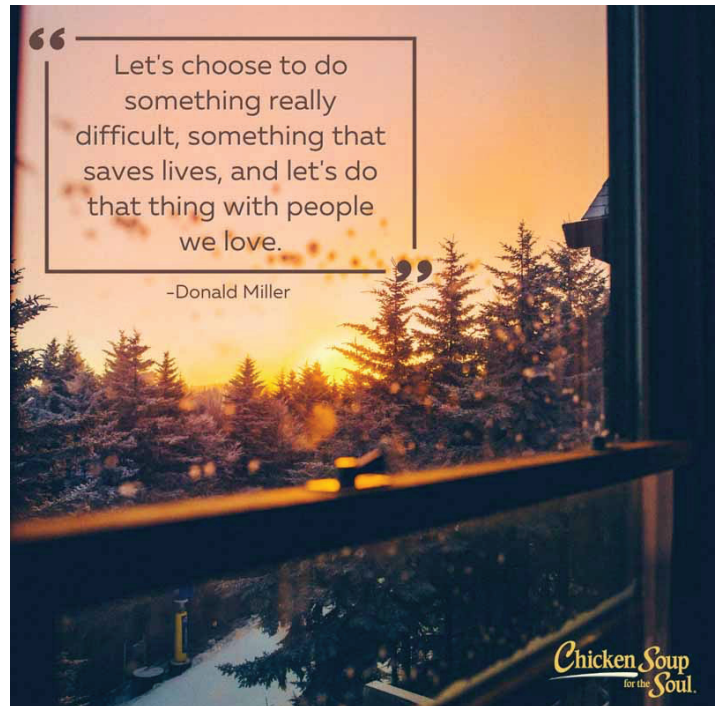


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Groton Community Calendar Saturday, Jan. 21

- Wrestling at Arlington, 10 a.m.
- Girls Basketball at Great Plains Lutheran: C game at 11 a.m. followed by JV and Varsity.
- Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.
- Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 22

- Open Gym: Grades JK-8; 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Grades 6-12; 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with Milestones for 6th grade at sophomores, 9 a.m.; Annual Meeting; Sunday School at 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.
- United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.
- Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.
- Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS

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

Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

Monday, Jan. 23:

- Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, green beans, Mandarin orange dessert, whole wheat bread.
- School Breakfast: Mini pancakes.
- School Lunch: Oriental chicken, egg rolls.
- Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, potluck at noon.
- Basketball Doubleheader hosting Northwestern: Girls JV at 5 p.m. followed by Boys JV, Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity.
- Middle School Wrestling Invitational at Ipswich, 6 p.m.
- The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

CLOSED: **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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GDILIVE.COM

Girls Basketball at Great Plains Lutheran Panthers Saturday, Jan. 20, 2023

C Games starts at 11 a.m. Sponsored by Wayne Wright
followed by JV girls. Sponsored by Wayne Wright

followed by Varsity Games

Sponsored by

Bary Keith at Harr Motors

Bierman Farm Service

Blocker Construction

Dacotah Bank

Groton Chamber of Commerce

Groton Ford

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Locke Electric

Spanier Harvesting & Trucking

Bahr Spray Foam

Thunder Seed with John Wheeting



Anyone wanting to sponsor a JV game, Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460

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NSU Women's Basketball

All-Around Effort Leads to Wolves Upset of No. 12 Mavericks

Aberdeen, S.D. – It wasn't until the final buzzer sounded when everyone in attendance in Wachs Arena could finally let out a sigh of relief, as Northern State secured a 72-69 victory over No. 12 Minnesota State. The Wolves withstood the relentless pressure of the Mavericks defense, finding passing lanes to score 40 points in the paint in the win.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 72, MSU 69

Records: NSU 11-8 (6-7 NSIC), MSU 14-3 (10-3 NSIC)

Attendance: 3,167

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State grabbed the momentum early with a 13-4 scoring run to open the game

Minnesota State cut the lead back to five mid-way through the second quarter, however six points from Jordyn Hilgemann in the paint powered an 8-0 scoring run to give NSU their largest lead of the game at 13 points (31-18); the Mavericks made another push at the end of the period to bring the game within two points (35-33) after a 15-4 scoring run

A 3-pointer by Emily Herzberg to open the third quarter gave MSU, holding the lead a majority of the period and leading by as many as six points (50-44); a pair of free throws by Kailee Oliverson brought NSU back within one point (52-51) at the end of the third quarter

A layup by Laurie Rogers to open the fourth quarter gave NSU their first lead since the halftime break, and the Wolves would only surrender the lead once in the final ten minutes

A jumper by Joey Batt gave Minnesota State their final lead of the contest at the 5:07 mark (60-59), before an Oliverson layup on an assist by Rianna Fillipi gave the Wolves the lead for good with 4:46 remaining

Alayna Benike and Oliverson iced the game away, each making a pair of free throws in the final ten seconds to secure the win

The Wolves improved to 8-1 when leading at the halftime break this season

The Northern State defense held Minnesota State to a season low 29.9 percent shooting from the field (23-77)

Northern shot 25-32 (78.1%) from the free throw line, including 7-8 in the fourth quarter; Rogers (7-7), Oliverson (5-5), and Rachel Garvey (2-2) were all perfect from the charity stripe

For the second time this season, Rogers (19 points, 10 rebounds) and Oliverson (17 points, 12 rebounds) secured double-doubles in the same game

Hilgemann gave the Wolves a spark off the bench tonight, scoring a career-high 16 points all in the first half; Benike also grabbed a career-high 11 rebounds in the game

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Laurie Rogers: 19 points, 10 rebounds, 3 blocks

Kailee Oliverson: 17 points, 12 rebounds, 1 block

Jordyn Hilgemann: 16 points, 6 rebounds, 3 assists

UP NEXT

Northern State will close out the weekend schedule with a home contest against Concordia-St. Paul this evening. The Wolves and Golden Bears are scheduled for a 6 p.m. tip-off in Wach Arena.

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NSU Men's Basketball

Northern Takes Down Minnesota State in Return to Wachs

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University men's basketball team out-scored their opponents by 17 and hit triple digits in their Friday win over Minnesota State. The win is the tenth of the season for the Wolves in NSIC action and bounces them back from a weekend sweep on the road.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 104, MSU 87

Records: NSU 14-5 (10-3 NSIC), MSU 13-6 (7-6 NSIC)

Attendance: 3313

HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern was on pace to score in triple digits, leading 58-39 at the half and shooting at a 70.4% clip
- The Mavericks ultimately out-scored the Wolves in the second, 48-46, however it was not enough to overcome the hot start by NSU
- The Wolves shot 56.5% from the floor and 44.1% from the 3-point line in the win, knocking down another 19-of-24 from the free throw line
- NSU tallied 34 points in the paint, 11 second chance points off eight offensive boards, and 11 points off the bench
- They added a game high 15 made 3-pointers, as well as 19 assists, five blocks, and eight steals
- Five Wolves scored in double figures in the win, led by Jacksen Moni and Josh Dilling with 22 points apiece
- In addition, three Wolves tallied five or more rebounds in the game where Northern tallied 32 as a team

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Jacksen Moni: 22 points, 75.0 field goal%, 7 rebounds, 3 assists
- Josh Dilling: 22 points, 66.7 field goal%, 5 rebounds, 3 assists
- Sam Masten: 20 points, 63.6 field goal%, 9 assists
- Jordan Belka: 16 points, 50.0 field goal%, 5 rebounds
- Augustin Reede: 13 points, 3 rebounds, 2 assists

UP NEXT

Northern State is back in action this afternoon against Concordia-St. Paul. Tip-off is set for 4 p.m. from Wachs Arena. Visit nsuwolves.com/gameday for full game day promotions and information.

Gov. Noem Signs Executive Order Blocking State Business with “Evil Foreign Governments”

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Kristi Noem signed Executive Order 2023-02, which blocks the State of South Dakota from doing business with certain telecommunications companies owned or controlled by “evil foreign governments.” The order also requires that every state contract include a clause certifying the contractor is not owned, influenced, or affiliated with these countries.

“It is critical that we protect South Dakotans from evil foreign governments,” said Governor Noem. “This order ensures that these countries cannot leverage telecommunications or state contract procurements to gain access to crucial state infrastructure and data.”

The order blocks business with companies associated with the governments of China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Cuba, and Venezuela.

Two months ago, Governor Noem signed an Executive Order banning TikTok for South Dakota state government. Since then, dozens of states have taken action to ban TikTok, as has Congress.

2022 Visitor Spending in South Dakota Yet Again Sets All-Time Record

PIERRE, S.D. – Visitor spending in South Dakota set an all-time record in 2022.

Tourism officials were closely monitoring the 2022 numbers following the extreme record-setting year of 2021. According to the annual study conducted by Tourism Economics, visitors to South Dakota spent 4.7 billion dollars, an increase of 8% over 2021. This surpasses all previous records, even exceeding 2021’s surge of travel spending that was up 30% over 2020.

South Dakota welcomed 14.4 million visitors, an increase of 0.6% over 2021.

“South Dakota values freedom and offers something for everyone. That – combined with the tireless work of our citizens – is why we continue to break tourism records,” said Governor Kristi Noem. “This industry provides a strong and stable flow of dollars contributing to South Dakota’s record revenues, helping to build the strongest economy in America.”

The tourism industry remains essential to South Dakota’s economy, providing an indispensable source of job creation and household income to thousands. 56,826 jobs in South Dakota were supported by the tourism industry, which generated 2.1 billion dollars of income for those families.

“Tourism in South Dakota is a job-creating, revenue-generating machine that plays a vital role in supporting the state’s economy year after year,” said Jim Hagen, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Tourism. “The revenue from South Dakota’s tourism industry helps support critical infrastructure and emergency services that South Dakotans depend on.”

In 2022, tourism generated \$361 million in state & local tax revenue, an increase of \$16 million over 2021. Without tourism in South Dakota, each household would pay an additional \$1,011 in taxes each year.

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism and the South Dakota Arts Council. The department is led by Secretary James Hagen.

Gov. Noem Urges Investigations into Leak of Social Security Numbers

PIERRE, S.D. – Yesterday, Governor Kristi Noem urged investigations into the leaking of nearly 2,000 Social Security numbers by the January 6th Committee. She pushed Attorney General Merrick Garland to investigate the apparent violation of federal law. She also requested that the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability and the House Ethics Committee investigate the breach.

The leaked Social Security numbers included those of Governor Noem, Bryon Noem, Cassidy Peters, Kyle Peters, Kennedy Noem, and Booker Noem.

“This callous, unacceptable handling of our most sensitive information could have permanent, widespread damage to the lives of my kids and my grandkids, as well as the families of the many other individuals impacted,” Governor Noem writes in both letters.

The leak of these Social Security numbers is a violation of the Privacy Act of 1974, which provides that “[no] agency shall disclose any record which is contained in a system of records by any means of communication to any person, or to another agency, except pursuant to a written request by, or with the prior written consent of, the individual to whom the record pertains[.]” 5 U.S.C. § 552a(b).

The leak impacted several public figures, including Governor Greg Abbott, Governor Henry McMaster, former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson, and former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar.

“I am glad of your recent decision to appoint a Special Counsel to probe the apparent mishandling of confidential information by President Joseph R. Biden. This action indicates an increased willingness to investigate violations of law, regardless of the political affiliation of the lawbreaker. I hope that you will do the right thing and investigate this apparent violation of federal law,” Governor Noem concluded in her letter to Attorney General Garland.

###

Community is invited to **EMILY'S HOPE PRESENTATION**



with

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ANGELA KENNECKE IS TURNING HER HEARTBREAK INTO ACTION BY TRAVELING THE COUNTRY TO BRING EMILY'S STORY TO COMMUNITIES, CONFERENCES AND SCHOOLS.

"MY NUMBER ONE REASON FOR TALKING ABOUT EMILY'S DEATH IS TO ERASE THE STIGMA SURROUNDING ADDICTION, ESPECIALLY THE USE OF HEROIN OR OPIOIDS OF ANY KIND.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Legislative status update

John Hult here with an update on the status of the bills we've covered so far this legislative session.

While our Joshua Haiar spent his week in Pierre, enjoying the "comforts" of the Capitol press room, the rest of us pitched in on legislative coverage from afar.

We don't want to write a story on every turn of the legislative screw, but we do want to keep you up-to-date on the ones we've covered.

Here goes:

- Housing infrastructure: Last October, I wrote about the squabbles from the 2022 session that left \$200 million in infrastructure for workforce housing on the table all year. Lawmakers brought a fix straight away this year, and last week we finally got to hear about what kinds of projects have been on hold. The fix, Senate Bill 41, moved through the Senate last week and the House this week. The full House punted on SB 41 Friday. It'll appear again on the House calendar Monday afternoon.

- Crime bills: I also wrote about bills to tighten election law penalties (SB 46 and SB 47) and witness tampering statutes (SB 50), to close jail inmate records to the public (SB 53), and to force convicts to pay for digital forensic exams (SB 54). The election law bills passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and moved to the Senate floor; the witness tampering bill was deferred for the next committee hearing. The other two passed in the full Senate and will head to a House committee.

- Incarceration costs: The prison-jail cost estimates now attached to any bill that creates a new crime or changes penalties for a current one might go away soon. The bill to kill them (House Bill 1003) passed the House on Thursday. Next up: a Senate committee hearing.

- County seat relocations: Makenzie Huber spent part of her week with SB 56, which would make it more difficult to move a county seat to a different city. The Senate Local Government Committee struck down much of SB 56, keeping three of the seven main changes. The amended bill awaits a vote on the Senate floor.

- Young adult crime: Makenzie also took a look at HB 1063, which would establish a task force to study how to handle adults ages 18-24 in the criminal justice system, who make up a quarter of all arrests in South Dakota. That one passed the House 67-2 and now heads to a Senate committee.

- Medical marijuana: Joshua Haiar reported on a bill that would update the qualifying conditions for medical marijuana cards (SB 1). It passed in the Senate, 20-15. Next up is a House committee, but no hearing date is set.

That's all for now. Enjoy your weekend!

Lawmakers rightly kill anti-democracy bill for many of the wrong reasons

DANA HESS ~ JANUARY 20, 2023 3:27 PM

Sometimes lawmakers do the right thing, but for the wrong reasons. A case in point would be the defeat of House Joint Resolution 5001 early Friday morning by the House State Affairs Committee.

HJR 5001, sponsored by Rep. Fred Deutsch, R-Florence, would require that backers of a defeated constitutional amendment wait one general election cycle before submitting that amendment to voters again. Deutsch calls it a "respect the will of the people resolution."

Deutsch's example for the committee was the fact that voters have handled the recreational marijuana issue in two straight elections. It was approved once by voters but then nullified in a court case. Brought back to voters in the next election, it went down in defeat. Deutsch said not long after the last election, marijuana backers were talking about bringing the issue back in the next election.

Deutsch was the only one to speak in favor of the bill. There was no opposition testimony, but members of the committee had a few questions and comments.

One provision of Deutsch's resolution is that the attorney general would decide if a new constitutional amendment was "substantially similar" to the previous, defeated constitutional amendment. Rep. Roger Chase, R-Huron, had a tough time with that verbiage.

Rep. Taylor Rehfeldt, R-Sioux Falls, was concerned that the timeline for challenges wasn't spelled out in the resolution.

Rep. Oren Lesmeister, D-Parade, wondered if there should be a "trigger" that allowed the rule not to apply to a constitutional amendment that was defeated in a close election.

Committee Chairman Will Mortenson, R-Pierre, wondered why it was the attorney general and not the secretary of state, who is responsible for elections, making the determination if the amendments were substantially similar.

Only one of the committee members seemed to hone in on the resolution's biggest flaw. After more than 20 minutes of testimony and questions, Rep. Becky Drury, R-Rapid City, said she would oppose the resolution because it "impedes people's right to go out to try to change the law."

Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! We have a winner!

Deutsch said he was only using the two votes on the recreational marijuana issue as an example. Well, if anything, it's an example of persistence. It's no easy chore to get a constitutional amendment or an initiated measure on the ballot. (In one media report, Deutsch said that if the resolution on constitutional amendments was a hit, he would whip up another one that dealt with initiated measures.)

If people are, as Deutsch says, tired of voting on recreational marijuana, then they have every right not to sign the petitions that would get it on the ballot again and, if it makes it to the next general election, they can snub that particular portion of their ballot if that's their choice.

However, it's the height of hypocrisy for any lawmaker to propose a resolution that makes it tougher for citizens to get a measure on the general election ballot. It's hypocritical because lawmakers have the easiest possible path toward getting an amendment on the ballot. All Deutsch would have to do, to get HJR 5001 on the ballot, is convince a majority of the lawmakers in the House and Senate. Citizens would have to collect thousands of signatures that are then the subject of vetting by the Secretary of State's Office.

It's also odd for Deutsch to maintain that voters may be tired of casting their ballots for or against marijuana, as if going to the polls every election cycle is that great an imposition. Lawmakers, it seems, never tire of voting. There's a rule in the Legislature that allows bills defeated in committee to still be debated on the House or Senate floor. There's a rule that allows a bill defeated on the House or Senate floor to be brought back to life for another vote.

The rules lawmakers live by make sure that they get to vote early and often on the laws proposed in each session. If they can vote that much, it's disingenuous to assume that voters will get weary when

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they have to cast their ballots more than twice in a row on the same ballot issue.

On a 10-2 vote, the House State Affairs Committee voted to send Deutsch's resolution to the 41st day of the session, a procedural move used to kill legislation. That was the right outcome, though most of the committee members seemed to cast their ballots for the wrong reasons.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

Bill to complicate county seat relocations limps out of committee

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JANUARY 20, 2023 2:02 PM

A bill that would make it more difficult to move a county seat to another city has been stripped down by committee amendments but will move on to the Senate floor.

Senate Bill 56, as originally introduced, would have made numerous changes to the state law (SDCL 7-6) governing the relocation of a county seat, including raising the percentage of petition signatures from 15% to 40% of registered voters in the county, and raising the voter approval from two-thirds to three-fourths majority, among several other changes.

However, legislators on the Senate Local Government Committee on Friday amended the bill to only consider one subsection (SDCL 7-6-4). The amended bill would raise the percent of petition signatures from 15% to 20% of registered voters in the county, explicitly instruct the county auditor to verify petition signatures are from registered voters within the concerned county, and set a July 1 petition deadline ahead of the general election.

The bill was introduced by Sen. Ryan Maher, R-Isabel, in response to a failed effort in South Dakota's Dewey County to move the county seat from Timber Lake to Eagle Butte. The county's population is nearly 80% Native American, and the county is within the Cheyenne River Reservation.

Carl Petersen, who circulated the petition but failed to turn in enough valid signatures, wanted to move the county seat to make local government and services more accessible to people in the county, particularly Native Americans, by moving the county seat to its most populated city. He also said Eagle Butte is more centralized than Timber Lake, requiring less drive time for several county residents to access services.

Committee member and Sen. Randy Deibert, R-Spearfish, said in committee discussion that there were "too many unknowns" with how the originally introduced bill would affect South Dakota's 65 other counties without taking feedback from those entities. Deibert originally suggested moving the bill to the 41st day – which would effectively defeat the bill, since this year's session is only 38 days – but that motion failed.

Proponents who testified in favor of SB 56 included Maher and Dewey County elected officials and employees.

Dewey County Auditor Mary Ducheneaux informed the committee that although she attempted to validate signatures on Petersen's petitions, the Secretary of State's Office instructed her that verifying signers were county residents and registered voters was not part of the validation process.

Opponents who testified were concerned about how the bill would affect Native American communities across South Dakota.

Sen. Sean Bordeaux, D-Mission, testified in opposition and said he hopes to establish Todd County's seat in Mission eventually. The county currently does not have its own county seat, but instead contracts services for several offices with Tripp County in Winner, which is about 40 miles from Mission.

Other counties across South Dakota have faced similar attempts to move the county seat. Residents in Perkins County tried to move the county seat from Bison, population 384, to Lemmon, population 1,252.

Gann Valley, population 12, became the country's least populated county seat following the 2010 census. Fort Thompson, Buffalo County's most populated city at 1,266, is on the Crow Creek Reservation and 25 miles away from Gann Valley, said Kellen Returns From Scout, with the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association.

"Nothing has been articulated to justify the increased burdens," Returns from Scout said of SB 56. "I believe this is a blatant suppression attempt on the voting power of Native Americans in our state."

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 set to decide whether pipeline trespassing case will proceed

BY: JARED STRONG - JANUARY 20, 2023 10:02 AM

There is no evidence a carbon dioxide pipeline surveyor accused of trespassing knew that he was not welcome to do the work on a Dickinson County, Iowa, farm, and the criminal charge against him should be dismissed, his attorney said this week.

A district court judge is poised to decide whether the trespassing charge against Stephen James Larsen, 28, of Arlington, South Dakota, should proceed to trial.

Alan Ostergren, a Des Moines attorney who represents Larsen, has requested that the case be dismissed. Larsen's trial was delayed while District Associate Judge Shawna Ditsworth considers the request.

Larsen was part of a crew that went to the northwest Iowa farm in August. The group was working for Summit Carbon Solutions, which plans to build a 680-mile network of pipe in the northwestern half of Iowa to transport captured carbon dioxide from ethanol plants.

The surveys are necessary to determine the path and depth of pipelines, and state law grants them access after pipeline companies meet several requirements to notify landowners of the projects and surveys.

The surveys by Summit and Navigator CO2 Ventures are also the subject of a handful of civil lawsuits the companies have filed against landowners. Those suits seek injunctions to force the surveys, potentially with the help of law enforcement officers.

The trespassing charge against Larsen was lodged because another Summit surveyor had been previously turned away from the Dickinson County property and told not to return, and because the landowners and tenant had rejected certified mailings that were meant to give notice of the survey.

Dickinson County Attorney Steven Goodlow said in a court filing a week ago that Summit should have obtained an injunction before trying to survey the land again.

Ostergren argues that an injunction might be necessary to successfully complete a survey but it isn't needed to avoid a trespassing charge.

"The entry for land surveys ... shall not be deemed a trespass and may be aided by (court) injunction," the law says.

It's unclear when Judge Ditsworth will rule on the motion to dismiss the case.

Jared Strong is the senior reporter for the Iowa Capital Dispatch. He has written about Iowans and the important issues that affect them for more than 15 years, previously for the Carroll Times Herald and the Des Moines Register. His investigative work exposing police misconduct has notched several state and national awards. He is a longtime trustee of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council, which fights for open records and open government. He is a lifelong Iowan and has lived mostly in rural western parts of the state.

U.S. mayors at the White House hear praise from Biden on rebuilding post-pandemic

BY: ADAM GOLDSTEIN - JANUARY 20, 2023 5:18 PM

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden hosted more than 200 of the nation's mayors at the White House on Friday afternoon, highlighting economic growth and the effectiveness of their bipartisan leadership as the country moves on from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I want to thank the mayors across the country for doing everything they can do to recover and rebuild," Biden said in his speech to the 91st Winter Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. "More than any other group of people in the world, mayors know that the measure of success isn't how many points you score, but how many problems you fix."

Biden spoke to the ongoing recovery of American cities and towns under his administration, in light of challenges faced during the pandemic.

He noted that two years ago, 80 million people were unemployed and 70% of mayors across the nation planned to cut jobs in critical industries, including teachers and transit workers.

Two years later, the president said that the effects of the American Rescue Plan and CARES Act are beginning to bear fruit. Biden said that the unemployment rate is at a 50-year low, fewer than 1.6 million people are unemployed, and the economy has added 11 million jobs since 2020.

"It is clearer than ever that our plan is working — we're rebuilding the economy from the bottom up and the middle out," the president said.

Biden explained that the general framework of this spending reflects his administration's aims to rebuild local economies across the country.

He said he reduced bureaucratic barriers for mayors to access billions of dollars in the American Rescue Plan, so cities can extend more mental health services, law enforcement resources and skilled trade programs.

"What we're trying to do is not just rebuild the economy," Biden said. "But bring back the pride, that sense of belonging, the sense of 'I want to stay where I live.'"

Tennessee, Arizona mayors cited

Biden specifically highlighted the work of several individual mayors in using federal funding to pay for community safety improvements during the pandemic.

The president called attention to the work of Mayor Indya Kincannon of Knoxville, Tennessee, who provided premium pay for police officers and firefighters to retain staff during the pandemic.

He also commended Mayor John Giles of Mesa, Arizona, who purchased ambulances and hired behavioral health clinicians for crisis calls with American Rescue Plan dollars.

Biden also mentioned ongoing efforts to rebuild America through the bipartisan infrastructure law, working with Sen. Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, to provide funding to build a bridge over the Ohio River, and with mayors Andre Dickens of Atlanta and Buddy Dyer of Orlando, Florida, to reconstruct airport terminals.

Biden said more than 20,000 infrastructure projects funded through the law will be underway by the end of 2023.

Biden further touched on the talent of American manufacturing workers and the success of the Chips and Science Act, praising the work of mayors Kate Gallego of Phoenix and Andy Ginther of Columbus, Ohio, in locking down major contracts to build large manufacturing plants.

"The economy rewards work where we don't need a college degree to provide for your family," Biden said.

"The Chip and Science Act will ensure the United States, not China, is leading the development of new technology," Ginther said during his introductory speech for the president. "It has the potential to turn the old Rust Belt into the new Silicon Valley."

Fentanyl, opioid epidemic

The president then talked about current challenges in immigration and the opioid epidemic, noting that

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more than 100,000 Americans died from fentanyl overdoses over the past two years.

Biden cited more than \$5 billion provided by the federal government for state and local mental health and substance abuse treatment programs. Biden also vented frustrations over the partisan standstill in Congress over immigration reform, in discussing his trip to the U.S.-Mexico border two weeks ago.

"They (members of Congress) can keep using immigration to try to score political points, or we can try to solve the problem," Biden said.

Biden also alluded to political posturing surrounding the national debt in response to a question from St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones, who asked how mayors could support Biden's agenda.

"Be realistic and don't confuse the national debt with debt reduction on a yearly basis," Biden said. "Focus on the things that make your city unique and make you grow."

In his concluding remarks to the mayors, Biden touted the abilities of the United States when the country works as a unit, from the individual mayor up to the top.

"We're the United States of America," Biden said. "When we work together, there's nothing beyond our capacity. Nothing, nothing, nothing."

Adam Goldstein is the D.C. Bureau intern for States Newsroom. Goldstein is a graduate student at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, studying digital reporting. He is originally from San Francisco, and loves swimming, cooking, and the San Francisco 49ers.

Ukrainians by the thousands arrive in states, but with a time limit

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - JANUARY 20, 2023 11:01 AM

WASHINGTON — As the one-year anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine approaches next month, Ukrainians who were welcomed to the United States under a special program offering an escape from war are watching another timeline.

The temporary Uniting for Ukraine program, sometimes called U4U, offers a two-year stay in the U.S., given that individuals or families find someone, or an organization, to financially sponsor their stay. After that two years, the Ukrainians' pathway to citizenship is unclear, if attainable at all.

Nearly 200,000 Americans have applied to sponsor those fleeing the war, with the majority of applicants from New York, Illinois, California and Washington, according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services data from early January.

But a States Newsroom analysis finds thousands of sponsors from other metro areas also have stepped up, including from Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware; Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro in Oregon and Washington; Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach in Florida; Cleveland-Elyria in Ohio; and Detroit-Warren-Dearborn in Michigan.

Private sponsorship expanded

Even as Ukrainians are being accepted into the U.S., the State Department this week also announced that Americans will soon be able to privately sponsor any refugee's journey to the United States in what the agency called "the boldest innovation in refugee resettlement in four decades."

The new State Department pilot program, dubbed Welcome Corps, aims to expand capacity for refugees entering the U.S. It resembles the program for Ukrainians, but offers a permanent stay.

Rather than the government solely relying on nonprofit agencies to provide initial assistance for refugees, the new program will allow groups of at least five U.S. citizens or permanent residents to raise money to fund a refugee's first 90 days in the U.S. and help the individual or family find housing, enroll in school and find essential services, according to the State Department.

Volunteer sponsors will receive no financial incentives, and an oversight mechanism will be in place to prevent any abuses, a senior State Department official said Thursday.

The private sponsorship model has been a feature of recent U.S. humanitarian parole initiatives — including Uniting for Ukraine, Operation Allies Welcome for Afghans and most recently for Venezuelans — but has only offered temporary stays in the U.S., mostly in response to urgent situations.

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Welcome Corps “incorporates lessons learned from other emergency initiatives launched over the past year,” according to a State Department press release Thursday.

This is the first time the U.S. will extend private sponsorship to those it defines as refugees — a person unable or unwilling to return to their own country because of persecution. Refugees have a pathway to permanent immigration status upon arriving in the U.S.

That is not the case for humanitarian “parolees,” a top concern for individuals and organizations who helped people in those groups — urgently evacuated Afghans after the U.S. withdrawal or the Ukrainians fleeing war through Uniting for Ukraine.

“HIAS was the first resettlement agency to augment network capacity through ‘welcome circles,’ partnering with American synagogues to receive Afghans and, later, Ukrainians,” said Mark Hetfield, president and CEO of HIAS, one of the refugee resettlement agencies that contracts with the U.S. government.

“We were, however, troubled that these newcomers entered the U.S. as temporary ‘parolees’—without the legal protections enjoyed by refugees, such as pathways to family reunion and a green card,” Hetfield continued in a statement Thursday.

“The Welcome Corps solves that problem by allowing groups outside of traditional resettlement networks to receive refugees with peace of mind — with pathways to family unity, green cards, and citizenship.”

However, it won’t solve the problem for current parolees, like those who fled the war in Ukraine. Welcome Corps will be distinct from any temporary humanitarian parole arrangements already in place, a senior State Department official said on a call with reporters Thursday.

Long-term prospects

While immigration experts say the Uniting for Ukraine process has allowed for a quicker path to the U.S., they also remain concerned about the long-term welfare of Ukrainians in the U.S.

“We have had significant concerns about the efficacy of bringing people in with humanitarian parole with no plan in place to allow them to adjust their status and stay if they cannot go home,” said Naomi Steinberg, vice president for U.S. policy and advocacy at HIAS.

Ukrainian parolees’ options are narrow and case-by-case when their two-year stay is up.

Ukrainians with relatives who are legal citizens may be able to pursue a family-based pathway to remain in the U.S. Those who were able to secure a job could pursue an employment-based pathway.

Others could try to apply for asylum, but they must prove fear of persecution in their home country based on race, religion, nationality or other protected grounds.

Depending on the timeline, some Ukrainians who were living in the U.S. or who arrived outside the U4U program can stay under Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, until Oct. 19. The U.S. extends the status to certain populations who can’t return home due to armed conflict.

Launched after invasion

The Biden administration launched U4U about two months after Russia’s invasion, a similar pathway to the one established for Afghans needing to rapidly flee following the U.S. withdrawal.

Communities across the country have welcomed 102,000 Ukrainians so far under U4U, according to the latest figures from the Department of Homeland Security, the agency managing the temporary humanitarian parole process.

Another roughly 38,000 have been authorized to book commercial air travel from Ukraine for their stay in the U.S. — meaning their financial sponsors were confirmed, and they completed all background checks and other required preparation steps.

Those looking to help as sponsors range “from everyday Americans living in everytown, USA, to big civic institutions, to national and international companies,” said Anya McMurray, president and COO of Welcome.us, an online platform that connects potential sponsors with Ukrainians seeking a way to the U.S.

The young nonprofit, originally established to help after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, has made roughly 1,300 pairings between sponsors and Ukrainians, and it’s revamping its online tool to connect Venezuelans and other populations.

“We wanted to bring those things together, that desire of Americans to help in their community and the

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transformational experience of welcoming a newcomer," McMurray said. "Our fundamental belief is that by doing that we create greater capacity for America to welcome more people."

The temporary parole process, based on a private sponsorship model, differs from the traditional route by which clearly defined refugees — those persecuted for reasons including race, religion or nationality — are resettled by the U.S. Department of State.

But while the temporary program offers limited benefits (though many benefits expanded under the supplemental aid package signed by Biden in May), the numbers of Ukrainians who have landed in the U.S. for humanitarian parole far outpace the permanent refugee placements that provide automatic pathways to obtaining a green card and citizenship.

Last fiscal year — from October 2021 to September 2022 — the U.S. permanently resettled just 25,465 refugees from 56 different countries, according to the latest Department of State data.

Southwest border crossings

The administration plans to expand the temporary humanitarian parole process to certain groups as a way to stem Southwest border crossings while the U.S. continues to enforce the pandemic-era Title 42 policy, which allows law enforcement to expel migrants at the border based on public health emergency powers.

Biden announced in early January that the U.S. would extend this case-by-case parole process "modeled on the successful Uniting for Ukraine" program to up to 30,000 Haitians, Cubans and Nicaraguans per month in an effort to decrease land entries at the U.S.-Mexico border, according to DHS.

A similar program for Venezuelans was already underway.

HIAS criticized the expansion as a "deeply flawed and outrageously inequitable plan to expand Title 42 border expulsions of asylum seekers, while allowing up to 30,000 people from Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua who have sponsors in the U.S. to enter the country temporarily as humanitarian parolees — but only if they fly to U.S. airports."

The organization fears a swell of parolees — those from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and the Caribbean — living in "legal limbo."

Congress failed to pass necessary legislation last session to give Afghan parolees permanent status in the U.S.

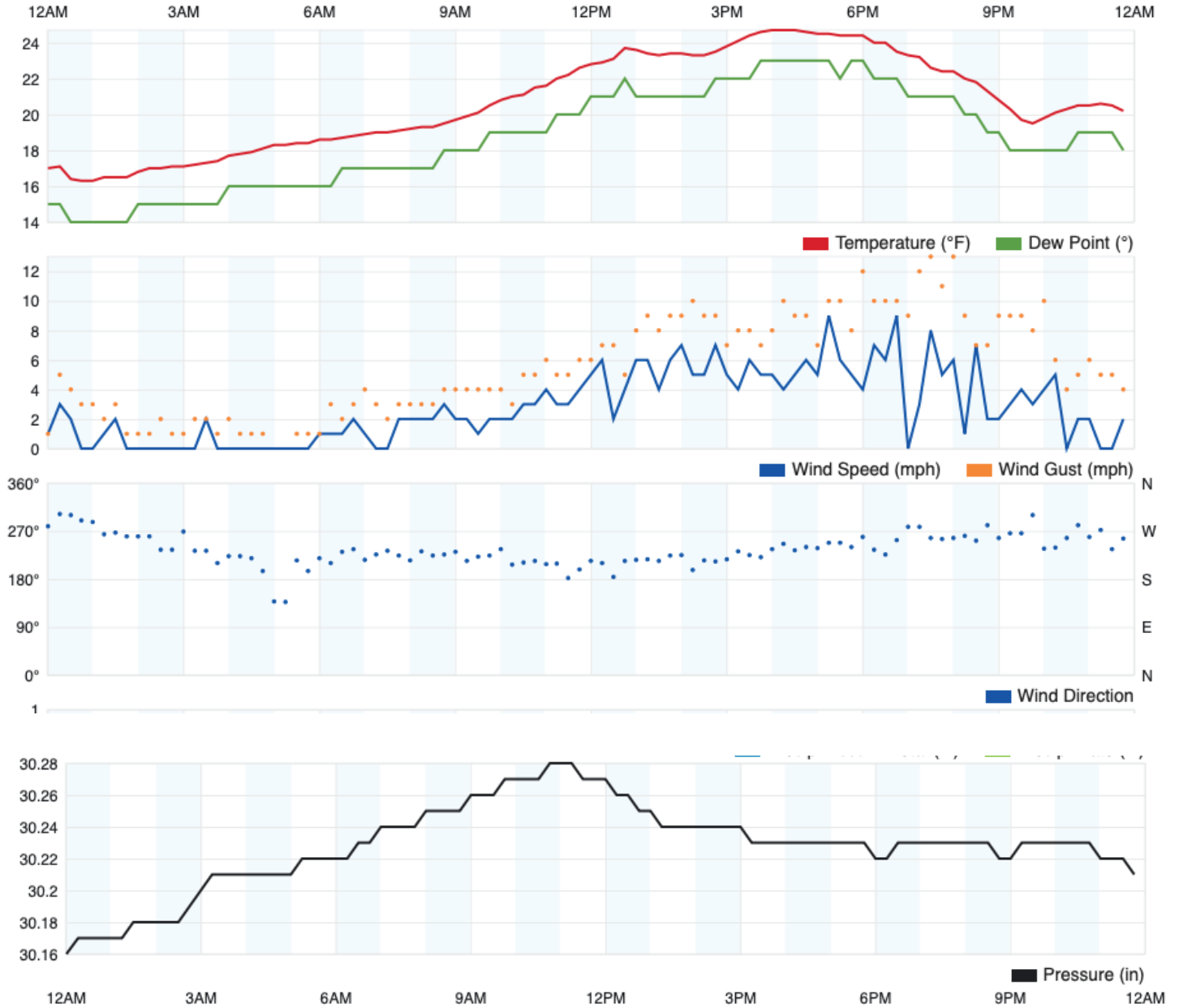
The brutal invasion in Ukraine displaced millions, with most — roughly 7.9 million — fleeing to surrounding European countries, according to the United Nations.

Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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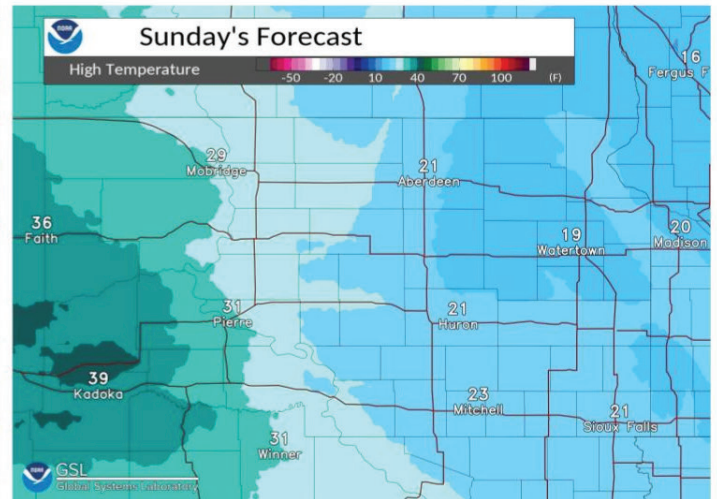
Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Areas Dense Fog	Partly Cloudy then Patchy Fog	Patchy Fog then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 24 °F	Low: 4 °F	High: 20 °F	Low: 13 °F	High: 32 °F	Low: 8 °F	High: 22 °F



Near Normal Temperatures This Weekend

January 21, 2023
3:37 AM

Fog, Some Locally Dense, Across Portions Of Northeast South Dakota This Morning



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

There is some fog ongoing across portions of northeast South Dakota this morning. Some of it has been dense at times, with visibility down to one-quarter of a mile or less. Temperatures today and Sunday should end up maxing out within a few degrees of climatological normal for mid January.

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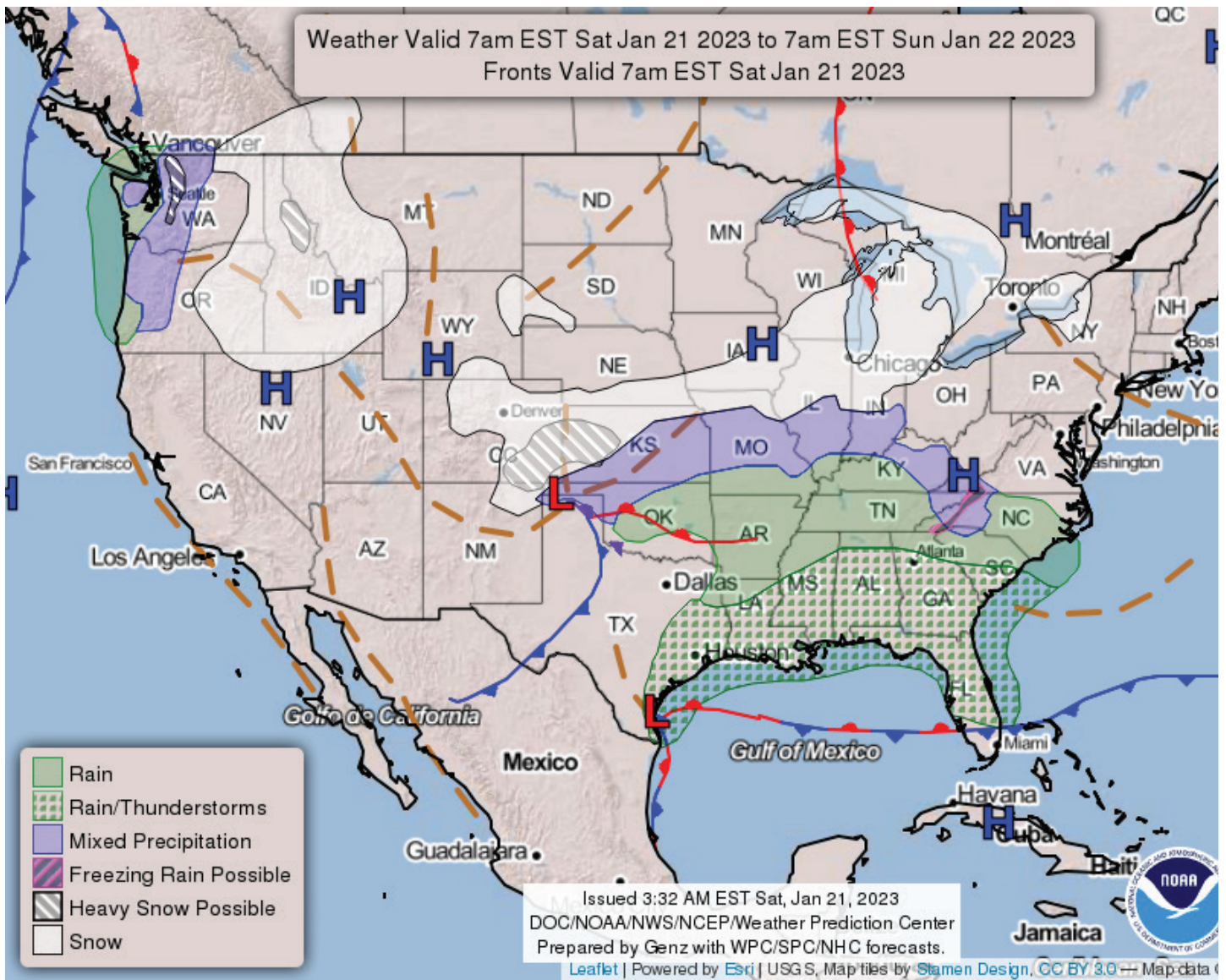
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 24.7 °F at 4:15 PM
Low Temp: 16.3 °F at 12:45 AM
Wind: 13 mph at 7:30 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 22 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 57 in 1942
Record Low: -31 in 1949
Average High: 24°F
Average Low: 1°F
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.39
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.39
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:24:53 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:01:40 AM



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Today in Weather History

January 21, 1999: Widespread dense fog and freezing drizzle created treacherous driving conditions across northeast South Dakota from the evening of the 21st to around noon on the 22nd. The freezing drizzle ended in the early morning hours of the 22nd. As a result, slippery conditions developed, especially across Hamlin, Deuel, and Codington counties. Many vehicles slid into the ditch. A few accidents resulted in minor injuries. Numerous activities were canceled on the evening of the 21st, and many schools had delayed starts on the 22nd.

1863 - A severe coastal storm dropped heavy rain on the Fredericksburg area of Virginia. It disrupted a Union Army offensive in an ill famed "mud march." (David Ludlum)

1963: Up to 3" of snow falls on San Francisco, their heaviest since 1887. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

1982 - The second of two major snowstorms to hit southern Minnesota came to an end. Minneapolis received 20 inches of snow in 24 hours to break the previous record of 17 inches in 24 hours established just a few days earlier. A record 38 inches of snow covered the ground following the two storms, with drifts ten feet high. (David Ludlum)

1985: Jacksonville, Florida, recorded its all-time record low of 7 degrees. Macon, Georgia, had its coldest day ever with a temperature of 6 degrees. It was the coldest Inauguration day in history as President Reagan is sworn in for a second term during cold and winds that resulted in wind chill readings of 30 degrees below zero. Because of the bitter cold temperatures, many outdoor Inauguration events were canceled, and President Reagan was sworn in the Capitol Rotunda.

1985 - Three days of snow squalls at Buffalo NY finally came to an end. The squalls, induced by relatively warm water in Lake Erie, produced 34 inches of snow at the International Airport, with up to 47 inches reported in the suburbs of Buffalo. The New York "blizzard of '85" left many counties disaster areas. (19th-21st) (Weather Channel) (Storm Data) President Reagan was sworn in for a second term in the coldest Inauguration Ceremony of record. Cold and wind resulted in wind chill readings as much as 30 degrees below zero. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - Low pressure over Minnesota produced high winds in the Northern Plains Region. Winds gusted to 66 mph at Rapid City SD, and reached 70 mph at Belle Fourche SD. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - High pressure over northern Nevada and low pressure off the coast of southern California combined to produce high winds in the southwestern U.S. Wind gusts in the San Francisco area reached 70 mph at Fremont. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Cold and snow prevailed in the northeastern U.S. Up to 13 inches of snow was reported between Woodford and Searsburg in Vermont. Montpelier VT reported a wind chill reading of 42 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across the state of Florida. Eight cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including West Palm Beach with a reading of 86 degrees. Rain in southern New England changed to freezing rain, then to sleet, and then to heavy snow during the late morning. Most of Massachusetts was blanketed with 6 to 10 inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999: A major tornado outbreak occurred from the southwest into central and northeast Arkansas during the afternoon and evening. In the Little Rock Area, 30 tornadoes tracked across 15 counties. Homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed in Little Rock, Beebe, McRae, and areas farther north and east. Eight deaths resulted from the tornadoes, with 140 to 150 injuries also reported.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

BE REFRESHED!

Ears may take up little space on the human body, but they play an important role in life. Sounds have a unique way of focusing on something that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Sirens blare to get our attention, and we look for a vehicle with blinking and flashing lights. Horns honk and warn us to "stay in your own lane" or to keep us from being careless in our driving. Roosters crow to announce a new day. Dogs bark to let us know that someone unusual may be in "our space" or to welcome us home. Sounds play an important role in our lives and without ears, we would miss much that life has to offer.

Another important aspect of our ears, however, is to hear the news. With news being available twenty-four hours a day, every day, we can easily become news-weary. Little changes except for the date and the day. The content of news broadcasts rarely changes, only the location and those who are participating in what is going on.

Solomon had representatives traveling far and wide to expand his commercial empire. Certainly, he was one who had an ear out for "good news." It was important to him. He wanted to know how he was doing with what he was doing. No doubt the reports he heard were often mixed. But when he received "good news," it revived his weary soul like a drink of cold water.

However, God's "good news" in Christ is not only "good news," but the "best news" everyone needs. It not only refreshes one's soul, but it also redeems and reconciles that soul to its Creator. And the "good news" of "His news" is that it gives us eternal life.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for Your Word that brings us the Good News of Your love, mercy, grace, and salvation. May we accept it gladly and share it freely. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Good news from far away is like cold water to the thirsty. Proverbs 25:25



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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2023 Community Events

- 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)
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 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)
- 06/16/2023 – SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 07/04/2023 – Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 – GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 – Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 – GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 – Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 – Tour of Homes & Holiday Party

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.20.23

20 29 31 64 66 17

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$31,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.18.23

12 18 24 27 45 1

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$34,270,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 25 Mins 48 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.20.23

2 10 28 30 44 13

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 55 Mins 49 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.18.23

3 22 25 27 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$23,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 25 Mins 49 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.18.23

4 11 14 54 69 16

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 24 Mins 49 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.18.23

6 15 22 42 47 26

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$473,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 24 Mins 49 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Friday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Andes Central/Dakota Christian 47, Avon 39
Bison 62, Wakpala 31
Brookings 47, Rapid City Central 33
Canton 58, Beresford 50
Castlewood 67, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 23
Dakota Valley 63, Tri-Valley 54
DeSmet 50, Estelline/Hendricks 44
Deubrook 57, Dell Rapids St. Mary 42
Ethan 49, Corsica/Stickney 43
Faith 53, Harding County 46, OT
Flandreau 50, McCook Central/Montrose 32
Freeman 62, Menno 36
Hanson 67, Canistota 32
Howard 67, Chester 46
Irene-Wakonda 57, Alcester-Hudson 49
Jones County 63, Kadoka Area 38
Lemmon 79, Timber Lake 54
Lennox 52, Platte-Geddes 36
Lower Brule 61, Flandreau Indian 42
Lyman 67, Burke 65
Mitchell Christian 59, Sioux Falls Lincoln 37
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 56, Kimball/White Lake 34
North Central Co-Op 70, Herreid/Selby Area 67
Rapid City Stevens 66, Watertown 42
Red Cloud 48, Spearfish 47, OT
Sioux Falls Christian 55, Madison 29
Sioux Valley 78, Dell Rapids 58
Sturgis Brown 58, Lead-Deadwood 9
Tiospaye Topa 57, McIntosh 32
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 62, Colome 19
Vermillion 51, Garretson 25
Viborg-Hurley 58, Baltic 23
Yankton 56, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 50, 2OT
Panhandle Tournament=
Edgemont 43, Morrill, Neb. 30

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli 49, Northwestern 45
Avon 60, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 48
Beresford 80, Canton 45
Castlewood 77, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 25
Colome 68, Gayville-Volin 41
Custer 66, Hill City 65

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Dakota Valley 73, Tri-Valley 52
DeSmet 73, Estelline/Hendricks 29
Deuel 54, Tiospa Zina Tribal 52
Ethan 62, Corsica/Stickney 46
Freeman 60, Menno 34
Great Plains Lutheran 65, Sioux Falls Lutheran 37
Ipswich 54, Faulkton 30
Irene-Wakonda 45, Alcester-Hudson 39
Jones County 58, Kadoka Area 49
Lennox 76, Platte-Geddes 44
Leola/Frederick 56, Langford 48
Lower Brule 112, Flandreau Indian 42
Marty Indian 70, Crazy Horse 62
McCook Central/Montrose 48, Flandreau 47
McLaughlin 66, Dupree 32
Milbank 56, Florence/Henry 53
Philip 73, Bennett County 28
Rapid City Central 70, Brookings 51
Rapid City Christian 58, Lakota Tech 55
Sioux Falls Christian 68, Madison 64
Sioux Falls Jefferson 72, Harrisburg 61
Sioux Falls Lincoln 74, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 61
Spearfish 56, Red Cloud 46, OT
Sturgis Brown 68, Lead-Deadwood 41
Vermillion 76, Garretson 46
Viborg-Hurley 56, Baltic 28
Warner 47, Britton-Hecla 26
Watertown 37, Rapid City Stevens 29
Waverly-South Shore 58, Wilmot 34
Webster 56, Sisseton 42
Yankton 58, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 47

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

Native Americans share trauma of Arizona boarding schools

By TERRY TANG The Associated Press

LAVEEN VILLAGE, Ariz. (AP) — During seventh grade at Phoenix Indian School, Pershlie Ami signed up to go on what the school called an "outing" — promoted as opportunities for Native American students to earn spending money off campus.

They were opportunities — for cheap labor.

Ami said most people have no idea that the school staff would send students out to work, often doing menial tasks, for strangers whose backgrounds weren't checked.

"A family came and picked me up and took me to their home. The task that they wanted me to do was pick up dog poop in their house," Ami said during a listening session Friday in the Gila River Indian Community just south of Phoenix overseen by U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland.

The session is part of a yearlong "Road to Healing" tour for victims and survivors of abuse at government-backed boarding schools. It is the fourth stop for the nation's first and only Native American Cabinet secretary after previous stops in South Dakota, Oklahoma and Michigan.

Ami, who's Hopi, is now 67 and living in nearby Laveen. She still remembers vehemently refusing to

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clean the house — and the fallout.

"I got severely punished for not doing what that family had asked me to do. I was never allowed to go out on another outing," she said. "Then I started to wonder what happened to some of these kids that went out on these outings, that nobody ever followed up on them."

Ami was one of several people who spoke during Haaland's visit to Arizona before a large audience that included Gov. Katie Hobbs and Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego.

Several testimonies addressed issues in addition to abuse, such as losing one's culture and language. The session took place in the multipurpose room of Gila Crossing Community School, where artwork and banners reflected the heritage of the local tribe.

"This is one step among many that we will take to strengthen and rebuild the bonds with the Native communities that federal Indian boarding school policies set out to break," Haaland said before the session.

Starting with the Indian Civilization Act of 1819, the U.S. enacted laws and policies to establish and support the schools. The stated goal was to "civilize" Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians, which was often carried out through abusive practices.

In Arizona alone, there were 47 federal Indian boarding schools — and that number does not even include the religious and private institutions that received federal funding to run schools.

"My ancestors and many of yours endured the horrors of the Indian boarding school assimilation policies carried out by the same department I now lead," Haaland said. "This is the first time in history that a United States Cabinet secretary comes to the table with a shared trauma. That is not lost on me."

Haaland has prioritized publicly examining the trauma caused by these schools. In May, the Interior Department released a first-of-its-kind report pointing out 408 schools the federal government supported that stripped Native Americans of their cultures and identities. At least 500 children are known to have died at some of the schools. But when more research is done, that statistic is likely to rise.

A majority of the speakers were descendants of boarding school survivors. They shared how their parents had a hard time learning how to be good parents because they were separated from their own — some at a very young age. Ami, whose father also went to a boarding school, remembered how he would refer to himself as "just a dumb Indian."

"I think he did eventually get rid of that image of being 'a dumb Indian,'" Ami said. "But he never stopped using that phrase in reference to himself."

The vulnerability of victims has spurred tears at all of these sessions. However, Deborah Parker, chief executive of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition and a member of the Tulalip Tribes, said there's a feeling of hope, too.

"There's a sense of encouragement. Yes, we can finally tell our stories and maybe we can begin to heal," Parker said. "Those tears help cleanse emotions that we've been keeping inside of us for sometimes generations."

Congress is planning to reintroduce legislation to establish a boarding school "truth and healing commission," according to Parker. It would be similar to one established in Canada in 2008. If passed, it would have a broader scope than the Interior Department's investigation into federally run boarding schools and subpoena power.

Meanwhile, a second report is pending in the school investigation launched by Haaland, who is a member of Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico. It will focus on burial sites, the schools' impact on Indigenous communities and also try to account for federal funds spent on the troubled program.

New Jackrabbit coach Jimmy Rogers says he's living the dream

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota State's football facilities were so bad when Jimmy Rogers was on his official visit in 2005 that his host drove right past them without stopping.

That didn't matter to Rogers, who had no choice but to sign with John Stiegelmeier and the Jackrabbits if he wanted to play Division I football.

"I promised him in front of my family that we would win a national championship," Rogers said Friday.

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"I wish it hadn't taken 18 years."

Two weeks after SDSU won its first Football Championship Subdivision title, Rogers was introduced as the successor to the retiring Stiegelmeier.

Rogers, 35, has been with the Jackrabbits nearly every step of the way as they've upgraded their facilities to some of the finest in the FCS and evolved into a power in the second tier of Division I football.

He was an under-recruited player who blossomed into a two-time all-conference linebacker. He's been a graduate assistant, position coach and defensive coordinator. Now, he's SDSU's 21st head coach.

"At 17 years old, South Dakota State wasn't a dream of mine," he said. "Seventeen years later, I can proudly say my reality has become a dream. It truly has."

Stiegelmeier, who won 199 games in 26 seasons, laid out a succession plan for an internal candidate to take over once he retired. Rogers has been the coach in waiting since being named assistant head coach in 2019.

"I don't think anybody knows they're ready until they get in these shoes," Rogers said. "This is going to be a learning process. I'm confident in who I am. Could I be a head coach everywhere in the country? No. I can be the head coach here. Part of that is because I've been everyone in this room."

Rogers takes over with the program at its all-time high. The Jackrabbits have turned the tide in their rivalry with North Dakota State, having beaten the Bison four straight times after their 45-21 win in the FCS title game Jan. 8.

SDSU is on a program-best 14-game win streak and coming off its 11th straight FCS playoff appearance.

"The 2022 team and that set of coaches and players won a national championship, will go down in history and we'll always talk about that team," athletic director Justin Sell said. "Today is about 2023, where we're trying to go and what we're trying to do. We have a chance to refresh that plan. We're going to stay true to who we are, build off that and go out and accomplish great things."

Rogers' defense ranked first in the Missouri Valley Football Conference, and its performance in the post-season allowed the Jackrabbits to beat all four playoff opponents by at least 21 points.

"We made a statement in the 2022 season," Rogers said. "That statement is now the standard, and we plan to uphold that."

S. Dakota lawmakers reject proposal to limit ballot measures

By AMANCAI BIRABEN Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota lawmakers on Friday dismissed a proposal that the state constitution ban ballot measures from being reconsidered if they failed in the previous election.

The Republican-controlled House State Affairs Committee rejected the proposed constitutional amendment after lawmakers said it relied on vague language and unwieldy implementation. One Republican criticized its interference with citizens' ability to directly change laws in South Dakota, which was the first state to enshrine the ballot measure process.

The proposed constitutional amendment, which would have prevented rejected ballot initiatives from appearing in the next election, would have needed to gain a majority in the next election to be enacted.

Republican Rep. Fred Deutsch, who spearheaded the effort, brought the proposal after voters rejected a ballot measure to legalize recreational marijuana last year, but legalization advocates say they plan to put the proposal back on ballots in the next election.

"The voters just said no. Can't we respect the will of the voters for at least one election cycle?" Deutsch said.

The Republican-controlled Legislature has tried in recent years to curtail the ballot initiative process after progressive measures, such as Medicaid expansion and medical marijuana legalization, have found favor with voters.

But Deutsch's proposal struggled to gain support, even with his fellow Republican lawmakers.

Opponents argued it would result in countless lawsuits because of the amendment's wording: to limit ballot measures that are "substantially similar" to prior measures. Other opponents urged caution when

amending the state's constitution and limiting a form of direct democracy.

"I have hesitations on what this does to election law," said Republican Rep. Becky Drury. "This impedes on people's right to bring measures."

The Legislature is also considering a bill, proposed by Attorney General Marty Jackley, to make it a felony for ballot petition circulators to commit perjury.

Jackley said the proposal would strengthen election laws by instituting a criminal punishment. He pointed to a 2014 case in which he attempted to prosecute a Republican Senate candidate for perjury for misrepresenting her candidate nominating petitions. The state Supreme Court overturned the convictions.

But Rick Weiland, who started an organization that operates ballot measure campaigns, including a campaign to place abortion rights in the state constitution, said bills like Jackley's would have a "chilling effect" on ballot measure campaigns.

He said, "It's more about intimidating people that want to get involved in direct democracy."

Rapid City police fatally shoot person who pointed gun

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City police officer fatally shot a person who had pointed a gun at him during a struggle late Thursday, the Rapid City Police Department said.

Rapid City Police Chief Don Hedrick said in a Facebook video that officers had chased "an individual" in a residential area north of the city's downtown before "a struggle of some sort ensued."

The officer attempted to use a stun gun, Hedrick said, but the person pointed a firearm at the officer.

Hedrick said the officer then fired at the person, who died.

"It does not appear that the suspect was able to fire any rounds at the police officer, but definitely pointed a weapon at him," Hedrick said.

Hedrick did not release details on the person killed.

The Pennington County sheriff's office took over the scene after the shooting, Hedrick said. The state's Division of Criminal Investigation will review the shooting.

Door of No Return: Yellen visits onetime slave-trading post

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

GOREE ISLAND, Senegal (AP) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen paid a solemn visit Saturday to the salmon-colored house on an island off Senegal that is one of the most recognized symbols of the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade that trapped tens of millions of Africans in bondage for generations.

Yellen, in Senegal as part of a 10-day trip aimed at rebuilding economic relationships between the U.S. and Africa, stood in the Gorée Island building known as the House of Slaves and peered out of the Door of No Return, from which enslaved people were shipped across the Atlantic.

"Gorée and the trans-Atlantic slave trade are not just a part of African history. They are a part of American history as well," Yellen said in brief remarks during her visit.

"We know that the tragedy did not stop with the generation of humans taken from here. Even after slavery was abolished, Black Americans — many of whom can trace their descent through ports like this across Africa — were denied the rights and freedoms promised to them under our Constitution."

The economic benefits that major slave-trading nations, including the United States, reaped for hundreds of years on the backs of unpaid labor could amount to tens of trillions of dollars, according to research on the commerce.

And in the U.S., African slaves and their children contributed to the building of the nation's most storied institutions, including the White House and Capitol, according to the White House Historical Association.

Yellen acknowledged the ongoing ramifications of that brutal past.

"In both Africa and the United States, even as we have made tremendous strides, we are still living with the brutal consequences of the trans-Atlantic slave trade," she said.

"What I take from this place is the importance of redoubling our commitment to fight for our shared

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values and principles wherever they are threatened — in the United States, in Africa, and around the world,” she said. “We have more work to do.”

Yellen’s trip to the island is one that many dignitaries have made, including former U.S. presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton and South Africa’s Nelson Mandela. Today, Gorée Island is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Yellen’s stop there during a trip meant to revitalize U.S.-African economic relations is one that evoked the massive costs of the slave trade. There has been a resurgence in interest in determining the true cost of slavery on the generations impacted.

The House Financial Services Committee in recent years has studied how U.S. banks and insurance companies profited from the practice of slavery before it was outlawed in 1865. There have also been hearings on the study and development of reparations proposals in the U.S.

Sections of Balkan river become floating garbage dump

VISEGRAD, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Tons of waste dumped in poorly regulated riverside landfills or directly into the waterways that flow across three countries end up accumulating behind a trash barrier in the Drina River in eastern Bosnia during the wet weather of winter and early spring.

This week, the barrier once again became the outer edge of a massive floating waste dump crammed with plastic bottles, rusty barrels, used tires, household appliances, driftwood and other garbage picked up by the river from its tributaries.

The river fencing installed by a Bosnian hydroelectric plant, a few kilometers upstream from its dam near Visegrad, has turned the city into an unwilling regional waste site, local environmental activists complain.

Heavy rain and unseasonably warm weather over the past week have caused many rivers and streams in Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro to overflow, flooding the surrounding areas and forcing scores of people from their homes. Temperatures dropped in many areas on Friday as rain turned into snow.

“We had a lot of rainfall and torrential floods in recent days and a huge inflow of water from (the Drina’s tributaries in) Montenegro which is now, fortunately, subsiding,” said Dejan Furtula of the environmental group Eko Centar Visegrad.

“Unfortunately, the huge inflow of garbage has not ceased,” he added.

The Drina River runs 346 kilometers (215 miles) from the mountains of northwestern Montenegro through Serbia and Bosnia. and some of its tributaries are known for their emerald color and breathtaking scenery. A section along the border between Bosnia and Serbia is popular with river rafters when it’s not “garbage season.”

Some 10,000 cubic meters (more than 353,000 cubic feet) of waste are estimated to have amassed behind the Drina River trash barrier in recent days, Furtula said. The same amount was pulled in recent years from that area of the river.

Removing the garbage takes up to six months, on average. It ends up at the municipal landfill in Visegrad, which Furtula said “does not even have sufficient capacity to handle (the city’s) municipal waste.”

“The fires on the (municipal) landfill site are always burning,” he said, calling the conditions there “not just a huge environmental and health hazard, but also a big embarrassment for all of us.”

Decades after the devastating 1990s wars that accompanied the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Balkans lag behind the rest of Europe both economically and with regard to environmental protection.

The countries of the region have made little progress in building effective, environmentally sound trash disposal systems despite seeking membership in the European Union and adopting some of the EU’s laws and regulations.

Unauthorized waste dumps dot hills and valleys throughout the region, while trash litters roads and plastic bags hang from the trees.

In addition to river pollution, many countries in the western Balkans have other environmental woes. One of the most pressing is the extremely high level of air pollution affecting a number of cities in the region.

“People need to wake up to problems like this,” Visegrad resident Rados Brekalovic said.

Lakers rally to snap Grizzlies' winning streak at 11 games

By JOE REEDY AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Lakers coach Darvin Ham had seen his squad on the wrong end of close losses for the past week.

On Friday night, Ham saw his team's mettle and resolve pay off.

Dennis Schröder completed a three-point play with 7.6 seconds after a steal, and Los Angeles rallied past Memphis 122-121 to snap the Grizzlies' winning streak at 11 games.

"To get a win like this is a momentum swing," Ham said. "The guys were kind of down after the Sacramento game, but we addressed areas that we needed to get better. There's no way we win this game if we didn't have the type of fight that we had."

The Lakers had lost their last three games by a total of 10 points. They trailed 114-107 with 3:04 remaining before outscoring the Grizzlies 15-7 the rest of the way.

Schröder stole the ball from Desmond Bane near halfcourt and made a layup while being fouled by Bane to tie it at 120. Schröder then hit a free throw for the lead.

"We wanted to trap first before we fouled," said Schröder, who scored 19 points. "I saw Bane catch the ball, he had his back to me and I made a play. I got the steal, pushed the ball, got fouled and finished the play."

After a timeout, Memphis' Brandon Clarke was fouled with 1.9 seconds remaining. He made the first free throw, but missed the second. Bane got the offensive rebound but lost control of it, giving the Lakers possession with 0.4 seconds left.

Russell Westbrook led the Lakers with 29 points and LeBron James added 23. It was only the second time this season Los Angeles won when trailing after three quarters.

The Lakers were outrebounded 63-47, but had a 20-4 edge in fast-break points.

"We were resilient the whole game," James said. "We stuck with the game plan. We've given ourselves a chance to win games."

Ja Morant led Memphis with 22 points. Clarke and Tyus Jones added 20 apiece, and Steven Adams had 16 points and 17 rebounds.

One significant reason for the Grizzlies' loss was free throws. They were 26 of 40 from the line, the ninth time this season they shot 65% or worse.

"They outcompeted us for 48 minutes. Plain and simple. Terrible effort," Grizzlies coach Taylor Jenkins said.

Morant missed his first five shots and was 2 of 10 with six points in the first half before he had a heated courtside conversation with Shannon Sharpe — the Pro Football Hall of Famer and Fox Sports personality — before halftime.

Morant had 14 points in the third quarter and the Grizzlies held a 13-point lead late in the period.

"We gave up too many second-chance points. Just have to win the 50-50 plays," Morant said. "We've got a lot of good, but a lot of cleaning up to do."

TIP-INS

Grizzlies: Memphis pulled down a season-high 24 offensive rebounds. ... Clarke also had 10 rebounds. ... Bane scored 16 points and Jaren Jackson Jr. added 12. ... Adams had seven rebounds in the first quarter, the fifth time this season he has had seven or more in the first.

Lakers: Troy Brown Jr. and Kendrick Nunn scored 11 points apiece and Troy Brown Jr. had 10. ... LA blocked five shots in the first quarter. ... Los Angeles scored 41 points in the fourth quarter and has scored at least 40 in four quarters this season.

UP NEXT

Grizzlies: At Phoenix on Sunday night.

Lakers: At Portland on Sunday night.

Prosecutors: Convicted CEO Elizabeth Holmes is a flight risk

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SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Elizabeth Holmes is a flight risk and shouldn't be allowed to stay out of prison while she appeals her 11-year prison sentence for defrauding investors, federal prosecutors said in court documents.

Holmes had a one-way plane ticket to Mexico booked for Jan. 26, 2022, three weeks after being convicted by a jury on four counts of fraud and conspiracy, federal prosecutors said in a motion filed Thursday in federal court in Northern California.

Holmes, who was CEO of Theranos during the company's turbulent 15-year history, was convicted in a scheme that revolved around the company's claims to have developed a medical device that could detect a multitude of diseases and conditions from a few drops of blood. But the technology never worked, and the claims were false.

Holmes booked the 2022 flight without a scheduled return trip and only canceled it after prosecutors contacted Holmes' attorneys about the "unauthorized flight," prosecutors said.

Holmes' attorneys did not immediately respond Friday to email and phone messages from The Associated Press. In a Jan. 23, 2022, email responding to prosecutors' concerns about the planned trip, they said Holmes had booked it before the jury's verdict to attend a wedding in Mexico.

"Given the verdict, she does not plan to take the trip and therefore did not provide notice, seek permission, or request access to her passport (which the government has) for the trip," wrote Lance Wade, one of Holmes' attorneys.

On November 17, U.S. District Judge Edward Davila sentenced Holmes to more than 11 years in prison. Davila ordered Holmes, who is pregnant, to report to prison on April 27, giving her enough time to give birth to her second child before she is incarcerated. She gave birth to a son shortly before her trial started last year.

Prosecutors did not protest Davila's decision to give Holmes five months of freedom or bring up the fact that they considered her a flight risk.

Holmes is scheduled to return to court on March 17 for a hearing on her request to stay out of prison while she appeals her conviction.

German caution on Ukraine arms rooted in political culture

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany has become one of Ukraine's leading weapons suppliers in the 11 months since Russia's invasion, but Chancellor Olaf Scholz also has gained a reputation for hesitating to take each new step — generating impatience among allies.

Berlin's perceived foot-dragging, most recently on the Leopard 2 battle tanks that Kyiv has long sought, is rooted at least partly in a post-World War II political culture of military caution, along with present-day worries about a possible escalation in the war.

On Friday, Germany inched closer to a decision to deliver the tanks, ordering a review of its Leopard stocks in preparation for a possible green light.

There was still no commitment, however. Defense Minister Boris Pistorius rejected the suggestion that Germany was standing in the way but said, "we have to balance all the pros and contras before we decide things like that, just like that."

It's a pattern that has been repeated over the months as Scholz first held off pledging new, heavier equipment, then eventually agreed to do so.

Most recently, Germany said in early January that it would send 40 Marder armored personnel carriers to Ukraine — doing so in a joint announcement with the U.S., which pledged 50 Bradley armored vehicles.

That decision followed months of calls for Berlin to send the Marder and stoked pressure for it to move up another step to the Leopard tank.

"There is a discrepancy between the actual size of the commitment and weapons deliveries — it's the second-largest European supplier — and the hesitancy with which it is done," said Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff, a Berlin-based senior analyst with the German Marshall Fund of the United States think tank.

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Scholz, an unshakably self-confident politician with a stubborn streak and little taste for bowing to public calls for action, has stuck resolutely to his approach. He has said that Germany won't go it alone on weapons decisions and pointed to the need to avoid NATO becoming a direct party to the war with Russia.

As pressure mounted last week, he declared that he wouldn't be rushed into important security decisions by "excited comments." And he insisted that a majority in Germany supports his government's "calm, well-considered and careful" decision-making.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Wednesday, Scholz listed some of the equipment Germany has sent to Ukraine, declaring that it marks "a profound turning point in German foreign and security policy."

That is, at least to some extent, true. Germany refused to provide lethal weapons before the invasion started, reflecting a political culture rooted in part in the memory of Germany's own history of aggression during the 20th century — including the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

"No German chancellor, of no party, wants to be seen out front in pushing a military agenda — you want to try all other options before you resort to that," Kleine-Brockhoff said. "And therefore for domestic consumption, it is seen as a positive thing for a German chancellor not to lead on this, to be cautious, to be resistant, to have tried all other options."

Scholz does face calls from Germany's center-right opposition and some in his three-party governing coalition to be more proactive on military aid; less so from his own center-left Social Democratic Party, which for decades was steeped in the legacy of Cold War rapprochement pursued by predecessor Willy Brandt in the early 1970s.

Scholz "decided early on that he does not want to lead militarily on Ukraine assistance," Kleine-Brockhoff said, though "he wants to be a good ally and part of the alliance and in the middle of the pack."

But the cautious approach "drives allies crazy" and raises questions over whether they can count on the Germans, Kleine-Brockhoff acknowledged.

Berlin kept up its caution on the Leopard tank even after Britain announced last week that it would provide Ukraine its own Challenger 2 tanks.

The hesitancy isn't just an issue between Berlin and Kyiv, since other countries would need Germany's permission to send their own stocks of German-made Leopards to Ukraine. On Wednesday, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said Warsaw would consider giving its tanks even without Berlin's permission.

"Consent is of secondary importance here. We will either obtain it quickly, or we will do the right thing ourselves," Morawiecki said.

British historian Timothy Garton Ash wrote in *The Guardian* and other newspapers this week that "to its credit, the German government's position on military support for Ukraine has moved a very long way since the eve of the Russian invasion."

But he argued that the tank issue has become "a litmus test of Germany's courage to resist (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's nuclear blackmail, overcome its own domestic cocktail of fears and doubts, and defend a free and sovereign Ukraine," and that Scholz should lead a "European Leopard plan."

Whether that will eventually happen remains to be seen. Scholz's government has insisted on close coordination with the United States, a possible reflection in part of the fact that Germany — unlike Britain and France — relies on the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

On Friday, Scholz's spokesman, Steffen Hebestreit, denied reports that Germany had insisted it would only deliver Leopard tanks if the U.S. sends its own Abrams tanks. He rejected the notion that Berlin is trailing others and insisted it is taking the right approach.

"These are not easy decisions, and they need to be well-weighed," he said. "And this is about them being sustainable, that all can go along with them and stand behind them — and part of a leadership performance is keeping an alliance together."

Burkina Faso says 66 women, children freed from extremists

By ARSENE KABORE Associated Press

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP) — Burkina Faso's army has freed 66 women and children who were abducted earlier this month by Islamic extremists while gathering food in the country's northern Sahel region, according to a state television report Friday.

National broadcaster RTB reported that armed forces had located the hostages during a military operation in Center-North region. The group included 39 children, with four infants among them.

Authorities have said they had been out in the countryside gathering wild fruit near the town of Arbinda in Soum province when Islamic extremists kidnapped them on Jan. 12 and 13.

Extremists have besieged towns around the West African country, preventing people and goods from moving freely. The town of Arbinda has been under jihadi blockade for years, making women more vulnerable to attacks if they try to leave, rights groups say.

Jihadi violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group has overrun Burkina Faso, killing thousands and displacing nearly 2 million people in the West African nation. The failure of successive governments to stop the fighting has caused widespread discontent and triggered two military coups in 2022.

The military junta that seized power in September, vowing to restore security, is still struggling to stem the violence.

Police: Heroic actions kept shooter from doing more harm

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (AP) — Police in Indiana said Friday that heroic actions by a Walmart employee and law enforcement officers kept a gunman who shot and injured one female employee from doing more harm.

The woman was the only person injured late Thursday when 25-year-old Ronald Ray Mosley II walked into a store break room where employees were meeting, specifically aimed at the victim and shot her in the face with a 9mm handgun.

Sgt. Anna Gray of the Evansville Police Department said officers were within the building within four minutes of the 911 call, and Mosley was shot and killed by officers who tracked him down shortly thereafter. No injuries were reported among the roughly 100 officers from several agencies who responded. There were about 40 employees and 40 shoppers in the store at the time.

After the shooting, a male employee — whom Mosley was also targeting — ran out of the room, and Mosley followed him. Another female employee saw that Mosley had fled the room and called 911. She then ran back into the room to get the victim, take her into another room, locked the door and turned out the lights before Mosley returned looking for the wounded woman.

Evansville Police Chief Billy Bolin called the employee a hero and credited her with saving the victim's life.

"I have no doubt that he was going back to finish what he started and we would probably have a dead victim today instead of one that's alive," Bolin said during a press conference Friday.

The wounded woman was taken by helicopter to an Indianapolis hospital and was in stable condition, according to Gray.

At least eight officers fired shots as they tracked Mosley, whom Bolin said left a suicide note.

"He absolutely planned to die last night," Bolin said.

Gray said investigators did not yet know when Mosley acquired the handgun he used in the shooting or how many shots he fired.

Body camera video played during the news conference showed one officer holding an assault rifle in front of him and another officer in front of him moving through the aisles of the store until gunfire is heard from elsewhere in the store and an officer shouts: "Drop it! Drop it!" Moments later, a voice is heard saying, "He's down, target is down."

The shooting was not the first criminal incident involving Mosley at the store. He was fired from the store after being charged with four misdemeanor counts of battery on May 18, 2022, after he attacked four co-workers. A probable cause affidavit filed in the case states that Mosley told police he had issues with people at work and "lost control."

The case was eventually referred to Vanderburgh County's mental health court.

He had pleaded guilty to the battery charges and was complying with mental health treatment through the court, Vanderburgh County Prosecutor Diana Moers said. Mosely had in fact appeared for a progress hearing on Thursday afternoon, just hours before the shooting.

Moers said Mosely's conviction on misdemeanor battery charges "wouldn't be one that exclude him from owning a handgun, necessarily."

Walmart, the Bentonville, Arkansas-based retail giant, said in a statement that the "entire Walmart family is shocked by the senseless violence that occurred at our Evansville store, and our hearts are with our associate at this time."

The company said in a separate statement that it does not discuss personnel matters involving current or former employees, but said that Mosley "has not worked for Walmart since May 2022."

Indiana has a "red flag" law, which legislators passed in 2005 and allows police or courts to seize guns from people who show warning signs of violence. However, after the May incident at the store, red flag court proceedings were not initiated against Mosley, according to Winston Lin, chief deputy prosecutor for the Vanderburgh County Prosecutor's office, said Friday.

Indiana University law professor Jody Madeira, an expert on Indiana's "red flag" law, said prosecutors most likely would not have filed such an action in this case office unless there was a threat of gun violence in Mosley's past, and there was no indication there was.

She noted he had been complying with court-ordered mental health treatment.

Evansville, a city of around 116,000 residents along the Ohio River, is about 170 miles (275 kilometers) southwest of Indianapolis.

A Walmart manager in Chesapeake, Virginia, killed six people in November when he began shooting wildly inside a break room before a routine employee meeting, two days ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. Six people were also wounded. The gunman shot and killed himself before officers arrived.

Son seeks \$50M from LA for dad's death from stun gun zaps

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Lawyers for the 5-year-old son of a man who died after repeatedly being shocked by Los Angeles police with a stun gun following a traffic collision filed a \$50 million claim Friday for damages against the city.

The legal claim is required before Keenan Anderson's son and estate can sue LA police for wrongful death and civil rights violations for restraining him and shocking him six times with a Taser in less than a minute on Jan. 3.

"If you Taser someone with 50,000 watts of electrical energy six times ... is there really any wonder that moments later his heart will begin to flutter?" attorney Carl Douglas said at a news conference. "Is there any wonder why four hours later his heart could no longer withstand the pressure from that Taser and gave up, leaving a 5-year-old boy in his wake?"

The claim was filed on behalf of Anderson's son, Syncere Kai Anderson, who stood with his mother, Gabrielle Hansell, the administrator of his estate, alongside their attorneys.

Anderson, 31, a high school English teacher in Washington, D.C., and cousin of Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of Black Lives Matter, was the suspect in a hit-and-run traffic collision when he was stopped by police in Venice. He later ran from officers and resisted arrest, police said.

Anderson screamed for help after he was pinned to the street by officers and repeatedly shocked, according to video released by the department.

"They're trying to kill me," Anderson yelled.

Footage showed an officer pressing his forearm on Anderson's chest and an elbow in this neck.

"They're trying to George Floyd me," Anderson said in reference to the Black man killed by officers in Minnesota.

"We can only wonder what Keenan Anderson meant," attorney Ben Crump said. "But if he meant that

he would end up dead at the end of the encounter at the hands of the Los Angeles Police Department then Keenan Anderson was correct. They George Floyd him.”

Chief Michel Moore said Anderson initially complied with officers as they investigated whether he was under the influence of drugs or alcohol. But he was subdued after struggling with officers who had chased him when he bolted.

Anderson ran in fear — as other Black men have — when additional officers responding to a call for backup rushed toward him, Douglas said.

The claim said officers used unreasonable deadly force, carelessly and mistakenly deployed the Taser, failed to follow training on the dangers of asphyxiation while handcuffing Anderson and conspired with each other to hide and distort information in false police reports.

An LAPD toxicology test found cocaine and cannabis in Anderson’s body, the chief said. The coroner’s office will also perform a toxicology report.

The officers haven’t been named yet but their union issued a statement saying the family and attorneys were “trying to shamelessly profit” from a “tragic incident.”

An LAPD spokesperson declined comment citing a policy not to comment on pending litigation.

After being subdued, Anderson went into cardiac arrest and died at a hospital about four hours later.

In soaked California, few homeowners have flood insurance

By MICHAEL PHILLIS and ADAM BEAM Associated Press

ACAMPO, Calif. (AP) — On Sunday morning, Kyle Starks woke up to floodwaters that reached the door of his Jeep after yet another heavy rain storm drenched California. Emergency crews showed up with boats to float Starks and other residents of his rural mobile home park in Acampo to safety.

Beyond the physical destruction, the storm could pack a financial hit: Starks does not have flood insurance. “I didn’t think it would flood this bad,” he explained from an evacuation center, worried that water damaged wiring and air conditioning equipment.

In California, only about 230,000 homes and other buildings have flood insurance policies, which are separate from homeowners insurance. That means only about 2% of properties are covered against flooding. The federal government is the insurer for the bulk of them — about 191,000 as of December. Private insurers issued the rest, according to the most recent state data from 2021.

In California, 32 trillion gallons of rain and snow fell since Christmas. The water washed out roads, knocked out power and created mudslides by soaking wildfire-charred hills. It caused damage in 41 of the state’s 58 counties. At least 21 people have died.

It takes targeted study to know the role of climate change in specific weather, but warmer air means storms like the ones that deluged California in recent weeks can carry more water.

Yet California’s drought has dulled people’s sense of the risk of flooding. People usually buy insurance after disasters when the risk is visceral, said Amy Bach, the executive director of insurance consumers group United Policyholders.

“People think the only people that need flood insurance are people who live right on the beach or on the banks of a river that has a history of flooding,” Bach said. In reality, far more people are threatened by rushing or rising water.

When you buy a home, a key document will be official Federal Emergency Management Agency maps that tell you if it’s in a high risk flood zone. If it is and you have a federally-backed mortgage, you are required to buy flood insurance that costs on average \$950 a year. Many banks require it too.

Yet FEMA maps are limited and only take into account certain kinds of flooding — they don’t really predict flood risk. Flooding caused by heavy rains that back up storm drains is not counted, for example. The limitations mean flood risk is underestimated nationally. The maps particularly lowball the chance of disaster in California, according to Matthew Eby, executive director of First Street Foundation, a risk analysis organization.

The FEMA maps don’t show Stark’s mobile home in a high risk area. And three years before his neighbor

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Juan Reyes bought his house, a series of storms dumped record amounts of rain on the state and flooded their neighborhood.

Reyes knew this, but he still did not buy flood insurance. It was too expensive, he said, and wasn't required. Plus, he thought local officials had improved the storm drainage system so that a similar flood wouldn't happen again. But it did and Reyes also had to be rescued by boat. He's staying at the same evacuation center, hoping his home isn't too badly damaged.

The storms damaged several thousand homes so badly they'll need to be repaired before people can live in them again. But Nicholas Pinter, a professor at the University of California, Davis who researches watersheds, said California needs to be prepared for even bigger events and that requires far more investment in flood defenses and more awareness of its danger.

"It is worrisome that there was as much damage as there was for what was extreme but not catastrophic flooding," he said.

State officials said even without flood coverage, they try to help people pursue claims — flooded cars, for example, are sometimes covered under auto insurance policies.

Also trying to figure out how to recover is David Enero in Merced, a community of roughly 90,000 in California's Central Valley that flooded badly. Water rose ankle-deep in his house. The laminate floor in his living room floated.

"It was kind of like you were walking on a wave or a trampoline" he said. The house smells like a mix of mildew, rotted hay and septic system overflow.

Enero lives in an area that is designated high risk where people have to buy flood insurance. He says paying for the damage on his own would be unimaginable. In retrospect, he wishes he had insured his belongings as well.

Although the maps force Enero and others in certain areas to buy coverage, FEMA no longer uses its famous maps to set the prices.

The agency updated its pricing in 2021 to more accurately reflect risk and dubbed it Risk Rating 2.0. FEMA says these revised prices -- and not flood maps -- are what communicate flood risk to consumers. The old system placed more emphasis on simple metrics — a home's elevation and whether it was in a mapped flood zone. Risk Rating 2.0 considers distance to water, damage caused by heavy rain and many other factors. It raises rates for about three-quarters of policyholders and offers price decreases for the first time.

FEMA has long said the new ratings would attract new policyholders with prices that reveal a property's true risk, and are more precise. Yet since they went into effect in California, the number of policies has dropped by roughly 5%, continuing a years-long decline nationwide.

Some aren't aware of their risk.

Jay Laub, one of Reyes' neighbors, also rescued from the floodwaters, said when he bought his house the insurance companies were mostly trying to sell him earthquake coverage. He said he assumed his house was covered for flood. He learned this week it wasn't.

Laub said he's worried his mobile home might have sunk in the soggy ground, which could require him to relevel it. He said he's not sure how he would pay for it.

"What do you do? You're on social security, like I am," he said. "But you know what? You take it one step at a time. You've just got to stay strong."

Trevor Burgess, CEO of the private insurer Neptune, said there's been a run on new policies with the storms. During the first 10 days of 2022, the company sold 53 in California. This year, Neptune sold 313 -- a roughly 500% increase.

"Storms, even as they are this terrible tragedy -- human tragedy and tragedy for property -- it does have the effect of reminding people that they are vulnerable and need to protect themselves," said Burgess.

She made history as Chicago mayor. Reelection may be harder

By SARA BURNETT Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Lori Lightfoot made history as the first Black woman and first openly gay person to serve as Chicago mayor, sailing to victory four years ago as an outsider who vowed to rid City Hall of corruption and deliver a safer, more equitable city.

But her bid for a second term is very much in question amid concerns about continuing high crime in the nation's third-largest city and accusations that she is overly hostile and sometimes flat-out mean — criticism she has dismissed as sexist and racist smears against a tough leader who is passionate about Chicago.

Ahead of a crowded Feb. 28 election, Lightfoot has been forced to go on the defensive in a heated race that has turned into both a personality contest and a policy debate.

"We have started to change Chicago around for the better," Lightfoot said during a recent debate. "I want to finish the job that we have started."

With nine candidates in the race, it is unlikely that anyone will exceed the 50% threshold needed to win the officially nonpartisan election outright. That means the winner is likely to be decided in an April 4 runoff between the top two vote-getters.

Were she to lose, Lightfoot would be the first Chicago mayor in decades to run for reelection and fail. And unlike her predecessors, Lightfoot doesn't enjoy a fundraising advantage over her top rivals.

The election will be an early test this year of how crime factors into mayoral races in big-city Democratic strongholds. Other major cities electing mayors this year, including Philadelphia and Atlanta, are also grappling with how to balance progressive ideals with residents' day-to-day concerns about keeping their families safe.

Lightfoot, a former federal prosecutor who had never before run for political office, emerged from a crowded field in 2019 to defeat far better known candidates with support from voters weary of political corruption and coverups.

She says her administration has made concrete progress on critical issues, from putting money into neighborhoods that have seen decades of disinvestment to taking illegal guns off the streets. But she notes that the last four years haven't been easy, with a global pandemic and protests over police violence that she said represented "some of the toughest times that we've ever faced" in Chicago.

Lightfoot's handling of crises has sometimes drawn praise, such as when she ordered lockdowns early in the coronavirus pandemic and an image of the stern-faced mayor became a popular meme. But at other times, Lightfoot's actions have been questioned.

After the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police prompted protests and civil unrest, including smashing of storefront windows and fires, Lightfoot ordered the city to raise drawbridges over the Chicago River in an attempt to block protesters from entering the downtown area. Some in the city saw it as elitist, a way of protecting upscale parts of the highly segregated city at the expense of neighborhoods with struggling business districts that also suffered serious damage.

But Lightfoot has taken the most heat for increased crime, with homicides hitting a 25-year high in 2021 with roughly 800. Lightfoot says she has a plan that is working, noting that homicides decreased last year. But they are still higher than when she took office, and concerns have grown about other violent crime in the city, including carjackings.

"We've made progress year-over-year," Lightfoot said. "But I recognize that people in the city don't feel safe."

Lightfoot's most formidable opponent may be two-term U.S. Rep. Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, a former member of the Chicago City Council, state Senate and county board who lost a runoff eight years ago against then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Lightfoot has run TV ads accusing Garcia of corruption, noting his House campaign took money from Sam Bankman-Fried, the former CEO of cryptocurrency exchange FTX accused of massive financial fraud. Garcia said he didn't know Bankman-Fried, and his campaign returned direct contributions.

Garcia touts his record of working with communities across the city and playing well with others in a way that he says Lightfoot does not.

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"She is combative, unnecessarily. She is over the top," Garcia said.

Elected as a reform-minded outsider who would rid the city of pay-to-play politics, Lightfoot was criticized when a campaign staffer sent out an email to public school teachers seeking students to volunteer for the campaign in exchange for class credit. Lightfoot apologized, calling it a mistake. Inspectors general are reviewing for possible policy violations.

Some of Lightfoot's biggest battles have been with the Chicago Teachers Union, which backed her first run for mayor. The two sides butted heads during an 11-day teachers strike in 2019 and bickered over returning to in-school instruction during the pandemic.

This year, the teachers union has endorsed Lightfoot rival Brandon Johnson, a Cook County commissioner and former Chicago teacher and union organizer. Johnson, who has criticized Lightfoot for running as a progressive and then breaking campaign promises, wants to shift money away from the police department and toward better mental health care and other services for long-neglected neighborhoods like the one where he lives on the city's West Side.

Lightfoot has also clashed with the Chicago police union, the Fraternal Order of Police. At a City Council meeting, Lightfoot was caught on a microphone referring to a union leader as "this FOP clown."

The police union has endorsed mayoral candidate Paul Vallas, a former city budget director and schools leader who served as an adviser to the police union during negotiations with City Hall. He's repeatedly called for more police officers, saying, "Crime is out of control."

Lightfoot has criticized Vallas as a Republican in disguise, noting he has received campaign contributions from GOP donors. Her campaign blasted him for being too cozy with the police union, calling its leader a "notorious bigot" and supporter of former President Donald Trump.

Lightfoot has increased her support in some areas of the city. Former Rep. Bobby Rush, a major critic during her first campaign turned prominent booster this year, joined Reps. Danny Davis and Robin Kelly — whose districts include predominantly Black neighborhoods — in praising her commitment to investing in the areas. Lightfoot maintained that commitment, Rush said, even "under the toughest of circumstances."

The mayor points to a record of achievements that include pushing through a \$15 minimum wage that labor unions had sought for years and approval of a long-sought casino that's expected to bring millions in revenue and thousands of jobs. She also has budgeted over \$3 million to protect access to abortion, including for people who travel to Chicago from states where the procedure is illegal.

In addition to Garcia, Vallas and Johnson, the other candidates running are wealthy businessman Willie Wilson, Chicago City Council members Sophia King and Roderick Sawyer, activist Ja'Mal Green and state Rep. Kambium "Kam" Buckner.

Leonard has season-high 36 to send Clippers past Spurs

By RAUL DOMINGUEZ Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Kawhi Leonard scored a season-high 36 points against his former team, and the Los Angeles Clippers snapped a two-game skid by beating the San Antonio Spurs 131-126 on Friday night.

The Clippers had lost nine of 11, but coach Tyronn Lue believed this game could mark the start of a turnaround for his team.

"I felt it this morning," Lue said. "I think having our guys back and everyone going back to their natural roles helps us out a lot. With Kawhi and PG (Paul George) on the floor, we play at a high level."

The Clippers had seven players score in double figures, including Norman Powell with 26 points and George had 16 points and 12 assists.

Los Angeles shot 63% from the field, 54% on 3-pointers and had 31 assists.

Keldon Johnson had 23 points for San Antonio, which has lost nine of 11. Josh Richardson added 17 points, Zach Collins had a season-high 17 and Jeremy Sochan had 16.

Leonard and George played together for just the third time in January. Leonard put on a show on the court where he won NBA Finals MVP in 2014 with the Spurs.

After losing 15 pounds, Leonard looked spry and had three thunderous dunks.

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"I'm feeling a lot lighter, moving a lot bit better out there," Leonard said. "I'm feeling pretty good. Played a few games in a row."

The 6-foot-7 forward was 13 for 18 from the field and 4 for 5 on 3-pointers while adding seven assists, four rebounds and two steals.

"He was great," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said. "He's one of the finest players in the league. We are talking about the very top of the list – he's with those guys."

Leonard scored 13 points in just under 3 1/2 minutes starting midway through the third quarter to give the Clippers a 93-90 lead. Leonard had three 3-pointers and a vicious left-handed dunk in the run.

San Antonio did not have an individual answer for Leonard but responded by shooting 57% from the field and 54% on 3-pointers to go along with 34 assists.

"We won this game tonight because we made shots," Leonard said. "They shot 57% and we shot 63. We definitely have to get better. We're not going to shoot 63% every night. We've got to make sure their percentages are a lot lower than that. We still need to improve. We've got a lot to improve on if we want to be a great team."

The Clippers set an opponent high with 41 points in the opening quarter, besting the mark they shared with 40 points against the Spurs in the opening quarter on Nov. 19. San Antonio responded by holding Los Angeles to 24 points in the second quarter.

"The team, I thought, was spectacular," Popovich said. "They never give in. They are playing more physically than they have all year. They are assisting, playing the right way. Those guys made shots down the stretch, and oftentimes, that's the difference. But I was really proud of our guys. They did a great job."

TIP-INS

Clippers: PG John Wall sat out with an abdominal strain and G Luke Kennard missed the game with a sore right calf. ... F Marcus Morris received a technical foul with 47 seconds remaining in the first half after continually talking to Sochan as the two stood across from each other at the free throw line. Morris' twin brother, Markieff, got into a skirmish with Sochan on Tuesday. Sochan tumbled to the court and took Morris with him after the Nets forward set a hard screen shortly after Sochan put three fingers in his face following a 3-pointer.

Spurs: San Antonio assistant coach Brett Brown missed the game due to "personal business," according to the team. ... The Spurs finished a four-game homestand at 1-3. ... San Antonio signed veteran center Gorgui Dieng to a second 10-day contract.

WELCOME BACK

Leonard was cheered by the Spurs fans for the first time since demanding a trade and leaving San Antonio in 2018.

Leonard was honored before the game with a video highlighting his seven seasons in San Antonio. There was a smattering of boos, but nothing to the level of jeers he received in previous appearances in San Antonio.

"It's been a long journey," Leonard said. "The fans are very competitive here. When I'm at the games you might hear boos, but if I'm walking on the street or going to restaurants, people come up to me and still tell me how much they love my game and like me as a person. So, I know it's just a competition once I'm here. I understand."

UP NEXT

Clippers: At Dallas on Sunday.

Spurs: At Portland on Monday.

Native Americans share trauma of Arizona boarding schools

By TERRY TANG The Associated Press

LAVEEN VILLAGE, Ariz. (AP) — During seventh grade at Phoenix Indian School, Pershlie Ami signed up to go on what the school called an "outing" — promoted as opportunities for Native American students to earn spending money off campus.

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They were opportunities — for cheap labor.

Ami said most people have no idea that the school staff would send students out to work, often doing menial tasks, for strangers whose backgrounds weren't checked.

"A family came and picked me up and took me to their home. The task that they wanted me to do was pick up dog poop in their house," Ami said during a listening session Friday in the Gila River Indian Community just south of Phoenix overseen by U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland.

The session is part of a yearlong "Road to Healing" tour for victims and survivors of abuse at government-backed boarding schools. It is the fourth stop for the nation's first and only Native American Cabinet secretary after previous stops in South Dakota, Oklahoma and Michigan.

Ami, who's Hopi, is now 67 and living in nearby Laveen. She still remembers vehemently refusing to clean the house — and the fallout.

"I got severely punished for not doing what that family had asked me to do. I was never allowed to go out on another outing," she said. "Then I started to wonder what happened to some of these kids that went out on these outings, that nobody ever followed up on them."

Ami was one of several people who spoke during Haaland's visit to Arizona before a large audience that included Gov. Katie Hobbs and Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego.

Several testimonies addressed issues in addition to abuse, such as losing one's culture and language. The session took place in the multipurpose room of Gila Crossing Community School, where artwork and banners reflected the heritage of the local tribe.

"This is one step among many that we will take to strengthen and rebuild the bonds with the Native communities that federal Indian boarding school policies set out to break," Haaland said before the session.

Starting with the Indian Civilization Act of 1819, the U.S. enacted laws and policies to establish and support the schools. The stated goal was to "civilize" Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians, which was often carried out through abusive practices.

In Arizona alone, there were 47 federal Indian boarding schools — and that number does not even include the religious and private institutions that received federal funding to run schools.

"My ancestors and many of yours endured the horrors of the Indian boarding school assimilation policies carried out by the same department I now lead," Haaland said. "This is the first time in history that a United States Cabinet secretary comes to the table with a shared trauma. That is not lost on me."

Haaland has prioritized publicly examining the trauma caused by these schools. In May, the Interior Department released a first-of-its-kind report pointing out 408 schools the federal government supported that stripped Native Americans of their cultures and identities. At least 500 children are known to have died at some of the schools. But when more research is done, that statistic is likely to rise.

A majority of the speakers were descendants of boarding school survivors. They shared how their parents had a hard time learning how to be good parents because they were separated from their own — some at a very young age. Ami, whose father also went to a boarding school, remembered how he would refer to himself as "just a dumb Indian."

"I think he did eventually get rid of that image of being 'a dumb Indian,'" Ami said. "But he never stopped using that phrase in reference to himself."

The vulnerability of victims has spurred tears at all of these sessions. However, Deborah Parker, chief executive of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition and a member of the Tulalip Tribes, said there's a feeling of hope, too.

"There's a sense of encouragement. Yes, we can finally tell our stories and maybe we can begin to heal," Parker said. "Those tears help cleanse emotions that we've been keeping inside of us for sometimes generations."

Congress is planning to reintroduce legislation to establish a boarding school "truth and healing commission," according to Parker. It would be similar to one established in Canada in 2008. If passed, it would have a broader scope than the Interior Department's investigation into federally run boarding schools and subpoena power.

Meanwhile, a second report is pending in the school investigation launched by Haaland, who is a member

of Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico. It will focus on burial sites, the schools' impact on Indigenous communities and also try to account for federal funds spent on the troubled program.

Despite tear gas, Peru protesters vow to keep demonstrating

By DANIEL POLITI and FRANKLIN BRICEÑO Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Peru's capital Friday and were met with volleys of tear gas for the second straight day, as demonstrators made clear they will keep up their mobilizations to demand the resignation of President Dina Boluarte.

Many of the protesters in Lima had arrived from remote Andean regions, where dozens have died amid unrest that has engulfed large portions of the country since Pedro Castillo, Peru's first leader from a rural Andean background, was impeached and imprisoned after he tried to dissolve Congress last month.

"Dina, resign already! What is that you want with our Peru?" said José Luis Ayma Cuentas, 29, who traveled about 20 hours to get to the country's capital from the southern Puno region, which has been the site of the deadliest state violence over the past month. "We're staying until she resigns, until the dissolution of Congress, until there are new elections, otherwise we aren't going anywhere."

Until recently, the protests had been mainly in Peru's southern region, with a total of 55 people killed and 700 injured in the unrest, largely in clashes with security forces.

Protesters now want Lima, home to around one-third of Peru's population of 34 million, to be the focal point of the demonstrations that began when Boluarte, who was then vice president, was sworn into office on Dec. 7 to replace Castillo. The protests sparked the worst political violence in the country has seen in more than two decades.

At the beginning of the Friday's protests, the demonstrators seemed more organized than the previous day and they took over key roads in downtown Lima waving flags while chanting, "The spilled blood will never be forgotten," "The people don't give up," and other slogans.

Police appeared more combative than the day before and after standing watch over protesters that had been blocked into downtown streets they started firing volleys of tear gas.

The firing of tear gas also appeared more indiscriminate. A group of protesters who were sitting in a plaza in front of the Supreme Court without causing a disturbance suddenly had to start running as approaching police fired round after round of tear gas that filled the area with smoke and a pungent smell permeated the air.

"I'm indignant, furious," said Maddai Pardo Quintana, 48, as she offered water mixed with baking soda to protesters to flush their eyes from the tear gas. "They want us to respect them but if they led by example and respected us, we'd also respect them more."

Pardo came to Lima to protest against Boluarte from the central province of Chanchamayo and vowed to stay in the capital until the president agrees to resign.

Anger at law enforcement was a constant throughout the march as demonstrators yelled "murderers" when they passed rows of police officers wearing helmets and holding up shields.

A few blocks away, Doris Pacori, 56, stood between police officers and protesters who had been blocked from reaching Congress.

"They are servants of the corrupt, cowards with them but abusive with the people," Pacori, who held a sign that read, "Dina murderer."

As night fell, protesters got locked into running battles with police while some demonstrators threw water bottles filled with rocks at officers.

Late Friday, Interior Minister Vicente Romero praised police action during the protests, saying that it "has been very professional."

Protesters were particularly angry at Boluarte for a defiant speech she gave Thursday night in which she accused protesters of fomenting violence, vowed to prosecute demonstrators and questioned where they received their financing.

"You want to break the rule of law, you want to generate chaos so that within that chaos and confusion

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you take power," Boluarte said Thursday night.

"The lady is very cold, she has no feelings, no compassion for other people," Pardo said.

Boluarte has said she supports a plan to hold fresh elections in 2024, two years ahead of schedule, but protesters unanimously say that isn't fast enough, particularly considering all the deaths in recent weeks.

Protests and clashes with law enforcement also took place in other parts of the country.

In Arequipa, Peru's second city, police clashed with protesters that tried to storm the airport.

Also in southern Peru, multinational firm Glencore decided to temporarily shut down its Antapaccay copper mine after protesters attacked the site.

Castillo, a political novice who lived in a two-story adobe home in the Andean highlands, eked out a narrow victory in elections in 2021 that rocked Peru's political establishment and laid bare the deep divisions between residents of the capital and the long-neglected countryside.

The AP Interview: Envoy says Taiwan learns from Ukraine war

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Taiwan has learned important lessons from Ukraine's war that would help it deter any attack by China or defend itself if invaded, the self-ruled island's top envoy to the U.S. said in an interview Friday with The Associated Press.

Among the lessons: Do more to prepare military reservists and also civilians for the kind of all-of-society fight that Ukrainians are waging against Russia.

"Everything we're doing now is to prevent the pain and suffering of the tragedy of Ukraine from being repeated in our scenario in Taiwan," said Bi-khim Hsiao, Taiwan's representative in Washington.

"So ultimately, we seek to deter the use of military force. But in a worst-case scenario, we understand that we have to be better prepared," Hsiao said.

Hsiao spoke at the quiet, more than 130-year-old hilltop mansion that Taiwan uses for official functions in Washington. She talked on a range of Taiwan-US military, diplomatic and trade relations issues shaped by intensifying rivalries with China.

No Taiwanese flag flew over the building, reflecting Taiwan's in-between status as a U.S. ally that nonetheless lacks full U.S. diplomatic recognition. The U.S. withdrew that in 1979, on the same day it recognized Beijing as the sole government of China.

The interview came after a year of higher tensions with China, including the Chinese launching ballistic missiles over Taiwan and temporarily suspending most dialogue with the U.S. after then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August.

Asked if new House Speaker Kevin McCarthy should make good on his earlier pledge to visit Taiwan as well, Hsiao said. "That will be his decision. But I think ultimately the people of Taiwan have welcomed visitors from around the world."

Beijing's leadership, she added, "has no right to decide or define how we engage with the world."

Taiwan, which split from the mainland in 1949 during a civil war, is claimed by China. The decades-old threat of invasion by China of the self-governed island has sharpened since China cut off communications with the island's government in 2016. That was after Taiwanese voters elected a government that Beijing suspected of wanting to take Taiwan from self-rule to full independence.

In Washington, Taiwan's self-rule is one issue that has strong support from both parties.

U.S. administrations for decades have maintained a policy of leaving unsaid whether the U.S. military would come to Taiwan's defense if China did invade. China's military shows of force after Pelosi's visit had some in Congress suggesting it was time for the U.S. to abandon that policy, known as "strategic ambiguity," and to instead make clear Americans would fight alongside Taiwan.

Asked about those calls Friday, Hsiao only praised the existing policy.

"It has preserved the status quo for decades, or I should say it has preserved peace," she said.

President Joe Biden has repeatedly volunteered in public comments that the U.S. would come to Taiwan's defense, only to have aides walk that back with assurances that strategic ambiguity still prevails.

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Meanwhile, after watching the Ukrainians' successful hard-scrabble defense against invading Russian forces, Taiwan realizes it needs to load up on Javelins, Stingers, HIMARS and other small, mobile weapons systems, Hsiao said. The Taiwanese and Americans have reached agreement on some of those, she said.

Some security think tanks accuse the U.S. — and the defense industry — of focusing too much of the nation's billions of dollars in arms deals with Taiwan on advanced, high-dollar aircraft and naval vessels. China's mightier military could be expected to destroy those big targets at the outset of any attack on Taiwan, some security analysts say.

Taiwan is pushing to make sure that a shift to grittier, lower-tech weapon supplies for Taiwanese ground forces "happens as soon as possible," Hsiao said. Even with the U.S. and other allies pouring billions of dollars worth of such weapons into Ukraine for the active fight there, straining global arms stocks, "we are assured by our friends in the United States that Taiwan is a very important priority," she said.

At home, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen announced last month the government was extending compulsory military service for men from four months to a year, and Taiwan is increasing spending on defense. Hsiao would not directly address a report by Nikkei Asia on Friday that U.S. National Guard members had begun work training in Taiwan, saying only that Taiwan was exploring ways to work with the U.S. Guard members to improve training.

Ukraine's experience has had lessons for the U.S. and other allies as well, she said, including the importance of a united allied stand behind threatened democracies.

"It's critical to send a consistent message to the authoritarian leaders that force is never an option ... force will be met by a strong international response, including consequences," Hsiao said.

Hsiao also spoke on the United States' push under the Biden administration to boost U.S. production of computer chips. Supply chain disruptions during the coronavirus pandemic have underscored semiconductors' crucial importance to the U.S. economy and military — and the extent of U.S. reliance on chip imports.

Greater U.S. production will push the nation into more direct trade competition with Taiwan, which is a global leader, especially for advanced semiconductors. Concern that China could interfere with semiconductor shipping through the Taiwan Strait has helped drive the United States' new production effort.

Hsiao pointed out that Taiwan's computer chip industry took decades to develop and expressed confidence it "will continue to be an indispensable and irreplaceable contributor to global supply chains in the decades to come."

She noted Taiwan's investment of \$40 billion in a new semiconductor plant in Arizona, a project big enough that Biden visited the site last month, and expressed frustration at what she called a continuing U.S. financial penalty for Taiwanese companies doing business in the United States.

The United States' diplomatic non-recognition of Taiwan as a country means that Taiwan — unlike China and other top U.S. trading partners — lacks a tax treaty with the U.S. and thus pays extra taxes.

Surmounting hurdles to fix that would make U.S.-Taiwan business investments "much more successful and sustainable in the long run," she said.

Chris Hipkins to be New Zealand's next prime minister

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Education Minister Chris Hipkins is set to become New Zealand's next prime minister after he was the only candidate to enter the contest Saturday to replace Jacinda Ardern.

Hipkins, 44, must still garner an endorsement Sunday from his Labour Party colleagues, but that is just a formality now. An official transfer of power will come in the days to follow.

"It's a big day for a boy from the Hutt," Hipkins said, referring to the Hutt Valley near Wellington where he grew up. "I'm really humbled and really proud to be taking this on. It is the biggest responsibility and the biggest privilege of my life."

Ardern shocked the nation of 5 million people on Thursday when she announced she was resigning after five-and-a-half years in the top role.

The lack of other candidates indicated party lawmakers had rallied behind Hipkins to avoid a drawn-out

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contest and any sign of disunity following Ardern's departure.

Hipkins will have only a little more than eight months in the role before contesting a general election. Opinion polls have indicated that Labour is trailing its main opponent, the conservative National Party.

Hipkins rose to public prominence during the coronavirus pandemic, when he took on a kind of crisis management role. But he and other liberals have long been in the shadow of Ardern, who became a global icon of the left and exemplified a new style of leadership.

Just 37 when she became leader, Ardern was praised around the world for her handling of the nation's worst-ever mass shooting and the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But she faced mounting political pressures at home and a level of vitriol from some that previous New Zealand leaders hadn't faced. Online, she was subject to physical threats and misogynistic rants.

"Our society could now usefully reflect on whether it wants to continue to tolerate the excessive polarization which is making politics an increasingly unattractive calling," wrote former Prime Minister Helen Clark.

Fighting back tears, Ardern told reporters on Thursday that she was leaving the position no later than Feb. 7.

"I know what this job takes, and I know that I no longer have enough in the tank to do it justice. It is that simple," she said.

Besides holding the education portfolio, Hipkins is also minister for police and the public service, and leader of the House. He is known as a political troubleshooter who has taken on a variety of roles to try to iron out problems created by other lawmakers.

But he's also committed some gaffes of his own, like when he told people during a virus lockdown that they could go outside and "spread their legs," a comment that drew plenty of mirth on the internet.

Hipkins drew a small crowd of clapping onlookers when he talked to reporters outside Parliament. He said he'd come back energized after a summer break, considered himself a hard worker and a straight shooter, and didn't intend to lose his trademark sense of humor in his new role.

He said he wouldn't be announcing changes to policy or ministerial roles before Sunday's vote, other than to say Grant Robertson would remain finance minister. Hipkins said he believed he could win the election and paid tribute to Ardern.

"Jacinda Ardern has been an incredible prime minister for New Zealand," Hipkins said. "She was the leader that we needed at the time that we needed it."

A lawmaker for 15 years, Hipkins is considered more centrist than Ardern and colleagues hope that he will appeal to a broad range of voters.

Among his biggest challenges during an election year will be convincing voters that his party is managing the economy well.

New Zealand's unemployment rate is relatively low at 3.3%, but inflation is high at 7.2%. New Zealand's Reserve Bank has hiked the benchmark interest rate to 4.25% as it tries to get inflation under control, and some economists are predicting the country will go into recession this year.

Illegal border crossings surge to highest of Biden's term

WASHINGTON (AP) — A surge in Cuban and Nicaraguan arrivals at the U.S. border with Mexico in December led to the highest number of illegal border crossings recorded during any month of Joe Biden's presidency, authorities said Friday.

The extraordinary influx came shortly before Biden introduced measures on Jan. 5 to deter Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans.

U.S. authorities stopped migrants 251,487 times along the Mexican border in December, up 7% from 234,896 times in November and up 40% from 179,253 times in December 2021, Customs and Border Protection said.

Cubans were stopped nearly 43,000 times in December, up 23% from November and more than quintuple the same period a year earlier. Nicaraguans were stopped more than 35,000 times, up 3% from November and more than double from December 2021.

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More migrants were also stopped from Ecuador and Peru.

The influx from Cuba and Nicaragua made El Paso, Texas, the busiest of the Border Patrol's nine sectors on the Mexican border for a third month in a row. The city was overwhelmed with migrants who were released to pursue their immigration cases in the U.S. in the weeks leading up to Biden's visit on Jan. 8, his first to the border as president.

The number of Venezuelan arrivals remained far below September highs, when the South American country was the second-highest nationality at the border after Mexicans. In October, the U.S. agreed to accept up to 24,000 Venezuelans on humanitarian parole, while Mexico agreed to take back the same number who entered the U.S. illegally and could be expelled under a pandemic-era rule to deny rights to seek asylum on grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Biden said this month that the U.S. would admit up to 30,000 people a month under humanitarian parole from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela, allowing them to live and work for two years if they apply online, pay airfare and find a financial sponsor. At the same time, Mexico agreed to take back the same number from those four countries who enter the U.S. illegally and can be removed under the pandemic-era rule known as Title 42.

Troy Miller, CBP's acting commissioner, signaled that the latest measures may be having the desired effect.

"Early data suggests the expanded measures for Cubans, Haitians, and Nicaraguans are having a similar impact, and we look forward to sharing the additional data in the next update," he said in a news release.

Arizona executions on hold amid review ordered by governor

By JACQUES BILLEAUD Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona's attorney general has put a hold on executions in the state until the completion of a review of death penalty protocols ordered by the new governor due to the state's history of mismanaging executions.

The review ordered Friday by Gov. Katie Hobbs, Arizona's first Democratic governor since 2009, came as the state's new Democratic attorney general, Kris Mayes, withdrew her Republican predecessor's request for a warrant to execute a convicted killer who initially asked to be executed but later backed out of that request. While Hobbs' order didn't declare a moratorium on the death penalty, Mayes will not seek court orders to execute prisoners while the review is underway, said Mayes spokesperson Richie Taylor. The review comes just days after the governor appointed Ryan Thornell, a prison official in Maine, as Arizona's new corrections director.

"With the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry now under new leadership, it's time to address the fact that this is a system that needs better oversight on numerous fronts," Hobbs said.

The review will examine, among other things, the state's procurement process for lethal injection drugs and lethal gas, execution procedures, the access of news organizations to executions and the training of staff to carry out executions.

Arizona, which currently has 110 prisoners on death row, carried out three executions last year after a nearly eight-year hiatus that was brought on by criticism that a 2014 execution was botched and because of difficulties obtaining execution drugs.

The state revealed in October 2020 that it had found a compounding pharmacist to prepare lethal injection drugs and announced in the spring of 2021 that it had finally obtained a supply of a lethal injection drug.

Since resuming executions, the state has been criticized for taking too long to insert an IV into a condemned prisoner's body in early May and for denying the Arizona Republic newspaper's request to witness the last three executions.

"These problems go back more than a decade," said Dale Baich, a former federal public defender who teaches death penalty law at Arizona State University. "The department of corrections, the governor and the attorney general (in past administrations) ignored the issues and refused to take a careful look at the problems. Gov. Hobbs and Attorney General Mayes should be commended for taking this matter seriously."

On Friday, Mayes withdrew a motion made by her Republican predecessor Mark Brnovich for a warrant

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for the execution of Aaron Gunches, who was first sentenced to death in 2008 for killing his girlfriend's ex-husband. Gunches earlier this month withdrew his request to be executed, citing recent executions he said amounted to "torture."

"These circumstances have now changed," Mayes said. "However, that is not the only reason I am now requesting the previous motion be withdrawn," Mayes said. "A thorough review of Arizona's protocols and processes governing capital punishment is needed."

The state's nearly eight-year hiatus came after a 2014 execution in which Joseph Wood was injected with 15 doses of a two-drug combination over two hours, leading the death-row prisoner to snort repeatedly and gasp more than 600 times before he died. His lawyers said the execution was botched.

In the past, Arizona and other state had struggled to buy execution drugs after U.S. and European pharmaceutical companies began blocking the use of their products in lethal injections.

In July 2015, the state tried to import sodium thiopental, which had been used to carry out executions but was no longer manufactured by companies approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The state never received the shipment because federal agents stopped it at the Phoenix airport, and the state lost an administrative challenge to the seizure.

Arizona is the only state to currently have a working gas chamber.

The last lethal gas execution in the United States was carried out in Arizona more than two decades ago. The state refurbished its gas chamber in late 2020. Corrections officials had declined to say why they restarted the gas chamber.

All three prisoners executed in Arizona last year declined lethal gas, leading them to be put to death by injection, the default execution method.

Colorado officials plead not guilty in Elijah McClain case

By COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

BRIGHTON, Colo. (AP) — A group of police officers and paramedics pleaded not guilty Friday to charges stemming from the role they are accused of playing in the death of a 23-year-old Black man who was forcibly restrained and injected with a powerful sedative called ketamine.

They were indicted by a state grand jury on manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide and other charges in 2021. Two years earlier, Elijah McClain died after being stopped while walking down the street in the Denver suburb of Aurora. A 911 caller had reported a man who seemed "sketchy."

An amended autopsy report released last year concluded that McClain would have most likely survived but for the administration of a dose of ketamine that was higher than recommended for someone his size. However, the manner of McClain's death was still listed as undetermined, not a homicide.

McClain's death fueled renewed scrutiny about the use of the ketamine and led Colorado's health department to issue a rule limiting when emergency workers can use it.

Experts in emergency medicine say prosecutions of paramedics are rare. However, in Illinois, two paramedics who strapped a Black man facedown on a stretcher after police requested an ambulance last month have been charged with murder.

Police officers Randy Roedema, Nathan Woodyard and Jason Rosenblatt, and fire department paramedic Jeremy Cooper and Lt. Peter Cichuniec all pleaded not guilty during a hearing in the Denver suburb of Brighton. They did not speak during the hearing except to acknowledge that they understood their rights.

Family members and other supporters packed the small courtroom during a hearing that mainly consisted of setting dates for trials and discussing motions hearings. A judge decided to schedule three separate trials, the first of which is set to begin in July for officers Roedema and Rosenblatt. Another trial for Cooper and Cichuniec is scheduled for August. Woodyard's trial is set for September.

A lawyer representing Woodyard, Megan Downing, declined to comment on the allegations, saying any defense she would offer would get into grand jury material, which remains sealed. Attorneys for the other defendants left court without making any comment.

A grand jury indicted them after Democratic Gov. Jared Polis ordered Attorney General Phil Weiser to

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open a criminal investigation into the case. There had been renewed national interest in McClain's death as protesters rallied over the killing of George Floyd in 2020. In 2021, the city of Aurora agreed to settle a lawsuit brought by McClain's parents for \$15 million.

McClain, a massage therapist, was unarmed and had not been accused of committing any crime. According to the indictment, he was walking home from a grocery store in 2019 after buying iced tea wearing a ski mask, months before the pandemic made face coverings common. The encounter quickly escalated, with McClain initially losing consciousness after a chokehold was applied by police. McClain, whom relatives say wore the mask because anemia made him cold, complained he couldn't breathe as three officers held him handcuffed on the ground, and he vomited several times.

Polis ordered the state investigation after a former district attorney said he could not file charges because an autopsy could not determine how McClain died. His death helped inspire a sweeping police accountability law in Colorado, a ban on chokeholds and restrictions on the use of the sedative ketamine.

The amended autopsy report released in September said McClain died as the result of complications of ketamine administration after being forcibly restrained. In it, Dr. Stephen Cina, a pathologist, said he could not rule out that changes in McClain's blood chemistry, like an increase in lactic acid, due to his exertion while being restrained by police contributed to his death but concluded there was no evidence that injuries inflicted by police caused his death. The indictment said McClain had low oxygen and too much acid in his blood.

Family and friends described McClain as a gentle and kind introvert who volunteered to play his violin to comfort cats at an animal shelter. His pleading words captured on police body camera video — "I'm just different" — painfully underscored his apparent confusion at what was happening.

Tax the rich? Liberals renew push for state wealth taxes

By SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

Supporters of taxes on the very rich contend that people are emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic with a bigger appetite for what they're calling "tax justice."

Bills announced Thursday in California, New York, Illinois, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, Washington and Connecticut vary in their approaches to hiking taxes, but all revolve around the idea that the richest Americans need to pay more.

All of the proposals face questionable prospects. Similar legislation has died in state legislatures and Congress. But the new push shows that the political left isn't ready to give up on the populist argument that government can and should be used as a tool for redistributing wealth.

"Under the pandemic, while people struggled to put food on the table, we saw billionaires double their wealth," said California Assembly Member Alex Lee, a Democrat.

The Tax Foundation, a conservative-leaning policy organization, called wealth taxes — which levy taxes not just on new income, but on a person's total assets — "economically destructive."

It also said in a statement that such taxes create "perverse incentives" for the rich to avoid taxes, including simply moving to states with a lower tax burden.

"Very few taxpayers would remit wealth taxes -- but many more would pay the price," the group said in a statement. Progressive Democrats, however, argue they are not seeing wealthy taxpayers leaving their states due to higher taxes.

California already taxes the wealthy more than most states. The top 1% of earners account for about half of the state's income tax collections. But this week, Lee proposed a "wealth tax," similar to one promoted for years by U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat.

It would impose an annual tax of 1.5% on assets of more than \$1 billion and 1% on assets of \$50 million or more. The new tax on wealth, not annual income, would affect an estimated 23,000 "ultra-millionaire" and 160 billionaire households, or the top 0.1% of California households, Lee said.

In Connecticut, progressive lawmakers are proposing more traditional hikes: a higher tax rate on capital gains earnings for wealthy taxpayers and higher personal income tax rates for millionaires,

"We need to ensure that the wealthiest in our state truly pay what they owe and not expect working

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families across our state to continue to subsidize their share," said state Rep. Kate Farrar, a deputy majority leader in the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives.

One obstacle to such proposals is that some states where the idea might be popular are currently running budget surpluses, meaning there is little pressure to raise revenue.

Connecticut is expected to end its fiscal year with a \$3 billion surplus. Hawaii is projecting a budget surplus of \$1.9 billion going into the new legislative session.

But Hawaii state Rep. Jeanne Kapela, a Democrat, said a proposal there to increase the state's capital gains tax is more about economic equity than raising money.

"If you look at our tax code now, it's really the definition of economic inequality," Kapela said.

The lowest-paid workers in many states often see a far bigger percentage of their income go to pay taxes every year than the very rich, particularly in states that don't have a graduated income tax.

Voters in Massachusetts, which had a flat income tax, approved an amendment to the state constitution in November that sets a higher rate for those earning more than \$1 million a year.

Despite optimism expressed by liberal lawmakers that 2023 could be the year, many of these proposals face an uphill battle, even in blue states with Democratic governors.

"This 'tax the rich' has been around before and it's present again. And quite frankly, it never got traction before and I seriously doubt there's an appetite for it now," said Gary Rose, professor of political science at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

A lot of people, he said, don't resent the rich as much as some progressive Democrats.

"I think if you polled the American people, a lot of people want to get rich themselves and it's part of, if you will, the American Dream," Rose said. "We've never really had in this country a tremendous appetite for taxing the rich because getting rich ... is really part of who we are and what separates this country from many Democratic socialist countries."

A wealth tax bill in California never even got a public hearing last year. Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat who was just elected to a second term in a landslide, has actively campaigned against efforts to increase taxes on the rich.

His opposition helped sink a 2022 ballot initiative that would have raised taxes on the rich to pay for electric vehicle charging stations and wildfire prevention.

In Connecticut, Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont, a multimillionaire, says he wants to focus his second term on reducing taxes rather than raising them.

Supreme Court: Justices interviewed as part of leak probe

By JESSICA GRESKO and MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Eight months, 126 formal interviews and a 23-page report later, the Supreme Court said it has failed to discover who leaked a draft of the court's opinion overturning abortion rights.

The report released by the court Thursday is the apparent culmination of an investigation ordered by Chief Justice John Roberts a day after the May leak of the draft to Politico. Notably the report did not indicate whether the justices themselves had been questioned. On Friday, seemingly in response to widespread questions from the media and legal community, the head of the investigation added in a statement that the court's nine justices had been interviewed as part of the probe and that nothing implicated them.

The leak touched off protests at justices' homes and raised concerns about their security. And it came more than a month before the final opinion by Justice Samuel Alito was released and the court formally announced it was overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

The report also offers a window into the court's internal processes. It acknowledges that the coronavirus pandemic, which expanded the ability of people to work from home, "as well as gaps in the Court's security policies, created an environment where it was too easy to remove sensitive information from the building and the Court's IT networks." The report recommends changes so that it's harder for a leak to happen in the future.

Some questions and answers about the report:

IF THE INVESTIGATION DIDN'T FIND THE LEAKER, WHAT DID IT FIND?

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Lax security and loose lips. Too many people have access to certain sensitive information, the report concluded, and the court's policies on information security are outdated. The court can't actively track, for example, who is handling and accessing highly sensitive information.

Beyond that, some people interviewed by federal investigators called in to help with the probe acknowledged they didn't scrupulously follow the court's confidentiality policies. In some cases, employees acknowledged "telling their spouses about the draft opinion or vote count," the report said.

The leak doesn't appear to have been the result of a hack, but the report said investigators could not rule out that the opinion was inadvertently disclosed, "for example, by being left in a public space either inside or outside the building."

HOW THOROUGH WAS THE INVESTIGATION?

Investigators conducted 126 formal interviews of 97 employees. They looked into connections between employees and reporters, including those at Politico. They looked at call logs of personal phones. They looked at printer logs. They even did a fingerprint analysis of "an item relevant to the investigation."

Every person who was interviewed signed a sworn statement that they were not the source of the leak. Lying about that could violate a federal law on false statements.

After all that, former Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, himself a onetime federal judge, was asked to assess the investigation. Chertoff described the investigation as "thorough" in a statement issued through the court.

The court did not respond to reporters' questions Thursday about whether the justices were interviewed. On Friday, the day after the report was released, Supreme Court Marshal Gail Curley who headed the investigation, said in a statement that she also spoke with each of the justices, who cooperated in the investigation. "I followed up on all credible leads, none of which implicated the Justices or their spouses," she wrote. She said she didn't believe it was necessary to ask the justices to sign sworn affidavits as others did.

WHAT WILL CHANGE AS A RESULT?

It seems clear the court will tighten its procedures, maybe upgrade equipment and likely do more training of personnel in response to the leak. But what it has done already or will do in the future, the court isn't saying. Investigators made a list of recommendations, but those weren't attached to the public version of the report to guard against "potential bad actors."

WHAT ABOUT SPECULATION OF WHO IT WAS?

After the leak, speculation swirled in Washington about who the source could be. Conservatives pointed fingers at the liberal side of the court, speculating that the leaker was someone upset about the outcome. Liberals suggested it could be someone on the conservative side of the court who wanted to ensure a wavering member of the five-justice majority didn't switch sides.

On social media, there was speculation that various law clerks could be the leaker because of their personal backgrounds, including connections to Politico and past writing. The report acknowledged investigators were watching.

"Investigators also assessed the wide array of public speculation, mostly on social media, about any individual who may have disclosed the document. Several law clerks were named in various posts. In their inquiries, the investigators found nothing to substantiate any of the social media allegations regarding the disclosure," the report said.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The report says investigators aren't quite done, but it suggests that any active investigation is winding down. "Investigators continue to review and process some electronic data that has been collected and a few other inquiries remain pending," they said. "To the extent that additional investigation yields new evidence or leads, the investigators will pursue them."

The final paragraph of the report said, "In time, continued investigation and analysis may produce additional leads that could identify the source of the disclosure."

Operative jumps from Haley team to Pence amid 2024 jostling

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — The executive director of former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley's issues advocacy group is leaving to help run similar efforts for former Vice President Mike Pence, a defection that comes as both former Trump administration officials consider 2024 Republican presidential bids.

Tim Chapman is taking over as senior adviser at Pence's Advancing American Freedom, according to a statement provided to The Associated Press on Friday.

"Tim Chapman is one of the brightest stars in the conservative movement, and we are so thrilled he's joining the team to advance the cause of American culture, American opportunity, and American leadership," Pence said in a statement.

The switch between camps comes as potential GOP White House contenders seek to build out their operations in preparation for the launch of campaigns against former President Donald Trump for the 2024 nomination. Haley and Pence, along with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and others, are among those considered likely to jump into the race.

Chapman, who previously served in several capacities for The Heritage Foundation and its political arm, will work with Advancing American Freedom executive director Paul Teller, a former Pence aide who also served as chief of staff to U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and as executive director of the U.S. House Republican Study Committee.

"I am grateful for my time working with Nikki Haley and her dedicated team," Chapman said in a statement. "Advancing American Freedom is one of the fastest growing and increasingly influential conservative groups in the nation, and I am thrilled to join the incredible team that is building AAF as a leader for common sense conservative policies that will help restore America."

In a statement to the AP, Betsy Ankney, executive director for Stand For America PAC, called Chapman "terrific" and said Haley's orbit was "happy he found a great spot to continue to advocate for conservative policy ideas."

Since 2020, Chapman had been serving as executive director of Stand for America, the advocacy nonprofit he helped create as a way for Haley to maintain visibility after her turns in elected and diplomatic office.

Although neither Pence nor Haley has made a 2024 campaign official, both have given signals they're inching closer to launching bids.

Pence has made numerous trips to early-voting states, including Haley's native South Carolina, where he's aimed to build support among the white evangelical voters critical to the state's GOP electorate. While heralding accomplishments of the Trump administration, including the appointment of three conservative U.S. Supreme Court justices, Pence has angled to garner support among those who may have backed the former president's policies but not his style.

Haley, who in 2021 told the AP that she "would not run if President Trump ran," has since shifted course. Asked Thursday why she is now considering a run in spite of her 2021 comments, Haley told Fox News that "a lot has changed," referencing, among other things, economic troubles for the country. She went on to say she felt she could be part of "new generational change," an indirect reference to Trump's advanced age.

Haley, seen as a rising GOP star during her tenure as South Carolina governor, stepped down after six years to serve as Trump's ambassador to the United Nations. Leaving that post after two years, Haley fueled speculation that she might either challenge Trump in 2020 or supplant Pence as his running mate, neither of which happened.

March for Life eyes Congress for post-Roe abortion limits

By ASHRAF KHALIL and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A half century after Roe v. Wade, March for Life supporters on Friday celebrated the Supreme Court's dismantling of that constitutional right to abortion and heralded the political struggle set loose by the court's decision. President Joe Biden pledged to do all in his limited power to restore core abortion rights.

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The first March for Life since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in June came with a new focus. Instead of concentrating their attention on the court, the marchers vowed to push for action from the building directly across the street: the U.S. Capitol.

Congress, movement leaders say, must be warned against making any attempt to curtail the multiple anti-abortion laws imposed last year in a dozen states.

Tens of thousands spread across a section of the National Mall for speeches, the Capitol Building in sight, then marched.

"For nearly 50 years, you have marched to proclaim the fundamental dignity of women, of their children and of life itself," Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch, whose office argued the case that overturned Roe v. Wade, told the crowd. "But this year is different."

Indeed, with the constitutional victory behind them and lawmakers now the ones to be persuaded, marchers took a new route along the western face of the Capitol, to their usual destination between that complex and the court.

"I am the post-Roe generation," read one sign. "Excommunicate Pro-Choice Catholics," said another. Banners proclaimed "Love Them Both," meaning mother and child.

Tammy Milligan came dressed as "patriot Wonder Woman" and stood out in the crowd. She said she never thought Roe v. Wade would be overruled in her lifetime, but the fight doesn't stop there. "We want it to be unthinkable for a woman to have an abortion," she said.

In a counter-protest outside the court building, 15 or so activists in favor of abortion rights held signs of their own: "Bans off our Bodies," "Mind your own uterus." They chanted, "Our bodies do not need advice from priests."

They were easily outnumbered and surrounded by March for Lifers, but interactions were civil and police did not separate the two camps.

Biden offered his counterpoint in a proclamation recognizing Sunday — Jan. 22 — as the 50th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. "Never before has the Court taken away a right so fundamental to Americans," his statement said. "In doing so, it put the health and lives of women across this Nation at risk."

He said he would continue to use his executive authority in any way he can to preserve abortion protections while urging Congress to enshrine such rights in law.

The crowd appeared smaller than in past years but bore multiple hallmarks of previous marches in the enthusiasm of the gathering, the large numbers of young people from Catholic schools around the country and plenty of banners representing different churches and religious orders.

"The struggle has changed," said Marion Landry, 68, who came from North Carolina with her husband, Arthur, 91, for the sixth time. "In some ways you don't have that central focus anymore. Now it's back to the states."

Mike Miller, 59, who came from Boston, has attended at least 15 such marches over the years. "There's still a lot of work to do," he said. "This is only one step and in the next step, education becomes the biggest thing."

From the stage, in a move to show that the anti-abortion movement crosses political parties and racial groups, Treneé McGee, a Black Democratic state representative from Connecticut, addressed the crowd.

"I stand in place of the pro-life Black women across the globe who are suffering in silence," she said. The crowd roared.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy offered support in a statement pledging that the new Republican majority will stand with abortion-rights opponents.

"While others raise their voices in rage and hatred, you march with prayers, goodwill, fellowship, compassion, and devotion in defense of the most defenseless in this country," McCarthy said.

Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, said the march is "a somber reminder of the millions of lives lost to abortion in the past 50 years, but also a celebration of how far we have come and where we as a movement need to focus our effort as we enter this new era in our quest to protect life."

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Some movement leaders also hope to plant seeds in Congress for a potential federal abortion restriction down the line. Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of SBA Pro-Life America, said she envisions an eventual "federal minimum standard" cut-off line such as 13 weeks of pregnancy after which abortion would not be permitted in any state. Dannenfelser's scenario would still leave individual states free to impose their own, stricter measures, including a total ban.

That last ambition is an admitted longshot since even if it passes the newly Republican-controlled House, it would most likely fail in the Democratic-held Senate.

"We know it's not going to happen this session, but this is the beginning," Dannenfelser said. "It's (Congress') responsibility to listen to the will of the people."

In the absence of *Roe v. Wade's* federal protections, abortion rights have become a state-by-state patchwork.

Since June, near-total bans on abortion have been implemented in Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia. Legal challenges are pending against several of those bans.

Elective abortions also are unavailable in Wisconsin, due to legal uncertainties faced by abortion clinics, and in North Dakota, where the lone clinic relocated to Minnesota.

Bans passed by lawmakers in Ohio, Indiana and Wyoming have been blocked by state courts while legal challenges are pending. And in South Carolina, the state Supreme Court on Jan. 5 struck down a ban on abortion after six weeks, ruling the restriction violates a state constitutional right to privacy.

But other states have witnessed unexpected pushback on the issue. Voters in Kansas and Kentucky rejected constitutional amendments that would have declared there is no right to abortion; Michigan voters approved an amendment enshrining the right to abortion in the state constitution.

Biden's administration has limited options after the court decision. Vice President Kamala Harris is to give a speech in Florida on Sunday to emphasize on the 50th anniversary that abortion rights remain a focus for the administration.

"We're going to see what else we can do," said White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. "But again, it's going to take congressional action to truly deal with this issue."

According to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll conducted in July, 53% of U.S. adults said they disapproved of the Supreme Court's repeal of *Roe*, while 30% approved. The same poll found that majorities think abortion should usually be illegal after the first trimester of pregnancy.

Anti-abortion activists also have their eye on the 2024 presidential elections and are essentially vetting prospective candidates over their views on the issue. Dannenfelser said she met recently with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a potential leading Republican candidate, and came away "incredibly impressed," but said it was still too early for her organization to endorse anyone.

She predicted that there will be some "fault lines" among Republican presidential contenders over abortion rights and protections, but warned that any candidate perceived as being soft on the issue will have "disqualified him or herself as a presidential candidate in our eyes, and having done so has very little chance of winning the nomination."

Prosecutors seek justice in Baldwin case, regardless of fame

By MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — Alec Baldwin faces two types of manslaughter charges in a reckoning on gun safety and the film industry, with two potential standards for proof and possible sanctions of up to five years in prison.

Prosecutors have vowed to file those charges before February against the 64-year-old actor and weapons specialist Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer on the set of the Western movie "Rust" in October 2021.

Santa Fe District Attorney Mary Carmack-Altwies says the case is about equal justice under the law and accountability in the death of Halyna Hutchins, regardless of the fame or fortune of those involved.

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She says the Ukrainian-born cinematographer's death while rehearsing a scene was tragic — and preventable.

Baldwin and Gutierrez-Reed maintain their innocence and have vowed to fight the charges, which were announced Thursday. Here is a look at the case:

THE CHARGES

One charge of involuntary manslaughter will require proof of negligence. It's punishable by up to 18 months in jail and a \$5,000 fine under New Mexico law.

The second manslaughter charge is for reckless disregard of safety "without due caution and circumspection." It carries a higher threshold of wrongdoing and includes a "firearm enhancement" that could result in a mandatory five years in prison because the offense was committed with a gun.

Prosecutors say a jury may ultimately decide which definition of manslaughter to pursue. But first a judge will have 60 days to weigh whether there is sufficient evidence to proceed.

Santa Fe District Defender Julie Ball says initial evidence of probable cause is typically weighed in favor of prosecutors, using a lower burden of proof than later at trial.

Involuntary manslaughter can involve a killing that happens while a defendant is doing something that is lawful but dangerous.

THE DEFENSE AND THE PROSECUTION

Baldwin has said he had no reason to believe there was a live bullet in the gun he discharged.

That defense is complicated by his role as both lead actor and co-producer on "Rust." State workplace safety regulators have fined Rust Movie Productions based on a string of safety failures, including testimony that production managers took limited or no action to address two misfires of blank ammunition on the set prior to the shooting.

Defense attorneys also maintain the innocence of Gutierrez-Reed, the daughter of veteran sharpshooter and film consultant Thell Reed. Gutierrez-Reed was hired at age 24, with limited prior experience on a handful of films, to supervise weapons, ammunition and training on "Rust."

Carmack-Altwies says a movie set armorer has the responsibility to ensure ammunition and guns are handled safely and has the authority to halt rehearsals or filming at any time when concerns arise.

The district attorney alleges that Gutierrez-Reed without noticing somehow loaded a bullet into the gun that killed Hutchins and should have noticed the difference between a live and a dummy round.

Dummy rounds typically rattle when shaken — the sound of a BB inside — and have a dimpled base or other possible markings. Blanks contain a charge but have no slug or bullet at the tip.

At the same time, New Mexico workplace safety regulators say "Rust" managers limited Gutierrez-Reed's ability to require safety and weapons training for people including Baldwin, and that a request for more training was rebuffed. Rust Movie Productions disputes the findings and sanctions.

THE REHEARSAL

The fatal shot was fired at a ranch on the outskirts of Santa Fe shortly after a lunch break, as Baldwin gathered inside a clapboard chapel with a dozen cast and crew members — the director, a scriptwriter, lighting and sound technicians, a safety coordinator and Hutchins — to rehearse a scene in which Baldwin draws a pistol from across his waist.

Law enforcement interviews indicate that Gutierrez-Reed remained outside.

Authorities say Baldwin was pointing the gun at Hutchins when he fired it, striking her in the chest and hitting director Joel Souza in the shoulder.

No movie cameras were filming at the time, but lapel camera video from law enforcement officers shows a chaotic aftermath as Hutchins slips in and out of consciousness and an evacuation helicopter arrives, to no avail.

The assistant director who handed Baldwin the gun, David Halls, has agreed to plead guilty to negligent

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use of a deadly weapon. It's unclear if he has agreed to testify in court.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Defense attorney Luke Nikas says Baldwin relied on professionals who assured him the gun did not have live rounds. The actor has sought to clear his name by suing people involved in handling and supplying the weapon.

In that lawsuit, Baldwin says that while working on camera angles with Hutchins, he pointed the gun in her direction and pulled back and released the hammer of the weapon, and it discharged.

Prosecutors say they will rely on an FBI analysis that shows the gun would not have gone off without the trigger being pulled. They say it was incumbent on Baldwin to know the gun and its ammunition and to handle them safely.

LIVE ROUNDS

A yearlong investigation by Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza did not establish how live ammunition wound up on the film set, something that industry experts say should never happen.

Investigators initially found 500 rounds — a mix of blanks, dummies and what appeared to be live bullets.

Carmack Altwies says her team is unlikely to resolve how they got there — and that she isn't that interested in doing so. For her the important matter is that nobody detected the live rounds and one was allowed to be loaded into the gun.

Rally for tech stocks helps soften Wall Street's rough week

By STAN CHOE and ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writers

A rough week on Wall Street dominated by worries about a weakening economy ended Friday with a broad rally that gave the market its best day in two weeks.

The S&P 500 rose 1.9%. Despite the gains, the benchmark index still ended with its first weekly loss in the last three. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1% and the Nasdaq composite closed 2.7% higher.

Technology and communication services stocks powered much of the gains as investors cheered another big quarterly surge in Netflix's subscribers. Remarks from a Federal Reserve official also helped build hope among investors that the central bank may decide to slow its pace of interest rate hikes as soon as next month.

The major indexes started the week in the red largely because of worries that the economy may not be able to avoid a scarring recession. Several reports on the economy came in weaker than expected, as the full weight of the Federal Reserve's hikes to interest rates last year start to make their way through the system.

Not long ago, bad news on the economy was often perversely good news for Wall Street. That's because investors took it to mean the Fed may ease up on its rate hikes. But bad news on the economy is increasingly becoming bad news for Wall Street, too, which is worrying more about the prospects of a serious recession.

Making things more complicated, several Fed officials through the week kept pounding the message that they'll likely hike rates further and then hold them there a while to make sure the nation's high inflation is really crushed. Even though inflation has begun to slow, upward pressure remains on it from a still-solid U.S. jobs market and other factors.

Many investors on Wall Street came into this week already forecasting a modest or short recession, but they also were hoping rate cuts by the Fed later this year could mean a rebound for markets. This week's sour economic data and comments from central bankers threaten such forecasts.

But on Friday, Fed Gov. Christopher Waller said he favors just a quarter-point hike on Feb. 1, when the central bank gives its next interest rate policy update. Waller also said that rates are already high enough to be slowing the economy. The remarks could have helped calm rising-rate worries in the market.

"It's important when you hear Federal Reserve members endorsing that," said Quincy Krosby, chief

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equity strategist for LPL Financial.

Gains for tech-oriented stocks accounted for a big share of the S&P 500's rally Friday. Google's parent company said it was cutting costs by laying off 12,000 workers, and Netflix reported a surge in its number of subscribers.

Netflix's surprising report late Thursday helped set the stage for Friday's rally, because the market had feared the streaming service's latest results would be disappointing and fuel worries about weaker earnings overall, said Jay Hatfield, CEO of Infrastructure Capital Advisors.

"When they started rocketing, then all the Nasdaq started moving, and that moves the S&P and everything else follows," Hatfield said.

Alphabet rose 5.3% after becoming the latest Big Tech company to acknowledge it expanded too quickly in recent years amid a boom created by the pandemic. Netflix jumped 8.5%.

Cruise lines also notched gains. Carnival rose 3.5%, Norwegian Cruise Lines climbed 4.5% and Royal Caribbean added 3.6%.

Also influencing the market on Friday: the expiration of \$797 billion in stock-option contracts. That's the largest amount for single stock options since January 2022 and the fourth-largest on record, according to Goldman Sachs.

Treasury yields mostly rose, clawing back drops from earlier in the week driven by worries about a weakening economy. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans, rose to 3.48% from 3.40% late Thursday.

The two-year yield, which tends to more closely track expectations for Fed action, rose to 4.19% from 4.13%.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 73.76 points to 3,972.61. The Dow gained 330.93 points to 33,375.49. The Nasdaq added 288.17 points to close at 11,140.43.

Small company stocks also notched solid gains. The Russell 2000 index rose 30.99 points, or 1.7%, to finish at 1,867.34.

Stock markets overseas mostly made modest gains.

The Nikkei 225 added 0.6% after Japan reported that its consumer inflation rate hit 4% in December, its highest level in 41 years. The high reading may add to pressures on the Bank of Japan to alter its longstanding policy of keeping its key interest rate at an ultra-low level of minus 0.1%. But economists expect price pressures to ease in coming months as inflation elsewhere declines.

Defense chiefs fail to resolve dispute on tanks for Ukraine

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany (AP) — Ukraine will have to wait longer to find out if it will get advanced German-made battle tanks.

A dispute over sending the tanks from Western allies to help Ukraine against Russia's invasion played out both in public and private on Friday, as more than 50 defense leaders meeting in Germany failed to hammer out an agreement — stalled by Berlin's hesitation.

Failure to reach agreement on what has become an urgent request from Ukrainian leaders largely overshadowed commitments from a number of nations — including the U.S. — to send billions of dollars in equipment and weapons to the war effort.

While U.S. and NATO leaders denied any dissension in the ranks and praised Germany for its widespread weapons and training contributions to Ukraine, a smaller group of leaders met privately with the Germans to try to find common ground. They were unable to forge a consensus on sending the German-made Leopard tanks.

Polish Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak said Friday that 15 countries that have the Leopards discussed the issue but no decisions were made. He called the meeting a "good discussion among allies" and said the matter would be discussed again at future talks.

Germany would need to agree for the tanks to be given to Ukraine, which is not a member of NATO.

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Despite pleas from Ukrainian officials, Germany has so far resisted mounting pressure to quickly supply Leopard 2 tanks to Kyiv, or at least clear the way for other countries, such as Poland, to deliver them from their own stocks.

Asked at the close of the Friday meeting whether Germany was "doing enough," U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin responded, "Yes, but we can all do more."

"They are a reliable ally and they've been that way for for a very, very long time," he said. "And I truly believe that they'll continue to be a reliable ally going forward."

Austin also downplayed the immediate importance of tanks, noting that the U.S. Stryker combat vehicles and Bradley armored vehicles that are being sent would give Ukraine new capabilities in the war. "This isn't really about one single platform," he said.

The defense leaders heard an impassioned plea for more military aid from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Speaking via video link, he told the gathering that "terror does not allow for discussion." He said "the war started by Russia does not allow delays."

Germany acknowledged there had been no resolution. But, speaking to reporters outside the conference hall, Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said, "We will make our decisions as soon as possible."

He said he had ordered the ministry to look into Germany's tank stocks so he can be prepared for a possible green light and be able to "act immediately." Pistorius added that Germany will "balance all the pros and contras before we decide things like that. ... I am very sure that there will be a decision in the short term but ... I don't know how the decision will look."

The issue, however, has grown increasingly complicated.

The U.S. has resisted providing its own M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine, citing extensive and complex maintenance and logistical challenges with the high-tech vehicles. Washington believes it would be more productive to send German Leopards since many allies have them and Ukrainian troops would need less training than on the more difficult Abrams.

U.S. and German officials have given mixed signals about whether the U.S. and German decisions are linked.

A U.S. official familiar with White House thinking said Germany has expressed hesitance to providing its tanks unless the U.S. sends Abrams. The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private Biden administration deliberations, added that there was some bewilderment in the administration over the German position, since Britain, another NATO ally, has already agreed to provide Challenger 2 tanks.

Steffen Hebestreit, a spokesman for the German government, denied that Berlin has demanded that the U.S. supply Abrams tanks alongside any shipment of Leopards.

Meanwhile, a Kremlin spokesman said deployment of Western tanks would trigger "unambiguously negative" consequences.

"All these tanks will require both maintenance and repairs, and so on, so (sending them) will add to Ukraine's problems, but will not change anything with regard to the Russian side achieving its goals," spokesman Dmitry Peskov said at a media briefing.

Austin and U.S. Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, laid out the latest massive package of aid the U.S. is sending, which totals \$2.5 billion and includes Stryker armored vehicles for the first time. It also will provide eight air defense systems, 350 Humvees, 53 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, more than 100,000 rounds of artillery ammunition and rockets, and missiles for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System.

Other pledges announced ahead of the Ramstein meeting included S-60 anti-aircraft guns from Poland with 70,000 rounds of ammunition, additional Stinger air-defense systems and two M-17 helicopters from Latvia, and two Russian-made Mi-8 helicopters and dozens of L-70 anti-aircraft guns with ammunition from Lithuania.

Germany's Pistorius, who took office Thursday, said that opinions among allies were mixed on the tank issue, and added that "the impression that has occasionally arisen that there is a united coalition and Germany is standing in the way is wrong."

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Milley told reporters traveling with him this week that new U.S. training of Ukrainian troops, combined with an array of new weapons and armored vehicles, will be key to helping the country's forces take back territory that has been captured by Russia in the nearly 11-month-old war.

The influx of new weapons, tanks and armored carriers comes as Ukraine faces intense combat in the country's east around the city of Bakhmut and the nearby salt mining town of Soledar. The battles are expected to intensify in the spring.

Milley said Friday that the number of Russian dead and wounded is now "significantly over" 100,000 people, a figure he gave in November.

"This is a very, very bloody war and there's significant casualties on both sides," he said. "Sooner or later, this is going to have to get to a negotiating table at some point in order to bring this to a conclusion."

Prosecutor suspended by DeSantis loses bid to get job back

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A federal judge ruled Friday that Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis violated the First Amendment and the Florida Constitution by removing an elected state prosecutor, but that the federal courts lack the power to reinstate him.

In an order dismissing the case, U.S. District Judge Robert Hinkle wrote that federal law prevents him from returning elected prosecutor Andrew Warren to office in a lawsuit that centered on state law.

DeSantis suspended Warren last year over the elected prosecutor's signing of statements that said he would not pursue criminal charges against seekers or providers of abortion or gender transition treatments, as well as policies about not charging people with some minor crimes.

Warren — a twice-elected, Democratic state attorney in Hillsborough County, which includes Tampa — sued the governor in federal court to get his job back.

"The idea that a governor can break federal and state law to suspend an elected official should send shivers down the spine of anyone who cares about free speech, the integrity of our elections or the rule of law," Warren said at a brief press conference Friday, before telling reporters "This is not over."

In testimony, Warren argued that he was suspended over his personal political positions on abortion and transgender issues. He said his office applied prosecutorial discretion over whether to bring charges in all cases, considering public safety and other matters.

Judge Hinkle's decision largely sides with Warren's arguments but finds that the case is effectively a state matter that cannot be resolved by a federal judge.

"Florida Governor Ron DeSantis suspended elected State Attorney Andrew H. Warren, ostensibly on the ground that Mr. Warren had blanket policies not to prosecute certain kinds of cases. The allegation was false," Hinkle wrote. "Mr. Warren's well established policy, followed in every case by every prosecutor in the office, was to exercise prosecutorial discretion at every stage of every case."

He added: "But the Eleventh Amendment prohibits a federal court from awarding declaratory or injunctive relief of the kind at issue against a state official based only on a violation of state law."

DeSantis' office did not immediately return an emailed request for comment.

The governor had accused Warren of incompetence and neglect of duty, arguing that the prosecutor was picking and choosing which laws to enforce, citing in his executive order the non-prosecution of crimes such as "trespassing at a business location, disorderly conduct, disorderly intoxication, and prostitution."

DeSantis' executive order also cited Warren's endorsement of statements from prosecutors across the country pledging to not bring criminal charges against people seeking, providing or supporting abortion access — and opposed the criminalization of gender transition treatments.

Florida has a 15-week abortion ban that took effect last year. The state does not have a law criminalizing gender transition treatments. Warren said his office had not received any criminal referrals related to the new abortion law or gender transition treatments.

The suspension positioned DeSantis, a potential 2024 GOP presidential candidate, at the forefront of a wave of Republican opposition to progressive prosecutors who exercise discretion over whether to charge

people with what they deem to be low-level offenses.

Rare attack in Alaska renews interest in polar bear patrols

By GENE JOHNSON and MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — For isolated communities at the top of the world, keeping the planet's largest land predators -- polar bears -- out of town is key to coexistence.

That can mean patrolling for the animals by snowmobile or four-wheeler, shooing them away with spotlights or a revved engine, or hazing them with beanbag shotguns. In one Canadian town, polar bears that can't be scared off are kept in an air-conditioned "bear jail" until they can be flown out onto the sea ice. Such bear patrols have long succeeded in reducing conflict.

But this week, a polar bear attack killed a mother and her 1-year-old son in Wales, a tiny, remote Alaska whaling village whose bear patrol had lapsed. The incident — the first fatal polar bear attack in Alaska in 30 years — underscored the risks of living alongside the creatures, which can weigh more than 1,700 pounds (771 kg).

While it's not clear why the bear attacked, and while no patrol can prevent all troublesome encounters between bears and people, the mauling has renewed interest in such programs.

"There's absolutely discussion now in Wales, saying, 'Hey, maybe things have changed to the point that we need this, and how do we do that?'" said Susan Nedza, the chief administrator for the Bering Strait School District.

Polar bear attacks are extremely rare. But as climate change reduces the amount of Arctic ice, forcing the bears to spend more time on land, the number of encounters between people and bears is on the rise, researchers say. Raising awareness and improving ways to keep both bears and people safe has become imperative.

In northeastern Russia, patrollers have planted walrus carcasses far from villages to lure the bears away. The patrols were increased in 2019 when about 60 polar bears descended on Ryrkaypiy in Russia's remote Chukotka region, forcing the cancellation of all public events.

In Arviat, a hamlet on the Hudson Bay in northern Canada, a bear patrol program was credited with dramatically reducing the number of bears killed in defense of life or property, from about eight per year before it began in 2010 to one per year afterward.

Another Hudson Bay town — Churchill, in northeastern Manitoba — has had a bear alert program for decades and has turned the animals into a tourist attraction. There, wildlife agents and police patrol by helicopter and by ground to protect trick-or-treaters on Halloween. Problem bears are captured and kept in an air-conditioned "bear jail" until the ice freezes up and they can be transported out to where they can find natural prey such as seals.

Another successful model is among the coastal communities of the North Slope, where Alaska meets the Arctic Ocean; tribes there have traditionally hunted the bears, along with whales and seals. It's not uncommon to see dozens of bears on the outskirts of some of those villages, depending on the time of year and ice conditions.

In the early 1990s, scores of polar bears massed on the shore of Utqiagvik, formerly known as Barrow, the northernmost community in the U.S. The village elders gathered: The school year was approaching, and something had to be done.

On their advice, the town put together patrols to try to keep the polar bears out.

"We went on shifts, we used whatever we could use, a snow machine or a truck," recalled Billy Adams, an employee of the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management who still sometimes patrols for bears. "It's all about keeping the people and the bears safe."

The goal is to keep an eye out for bears, respond to reported sightings, and shoo them away as gently as possible. Sometimes that means just revving the engine of a snowmobile, truck or four-wheeler, or shining a spotlight at them; other times it can escalate to the use of beanbags or "cracker shells," like firecrackers fired from a shotgun, to harass the bears, said Taquilik Hepa, director of the North Slope

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Borough Department of Wildlife Management in Alaska.

The North Slope has patrols on standby in case bears come close; three villages have active patrols now, Hepa said.

In Kaktovik in 2014, a patroller shooed away a polar bear that had gotten into the entryway of an 81-year-old woman's home, where it was feeding on a drum of seal oil. The woman had hidden inside and was unharmed.

The North Slope Borough doesn't maintain a budget for the program, but supports it by providing fuel or equipment. When available, grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service help offset the costs, which can include pay for patrollers.

Polar bears appear less frequently in Wales, a community that is the westernmost point on the North American mainland — just 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Russia across the Bering Strait. Wales is home to about 150 people, almost all of them Inupiat. It's accessible by plane and boat, including barges that deliver household goods. Winter trails provide snowmobile access to other communities and subsistence hunting grounds.

Wales began a polar bear patrol in 2014 with the help of the World Wildlife Fund, which has supported the creation of several such programs in far northern communities across the globe. But the local program became inactive due to a confluence of factors — including the COVID-19 pandemic, the relative lack of bears and the recent death of its leader, Clyde Oxereok.

The community also has fewer financial resources than some of its counterparts in the North Slope, where the oil industry has buoyed the economy.

Even if a patrol had been active, though, it's not clear it could have prevented Tuesday's attack. It occurred early in the afternoon — not typically a risky time for bear encounters — and came amid a near whiteout, with extremely poor visibility.

Authorities investigating the mauling said they intend "to learn from this tragedy and determine what future measures we and our communities can take to prevent future fatal human-bear encounters," according to a joint statement released Thursday by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Alaska Nannut Co-management Council, which represents 15 Alaska Native tribes that have traditionally hunted polar bears.

Chrissy Friberg, a traveling optician from Washington state, spent a couple days in Wales just before the attack, holding a clinic for the villagers. She said people didn't seem overly concerned about the risk of bears.

"We were outside, walking around," she said. "There were no threats or warnings."

Confidential document reveals key human role in gunshot tech

By GARANCE BURKE and MICHAEL TARM Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — In more than 140 cities across the United States, ShotSpotter's artificial intelligence algorithm and intricate network of microphones evaluate hundreds of thousands of sounds a year to determine if they are gunfire, generating data now being used in criminal cases nationwide.

But a confidential ShotSpotter document obtained by The Associated Press outlines something the company doesn't always tout about its "precision policing system" — that human employees can quickly overrule and reverse the algorithm's determinations, and are given broad discretion to decide if a sound is a gunshot, fireworks, thunder or something else.

Such reversals happen 10% of the time by a 2021 company account, which experts say could bring subjectivity into increasingly consequential decisions and conflict with one of the reasons AI is used in law-enforcement tools in the first place -- to lessen the role of all-too-fallible humans.

"I've listened to a lot of gunshot recordings — and it is not easy to do," said Robert Maher, a leading national authority on gunshot detection at Montana State University who reviewed the ShotSpotter document. "Sometimes it is obviously a gunshot. Sometimes it is just a ping, ping, ping. ... and you can convince yourself it is a gunshot."

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Marked "WARNING: CONFIDENTIAL," the 19-page operations document spells out how employees in ShotSpotter's review centers should listen to recordings and assess the algorithm's finding of likely gunfire based upon a series of factors that may require judgment calls, including whether the sound has the cadence of gunfire, whether the audio pattern looks like "a sideways Christmas tree" and if there is "100% certainty of gunfire in reviewer's mind."

ShotSpotter said in a statement to the AP that the human role is a positive check on the algorithm and the "plain-language" document reflects the high standards of accuracy its reviewers must meet.

"Our data, based on the review of millions of incidents, proves that human review adds value, accuracy and consistency to a review process that our customers—and many gunshot victims—depend on," said Tom Chittum, the company's vice president of analytics and forensic services.

Chittum added that the company's expert witnesses have testified in 250 court cases in 22 states, and that its "97% aggregate accuracy rate for real-time detections across all customers" has been verified by an analytics firm the company commissioned.

Another part of the document underscores ShotSpotter's longstanding emphasis on speed and decisiveness, and its commitment to classify sounds in less than a minute and alert local police and 911 dispatchers so they can send officers to the scene.

Titled "Adopting a New York State of Mind," it refers to New York Police Department's request of ShotSpotter to avoid posting alerts of sounds as "probable gunfire" — only definitive classifications as gunfire or non-gunfire.

"End result: It trains the reviewer to be decisive and accurate in their classification and attempts to remove a doubtful publication," the document reads.

Experts say such guidance under tight time pressure could encourage ShotSpotter reviewers to err in favor of categorizing a sound as a gunshot, even if some evidence for it falls short, potentially boosting the numbers of false positives.

"You're not giving your humans much time," said Geoffrey Morrison, a voice-recognition scientist based in Britain who specializes in forensics processes. "And when humans are under great pressure, the possibility of mistakes is higher."

ShotSpotter says it published 291,726 gunfire alerts to clients in 2021. That same year, in comments to AP appended to a previous story, ShotSpotter said more than 90% of the time its human reviewers agreed with the machine classification but the company invested in its team of reviewers "for the 10% of the time where they disagree with the machine." ShotSpotter did not respond to questions on whether that ratio still holds true.

ShotSpotter's operations document, which the company argued in court for more than a year was a trade secret, was recently released from a protective order in a Chicago court case in which police and prosecutors used ShotSpotter data as evidence in charging a Chicago grandfather with murder in 2020 for allegedly shooting a man inside his car. Michael Williams spent nearly a year in jail before a judge dismissed the case because of insufficient evidence.

Evidence in Williams' pretrial hearings showed ShotSpotter's algorithm initially classified a noise picked up by microphones as a firecracker, making that determination with 98% confidence. But a ShotSpotter reviewer who assessed the sound quickly relabeled it as a gunshot.

The Cook County Public Defender's Office says the operations document was the only paperwork ShotSpotter sent in response to multiple subpoenas for any guidelines, manuals or other scientific protocols. The publicly traded company has long resisted calls to open its operations to independent scientific scrutiny.

Fremont, California-based ShotSpotter acknowledged to AP it has other "comprehensive training and operational materials" but deems them "confidential and trade secret."

ShotSpotter installed its first sensors in Redwood City, California, in 1996, and for years relied solely on local 911 dispatchers and police to review each potential gunshot until adding its own human reviewers in 2011.

Paul Greene, a ShotSpotter employee who testifies frequently about the system, explained in a 2013 evidentiary hearing that staff reviewers addressed issues with a system that "has been known from time

to time to give false positives" because "it doesn't have an ear to listen."

"Classification is the hardest element of the process," Greene said in the hearing. "Simply because we do not have ... control over the environment in which the shots are fired."

Greene added that the company likes to hire ex-military and former police officers familiar with firearms, as well as musicians because they "tend to have a more developed ear." Their training includes listening to hundreds of audio samples of gunfire and even visits to rifle ranges to familiarize themselves with the characteristics of gun blasts.

As cities have weighed the system's promise against its price tag -- which can reach \$95,000 per square mile per year -- company employees have explained in detail how its acoustic sensors on utility poles and light posts pick up loud pops, booms or bangs and then filter the sounds through an algorithm that automatically classifies whether they're gunfire or something else.

But until now, little has been known about the next step: how ShotSpotter's human reviewers in Washington, D.C., and the San Francisco Bay area decide what is a gunshot versus any other noise, 24 hours a day.

"Listening to the audio downloads are important," according to the document written by David Valdez, a former police officer and now-retired supervisor of one of ShotSpotter's review centers. "Sometimes the audio is compelling for gunfire that they may override all other characteristics."

One part of the decision-making that has changed since the document was written in 2021 is whether reviewers can consider if the algorithm had a "high confidence" the sound was a gunshot. ShotSpotter said the company stopped showing the algorithm's confidence rating to reviewers in June 2022 "to prioritize other elements that are more highly correlated to accurate human-trained assessment."

ShotSpotter CEO Ralph Clark has said that the system's machine classifications are improved by its "real-world feedback loops from humans."

However, a recent study found humans tend to overestimate their abilities to identify sounds.

The 2022 study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Forensic Science International* looked at how well human listeners identified voices compared to voice-recognition tools. It found all the human listeners performed worse than the voice system alone, saying the findings should lead to the elimination of human listeners in court cases whenever possible.

"Would that be the case with ShotSpotter? Would the ShotSpotter system plus the reviewer outperform the system alone?" asked Morrison, who was one of seven researchers who conducted the study.

"I don't know. But ShotSpotter should do validation to demonstrate that."

3 active-duty Marines charged in Jan. 6 Capitol riot

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

A Marine who said he was waiting for "Civil war 2" and two other active-duty members of the military have been charged with participating in the riot at the U.S. Capitol, authorities said in newly filed court papers.

Micah Coomer, Joshua Abate and Dodge Dale Hellonen were arrested this week on misdemeanor charges after their fellow Marines helped investigators identify them in footage among the pro-Trump mob on Jan. 6, 2021, according to court papers.

Dozens of people charged in the riot have military backgrounds, but these three are among only a handful on active duty. A Marine Corps officer seen on camera scuffling with police and helping other members of the mob force their way into the Capitol was charged in 2021.

No defense lawyers for the men were listed in the court docket, so it was not immediately clear whether they have attorneys to comment on their behalf.

Their service records show they are all active-duty Marines. Maj. Kevin Stephensen, a spokesman for the Marine Corps, said it is aware of the allegations and "is fully cooperating with appropriate authorities in support of the investigation."

Coomer, of Indiana, is stationed in Southern California's Camp Pendleton; Abate, of Virginia, is at Fort Meade in Maryland; and Hellonen, of Michigan, is stationed at North Carolina's Camp Lejeune, according to the Marines.

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The men spent about 52 minutes inside the Capitol, authorities say. At one point while in the rotunda, they put a red "Make American Great Again" hat on a statue to take pictures with it, according to court papers. Hellonen was carrying a "Don't Tread on Me" flag, authorities said.

Coomer posted photos on Instagram that appeared to be taken inside the Capitol with the caption "Glad to be apart of history," according to court documents. Days after the 2020 election, he and another person discussed over Instagram message how he believed the election was rigged.

And in late January 2021, he told another person in a message that "everything in this country is corrupt." "We honestly need a fresh restart. I'm waiting for the boogaloo," Coomer wrote in a message detailed in court documents. When asked by the person what's "a boogaloo," Coomer responded "Civil war 2," authorities said.

The boogaloo is an anti-government, pro-gun extremist movement. Its name is a reference to a slang term for a sequel — in this case, a second U.S. civil war. The movement is named after "Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo," a 1984 sequel to a movie about breakdancing.

Supporters have shown up at protests over COVID-19 lockdown orders and protests over racial injustice, carrying rifles and wearing tactical gear over Hawaiian shirts. The shirts are a reference to "big luau," a riff on the term "boogaloo" sometimes favored by group members.

During an interview related to his security clearance in June, Abate acknowledged walking through the Capitol with two "buddies," investigators said. Abate said they "walked around and tried not to get hit with tear gas."

The Pentagon said Abate was assigned to the Marine Cryptologic Support Battalion, which supports the National Security Agency. One of the largest U.S. intelligence agencies, the NSA spies on electronic communications around the world and has a critical role in deterring cyberattacks and foreign influence operations.

A spokesperson for the NSA declined to answer questions about when the agency learned of Abate's statement that he had entered the Capitol or if it took action prior to his arrest to restrict his access to classified information.

The trio face charges including illegal entry and disorderly conduct.

Among Jan. 6 defendants with military backgrounds are members of the far-right extremist group the Oath Keepers, accused of plotting to violently keep President Donald Trump in power. The group's leader, Stewart Rhodes, a former Army paratrooper, was convicted of seditious conspiracy in November.

A Navy reservist from Virginia accused of storming the Capitol was convicted this week on charges that he illegally possessed silencers disguised to look like innocuous cleaning supplies. Hatchet Speed is scheduled to go on trial in his Jan. 6 case later this year.

And a former U.S. Army reservist described by prosecutors as a Nazi sympathizer was convicted of storming the Capitol to obstruct Congress from certifying President Joe Biden's electoral victory. Timothy Hale-Cusanelli, who was employed as a security contractor at a Navy base, was sentenced to four years in prison in September.

Nearly 1,000 people have been charged so far in the riot and the tally increases by the week. Almost 500 people have pleaded guilty to riot-related charges and more than three dozen have been convicted at trial.

Google axes 12,000 jobs as layoffs spread across tech sector

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Google is laying off 12,000 workers, or about 6% of its workforce, becoming the latest tech company to trim staff as the economic boom that the industry rode during the COVID-19 pandemic ebbs.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai, who also leads its parent company Alphabet, informed staff Friday at the Silicon Valley giant about the cuts in an email that was also posted on the company's news blog.

It is the company's biggest-ever round of layoffs and adds to tens of thousands of other job losses recently announced by Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook parent Meta and other tech companies as they tighten

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their belts amid a darkening outlook for the industry. Just this month, there have been at least 48,000 job cuts announced by major companies in the sector.

"Over the past two years we've seen periods of dramatic growth," Pichai wrote. "To match and fuel that growth, we hired for a different economic reality than the one we face today."

He said the layoffs reflect a "rigorous review" carried out by Google of its operations.

The jobs being eliminated "cut across Alphabet, product areas, functions, levels and regions," Pichai said. He said he was "deeply sorry" for the layoffs.

Regulatory filings illustrate how Google's workforce swelled during the pandemic, ballooning to nearly 187,000 people by late last year from 119,000 at the end of 2019.

Pichai said that Google, founded nearly a quarter of a century ago, was "bound to go through difficult economic cycles."

"These are important moments to sharpen our focus, reengineer our cost base, and direct our talent and capital to our highest priorities," he wrote. He called out the company's investments in artificial intelligence as an area of opportunity.

There will be job cuts in the U.S. and in other unspecified countries, according to Pichai's letter.

Tech companies that "not long ago were the darlings of the stock market" have been forced to freeze hiring and cut jobs in preparation for an economic downturn, said a note from Victoria Scholar, an analyst with U.K.-based Interactive Investor.

"Digital spending is suffering, and ad revenues are falling with it," she wrote.

Just this week, Microsoft announced 10,000 job cuts, or nearly 5% of its workforce. Amazon said this month it is cutting 18,000 jobs, although that's a fraction of its 1.5 million strong workforce, while business software maker Salesforce is laying off about 8,000 employees, or 10% of the total. Last fall Facebook parent Meta announced it would shed 11,000 positions, or 13% of its workers. Elon Musk slashed jobs at Twitter after he acquired the social media company last fall.

Those job cuts are hitting smaller players as well. U.K.-based cybersecurity firm Sophos laid off 450 employees, or 10% of its global workforce. Cryptocurrency trading platform Coinbase cut 20% of its workforce, about 950 jobs, in its second round of layoffs in less than a year.

Employment in the U.S. has been resilient despite signs of a slowing economy, and there were another 223,000 jobs added in December. Yet the tech sector grew exceptionally fast over the last several years due to increased demand as employees began to work remotely.

CEOs of a number of companies have taken blame for growing too fast, yet those same companies, even after the latest round of job cuts, remain much larger than they were before the economic boom from the pandemic began.

"I take full responsibility for the decisions that led us here," Pichai wrote.

While the tech layoffs are "shocking numbers," their effect on tech industry employment is "nowhere near as bad as what it seems," said John Blevins, an adjunct professor at Cornell University's business school.

"These workers who were laid off will readily get new jobs," most likely at smaller tech companies, Blevins said. "They're coming with high credentials from these big firms. That knowledge will be transferred and will actually work to everyone's benefit."

In their layoff announcements, both Pichai and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella emphasized the importance of capitalizing on their advances in artificial intelligence technology, reflecting renewed competition between the tech giants sparked by Microsoft's growing partnership with the San Francisco startup OpenAI.

Shares of Alphabet Inc., based in Mountain View, California, rose more than 4% Friday.

Historic Black churches receive \$4M in preservation grants

By AARON MORRISON AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Administrators of a trust fund established to preserve historic Black churches in the United States on Friday revealed a list of houses of worship receiving \$4 million in financial grants.

The list of 35 grantees includes 16th Street Baptist Church Inc. in Birmingham, Alabama, where crucial

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civil rights organizing meetings were held during Jim Crow segregation in the 1960s and where four Black girls were killed after a bombing by members of the Ku Klux Klan in 1963.

Black churches in nearly every region of the U.S. are among the fund's first round of recipients receiving grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund launched its "Preserving Black Churches" program in 2021 to help support ongoing or planned restoration work in historic congregations that are caretakers of cultural artifacts and bear monumental legacies. Some church renovations were imperiled or severely postponed three years ago after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, which reduced the capacity of many houses of worship to serve the public at an unprecedented time of need.

"Leaving an indelible imprint on our society, historic Black churches hold an endearing legacy of community, spirituality and freedom that continues to span generations," said Brent Leggs, the fund's executive director, who is also senior vice president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Rev. Monica Marshall couldn't agree with that sentiment more. She was a teenager in the 1970s when she became a member of Varick Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. It is the oldest continuous Black congregation in the borough and has been ministering in the community for more than 200 years.

Marshall, 66, has fond memories of joining the church's youth choir, playing the keyboard and leading its music ministry, before accepting the call to preach many years later. In 2010, she became the pastor. There are about 75 active members.

Varick Memorial's current building dates back to 1951, but is deteriorating and has roofing issues. The church has been mostly uninhabitable since 2020, the reverend said.

"The pandemic made it harder to maintain the building," Marshall said. "I just heard God tell me, 'You're not going back into the same building that you came out of.' The people have been very faithful, they've been waiting on my vision and it just came true."

The congregation received a grant of \$200,000 to support critical restoration of the building's structural integrity. Marshall said the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund's efforts have restored hope that Varick Memorial can resume a wider array of services to the community.

"If you don't know where you've come from, it's hard to press on and go to even greater heights, to deeper depths in your life and in your legacy," the reverend said.

Many Black churches, both historic and modern, experience challenges related to deferred renovation, insufficient funds for regular maintenance and threats of demolition due to public hazards.

Since before the abolition of slavery, the Black church has been an epicenter for the cultural, social and educational pursuits of its members. The church has also played a role in brokering congregants' relationship to political power. It's not uncommon for politicians, most often Democrats, to campaign from Black church pulpits.

The church is a domain for the prophetic tradition in which preachers weave Scripture with criticisms of racism, corruption and poverty. "Souls to the polls" is a get-out-the-vote campaign common in the Black church, encouraging congregants to take advantage of early voting periods to counteract voter suppression and intimidation.

"After all, these are our sacred sites, which our ancestors built from the ground up, and we must do everything we can to ensure their survival," said Henry Louis Gates Jr., the professor and historian who sits on the action fund's national advisory council.

In 2021, Gates executive produced and hosted a four-hour docuseries for PBS called "The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song," based on his New York Times bestselling book of the same title.

"Preserving these structures is a visible way of preserving a crucial chapter of Black history," Gates said.

The action fund's other grantees include First Bryan Baptist Church in Savannah, Georgia, which is considered to be one of the oldest Black Baptist churches in the U.S.; Cory United Methodist Church in Cleveland, where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X spoke in 1963 and 1964; and St. Paul Christian Meth-

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odist Episcopal, a church located on the historically Black campus of Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee.

The action fund's administrators said they received proposals for 1,266 Black churches across the U.S., with \$189 million in total funds requested. The effort is supported by a \$20 million seed donation received last year from the Lilly Endowment Inc., which supports religious, educational and charitable causes.

St. Rita Catholic Church in Indianapolis, another action fund grantee, will receive \$100,000 to fix its bell tower and repair the main structure's masonry, which date back to 1958.

"The bricks of the bell tower started falling off about 19 years ago," said the Rev. Jean Bosco Ntawugashira, who was appointed pastor of the congregation last July. "It became a danger to the community and, unfortunately because of COVID, the (restoration) project was somehow halted."

St. Rita has been serving Indianapolis' Black residents since 1919 and is considered the city's mother church for Black Catholics from all over the world.

"The Black community, some time back, considered the Catholic Church to be the church for the whites," Ntawugashira said. "They are going to understand that the Catholic Church is universal and it doesn't close doors to anyone. They belong to a global community."

Judge fines Trump, lawyer for 'frivolous' Clinton lawsuit

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A Florida judge sanctioned former President Donald Trump and one of his attorneys, ordering them to pay nearly \$1 million for filing what he said was a bogus lawsuit against Trump's 2016 rival Hillary Clinton and others.

In a blistering filing on Thursday, U.S. District Judge Donald M. Middlebrooks accused Trump of a "pattern of abuse of the courts" for filing frivolous lawsuits for political purposes, which he said "undermines the rule of law" and "amounts to obstruction of justice."

"Here, we are confronted with a lawsuit that should never have been filed, which was completely frivolous, both factually and legally, and which was brought in bad faith for an improper purpose," he wrote.

Citing Trump's recent legal action against the Pulitzer Prize board, New York's attorney general, big tech companies and CNN, he described Trump as "a prolific and sophisticated litigant" who uses the courts "to seek revenge on political adversaries."

"He is the mastermind of strategic abuse of the judicial process," he wrote.

The ruling required Trump and his attorney, Alina Habba, to pay nearly \$938,000 to the defendants in the case.

A spokesman for Trump and Habba did not immediately respond to requests for comment late Thursday.

Middlebrooks in September dismissed the suit Trump had filed against Clinton, former top FBI officials and the Democratic Party, rejecting the former president's claims that they and others conspired to sink his winning presidential campaign by alleging ties to Russia.

The lawsuit had named as defendants Clinton and some of her top advisers, as well as former FBI Director James Comey and other FBI officials involved in the investigation into whether Trump's 2016 presidential campaign had coordinated with Russia to sway the outcome of the election.

He said then the suit contained "glaring structural deficiencies" and that many of the "characterizations of events are implausible."

In the wake of the sanctions, Trump on Friday withdrew his lawsuit against New York Attorney General Letitia James. The case, in federal court in Florida, had also been before Middlebrooks.

Trump sued James in November in response to her lawsuit alleging he and his company misled banks and others about the value of assets in a practice she dubbed "The art of the steal."

Trump, a Republican, also sought to prevent James, a Democrat, from having any oversight over the family trust that controls his company. His 35-page complaint rehashed some claims from his previously dismissed lawsuit against James in federal court in New York, irritating Middlebrooks, who wrote in a December order: "This litigation has all the telltale signs of being both vexatious and frivolous."

Tech industry job cuts come rapidly and in big numbers

In just the past month there have been nearly 50,000 job cuts across the technology sector. Large and small tech companies went on a hiring spree in over the past several years due to a demand for their products, software and services surged with millions of people working remotely. However, even with all of the layoffs announced in recent weeks, most tech companies are still vastly larger than they were three years ago. Here's a look at some of the companies that have announced layoffs so far.

August 2022

Snap: The parent company of social media platform Snapchat said that it was letting go of 20% of its staff. Snap's staff has grown to more than 5,600 employees in recent years and the company said at the time that even after laying off more than 1,000 people, its staff would be larger than it was a year earlier.

Robinhood: The company, whose app helped bring a new generation of investors to the market, announced that it would reduce headcount by about 23%, or approximately 780 people. An earlier round of layoffs last year cut 9% of its workforce.

November 2022

Twitter: About half of the social media platform's staff of 7,500 was let go after it was acquired by the billionaire CEO of Tesla, Elon Musk.

Lyft: The ride-hailing service said it was cutting 13% of its workforce, almost 700 employees.

Meta: The parent company of Facebook laid off 11,000 people, about 13% of its workforce.

January 2023

Amazon: The e-commerce company said it must cut about 18,000 positions. That's just a fraction of its 1.5 million-strong global workforce.

Salesforce: The company lays off 10% of its workforce, about 8,000 employees.

Coinbase: The cryptocurrency trading platform cuts approximately 20% of its workforce, or about 950 jobs, in a second round of layoffs in less than a year.

Microsoft: The software company said it will cut about 10,000 jobs, almost 5% of its workforce.

Google: The search engine giant becomes the most recent in the industry to say it must adjust, saying 12,000 workers, or about 6% of its workforce, would be let go.

Here's what to expect from Tuesday's Oscar nominations

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There were, admittedly, some notable distractions at last year's ceremony, so you might have missed it: The old Oscar rules have gone out the window.

A film, streamed by Apple TV+, won Hollywood's top award without a penny of box office. But this year — plot twist! — there isn't one streaming title in the hunt for the Academy Awards' major prizes. When nominations are announced Tuesday, popcorn will be on the menu. "Top Gun: Maverick," "Avatar: The Way of Water" and "Elvis" all look assured of best-picture nods.

But after a seesawing movie year where every pronouncement about the future of theatrical movies was plausible at different times — Audiences are back! No they're not! — the film Hollywood will crown the best of 2022 may, ultimately, be neither a streaming title nor a box-office smash.

Recent nominations from the industry's top guilds have strongly suggested there are just three films with a realistic shot at best picture. The sci-fi indie "Everything Everywhere All at Once," the Irish dark comedy "The Banshees of Inisherin" and Steven Spielberg's fictionalized memoir "The Fabelmans" were the only films nominated for the top prizes of the Screen Actors Guild, the Producers Guild and the Directors Guild. As much as some would like to see "Top Gun: Maverick" buzz the Oscar tower, striking out with the actors' guild has almost always been a death knell for best picture chances.

But it's a long way until the 95th Academy Awards on March 12. Here's a rundown of what we can expect when nominations are announced Tuesday morning.

WHAT ARE THE FAVORITES?

The strongest support seems to be for Martin McDonagh's "The Banshees of Inisherin" and Daniel Kwan

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and Daniel Scheinert's "Everything Everywhere All at Once." Along with nods for direction, screenwriting and best picture, both films could score as many as four acting nominations Tuesday. "Everything Everywhere All at Once" star Michelle Yeoh is the frontrunner in the formidable best actress category, while her co-star, Ke Huy Quan, the former child star, appears to be running away with best supporting actor. "Banshees" star Colin Farrell is probably the stiffest competition for Brendan Fraser ("The Whale") and Austin Butler ("Elvis") in best actor, while Brendan Gleeson, Kerry Condon and Barry Keoghan may all score supporting nods.

WHAT IS 'THE FABELMANS'?

That was the answer no "Jeopardy!" contestant could come up with in a recent episode, a chastening moment in an otherwise much-celebrated run for Spielberg's Golden Globe-winning coming-of-age drama. "The Fabelmans" has been a frontrunner since its award-winning Toronto International Film Festival premiere, but there are some cracks in its campaign beyond unanswered gameshow clues. Michelle Williams surprisingly missed out on a SAG nomination, but expect the academy (which has nominated Williams four times before) to remedy that. More challenging is that, unlike "Everything Everywhere All at Once" or "The Banshees of Inisherin," "The Fabelmans" (\$14.4 million domestically) underperformed at the box office. Ironically, the filmmaker who helped create the modern blockbuster will have to win despite the faint whiff of theatrical disappointment. Spielberg, though, appears headed for his ninth best director nomination, and very likely, his third win in the category.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE BLOCKBUSTERS?

With \$1.5 billion in ticket sales, "Top Gun: Maverick" helped bring moviegoers — especially older, more hesitant moviegoers — back to theaters after two-plus years of pandemic. Expected to be rewarded with a best picture nod, as well as many nominations in the technical categories. Getting six IMAX cameras into the cockpit of a fighter jet, as cinematographer Claudio Miranda managed, is the kind of filmmaking feat that's hard to ignore. James Cameron's "Avatar: The Way of Water" (approaching \$2 billion) will be in the mix in many of the same categories, too. And for the first time, a Marvel movie is poised to land an acting nomination: Angela Bassett, for "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever." She'll also likely win.

Some would say that the Oscars could use such box-office hits. Ratings have tended to be higher in years where widely watched films are vying for best picture. In recent years, Oscar producers have vainly tried to add prizes for "best popular film" and Twitter-voted winners, and mostly only gotten mockery for their efforts. At the same time, more modest films — "CODA," "Nomadland," "Parasite," "The Shape of Water," "Moonlight" — have usually triumphed.

WHAT ROUNDS OUT BEST PICTURE?

Ten films will be nominated for best picture, and seven of those slots feel like locks: "The Banshees of Inisherin," "Everything Everywhere All at Once," "The Fabelmans," "Top Gun: Maverick," "Tár," "Avatar: The Way of Water" and "Elvis." I'd expect to see Darren Aronofsky's "The Whale" and, maybe, Sarah Polley's "Women Talking," which scored a best ensemble nod from SAG. That would leave films like "Triangle of Sadness," "All Quiet on the Western Front" and "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery" hunting for the the last spot.

WHAT'S WITH THE 'GRASSROOTS' CAMPAIGN FOR ANDREA RISEBOROUGH?

With Yeoh, Blanchett, Williams, Viola Davis ("The Woman King"), Ana de Armas ("Blonde") and Danielle Deadwyler ("Till"), the best actress category is already ultra-competitive. But a late-breaking, celebrity-backed campaign has pushed Andrea Riseborough forward for her performance as an alcoholic West Texas mother in the little-seen October release, "To Leslie." Riseborough wasn't seen as in the awards mix but she did land a nomination from the Independent Spirit Awards. Instead, it's been a host of A-listers including Gwyneth Paltrow, Kate Winslet, Charlize Theron and Jennifer Aniston whose promotion of Riseborough suddenly put her on the Oscar map.

WHAT ELSE TO LOOK FOR?

Jamie Lee Curtis ("Everything Everywhere All at Once") could land her first Oscar nomination. So could Adam Sandler ("Hustle"), who was nominated by SAG for his Netflix basketball drama. The favored international film may not be the Indian sensation "RRR" (which wasn't selected by India but is competing

in other categories, including best song). The German entry "All Quiet on the Western Front," coming off its strong showing in the BAFTA nominations and aggressively pushed by Netflix, may be the foreign film that racks up multiple nominations Tuesday.

WHO WON'T BE BUT SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED?

The academy's policy that international films are submitted by the governments of their origin countries has had a chilling effect on filmmakers working inside oppressive regimes. Jafar Panahi's lauded "No Bears" will be absent only because Iran, which imprisoned Panahi earlier this year, predictably chose not to submit it. Charlotte Wells' "Aftersun," my pick for best film of the year, may find some well-deserved academy love for Paul Mescal but could surely contend in many categories, especially if they gave Oscars for "Best Needle Drop." I might have also voted for Tilda Swinton in "The Eternal Daughter," Keke Palmer for "Nope," Steven Soderbergh's "Kimi" for best film and "Weird: The Al Yankovic Story" for best screenplay. Plus, how are we not throwing awards at Daniel Craig for one of the year's funniest performances in "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery"? He deserves it, if for nothing else, for the swimwear.

Romanian judge grants 30-day extension of Tate detention

By NICOLAE DUMITRACHE AND STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — A judge in Romania has granted a request to extend by another 30 days the arrest of Andrew Tate, the social media personality who was detained in the country on charges of being part of an organized crime group, human trafficking and rape, an official said Friday.

Tate, 36, a British-U.S. citizen who has 4.7 million followers on Twitter, was initially detained on Dec. 29, in Bucharest, Romania's capital. His brother, Tristan, and two Romanian women were arrested and held in the same case.

Ramona Bolla, a spokesperson for Romania's anti-organized crime agency, DIICOT, told The Associated Press that prosecutors requested the second 30-day extension Thursday to keep all four in detention while the investigation continued. A judge approved the request Friday, she said.

The judge's decision at the Bucharest Tribunal came after all four lost an appeal last week in a Bucharest court against a judge's Dec. 30 ruling to extend their arrests from 24 hours to 30 days.

The Tates are also likely to appeal Friday's extension.

Ioan Gliga, a lawyer for the Tate brothers, said he considered the ruling Friday as "totally unjustified."

"Only an hour ago, the session was closed and the file has 20 volumes," he said, "I find it very hard to believe that someone has the physical capacity to study the file in such a short time, as only yesterday it reached the tribunal."

A post on Andrew Tate's Twitter account Thursday read: "I'm in detention as they 'look' for evidence. Evidence they will never find because we are not guilty. They have and will continue to ignore and throw away any and all testimony or hard evidence (that) we are innocent."

"My case isn't about the truth. This is about Politics," the post continued.

Tate, a former professional kickboxer who has reportedly lived in Romania since 2017, was previously banned from various prominent social media platforms for expressing misogynistic views and hate speech.

Romanian authorities descended on a compound near Bucharest last week and towed away a fleet of luxury cars that included a blue Rolls-Royce, a Ferrari and a Porsche. They reported seizing assets worth an estimated \$3.9 million.

Prosecutors have said that if they can prove the owners gained money through illicit activities such as human trafficking, the assets would be used to cover the expenses of the investigation and to compensate victims. Tate also unsuccessfully appealed the asset seizure.

After the Tates and the two women were arrested in December, DIICOT said in a statement that it had identified six victims in the human trafficking case who were subjected to "acts of physical violence and mental coercion" and were sexually exploited by the members of the alleged crime group.

The agency said victims were lured with pretenses of love, and later intimidated, kept under surveillance and subjected to other control tactics while being coerced into engaging in recorded pornographic acts.

Bosnian war survivors share survival tips with Ukraine

By SABINA NIKSIC Associated Press

GORAZDE, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Residents of eastern Bosnia's city of Gorazde do not need imaginations to understand the suffering of Ukraine's people. Three decades ago, they endured more than three years of extreme hardship as Bosnian Serbs pummeled their city with rockets and artillery from the surrounding hills.

The long siege during Bosnia's 1992-95 interethnic war cut off Gorazde from access to electricity, food, medicine and the outside world. The people there found creative ways to keep lights on and heating working, survival tips they now are sharing with civilians plunged into darkness and cold by Russia's relentless missile and drone attacks on Ukraine's power grid.

Edin Culov, the Gorazde region's governor, said friends and acquaintances who work for the European Union's mission to Bosnia, in Sarajevo, contacted him late last year seeking information for a humanitarian effort to provide Ukrainians with an alternative source of electricity.

They specifically wanted any "drawings, photographs, video recordings or anything else" about the "miniature power plants" used in Gorazde back in the 1990s. The plants consisted of home-built paddlewheels mounted on wooden platforms with electrical generators. Locals set them up around a bridge in the Drina River, where barrels and ropes kept them afloat.

Each "plant" had a main supply cable running from its generator to the bridge, from where smaller cables carried the power to buildings. Depending on the volume of water under the span, the contraptions produced enough electricity for Gorazde's straining hospital and for residents living close enough to the river to keep one light bulb on, listen to the radio and occasionally watch television.

A small group of mechanical engineers and electricians who honed their skills in the city's prewar manufacturing industry, which produced everything from weapons to textiles, built the first prototype. Their clever, but simple design allowed DIYers to create the mini plants from engines, alternators, condensers and scrap material scavenged from Gorazde's bombed out factories, vehicles and homes.

Paddlewheels quickly bloomed on the river. Siege survivors credit the contraptions with helping the city hold out and become the only enclave in eastern Bosnia never to be captured by Serb forces. After the war ended, the equipment was removed and dismantled.

In response to the EU request all these years later, Culov said the city collected everything it could find and he went on the radio in Bosnia to solicit surviving documents and memories. The information was delivered to the EU mission in Bosnia, which has shared it with Ukraine, he said.

"I guess they will use the material we provided to develop a few test models and then, if it proves feasible, start mass producing (the miniature) power plants" for distribution around the country, Culov explained.

Among those who responded to Culov's appeal for information were two surviving members of the original development team.

Aziz Lepenica, who had taught engineering at the city's technical high school until suffering a stroke a couple of years ago, offered to return to show students how to prepare proper design drawings and technical calculations for Ukraine.

During Bosnia's war, "We made no drawings. We had no time for that," Lepenica said. "We made all calculations and construction plans in our heads."

During his teaching years, Lepenica helped his students construct a replica of the homegrown power plants. It was placed on the riverbank, next to Gorazde's central bridge, in 2016 to serve as a monument to the days when, as Lepenica put it, "life was unbearable, but our morale was high."

"It would mean a lot to us if it turns out we can help the people (of Ukraine) who are being deprived of electricity as we were," Lepenica said.

Murat Heto, another one of the inventors, also helped prepare documentation for Ukraine.

"With everything we have been through, one would need to be made of wood not to empathize with (Ukrainians)," the retired electrician said, recalling how the lights powered by the miniature power plants developed by his team "made the world of difference" in wartime Gorazde.

Some 7,000 civilians were killed or severely wounded in the city. Residents often went out only at night

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to avoid unrelenting sniper and artillery attacks. An influx of refugees from surrounding areas nearly doubled the population to 70,000.

While the refusal of Serb forces to allow U.N. aid convoys into Gorazde kept food and medicine in short supply, the power plants were a "symbol of our resolve to resist, to not give in," Heto said.

"I wish to God it had not happened to us nor to Ukraine, but when people are pushed into a corner and faced with a threat of extermination, everything becomes possible," he said.

Church of England apologizes for treatment of LGBTQ people

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The Church of England formally apologized Friday for its treatment of LGBTQ people, even as it said that same-sex couples still won't be allowed to marry in its churches.

The apology from the church's bishops came in a report following five years of debate on the church's position on sexuality. The report will be delivered to the church's national assembly, the General Synod, which is meeting in London next month.

"We want to apologize for the ways in which the Church of England has treated LGBTQI+ people — both those who worship in our churches and those who do not," the bishops said in a statement. "For the times we have rejected or excluded you, and those you love, we are deeply sorry. The occasions on which you have received a hostile and homophobic response in our churches are shameful, and for this we repent."

Nonetheless, the Church of England's stance that matrimony is restricted to unions between one man and one woman will remain in place. It has instead proposed offering same-sex couples the chance to have a church service with prayers of dedication, thanksgiving or for God's blessing after they have a civil wedding or register a civil partnership.

Same-sex marriage has been legal in England and Wales since 2013, but the church did not change its teaching when the law changed.

Church leaders described the decision on church services as a significant change that acknowledges the lived experience of some faithful Christians. But deep divisions remain, and the bishops acknowledged that some clergy will choose not to use the new prayers to bless the unions of same-sex couples.

Among them will be Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the spiritual leader of the Anglican Church. He described the introduction of the prayers as "a moment of joy and celebration" but said his role in the Anglican communion makes his primary task to work for unity among some 85 million members.

"Because of my pastoral care and responsibility of being a focus of unity for the whole communion ... I will not personally use them in order not to compromise that pastoral care," he told reporters.

Jayne Ozanne, a prominent campaigner for LGBTQ people in the church, expressed disappointment with the stand of the bishops, arguing that God did not discriminate — and "neither should we."

"We've had apology after apology after apology, and this one frankly, sounds hollow and cruel," Ozanne wrote on Twitter. "Because if you apologise and then carry on with the abuse, it is akin to domestic abuse. The fact that the bishops don't see that is what angers me."

Today in History: JAN 21, Concorde passenger service begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Jan. 21, the 21st day of 2023. There are 344 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 21, 2010, a bitterly divided U.S. Supreme Court, in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, vastly increased the power of big business and labor unions to influence government decisions by freeing them to spend their millions directly to sway elections for president and Congress.

On this date:

In 1793, during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed on the guillotine.

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In 1910, the Great Paris Flood began as the rain-swollen Seine River burst its banks, sending water into the French capital.

In 1915, the first Kiwanis Club, dedicated to community service, was founded in Detroit.

In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin died at age 53.

In 1942, pinball machines were banned in New York City after a court ruled they were gambling devices that relied on chance rather than skill (the ban was lifted in 1976).

In 1950, former State Department official Alger Hiss, accused of being part of a Communist spy ring, was found guilty in New York of lying to a grand jury. (Hiss, who proclaimed his innocence, served less than four years in prison.)

In 1976, British Airways and Air France inaugurated scheduled passenger service on the supersonic Concorde jet.

In 1977, on his first full day in office, President Jimmy Carter pardoned almost all Vietnam War draft evaders.

In 2003, the Census Bureau announced that Hispanics had surpassed blacks as America's largest minority group.

In 2020, the U.S. reported its first known case of the new virus circulating in China, saying a Washington state resident who had returned the previous week from the outbreak's epicenter was hospitalized near Seattle; U.S. officials stressed that they believed the overall risk of the virus to the American public remained low.

Ten years ago: A day after being inaugurated for a second term in a private Sunday ceremony, President Barack Obama took a public oath, summoning a divided nation to act with "passion and dedication" to broaden equality and prosperity at home, nurture democracy around the world and combat global warming. British movie director Michael Winner, 77, who'd made 30 films, including three in the "Death Wish" series, died in London.

Five years ago: Security forces in Afghanistan brought an end to an overnight siege by Taliban militants at the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul; four American citizens were among 22 people killed in the 13-hour attack. The Philadelphia Eagles stunned the Minnesota Vikings, 38-7, in the NFC title game to advance to the Super Bowl against the New England Patriots, who had scored a 24-20 comeback win over the Jacksonville Jaguars in the AFC title game. (The Eagles would go on to win their first Super Bowl.)

One year ago: Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met in Geneva for about 90 minutes, but the two sides reported no breakthroughs in talks aimed at preventing a feared Russian invasion of Ukraine. The FBI said Brian Laundrie, the boyfriend of slain cross-country traveler Gabby Petito, had admitted to killing her in a notebook discovered near his body in a Florida swamp. Comedian and actor Louie Anderson died in Las Vegas at 68.

Today's birthdays: World Golf Hall of Famer Jack Nicklaus is 83. Opera singer-conductor Placido Domingo is 82. Actor Jill Eikenberry is 76. Country musician Jim Ibbotson is 76. Singer-songwriter Billy Ocean is 73. Former U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke is 73. Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder is 72. Actor-director Robby Benson is 67. Actor Geena Davis is 67. Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., is 62. Basketball Hall of Famer Hakeem Olajuwon is 60. Actor Charlotte Ross is 55. Actor John Ducey is 54. Actor Karina Lombard is 54. Actor Ken Leung is 53. Rock musician Mark Trojanowski (Sister Hazel) is 53. Rock singer-songwriter Cat Power is 51. Rock DJ Chris Kilmore (Incubus) is 50. Actor Vincent Laresca is 49. Singer Emma Bunton (Spice Girls) is 47. Actor Jerry Trainor is 46. Country singer Phil Stacey is 45. R&B singer Nokio is 44. Actor Izabella Miko (MEE'-koh) is 42. Actor Luke Grimes is 39. Actor Feliz Ramirez is 31.