand why this tournament had to start in November, another first for the World Cup. Security guards clad in neon vests whisked us onto buses.

Despite the teeming crowds, it was a smooth ride to the gates. "Stadium, this way!" the guards chanted

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in unison, a tune that has formed a hypnotic soundtrack to this World Cup. It was 12:35 p.m. The match was starting soon.

When Cameroon scored the first goal, the crowd went wild. But their fast start faded as Serbia fired back with two goals. Then a third. Cameroon scored a second time. Then a third! This was no normal game. I was riveted. The match was tied, 3-3.

But I had a tough choice. If I wanted to make Ghana versus South Korea at 4 p.m. in Al Rayyan — 17 miles (27 kilometers) back north — I had to get out of there. Fast. I bolted at the 80th minute, just as Cameroon's Georges-Kevin N'Koudou took a corner kick.

There was just an hour between games and the metro to Education City Stadium would take over two full hours. There was no way I'd make it in time.

SECOND MATCH - SOUTH KOREA VS GHANA

I pounded the pavement and hailed a cab instead. Fans choked the roads with traffic. It was an anxious 40 minutes in the car. When I arrived at Education City Stadium it was 3:51 p.m. I sprinted through an entrance for journalists, as Korean and Ghanaian fans settled in their seats. When I reached the stands, the kickoff countdown sounded out: "Three, two, one!"

The Ghanaians sang constantly. Red-clad Korea fans beat giant drums and jumped up and down with unyielding loyalty, even as Ghana scored twice.

The action picked up in the second half as Korea scored off two headers back-to-back. Ghana scored a third goal.

As much as I wanted to get swept up in the color and noise, I kept checking traffic on my phone. At the 75th minute, with Ghana leading 3-2, I forced myself out of the stadium and sprinted to the metro before it could become the chokepoint it often does after games — not even knowing who won.

The frenzied Ghanaians rejoicing in the station told me everything about the final score. The metro train could have been a night club. Afrobeat music blared. Annan-Mettle Ebenezer, a 36-year-old security guard from Ghana, cut loose in dance as his friends cheered him on.

"We were the best! Our strength, our muscles!" he shouted, moved by the moment in a way you rarely see outside the World Cup.

THIRD MATCH - BRAZIL VS SWITZERLAND

I made it to Stadium 974, located near Doha's Hamad International Airport and named both for Qatar's international telephone code and the 974 shipping containers composing it that will be disassembled after the World Cup. I'd timed this well, with 15 minutes to get to my seat ahead of the 7 p.m. kickoff. Brazilian stragglers in yellow and blue wigs hurried to the entrance, their excitement palpable.

Unlike the last two, this game lacked excitement. After an hour, no goal had been scored. Brazil's first try was disallowed for offside, frustrating fans.

At the 75th minute, I thought I wouldn't miss anything. As I rushed out of the stadium and onto the street in the dying minutes of the match, I heard the crowd burst into hysterics. Echoing behind me was unmistakable roar of a World Cup goal.

Brazil 1, Switzerland 0.

FOURTH MATCH - PORTUGAL VS URUGUAY

I felt crushed to have missed it. But there was no time for regret. Lusail Stadium, the final destination hosting Portugal versus Uruguay, was still 12 miles (20 kilometers) and an hour's metro ride away.

In the train, elbows pressed into strangers' torsos, heads squeezed under armpits. I wasn't the only one trying to make both matches.

Rodrigo Gonzalez Cejas, a 42-year-old Argentine lawyer on the metro, said he didn't mind missing Brazil's last-minute goal. It was more important, he said, to see as many matches as possible.

He said he has frequently made it to three matches a day at this World Cup, leaving in the final minutes and running for his life to the next destination. I told him of my experiment and tried to understand why he put himself through such a grueling routine. "I love football," Gonzalez Cejas replied simply, then rushed out of the train.

I was exhausted, my feet dragging. According to my phone, I'd walked just about nine miles (15 kilome-

ters). But the sight of thousands upon thousands of spirited fans from all over the world converging on the gleaming stadium revived me.

With the thought that I had nowhere to run to next — other than my hotel bed long after midnight — I absorbed the atmosphere and stayed until the end to see Portugal beat Uruguay 2-0 to advance to the round of 16.

The lesson?

It is possible to see four World Cup matches in one day in Qatar. But in the future, I think I'll stick to just one.

Got a bucket? Speed up the composting process with bokashi

By JESSICA DAMIANO Associated Press

It's no secret that the key to healthy plants is healthy soil, and the best way to improve soil is by incorporating compost, which can take up to a year to make.

Bokashi is a composting method that can speed that up. It uses an inoculant developed in Japan in the 1980s containing beneficial microorganisms.

Compost improves the drainage of heavy clay soil and enhances the water retention of sand. It exudes nutrients and microbes to nourish plants and increase their vigor, while decreasing or eliminating the need for conventional fertilizer.

Homemade compost, always a worthwhile endeavor, requires time and patience. Ingredients must be tossed or turned periodically to expose all parts to the oxygen necessary for their aerobic — or oxygen-fueled — decomposition.

Bokashi composting degrades ingredients anaerobically, replacing the function of oxygen with fermentation, which essentially pickles them. This cuts the wait time to as little as 10 days, and creates a product that's even higher in nutrients than traditional compost.

It can be done in a small, indoor space, and the only equipment needed is a 5-gallon bucket with a spout and tight-fitting lid, and a bag of inoculant to kick start the fermentation process. Bokashi inoculants typically contain wheat bran, wheat germ or sawdust. You can buy a kit or research DIY options to get started.

Add kitchen scraps to the bucket in 2-inch layers, sprinkling a small handful of inoculant over each layer as you go and resealing the bucket tightly between additions. You might cover the layers with a plate or plastic wrap before sealing the container to further reduce oxygen exposure.

When the bucket is full, drain the produced liquid from the spout every couple of days. Dilute one teaspoon of that "compost tea" into a quart of water and apply the highly nutritious solution to garden or houseplant soil to increase plant vigor and yield. Avoid direct contact with foliage, and use each batch within a day or so of collecting it.

Meat and dairy scraps — strictly no-no's in a regular compost pile — can be incorporated into the bokashi bucket. Unlike conventional compost piles, which don't heat up sufficiently to kill harmful bacteria and parasites, the effective microorganisms in the bokashi bucket will destroy any pathogens present in the animal products.

Ingredients should be added quickly and sporadically to avoid introducing too much oxygen to the bucket. Likewise, you should avoid the temptation to check on its progress between additions.

The sealed bucket should not emit any odors into the room, but you may notice a sweet-and-sour scent when the lid is opened. This is normal. A foul odor, however, signals that something has gone awry. If you detect a rotting-egg odor or if dark mold is visible within the bucket (white mold is OK), try adding more inoculant. If the situation isn't remedied within a couple of days, discard the batch, clean and disinfect the bucket and start over.

When the fermentation process is complete — again, in as little as 10 days — the resulting biomass will still resemble the original ingredients, but will decompose quickly. It can be buried in trenches in a new garden bed at least two weeks before planting. Be sure to cover it completely with soil.

You can also add it to the center of a traditional or worm composting bin or pile (mixed well with the

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existing contents), where it will break down further.

If the notion of creating "pre-compost" only to add it to a conventional compost pile seems pointless, consider that incorporating bokashi-decomposed ingredients will save many months, essentially providing a fast track to finished compost.

If you don't have a conventional compost pile, you can finish your bokashi compost by digging a hole and burying batches in a dedicated spot in the garden. After two weeks, you can dig up what you need and use it as you would regular compost.

Another option: Bokashi can be dug into trenches alongside but safely away from plants. Take care to avoid direct contact with roots, as the acidity of the fermented product will burn them. For the same reason, it should not be applied as a top dressing or used as mulch unless it has been further composted using traditional methods.

Today in History: November 30, birth of Winston Churchill

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Nov. 30, the 334th day of 2022. There are 31 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 30, 1782, the United States and Britain signed preliminary peace articles in Paris for ending the Revolutionary War; the Treaty of Paris was signed in September 1783.

On this date:

In 1803, Spain completed the process of ceding Louisiana to France, which had sold it to the United States.

In 1874, British statesman Sir Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace.

In 1981, the United States and the Soviet Union opened negotiations in Geneva aimed at reducing nuclear weapons in Europe.

In 1982, the motion picture "Gandhi," starring Ben Kingsley as the Indian nationalist leader, had its world premiere in New Delhi.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Brady Bill, which required a five-day waiting period for handgun purchases and background checks of prospective buyers.

In 2000, Al Gore's lawyers battled for his political survival in the Florida and U.S. Supreme Courts; meanwhile, GOP lawmakers in Tallahassee moved to award the presidency to George W. Bush in case the courts did not by appointing their own slate of electors.

In 2004, "Jeopardy!" fans saw Ken Jennings end his 74-game winning streak as he lost to real estate agent Nancy Zerg.

In 2010, the Obama administration announced that all 197 airlines that flew to the U.S. had begun collecting names, genders and birth dates of passengers so the government could check them against terror watch lists before they boarded flights.

In 2011, an Arizona jury sentenced convicted "Baseline Killer" Mark Goudeau (goo-DOH') to death for killing nine people in the Phoenix area. (He remains on death row.)

In 2013, Paul Walker, 40, the star of the "Fast & Furious" movie series, died with his friend, Roger W. Rodas, who was at the wheel of a Porsche sports car that crashed and burned north of Los Angeles.

In 2018, former President George H.W. Bush, a World War II hero who rose through the political ranks to the nation's highest office, died at his Houston home at the age of 94; his wife of more than 70 years, Barbara Bush, had died in April.

In 2020, two battleground states, Wisconsin and Arizona, certified their presidential election tallies in favor of Joe Biden, even as President Donald Trump's legal team continued to dispute the results; Biden's victory in Wisconsin was certified following a partial recount that only added to his 20,600-vote margin over Trump.

Ten years ago: Israel approved the construction of 3,000 homes in Jewish settlements on occupied lands, drawing swift condemnation from the Palestinians a day after their successful bid for recognition

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by the United Nations. Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets in Egypt, denouncing President Mohammed Morsi and a draft constitution that was approved earlier in the day by his Islamist allies.

Five years ago: House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi called on veteran Democratic congressman John Conyers to resign in the face of multiple accusations of sexual misconduct. (Conyers resigned five days later.) A jury found a Mexican man not guilty in the killing of a woman on a San Francisco pier, a shooting that touched off a fierce national immigration debate. (Jose Ines Garcia Zarate, who had been deported five times, did not deny shooting Kate Steinle but said it was an accident. He was found guilty of being a felon in possession of a firearm.) Rapper DMX pleaded guilty to tax fraud, admitting he concealed millions of dollars in revenue to dodge \$1.7 million in taxes. (The rapper was sentenced to a year in prison.) Actor Jim Nabors, best known as TV's "Gomer Pyle," died at the age of 87.

One year ago: Ethan Crumbley, a 15-year-old sophomore, opened fire at a Michigan high school, killing four students and wounding seven other people; school staff had discovered his violent drawings but his parents wouldn't remove him from school. (The parents, James and Jennifer Crumbley, are accused of making the gun accessible and ignoring their son's mental health needs; they face charges including involuntary manslaughter.) The Biden administration moved to toughen testing requirements for international travelers to the U.S., including both vaccinated and unvaccinated people, amid the spread of the omicron variant of the coronavirus. CNN took Chris Cuomo off the air indefinitely, saying information released by New York's attorney general showed that he had played a greater role than he had previously acknowledged in defense of his brother, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, as he fought sexual harassment charges. (Cuomo would be fired days later.)

Today's Birthdays: Country singer-recording executive Jimmy Bowen is 85. Movie director Ridley Scott is 85. Screenwriter Geoffrey C. Ward is 82. Movie writer-director Terrence Malick is 79. Rock musician Roger Glover (Deep Purple) is 77. Playwright David Mamet (MA'-meht) is 75. Actor Mandy Patinkin is 70. Musician Shuggie Otis is 69. Country singer Jeannie Kendall is 68. Singer Billy Idol is 67. Historian Michael Beschloss is 67. Rock musician John Ashton (The Psychedelic Furs) is 65. Comedian Colin Mochrie is 65. Former football and baseball player Bo Jackson is 60. Rapper Jalil (Whodini) is 59. Actor-director Ben Stiller is 57. Rock musician Mike Stone is 53. Music producer Steve Aoki is 45. Singer Clay Aiken is 44. Actor Billy Lush is 41. Actor Elisha Cuthbert is 40. Actor Kaley Cuoco (KWOH'-koh) is 37. Model Chrissy Teigen (TY'-gihn) is 37. Actor Christel Khalil is 35. Actor Rebecca Rittenhouse is 34. Actor Adelaide Clemens is 33. World chess champion Magnus Carlsen is 32. Actor Tyla Harris is 22.