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Groton Community Calendar Tuesday, Feb. 7

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, peas, sunset salad, cookie, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: French toast.
School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn bread.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Junior High Boys Basketball hosts Warner, 4 p.m.
Boys Basketball hosts North Central. JV game at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.
United Methodist Church: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

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

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



City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 8

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, peach cobbler, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Egg omelets.
School Lunch: Chicken noodle soup.
Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
Small Group Music Contest at the Aberdeen Recreation Cultural Center
United Methodist Church: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Book Study with Lindsey Tietz, 4 p.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; UMYF Bowling at the Jungle, 6:30 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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The Bulletin

by Newsweek

JANUARY 24, 2023

World in Brief

- House Speaker Kevin McCarthy said federal debt was "the greatest threat to our future," during remarks to the nation but failed to define what Republicans seek in exchange for raising the federal borrowing limit.
- BP became the latest energy giant to report a record profit in 2022 due to higher energy prices amid the war in Ukraine. The energy giant's profits doubled to \$28 billion.
- Donald Trump's ability to raise tens of millions of dollars for his political campaigns may prove insignificant after the Americans for Prosperity said the group will not be backing the former president in 2024.
- Boeing announced plans to cut about 2,000 jobs in the finance and human resources department this year, while also "significantly" growing the overall workforce in the engineering and manufacturing verticals.
- In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russian forces have been trying to restart offensive operations since the beginning of the year, but they are being hampered by problems with manpower and ammunition, U.K. officials said.

- Rescue efforts to find more survivors in Turkey after the devastating earthquake have been hampered due to heavy rain and snow. Emergency response teams from the U.S. and other countries have been mobilized and are on the way to help rescue efforts.

- A second Chinese balloon spotted over Latin America is intended for civilian use and drifted off course, Beijing's foreign ministry has said. The U.S. had failed to detect previous spy balloons over the nation, Air Force General Glen VanHerck said.

GDILIVE.COM

Boys' Basketball at the Groton Area Arena
Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023

Groton Area vs. North Central

JV game at 6 p.m. sponsored by Larry & Val Fliehs

Varsity Game to follow Sponsored by

Bary Keith at Harr Motors
Bierman Farm Service
Blocker Construction
Dacotah Bank
Groton Chamber of Commerce
Groton Ford
John Sieh Agency
Locke Electric
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking
Bahr Spray Foam
Thunder Seed with John Wheeting



\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.
GDI Subscribers can watch for free

Weber leaving school business manager position after 37 years of service

by Dorene Nelson

Mike Weber has resigned from his position as the business manager for the Groton Area Public School effective at the end of this school year. Weber has been in this position for thirty-seven years. He and his wife Lorrie both plan to retire and take life a bit easier.

"I am originally from Tripp, SD, where my family owned and operated a grocery store," Weber said. "I grew up working in that store, helping my grandfather to bag potatoes into ten

pound bags when I was in the first grade. It was here in this store that I was first introduced into the world of business and finance."

"I graduated from Dakota State University, Madison, SD, in 1986 with a degree in business administration. I started working here in Groton one week later," he stated. "While I was attending Dakota State, the college converted from a teacher college into the computer / technology school that exists today."

"My first year here in Groton was when we had so many snow days that we had school until June 2nd," Weber smiled. "Bob Wegner, the business manager that I replaced, was originally going to train me, but he could not come to an agreement with the administration for his services after he retired."

"Basically I called him at home every other day for a full year until I was acclimated," he admitted. "Wegner had done all of his work previously in a large ledger book, using sheets of carbon copy paper that is very tedious work."

"I still remember two important pieces of advice that I received from Wegner," he said. "First, he advised me to just use my initials and my last name when signing papers, documents, checks, order forms, etc. Otherwise, I'd be wasting valuable time."

"His second piece of advice involved his introducing me to Omer Nelson, who sold insurance and person investment products," Weber stated. "From that initial investment of \$25 a month, I am now able to comfortably retire early!"

"The switch to more reliance upon computers was slow, first putting payroll on the computer," he explained. "Then the school added IBM personal computers followed later by an entire computer lab of IBM's."

"In addition to the switch from paper/pencil bookkeeping to the computer, there have been many other



**Mike Weber
1986 College Photo**



**Mike Weber
2023 Photo at his desk at GHS**

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changes in the school district," Weber said. "For example, in 1987 the elementary school in Columbia was closed, followed by an addition to the elementary school in 1992-1993."

"In 2002-2004, the bond issue was passed with the eventual building of the arena addition currently used for all competitive sporting events," he explained. "In the fall of 2004, the Bristol School District merged with Groton followed by the Conde area in 2008."

"The east side addition to the middle school/high school, the next big project, was completed in 2010," Weber said. "This addition, changing the front door of the high school from the south side to the east side, added an important security step that had been missing."

"The last major change, while I was employed in the Groton District, was the addition to the elementary school, completed in 2016."

"I would like to remain as the business manager for the North Central Special Ed Coop, a job that I added in 1993," Weber explained. "The level of that work is basically 1 day per week so it will still give me something to do!"

"I also have a provision in my Coop contract for 2023-24 that would allow me to continue in that capacity and work from home beginning July 1, 2023," he added. "However, the Coop would have to provide me with a computer and printer."

"I have not made a decision on the Coop yet but will do so later this spring," Weber said. "Some of that decision will depend upon who gets hired in Groton and whether or not they want to assume the Coop duties."

"This summer I will be available for consultant work for other school districts and Groton as well, if they need help," he stated. "Currently, there are brand new business managers in Langford, Frederick, and Northwestern. Doland and Redfield business managers are in year two and Edmund Central's business manager is starting year three. All these schools are part of the Coop except Redfield."

"During the thirty-seven years I've been employed by the Groton Area School District, I had the opportunity to work with the following five superintendents: Robert Olson, William Gange, Larry Klapperich, Laura Schuster, and Joe Schwan."

"My wife Lorrie and I have a blended family of three boys and three girls," Weber explained. "I am pleased and grateful that my children have all received a top-notch education here in Groton and have used that foundation for the excellent jobs that they have today!"

Junior High Teams split with Aberdeen Christian

Groton Area's junior high basketball teams split a pair of games with Aberdeen Christian, Monday, at the Groton Area Arena.

Groton Area's seventh grade team won, 55-19. Easten Weber led Groton Area with 19 points followed by Ryder Schelle with 14, Ethan Kroll 10, Larson Zak eight, Braeden Flihs four, Jace Johnson three and Alex Abeln two.

Charlie Eichler led the Knights with 21 points while Andrew Schwab had three and Kaleb had two.

Then it was reversal time as the Knights won the eighth grade game, 56-22.

Larson Zak and Easten Weber each had eight points while Ethan Kroll, Alex Abeln and Jace Johnson each had two points.

Cowboy led the Knights with 20 points while Luke had 14, Dylan 13 and Brooks nine.

Both games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Akaska Tavern & Bait Shop.

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St. Elizabeth to host Hunger Banquet

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is again hosting a Hunger Banquet to raise money and awareness for the poor.

**St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Catholic Parish Hall
Groton, SD**

**2023 Annual Hunger Banquet
February 15, 2023 at 6:30 PM**

**Guest Speaker & Program by
Deacon John Devlin of
St. Michael's Parish , Sioux Falls**

Welcome one and all to SEAS Hunger Banquet to help start off the season of Lent. Especially to help those in our world who are in need of support. So many people suffer from lack of food and safe drinking water to sustain life. Can't wait to see you all!

A little about the banquet...You are divided into groups before the banquet. About 10% will receive a three course meal. About 30% will receive a bowl of stew and the remaining people will receive a scoop of rice. A free will offering will be taken.

This is an excellent way to help your children understand that not everyone in the world has sufficient food. If you bring a group, please rsvp to Carol Smith so they have enough rice.

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Tony Bender/That's Life

Bearded Wonders

Editor's Note: What was Tony Bender doing 10 years ago? The same thing he's doing now—growing facial hair, this time for the Wishek Centennial. This one's from 2013.

As I traveled to wrestling and basketball tournaments recently, it was easy to pick out people from Ashley. We were the ones that looked like invading Visigoths. Let me explain. You see Ashley is about 100 days away from it's 125th celebration, June 20-23, 2013, and most of the men (and some of the women) are growing beards to celebrate.

It is my understanding that in a show of solidarity, women not genetically predisposed to facial hair have stopped shaving their legs. (Projected 2013 birthrate in Ashley: Zero.) Some women quit shaving after the last celebration in 1988 and cannot go near a zoo for fear of ending up on the wrong side of the bars. I would be the last person to suggest a lack of femininity in Ashley, but around here "dowdy" is considered a fashion statement. I don't know when Maybelline is going to hit town, but it's going to be big.

We are a ragged-looking bunch indeed. At halftime, the workers at the Jamestown Civic Center concession stand ducked behind the popcorn machine when the Ashley horde approached. That's how the rumor about Hell's Angels got started. In the interest of public safety, how do you tell Ashley Brothers of the Brush from Hell's Angels? The Ashley guys are the mean ones with Dekalb Seed hats.

Some guys naturally look better in beards. There's me, Bobby Delzer, Jesse Kaseman, Santa Claus and the guys from ZZ Top. My kids were so horrified by their first glimpse of my face when I shaved for a funeral a year ago, they made me take a sacred vow never to do that again. India, with tears in her eyes and a quivering voice, begged—"Please Dad, never again!" The cats hissed.

It is traditional for all Brothers of the Brush to shave at the same time months ahead of the celebration for a beard-growing contest. There are various categories: Best Beard, Scraggiest Beard, Unibomber Look-a-Like, Fewest Lice—that kind of thing.

The last time I saw Bobby Delzer without a beard we were in grade school, so it really freaked me out. I don't want to get into details, but when you have a beard for decades you don't realize there's a lot happening underneath all that hair—none of it good. Jesse Kaseman is a good friend of mine and a darn fine mechanic, but if ever there was a face built for a beard, it is his.

Then there is baby-faced Dillon Becker who walked into my office last week with what appeared to be an emaciated kitten with mange clinging to his chin. My ear hair is thicker. He was dressed in black. "You know," I said, "All you need is a plaid shirt and suspenders and you'll be ready for the Hutterite Colony." He unzipped his jacket to reveal a plaid shirt. No suspenders. His beard meowed.

I don't know much about the Hutterites other than they are good neighbors and sell quality smoked chickens, but I don't think you get your suspenders until you have been promoted. Kind of like in the army. So, if you see a guy with just one suspender, it means he knows how to plow but his furrows are crooked.

Imagine some day thousands of years from now if by archeological happenstance my column is the only known record of Hutterites. That will be hilarious.

"Class, what do we know about the Hutterites?"

"Well, they smoked chickens, wore suspenders and their leader was Dillon Becker. He used a kitten for a beard."

At any rate, let's get back to my whole point, which is that Dillon Becker has one pitiful looking beard. (Chances of Dillon getting a date in 2013 with that feeble beard? Zero.) If he registers at eHarmony.com, the mainframe is going to melt down. That's a face only the FBI could appreciate.

The original name for the celebration was quasiquicentennial but the committee spent the first three meetings trying to figure out how to spell it before agreeing it would be called "The 125th" but not before one committee member died from blood loss while getting an "Ashley Quasiquicentennial" tattoo.

When Eureka, SD, celebrated their quasiquicentennial last year they appointed subcommittees for each syllable but eventually decided to call it "The Big Q". But that sounded a little too "James Bond" for Ashley.

If you are wondering, in 2038 when we celebrate 150 years, it will be called a sesquicentennial. With No Child Left Behind in place, if we start now we should be able to spell it by then.

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

February 7, 2023 – 7:00pm
City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

- Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
- Vacation Leave Review – Todd Gay
- Department Reports
- Minutes
- Bills
- Second Reading of Ordinance No. 767 – Amending Rates for Groton Municipal Electric Customers
- Economic Development
- Park Bathroom/Baseball Concession Discussion
- June 6-9, 2023 – FO & HR School in Pierre, SD – Douglas Heinrich
- February 22-23 – Emergency Preparedness & Restoration Conference in St. Cloud, MN – Todd Gay
- Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
- Hire Groton PD Officer
- Second Reading of Ordinance No. 766 – 2023 Summer Salary Ordinance
- Adjournment

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

Special School Board Meeting

February 8, 2023 – 5:00 PM – GHS Library Conference Room

AGENDA:

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

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve hiring Becky Hubsch as Business Manager.
2. Executive Session pursuant SDCL 1-25-2(1) for Principal Interviews and SDCL 1-25-2(4) negotiations.
 - a. Shelby Edwards
 - b. Jordan Kjellsen
3. Any necessary action arising out of executive session.

ADJOURN

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Girls' Basketball at the Groton Area Arena
Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023

Groton Area vs. Elk Point-Jefferson

JV game at 4 p.m. sponsored by Mr. Anonymous

Varsity Game to follow Sponsored by



Bary Keith at Harr Motors
Bierman Farm Service
Blocker Construction
Dacotah Bank
Groton Chamber of Commerce
Groton Ford
John Sieh Agency
Locke Electric
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking
Bahr Spray Foam
Thunder Seed with John Wheething



Games called by Shane Clark

\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.
GDI Subscribers can watch for free

GDILIVE.COM

Boys' Basketball
Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023

Groton Area at Redfield

JH Boys game at 5 p.m. (1 combined game)
sponsored by Akaska Tavern & Bait Shop

JV game at 6 p.m. sponsored by Grandma & Grandpa

Varsity Game to follow Sponsored by



Bary Keith at Harr Motors
Bierman Farm Service
Blocker Construction
Dacotah Bank
Groton Chamber of Commerce
Groton Ford
John Sieh Agency
Locke Electric
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking
Bahr Spray Foam
Thunder Seed with John Wheething



\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.
GDI Subscribers can watch for free

GDILIVE.COM

Girls' Basketball
Friday, Feb. 10, 2023

Groton Area hosting Redfield

C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV sponsored by Mr. Anonymous

Varsity Game to follow Sponsored by



Bary Keith at Harr Motors
Bierman Farm Service
Blocker Construction
Dacotah Bank
Groton Chamber of Commerce
Groton Ford
John Sieh Agency
Locke Electric
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking
Bahr Spray Foam
Thunder Seed with John Wheething



\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.
GDI Subscribers can watch for free

GDILIVE.COM

Double Header Basketball at Moberidge-Pollock
Saturday, Feb. 11, 2023

Girls JV Game @ 1 PM in HS Gym sponsored by Larry & Val Flihs
Boys JV Game @ 1 PM in MS Gym sponsored by Ed & Connie Stauch

Varsity Games to follow Sponsored by



Bary Keith at Harr Motors
Bierman Farm Service
Blocker Construction
Dacotah Bank
Groton Chamber of Commerce
Groton Ford
John Sieh Agency
Locke Electric
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking
Bahr Spray Foam
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SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Committee advances bill to stop carbon pipelines from using eminent domain

Two anti-pipeline bills pass committee, four others fail

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - FEBRUARY 6, 2023 6:04 PM

A bill intended to prevent two proposed carbon pipeline projects from using eminent domain passed a legislative committee Monday.

The committee considered a total of six bills aimed at giving landowners more power in their fight against the pipeline projects. It was the first step in the legislative process for each of the bills during the ongoing 38-day legislative session at the Capitol in Pierre.

"These bills are coming before you because landowners are concerned about eminent domain," said the prime sponsor of three of the bills, Rep. Karla Lems, R-Canton. "We want choice, and we want protection."

Current state law says "all pipelines holding themselves out to the general public as engaged in the business of transporting commodities for hire by pipeline" are common carriers. The law also says common carriers may exercise eminent domain, which is a legal process to obtain access rights from landowners who are unwilling to grant them. On an 8-5 vote, the committee approved Lems' bill to exclude carbon pipelines from the definition of a "common carrier."

Some landowners opposed to the projects said carbon pipelines are different from oil, natural gas or water pipelines, which deliver a product used by the public.

"I never envisioned, in my wildest imagination, that eminent domain could be utilized in this situation,"



Landowners and stakeholders impacted by the two carbon capture pipeline projects planned for South Dakota listen as the House State Affairs Committee decides on six bills impacting the projects on Feb. 6, 2023, at the Capitol in Pierre. (Courtesy of Jason Harward/Forum News Service)

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said Aberdeen farmer and rancher Craig Schaunaman.

Another bill that passed 10-3 would require a company with condemning authority to issue its final and best financial offer to landowners at an earlier date. Both bills now move to the full House of Representatives.

The two proposed underground carbon pipelines, Navigator CO2's Heartland Greenway project and another proposal by Summit Carbon Solutions, would capture carbon dioxide emitted from ethanol plants in the Midwest and transport it in liquified form through multi-state pipelines to be sequestered underground in Illinois and North Dakota, respectively.

Ethanol producers can get more money for their products in states with stricter emission standards by shrinking their carbon footprint. Sequestering carbon keeps it out of the atmosphere, where it traps heat and contributes to climate change. Ethanol producers would also benefit from a federal tax credit for sequestered carbon dioxide.

Critics say the pipelines could leak and contaminate groundwater and soil. They also argue the projects would undermine property rights.

Eminent domain is a power reserved to use for public benefit, according to Brian Jorde, an attorney representing landowners against the pipelines.

"And now we have shifted so far from those concepts, unfortunately," Jorde said. He said the carbon pipelines are for private gain and do little, if anything, to benefit the public.

Proponents of the pipelines say they would bring large financial benefits to the ethanol industry and regional economy, and that some of the CO2 would be used to carbonate soft drinks and make products including dry ice.

Summit Carbon Solutions says it has agreements with 60% of the people owning land required for the pipeline in South Dakota. The bills are an attempt to derail the projects, according to Jake Ketzner, a lobbyist for Summit.

"Please do not change the rules in the middle of the game," Ketzner said.

The majority of anti-pipeline bills were rejected Monday. A bill requiring agreements with 90% of landowners prior to state regulators considering a pipeline project died in the committee. So did a bill that would have required companies to include impacted landowners in a pipeline project's siting and condemnation process.

Another bill requiring the establishment of best practices for CO2 pipeline applications prior to any construction also failed, as did a bill requiring certain companies give a 30-day notice and pay \$500 to a landowner prior to entry upon private land to conduct a survey.

Some legislators said those bills were too broad in their potential impact.

"We're singling out one project here to try to create a stumbling block, but the unintended consequences are it's going to apply to a lot of utilities and water projects moving forward," said Rep. Roger Chase, R-Huron.

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

First of multiple 'truth in sentencing' bills to see debate Tuesday morning

Supporters want stiffer prison terms, opponents see 'knee-jerk' reactions to crime

BY: JOHN HULT - FEBRUARY 6, 2023 5:05 PM

Repeat offenders and people who commit violent crimes would serve more time if lawmakers pass one of the "truth in sentencing" bills on the legislative docket this session.

Sen. Brent Hoffman, R-Sioux Falls, worked with Minnehaha County State's Attorney Daniel Haggar and other criminal justice officials to draft Senate Bill 146. The bill is set for a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday morning at the Capitol in Pierre.

The bill would undo parole eligibility altogether for some violent crimes.

Inmates convicted of manslaughter, aggravated assault against an infant or law enforcement officer, kidnapping, commission of a felony with a firearm, and a handful of other high-level felonies could earn credits for good behavior, but those credits could "only be used for increased privileges and may not be used to reduce the sentence imposed by the court."

For other violent crimes, such as aggravated assault or second-degree burglary, inmates would be required to serve at least 85% of their sentences.

The Hoffman bill seeks to upend the Department of Corrections' Individual Program Directive (IPD) parole system. That system releases inmates early without a parole hearing if they have a clean disciplinary record and complete a battery of personalized programming requirements in prison, such as earning a GED or completing chemical dependency treatment.

The goal is to align the sentences served by inmates with the sentences the public might hear in court or learn about from news reports.

"If someone is sentenced to manslaughter for, let's say, a 20 year term with 10 suspended, the people who walk out of that courtroom would rightly assume that, 'oh, that person is going to be in prison for 10 years,'" Hoffman said. "But that's not the case."

Sioux Falls Republican Rep. Chris Karr has two bills with similar aims. House Bill 1160 would keep repeat offenders behind bars for longer, but draws fewer distinctions between violent and non-violent offenses than Hoffman's bill. HB 1171 would undo the IPD system for inmates with four or more felony convictions.

Karr also wants to require mandatory sentences for people convicted of four or more driving under the influence charges with House Bill 1170. Karr's grandmother was killed by a drunken driver who had six previous DUI convictions.

"I started to ask the question, 'What's happening in our system in this process to somebody that is given a second chance, a third chance, a fourth chance, a fifth chance, and they're not serving any time or rehabilitating?'" Karr said. "There's an overall bigger systemic issue here, not just this one situation."

Bills prompted by Sioux Falls, Rapid City crime

The proposals from Karr and Hoffman come on the heels of high-profile crimes allegedly committed by parolees in the state's two largest cities: Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

The officials have largely placed the blame on an increase in parolees ducking supervision – a number that's doubled since 2015 – as well as on criminal justice reforms passed in 2013 and 2015, and have urged legislators to take action.

"At the coffee shops, they're telling me daily that they want public safety," said Minnehaha County Sheriff Mike Milstead, who counts himself as a strong supporter of a push to build more prisons in the state.

"Some people have accused South Dakota of having too many people in prison, but we also have one of the safest states in the nation to raise a family," the sheriff said. "So maybe having people behind bars who are violent offenders is a good thing."

Public safety officials like Milstead hope to rein in crime, but at least one former Department of Correc-

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tions secretary and advocates with the American Civil Liberties Union see longer prison terms as a step backward that could cost taxpayers dearly.

"This will cost, over the years, millions of dollars. Not right away, but it's a cumulative effect," said Denny Kaemingk, who served eight years as DOC secretary under former Gov. Dennis Daugaard. "In the long run, it's going to fill a lot more beds and cost a lot more dollars. That's passing the cost of this archaic return to prison and away from rehabilitation on to our children."

The IPD system is a best practice, the former cabinet secretary said. Before the IPD system, South Dakota had a "good time" system, in which inmates had a certain percentage of their sentence shaved off at the start of their term, which could be added back to their sentences for misbehavior.

Assessing inmates at the start of their terms to determine which rehabilitation programs might work for them is a better way of managing inmates and encouraging positive change, Kaemingk said.

DOC officials work to attend to each inmate and craft programming that serves the inmate and the public, knowing that most inmates will be released back to their families and communities.

"The IPD puts together what your needs are. Your needs and risk. It puts that together and says, 'If you want to get your early release, you need to do those things,'" Kaemingk said.

Kaemingk refers to truth in sentencing bills as "knee-jerk reactions" that disregard "the simplest understanding of professional correctional policies."

The ACLU of South Dakota intends to testify against SB 146 on Tuesday. ACLU South Dakota Advocacy Director Samantha Chapman said the proposals don't address the underlying issues behind public safety concerns and aren't informed by thoughtful collaboration.

"Real criminal justice reform will require leadership and commitment from our legislators, police, district attorneys, judges and people in each part of the system – not just locking people up and throwing away the key," Chapman said in an emailed statement.

National conversation

Senate President Pro Tem Lee Schoenbeck, R-Watertown, doesn't see truth in sentencing as costly. Schoenbeck, an attorney, co-sponsors SB 146. Under a truth in sentencing scheme, judges would simply adjust their sentences downward to reflect the new guidelines.

"If you want someone to serve two years in prison, don't give them 20 years," Schoenbeck said. "Give them two."

Attorney General Marty Jackley has not endorsed any of the "truth in sentencing" bills, but said last week that he generally favors the concept of moving toward a system where prison terms align more closely with a judge's sentence. That's what happens in federal court, which abolished parole in the late 1990s and replaced it with a grid system for sentencing and a supervised release period at the end of a defendant's prison term.

"Truth in sentencing is moving a little closer to that federal system," said Jackley, who served as U.S. attorney for the District of South Dakota before his first term as attorney general began in 2009.

Larry Long, whose ascension to a judgeship in Sioux Falls paved the way for Jackley's appointment that year, said he understands both sides of the debate.

The public doesn't appreciate early releases, particularly if the person released commits new crimes.

"They might be trying to communicate reality, not so much to the judges, but to the general public," Long said of the proposals. "The judges are going to have a pretty good idea of how much actual time the guy's going to do. And I think that factors into almost every judge's decision about how much time to give."

But the carrot of early release through parole, particularly when there's a system in place for early release that bypasses parole through good behavior, is important for reasons beyond rehabilitation, Long said.

"The rationale for good time is control," Long said. "It's 'we give you a good time off the top, and we take it back from you if you misbehave.' That's the incentive to behave while you're in the joint."

Tennessee lawmakers grappled with similar questions last year, when they passed their own truth in sentencing bill. Gov. Bill Lee opposed the idea, but allowed the bill to become law anyway, which is an option available to governors in that state.

Lee's concerns, according to the Tennessee Lookout, mirrored those expressed by Kaemingk. "Similar legislation has been enacted before and resulted in significant operational and financial strain, with no reduction in crime," Lee said in a statement to legislators last May. "Widespread evidence suggests that this policy will result in more victims, higher recidivism, increased crime and prison overcrowding, all with an increased cost to taxpayers."

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

COMMENTARY

Medicaid work requirement would undermine election, threaten cancer care

MATTHEW MCLARTY ~ FEBRUARY 6, 2023 5:04 PM

Just a few short months ago, South Dakotans voted, by a wide margin, to provide access to affordable health care. They voted to help thousands of fellow South Dakotans stuck in the coverage gap, and they voted to prevent the Legislature from adding additional burdens to that access.

Before Medicaid expansion is even implemented, politicians in Pierre are already trying to undermine the will of the people. Their resolution will add layers of administrative red tape between South Dakotans and their doctors and quite literally take health insurance away from cancer patients.

Moving HJR 5004 forward would be an insult to South Dakota voters, 82% of whom want the state to move quickly to implement Medicaid expansion as it is now in our state constitution. What's more, it would be a major step backward for cancer patients and survivors in our state. This year, 5,340 South Dakotans will be diagnosed with cancer, and the disease will kill 1,760 of us.

Expanded Medicaid eligibility, as it is currently in our state constitution, promotes earlier cancer detection, fewer deaths, and improved outcomes for patients. Consistent access to screening and treatment is crucial to seeing these positive impacts. This resolution would create further uncertainty in those efforts and put cancer patients at risk of losing coverage in the middle of their treatments.

At the American Cancer Society, we know that cancer patients in active treatment are often unable to work or require modifications in their employment due to their treatment. Between 40 and 85 percent of them stop working and their absences range from 45 days to six months. Many cancer survivors also continue to deal with chronic issues as a result of their treatments that impact their ability to work. We have found that the complexity and frequency of administrative reporting requirements, like those in HJR 5004, have led to thousands of people losing their Medicaid coverage. For a patient who is mid-treatment, a loss of health care coverage could seriously jeopardize their chance of survival.

Medicaid work requirements could hinder access to lifesaving preventive services, as well. Individuals without health insurance are diagnosed with cancer at later stages when the disease is more expensive to treat, and survival is less likely.

This resolution won't have the effect South Dakota politicians think it will. We know because we've seen it tried in other states. Arkansas' work requirement increased uninsured rates without increasing employment, studies by Harvard researchers found. People who lost Medicaid did not transition to other coverage and there was no evidence that it increased employment.

Every day, we hear stories from cancer patients and cancer survivors — truly inspiring stories of South Dakotans getting care and triumphing over this deadly disease. But we also hear stories that are heart-breaking. A retired physician in Yankton told us of a patient who came to her and was diagnosed with breast cancer. This patient did not have health care and did not then qualify for Medicaid. She said to that

doctor that she would not bankrupt her family and left the office. She, like many other South Dakotans, had to choose to forgo much-needed health care because of her financial state. The doctor said she was crestfallen when she read that patient's obituary in the paper some month later.

This resolution would cost state resources to put it on the ballot and more state resources to enforce, all in the unlikely chance that the federal government approves it. The people of South Dakota have spoken loud and clear, but that seems to be falling on deaf ears in Pierre. Consistent access to health care coverage is a matter of life and death for thousands of low-income cancer patients and survivors.

Matthew McLarty is a Sioux Falls resident and the South Dakota government relations director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. He is dedicated to leveraging the power of government to end suffering and death from cancer.

U.S. House speaker calls for 'responsible' debt limit legislation, shares few details

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - FEBRUARY 6, 2023 6:23 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on Monday said the greatest threat to the nation's future is the rising national debt, though he gave few specifics for how he planned to lower deficit spending or avoid a first-ever default on the debt this year.

The California Republican, in a 10-minute address from the U.S. Capitol the day before the president's State of the Union address, said the summer debt limit deadline "is one of the most important opportunities Congress has to change course." He called on lawmakers to approve a "responsible debt limit increase that puts us on a path towards a healthier economy."

McCarthy, however, was light on the details of how exactly the Republican-controlled House would get to that goal, or how that GOP legislation would move through the Democratic Senate.

McCarthy called on Congress and the White House to take a different approach to the debt limit during this year's talks, saying there should be no drawing lines in the sand, no policy gimmicks and no political games.

He then outlined his three requirements for negotiations.

"First, we will continue to sit down and negotiate, just as President Biden did in the past. Second, we must commit to finding common ground on a responsible debt limit increase," McCarthy said. "Third, we must move towards a balanced budget and insist on genuine accountability for every dollar we spend."

McCarthy added that cuts to Social Security and Medicare, a default on the debt and higher taxes were all off the table for these negotiations.

"Cuts to Medicare and Social Security, they're off the table. Defaulting on our debt is not an option," he said. "But neither is a future of higher taxes, higher interest rates and an economy that doesn't work for working Americans."

Meeting last week

McCarthy's comments Monday were somewhat different from those he made last week after meeting with President Joe Biden for more than an hour on the debt limit and government spending.

McCarthy at the time said that meeting included "a very productive conversation."

"Now, you know, in all these different things, if you had a productive conversation, and you both walked out saying, 'Let's continue it,' that's a positive for today," McCarthy said last week.

The speaker also said he was very clear with Biden during the meeting that the U.S. House would not pass "a clean debt ceiling," meaning he expects to add language addressing government spending, or something similar, to the bill.

National Economic Council Director Brian Deese said during a briefing on Monday afternoon that Biden will discuss the debt limit during his State of the Union address on Tuesday and emphasize his view that

conversations about future government spending should remain separate from talks about how Congress should address the debt limit.

"The full faith and credit of the United States — this bedrock idea that the United States has met all of its financial obligations for its existence as a country — isn't something that anybody should be using as a bargaining chip, it's not a negotiable item. It's Congress' constitutional obligation." Deese said.

The economic and national security consequences of getting close to a default on the debt, he said, would be significant.

"So you'll hear that clearly from the president," Deese said. "And you'll hear an openness and in fact an eagerness to have a real, serious conversation about the fiscal and economic priorities of the country."

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

Proposed federal rule would lower credit card late fees

BY: CASEY QUINLAN - FEBRUARY 6, 2023 4:40 PM

As Americans continue to struggle with high credit card rates, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has proposed a rule to help lessen some of their financial burden — in the form of lower late fees.

The new rule would limit late fees to \$8. Currently credit card companies can charge as high as \$41 — penalties that the CFPB's director, Rohit Chopra, said are charged for "no purpose beyond padding the credit card companies' profits."

The CFPB rule amends regulations that implemented the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009, and addresses a loophole that provided a loose standard that said late fees must be "reasonable and proportional."

The proposed rule would require credit card companies to prove they need to charge a higher late fee to cover costs, and cap those fees at 25% of the minimum payment. Current regulations let credit card companies charge as much as 100% of the minimum payment owed. The rule would also get rid of the automatic inflation adjustment for the amount companies could charge in late fees.

According to the CFPB, an independent financial watchdog within the Federal Reserve, credit card companies bring in about \$12 billion in late fees annually. The rule could shrink that by as much as \$9 billion each year.

"The rule brings to the forefront the reality that credit card late fees are designed to be excessive to create incentives for consumer behavior. They are not in proportion to the cost to the lender," said Aaron Klein, senior fellow in economic studies at Brookings.

The rule does not need Congressional approval, but Klein doesn't expect it to go into effect and be felt by consumers until next year because of the lengthy process rules undergo, which includes a public comment period. It's also possible that the banking industry will take legal action to fight the rule, which could delay it from going into effect.

The Consumer Banks Association's president and CEO, Lindsey Johnson, has already responded by accusing the CFPB of "seeking to advance a political agenda" and said the rule will harm credit card holders.

The agency proposes the rule as credit card debt has ballooned in the U.S. It rose by 18.5% in the past year, shooting up to \$930.6 billion, a record amount, according to a fourth quarter report from TransUnion, a consumer credit reporting agency.

Bankrate said the average credit card rate is 19.95% as of Feb. 1, which is the highest since the financial services company began tracking them in 1985. Credit card balances had the largest year-over-year increase in more than two decades at 15%, according to the New York Fed's third quarter report on household debt and credit.

Some of that debt can be tied to the Federal Reserve's decision to repeatedly raise interest rates to fight inflation over the past year. The latest increase of 0.25%, announced last week, follows a 0.50% hike in December and previous four rate hikes of 0.75%.

"These Fed rate hikes basically just get passed through to cardholders ... if the Fed moves rates higher

by half a point or three quarters of a point or whatever it is, your rate should move higher by that same amount typically within a statement cycle or two," said Ted Rossman, senior credit cards analyst at Bankrate.

The CFPB March 2022 report on late fees found that the average late fee was \$31 and that repeat late fees were \$36 on average. Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi had the highest average late fees per account.

"In 2019 credit card accounts held by consumers living in the United States' poorest neighborhoods paid twice as much on average in total late fees than those in the richest areas," the report explained.

"The law differentiates between fees and interest but for consumers it's money out of pocket. These [late fees] are a large source of cost to consumers on the margin ... People facing greater economic difficulty and hardship pay more in fees," Klein said.

He added, "For folks who are living paycheck to paycheck, and sometimes that paycheck comes a day or two after the credit card bill is due, these late fees really add up and put a much greater squeeze on those living on the razor's edge."

Casey Quinlan is an economy reporter for States Newsroom, based in Washington, D.C. For the past decade, they have reported on national politics and state politics, LGBTQ rights, abortion access, labor issues, education, Supreme Court news and more for publications including The American Independent, ThinkProgress, New Republic, Rewire News, SCOTUSblog, In These Times and Vox.

White House targets economic development in Central America to reduce migration

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - FEBRUARY 6, 2023 2:03 PM

WASHINGTON — The White House Monday announced nearly \$1 billion in investments to address economic causes of migration in several Central American countries, an effort being spurred by Vice President Kamala Harris.

Spread over several years, 10 private companies from Target to Nestlé are pledging \$950 million to create economic development in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. The plan is an attempt to curb economic-related migration at the U.S.-Mexico border by creating opportunities in those countries, senior administration officials said on Monday during a call with reporters.

"These efforts to address the root causes of migration represent a long-term development effort that will take time, but we're already beginning to see some positive trends," a senior administration official said.

In the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic in April 2020, people from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico made up a majority of migrants at the Southern border.

But that is not the case now and a majority of migrants — 63% — since November 2022 were from other countries such as Colombia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela, according to the Pew Research Center.

The Biden administration has continued the use — through court orders — of the controversial Title 42 policy, which was implemented by the Trump administration in the early stages of the pandemic to bar migrants from claiming asylum.

As a result, more than 2 million migrants have been turned away at the U.S. border, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data. The U.S. Supreme Court later this month will decide whether to keep the policy in place.

Initiative totals \$4.2B

Monday's announcement builds from a May 2021 initiative Harris launched, known as the Call to Action, bringing the total amount of public-private partnership investments to \$4.2 billion from 47 companies, senior administration officials said.

The Call to Action has six main focus areas. They include supporting long-term development of the region such as promoting a reform agenda; digital and financial inclusion; food security that takes into account climate change for resilient agriculture and clean energy; education and workforce development; public

health access; and strengthening democracy and combating corruption.

Harris was also scheduled to meet later Monday with private sector leaders and government officials to strategize next steps, senior administration officials said.

The companies in the new announcement include Chegg, an online learning platform; the Columbia Sportswear Company; Microwd, which offers microloans to women entrepreneurs; Millicom, a telecommunications services in Latin America; Nestle, Nespresso's parent company and Nescafé; Nextil, a garment manufacturing company; Protela-Colombia, a textile manufacturer; Root Capital, a nonprofit social investment fund in rural areas to grow agricultural businesses; Target; and Viamericas, which offers money transfers.

Factors in migration

Economic factors are not the only cause of migration. It also can stem from climate change, political instability and violence, according to research from the Migration Policy Institute, which studies migration patterns across the world.

The administration has directed the U.S. Agency for International Development to help reduce gender-based violence in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. For example, in January, the Department of State launched a \$3 million project for programs to support survivors and invest in education to combat violence in six municipalities in northern Honduras.

Senior administration officials said while there has been increased migration from people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela, the administration's immigration policy for those countries has been based on a parole system rather than economic initiatives, because of the inability to return those migrants to their home countries due to oppressive regimes or violence.

Senior administration officials also noted that there has been a decrease in migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela at the Southern border, due to those newly announced parole programs.

In early January, the administration announced dual immigration strategies that would increase expulsions of migrants who attempt to cross the Southern border, while also expanding opportunities for up to 30,000 migrants each month from Cuba, Haiti and Nicaragua who have U.S.-based financial sponsors and have passed a background check to enter the country legally and would allow them to work temporarily for two years.

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

DNC delivers blow to New Hampshire, Iowa with overhaul of primary calendar

BY: ETHAN DEWITT - FEBRUARY 6, 2023 8:18 AM

The Democratic National Committee approved a presidential primary calendar Saturday that placed South Carolina as the first nominating state in 2024, pushing back New Hampshire and Iowa from their traditional spots in a party-wide push to diversify the early calendar.

In a voice vote at the DNC's winter meeting in Philadelphia, party members voted to place South Carolina first, on Saturday Feb. 3, 2024, followed three days later by Nevada and New Hampshire on Feb. 6, and a week after that by Georgia on Feb. 13 and then by Michigan on Feb. 27.

"Folks, the Democratic Party looks like America, and so does this proposal," said DNC Chairman Jaime Harrison.

The vote gave formal approval to a proposal first put forward by the Rules and Bylaws Committee in early December, which came after a year of presentations from state candidates. It also fulfilled a desire by President Joe Biden to emphasize South Carolina and Nevada over New Hampshire and Iowa, whose populations are majority white.

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"We can't go back in time to fix the mistakes of our past, but by golly, this will help allow us to put our hands on that arc of history and bend it towards justice," said Pete Lee, the vice chairman of the Democratic Party of Oregon, during a debate ahead of the vote.

But the DNC vote clashes with the Republican National Committee's vote in April 2022 to keep the traditional nominating order for its primaries: Iowa, followed by New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada. It also set into motion what is likely to be a bitter conflict in New Hampshire and Iowa over their positions on the calendar.

For its part, New Hampshire has a state law that requires both Republican and Democratic presidential primaries to be held together before any other state's, and its secretary of state, Dave Scanlan, has vowed to hold it first no matter what.

On Saturday, New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu reiterated that vow.

"Joe Biden and the power brokers at the DNC in Washington think New Hampshire's time is up, but it's not in our DNA to take orders from Washington," Sununu wrote on Twitter. "New Hampshire will be going first in 2024."

'Done waiting'

Saturday's vote came after nearly an hour of spirited debate between representatives of Iowa and New Hampshire — who urged the party to reconsider the vote — and committee members from other states, who argued the change was necessary and overdue.

Harrison, of South Carolina, said the calendar "reflects our values and will strengthen our party." He argued each state in the new calendar brings out the party's strengths — from Black Americans in South Carolina to Latino voters in Nevada to union workers in Michigan and Nevada.

"Folks, think about this: Forty percent of enslaved people came to this country, and they came through the Port of Charleston," Harrison said. "... We know how important the Latino voice has been in terms of building this country. It is elevated by pushing Nevada (up)."

Artie Blanco of Nevada agreed. Democrats in her state had long argued that a newly diverse primary was "in the long-term best interest of this Democratic Party," she said. And the new position would be a meaningful boost for Latino voters, she said.

"Fellow Democrats, you can't say you're elevating this coalition's voice but still ask us to wait our turn," she said. "I'm done waiting."

Other state representatives said the calendar provided a new roadmap for Democrats to build support in areas of the country once thought unwinnable. Alan Clendenin, a Florida Democrat, praised the new calendar for bringing a new focus to Southern states and forcing the party to take it seriously.

"The road to victory is going to go through the South," he said. "We are rising, and between South Carolina and putting Georgia on the map, we will achieve victory in 2024 and beyond."

South Carolina Democratic Party Chairman Trav Robertson argued his state's new position would reward the presidential candidates who can compete in diverse environments, not just the ones who have raised the most money.

"The reality is this: 60 to 65% of traditional Democratic voters in the state of South Carolina don't live in one county," he said. "You have to come into our state and work in urban settings, in rural settings in order to put together an organization to win."

In a fiery speech of her own, U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell of Michigan pushed back at arguments from Iowa and New Hampshire that they should keep their positions, countering that Michigan had been a better recent predictor of future presidents.

"Here's the reality," she said. "No one state should have a lock on going first."

Last minute pleas from New Hampshire, Iowa

Representatives of New Hampshire, meanwhile, argued that the DNC's move would have political consequences.

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The DNC proposal approved Saturday granted each state its new slot provided it met a series of conditions. In New Hampshire, those conditions include the repeal of a 1975 law requiring its primary to be the first, as well as the passage of legislation to expand the number of people who can vote by absentee ballot. Both of those requests have been rejected by top Republicans in the state, who control the Legislature and governor's office.

Michigan, Nevada, and South Carolina had met their conditions in time for the Philadelphia meeting, a DNC official said, but New Hampshire and Georgia have not. On Saturday, the DNC approved an extension to June 3 for those two states.

But Joanne Dowdell, New Hampshire's DNC representative on the Rules and Bylaws Committee, argued that whatever the deadline, the demands on the state are impossible to meet. If the demands are not met, the new DNC rules dictate that New Hampshire's presidential primary be pushed back to March, well after the early window.

"It is frustrating because the DNC is set to punish us despite the fact we don't have the ability to unilaterally change state law," she said. "And we are frustrated because as many times as we say it, no one seems to listen when we say that this will only hurt President Biden in our purple battleground state."

Dowdell said that because New Hampshire will likely hold its primary first regardless, any punishments levied against the state would affect support for Biden's re-election.

"If President Biden doesn't file for the New Hampshire primary, it could provide an opening for an insurgent candidate to rise in the state and potentially win the first presidential primary of 2024, something that no one in this room wants to see," Dowdell said.

New Hampshire Democratic Party Chairman Ray Buckley warned that if Granite State voters soured on Democrats, the repercussions could affect the balance of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, both of which are near-evenly divided.

"Try to get to 51 in the U.S. Senate without Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan," said Buckley, referring to New Hampshire's two Democratic senators.

Iowa Democrats — who are eliminated from the early nominating window entirely under the new calendar — also aired frustrations.

Jan Bauer, an Iowa DNC member, said that the Rules and Bylaws Committee had ignored the state's efforts to revamp its caucus system and effectively reshape it to act more like a primary. Those pledged changes came after a series of glitches caused days-long delays in delivering the results of the Iowa Democratic Caucuses in 2020.

Rita Hart, the newly elected chairwoman of the Iowa Democratic Party, said Iowa had been put in an "impossible" position of choosing between the DNC rules and its state laws. She also said the changes "feed the narrative that Democrats have turned their backs on Iowa and on rural America."

"Iowans value common sense, and it just doesn't make sense to entirely remove representation from rural Midwestern states in the pre-window," Hart said.

Scott Brennan, a former chairman of the Iowa Democratic Party, said he opposed the new calendar "from a genuine concern that the proposed calendar and the vast uncertainty surrounding it cannot be resolved in a timely manner."

He said the extensions would not change the fact that two of the states could not comply with the new waiver requirements. He also argued that by approving the new calendar so close to the primaries themselves — almost exactly a year from Saturday's vote — the DNC was setting itself up for a contentious year where states would attempt to overrule the new calendar.

"There is a limited amount of calendar real estate, conflicting state laws, and the GOP calendar that no longer bears any resemblance to ours," Brennan said. "If past is prologue, some states proposed here will spend the coming year maneuvering for their position, and we have created an opportunity for other states to take a run at encroaching at the pre-window."

But James Roosevelt, a Massachusetts committee member and co-chairman of the Rules and Bylaws Committee, praised the effort the committee had made to arrive at its decision.

"This has been a long process, but an open and a fair one," said Roosevelt, who added that it had re-

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sulted from "extensive meetings, discussions, and research."

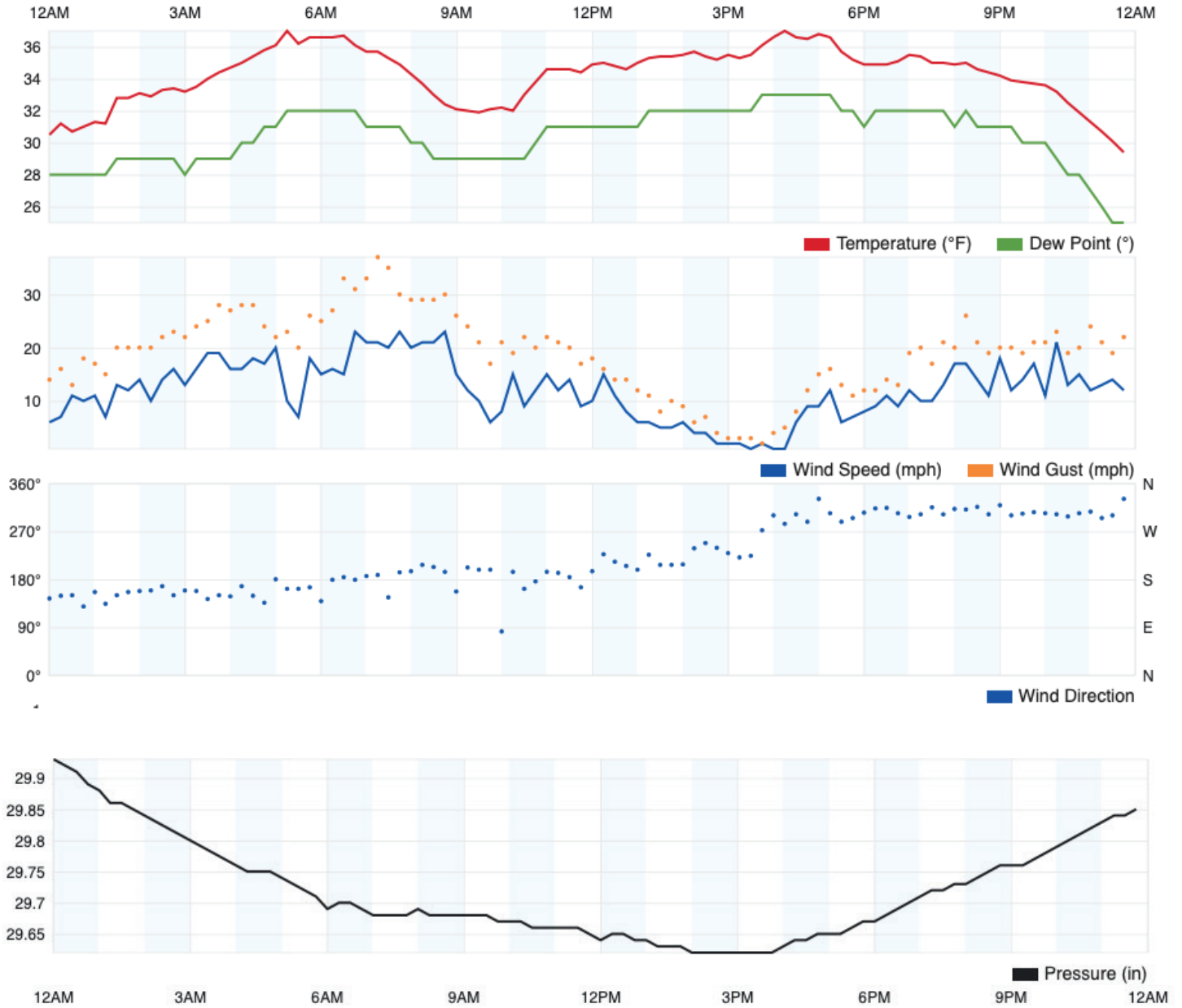
"The new window shows that we are a party that adapts and grows," he said.

Ethan DeWitt is the New Hampshire Bulletin's education reporter. Previously, he worked as the New Hampshire State House reporter for the Concord Monitor, covering the state, the Legislature, and the New Hampshire presidential primary. A Westmoreland native, Ethan started his career as the politics and health care reporter at the Keene Sentinel.

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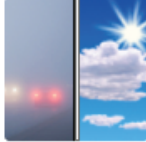




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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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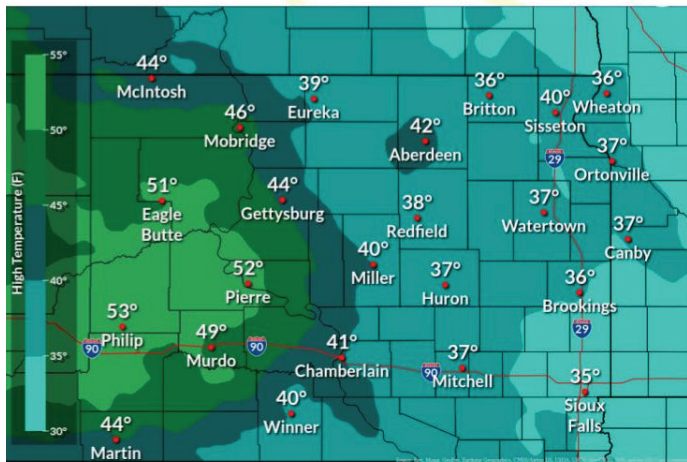
Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Patchy Fog then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Cloudy and Blustery	Blustery. Slight Chance Snow then Partly Sunny	Mostly Clear and Blustery then Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 41 °F	Low: 15 °F	High: 39 °F	Low: 23 °F	High: 31 °F	Low: 4 °F	High: 24 °F

Relatively Mild... Then More Wintry Thursday

Continued snow melt today and Wednesday, with highs above freezing. *Patchy Wednesday AM fog*

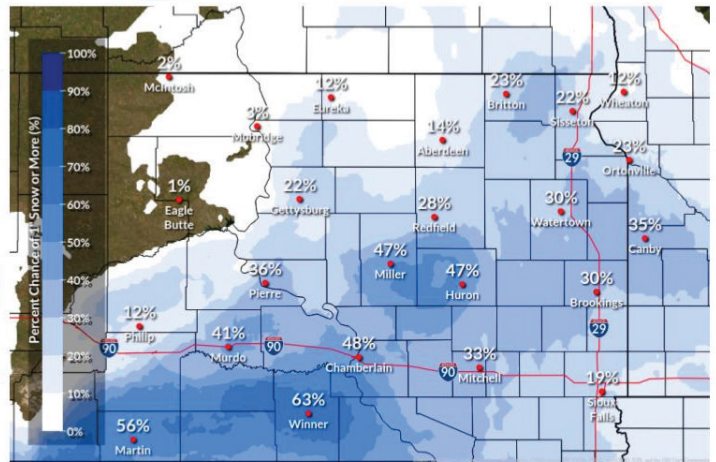
A dusting to locally 1-2" of snow combines with northwesterly wind gusts of 30 to 45 mph Thursday. *Reduced visibility from falling/blowing snow possible*

High Temperatures Today, Tuesday Feb 7th



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Probability of 1" of snow Wed Night - Thursday



Updated: February 7, 2023 4:18 AM

Snow melt will continue today and Wednesday across the area with high temperatures above freezing. However, colder air moves in Thursday, along with blustery conditions and minor snow accumulations. Impacts to travel are possible. Milder air moves back in for the weekend.

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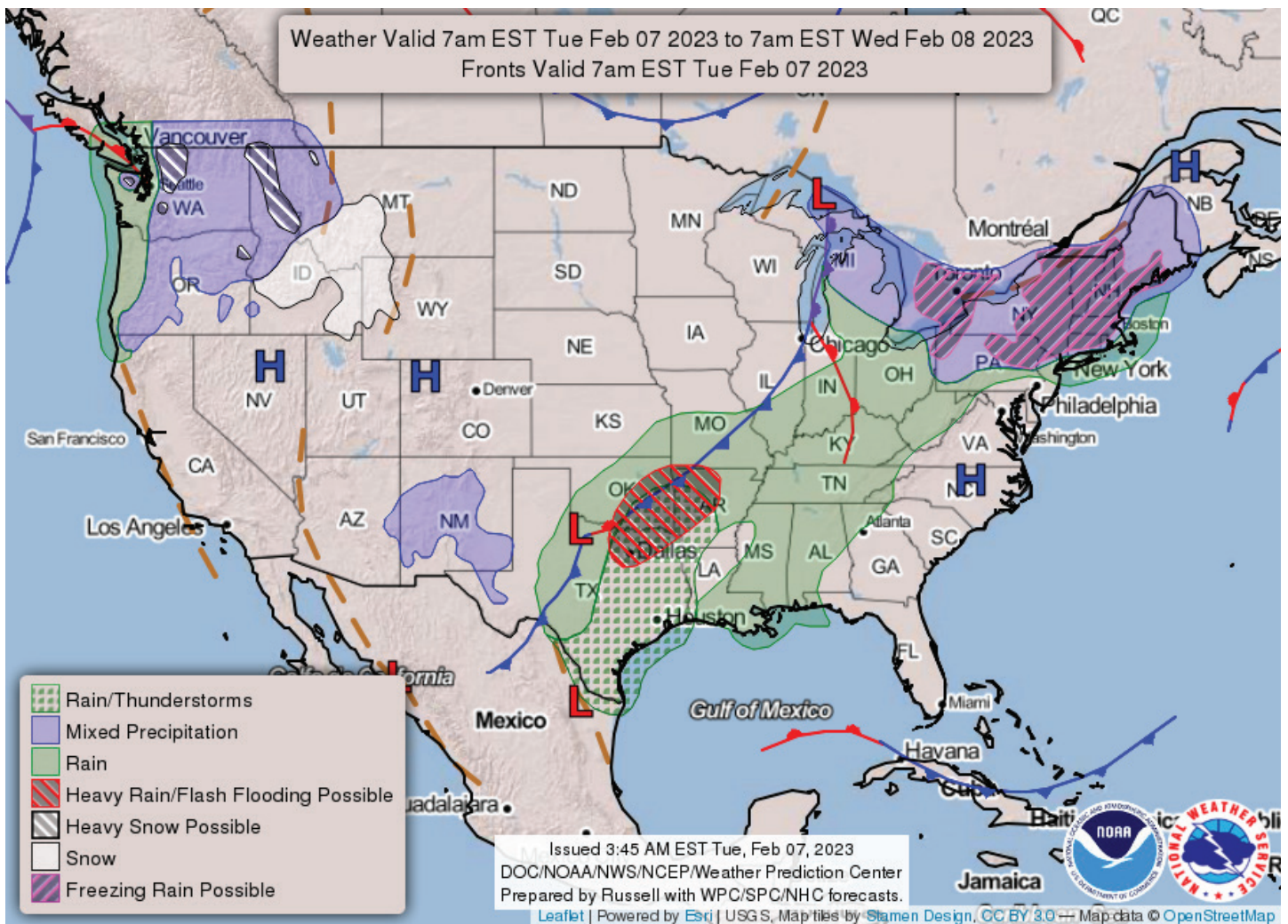
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 37 °F at 4:10 PM
Low Temp: 29 °F at 11:58 PM
Wind: 37 mph at 7:11 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 05 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 62 in 1987
Record Low: -42 in 1895
Average High: 26
Average Low: 4
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.14
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.69
Precip Year to Date: 0.25
Sunset Tonight: 5:49:07 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:42:30 AM



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Today in Weather History

February 7, 1994: Snow falling over the area produced heavy accumulations from central into northeast South Dakota with 11 inches at Kennebec and eight inches at Watertown from the 7th through the 9th. Extreme cold accompanied and followed the snow with low temperatures of 52 below zero at Promise and 45 below zero at Aberdeen on the 9th. Snow accumulation caused a roof to cave in on a drugstore at Bristol. A man died of exposure attempting to walk home near Sioux Falls after his car became stuck in a ditch.

February 7, 2001: Heavy snow of 6 to 16 inches fell across central and northeast South Dakota, resulting in school and activities cancellations, closing of some businesses, and challenging if not impossible travel. Several people became stranded and had to be rescued. There were also flight cancellations and delays, along with some vehicle accidents resulting in minor injuries. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Mound City, Mobridge, Eureka, 7 inches at Milbank and 6 SE McIntosh, 8 inches at Aberdeen, Ipswich, Selby, Iona, and Britton, 9 inches at Clark, 1 S Columbia, Isabel, Webster, and 10 inches at Roscoe, Watertown, and 1 W of Summit. Locations with snowfall of a foot included Mission Ridge, Murdo, 4 NW Onida, Castlewood, 23 N Highmore, and Timber Lake. Thirteen inches of snow fell at Canning and Fort Pierre, 14 inches fell at Gettysburg, Eagle Butte, and Pierre with 15 inches at Miller and 16 inches of snow at Clear Lake, Mellette, and Faulkton.

February 7, 2010: A compact but strong area of low pressure moved from Canada and across the Northern Plains from the 7th through the 9th. A prolonged period of moderate to heavy snow developed over far northeast South Dakota and west-central Minnesota, bringing 6 to 8 inches of snow to the area. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Milbank, Wheaton, and Ortonville; 7 inches at Clear Lake, Sisseton, and Artichoke Lake; 8 inches at Summit, Victor, Wilmot, and Browns Valley.

1812: The Hard Shock of the New Madrid Earthquake series strikes the area around the small town of New Madrid, Missouri. A three-mile-long island, Island #32, was completely sunk! The Mississippi River once again ran backward. This major shock marked the beginning of the end of New Madrid's extended ordeal, even though aftershocks would continue to be felt for years, and the fault is still active.

1835: A Great Freeze took place from February 2-9 across southern Georgia, southeastern South Carolina, and northern Florida. During this freeze, the St. Johns River was frozen, "several rods from the shore," and people were able to walk a distance from the shore. Many citruses and other fruit trees were killed to the ground, never to grow again, when temperatures reached as low as 1°F in Charleston and 8°F in Jacksonville. A Florida gentleman told a newspaper that the state "appeared as desolate as if a fire had swept over it" after the severe freeze of that winter season. According to Florida Citrus Mutual, this freeze was so severe that it is considered an impact freeze. This indicates that the freeze annihilates entire groves across the state, killing both mature and young citrus trees while causing a profound economic impact on the citrus industry and prompting growers to replant farther south. This freeze ended attempts to grow citrus in southern Georgia, southeastern South Carolina, and northern Florida.

1892: The temperature falls to 90 degrees below zero in Verkhoyansk, Russia, on this day. The temperature was considered the coldest temperature ever recorded in the Northern Hemisphere. However, this reading was done by a spirit thermometer, which is less accurate than a mercury thermometer. The accepted record was 90 degrees below zero in Oimaykon on February 6, 1933. However, recently published report by the WMO, the coldest temperature in the Northern Hemisphere is -69.6°C (-93.3°F) on December 22nd, 1991 at Klinck Automatic Weather Station (AWS) Greenland.

1904: A small fire in the business district of Baltimore, Maryland becomes wind-whipped into an uncontrollable conflagration that engulfs a large portion of the city by evening.

1933: The USS Ramapo, a 478 ft. Navy oiler was traveling from Manila to San Diego when it encountered the tallest rogue wave ever recorded. The wave measured 112 feet in height was caused by 70 mph winds over a broad fetch of the ocean.

2017: Six tornadoes traveled across southern Louisiana. The strongest tornado, an EF-3, impacted eastern New Orleans.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE SEARCH CONTINUES

Consider this: there are twenty-one letters in the Hebrew alphabet. In Proverbs 31:10 there are twenty-two letters, forming an acrostic. It begins with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet in the final chapter of Proverbs. Obviously, believing that the Holy Spirit is the infallible author of each verse in the Bible, this did not happen by accident. Certainly, there is a significant message contained in these few verses. The use of the acrostic model was used by teachers and scholars of the laws and prophets to make the message easy to memorize.

First, the acrostic was used to provide a helpful way to organize information for future use. A wife of noble character, as pictured in these few verses, includes items that young women would want to include in their resumes as they matured. It is also the criteria for men to apply to women when seeking a wife. The traits that are presented in these verses are both goals to be achieved and traits to be sought in a wife.

Second, the term noble implies capabilities, character, and efficiency. It is the same term used when a wife is spoken of as the crown of her husband.

Third, "who can find?" The noble wife is rare and not easily found. However, it does not mean that the search is not worth the effort. Quite the contrary.

Ruth was described as a "woman of noble character." Her story echoes throughout history. How fortunate we are that God gave an example for women to follow and men to search for in a wife.

Prayer: Lord, how blest we are that You provide us with detailed instructions on what matters most in life! May we align our minds and hearts with Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Proverbs 31:10



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)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 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
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 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
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.03.23

1 4 50 54 59 17

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$31,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 42 Mins
DRAW: 43 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.06.23

3 4 20 32 35 6

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$34,670,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 42
DRAW: Mins 43 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.06.23

1 5 15 39 46 16

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 12 Mins 43
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.04.23

7 10 14 30 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$42,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 42
DRAW: Mins 43 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.06.23

14 19 58 59 68 16

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 41
DRAW: Mins 43 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.06.23

5 11 22 23 69 7

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 41
DRAW: Mins 43 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Arlington 49, Dell Rapids St. Mary 47
Avon 59, Kimball/White Lake 57, OT
Bon Homme 50, Menno 37
Canton 50, Parker 37
Chester 70, Flandreau Indian 29
Colman-Egan 45, Baltic 37
Elkton-Lake Benton 62, Canistota 41
Ethan 52, James Valley Christian 29
Freeman 60, Gregory 53
Harrisburg 59, Tea Area 57
Hay Springs, Neb. 57, Oelrichs 22
Jones County 55, Kadoka Area 39
Leola/Frederick 35, Langford 30
Lyman 58, Chamberlain 46
Marty Indian 64, Pine Ridge 56
Mobridge-Pollock 66, Crow Creek 49
St. Thomas More 56, Red Cloud 46
Sunshine Bible Academy 35, Mitchell Christian 34
Waubay/Summit 63, Wilmot 28
Webster 47, Britton-Hecla 37
White River 59, Colome 21

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Baltic 76, Colman-Egan 56
Bridgewater-Emery 59, Scotland 28
Centerville 49, Chester 48
Dell Rapids St. Mary 76, Arlington 32
Ethan 63, James Valley Christian 58
Hanson 58, McCook Central/Montrose 54
Herreid/Selby Area 71, Napoleon/G-S, N.D. 58
Hills-Beaver Creek, Minn. 63, Elkton-Lake Benton 55
Lennox 75, Tri-Valley 48
Mobridge-Pollock 64, Crow Creek 60
Potter County 77, Stanley County 61
Sisseton 72, Flandreau Indian 71, OT
Tea Area 78, Parkston 22
Webster 51, Britton-Hecla 22
Yankton 85, Huron 57

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

'Dances With Wolves' actor charged in Nevada sex abuse case
By RIO YAMAT Associated Press

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NORTH LAS VEGAS, Nev. (AP) — A former “Dances With Wolves” actor accused of sexually abusing Indigenous girls and women for two decades in multiple states has been charged in Nevada for crimes that prosecutors said occurred in the Las Vegas-area starting in 2012.

Nathan Chasing Horse, 46, was formally charged Monday morning during a brief appearance in a North Las Vegas courtroom full of his friends and relatives who had hoped to see him released on bail. But a judge postponed hearing arguments about his custody status until Wednesday to give Chasing Horse’s new California-based attorney, Alexandra Kazaria, additional time to obtain permission from the State Bar of Nevada to represent him in the case.

Nevada law requires prosecutors to present convincing evidence that a defendant should remain in custody. Clark County Deputy District Attorney Jessica Walsh said last week that she expected testimony from Las Vegas police detectives, FBI special agents and victims.

In the meantime, Chasing Horse is being held without bail at a jail in downtown Las Vegas. He has been in custody since his Jan. 31 arrest near the North Las Vegas home he shares with his five wives.

Chasing Horse is charged with eight felonies, including sex trafficking, sexual assault against a child younger than 16, and child abuse, according to a criminal complaint. Prosecutors also filed an additional felony charge Monday in connection with what detectives said were videos saved on a phone showing sexual assaults of a minor.

Seated opposite of Chasing Horse’s family on Monday, some of the victims and their supporters held signs inside the courtroom reading “NO MORE STOLEN SISTERS” and “WOMEN AREN’T PRISONERS.”

Rulon Pete, executive director of the Las Vegas Indian Center, said after the hearing that the victims had been prepared “to help out with making sure justice has been served.”

“Unfortunately there’s a lot of anxiety they’re experiencing,” he told The Associated Press after speaking with the victims and prosecutors. “When this got pushed back, it was like adding more weight to the situation.”

He did not enter a plea Monday after he was formally charged. In Nevada, defendants do not enter a plea until their criminal case is bound over to a state district court, either after a grand jury indictment or after a judge decides prosecutors have enough evidence for the defendant to stand trial.

Chasing Horse played the role of Sioux tribe member Smiles a Lot in Kevin Costner’s 1990 Oscar-winning film.

Since then, he has built a reputation among tribes across the United States and in Canada as a “medicine man.” Chasing Horse, police said, abused that position and took underage wives over two decades in multiple states, including South Dakota, Montana and Nevada, where he has lived for about a decade. He also was banished from the Fort Peck Reservation in Poplar, Montana, in 2015 following similar allegations.

Detectives described Chasing Horse in a 50-page search warrant as the leader of a cult known as The Circle, whose followers believed he could communicate with higher powers.

Pete, of the Las Vegas Indian Center, described the role of the medicine man in their culture as a highly respected leadership post. “They’re like priests, if you will.”

“You follow what they teach,” he said, adding that the victims have shown great courage by speaking out despite the intimidation and threats Pete said they have faced since Chasing Horse’s arrest.

An arrest report for Chasing Horse shows at least six victims have been identified, including one who was 13 when she said she was abused, and another who said she was offered to him as a “gift” when she was 15.

After SWAT officers took him into custody last week, detectives searched the family’s home and found guns, 41 pounds (18.5 kilograms) of marijuana and psilocybin mushrooms, according to the arrest report.

The criminal complaint filed Monday also charges Chasing Horse with two misdemeanors in connection with a dead bald eagle and parts of a dead hawk discovered during the search of his property.

Chasing Horse was born on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, which is home to the Sicangu Sioux, one of the seven tribes of the Lakota nation.

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Group: 1-in-5 US adults will bet on this year's Super Bowl

By WAYNE PARRY Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — A record 50.4 million American adults plan to bet on this year's Super Bowl, wagering a total of \$16 billion, the gambling industry's national trade group predicted Tuesday.

The American Gaming Association forecasts that 1-in-5 American adults will place a bet on Sunday's NFL championship game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Kansas City Chiefs.

The estimate includes legal bets, and those placed with illegal bookies or casually among friends or relatives.

The total amount expected to be wagered this year is more than double the amount from last year as the legal U.S. sports betting market continues to grow.

There are three additional states offering legal sports betting this year — Kansas, Ohio and Massachusetts — compared with a year earlier, for a total of 33 states plus Washington, D.C. Maryland also added mobile sports betting in the past year, but it had in-person wagering for last year's Super Bowl.

More than half of all American adults live in a market where sports betting is legal.

"Every year, the Super Bowl serves to highlight the benefits of legal sports betting: Bettors are transitioning to the protections of the regulated market, leagues and sports media are seeing increased engagement, and legal operators are driving needed tax revenue to states across the country," said Bill Miller, the association's president and CEO.

Hard data is backing up predictions of a record-setting betting market for this year's game. GeoComply, which handles nearly all the online betting traffic for the U.S. sports betting market to verify a customer is in a particular location where such bets are legal, says it has recorded over 550 million geolocation checks during the NFL playoffs from Jan. 14 to 29.

That's up 50% from the same period last year, and the group is predicting record-setting volume for this year's Super Bowl.

Eilers & Krejcik Gaming Research, an independent analytics firm in California, looked solely at legal bets. It predicted a total of just over \$1 billion this year, led by Nevada (\$155 million); New York (\$111 million); Pennsylvania (\$91 million); Ohio (\$85 million) and New Jersey (\$84 million.) Their research was not involved in the AGA predictions.

The company estimated 10 to 15% of that total would be wagered live after the game begins, and that 15 to 20% would come in the form of same-game parlays, or a combination of bets involving the same game, such as betting on the winner, the total points scored and how many passing yards Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts will accumulate.

The AGA survey found bettors evenly split, with 44% backing the Chiefs and an identical percentage betting on the Eagles.

The Eagles were 1.5-point favorites as of Monday night on FanDuel, the official odds provider to The Associated Press.

There is a vast array of bets offered on the big game, from the most basic predictions of which team will win and by how many points, to wagering on the total amount of points scored in the game.

Also popular are so-called proposition or prop bets on individual player performances, like whether Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes will throw two or fewer touchdown passes or how many rushing yards Eagles running back Miles Sanders will accumulate.

For the Super Bowl, these bets encompass outcomes as unusual as whether the opening coin toss will come up heads or tails; whether the final score of the game has ever happened before as the score of a past Super Bowl, and even what color of Gatorade will be dumped on the winning coach.

Biden aims to deliver reassurance in State of Union address

By ZEKE MILLER and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is ready to offer a reassuring assessment of the nation's condition rather than roll out flashy policy proposals as he delivers his second State of the Union address

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on Tuesday night seeking to overcome pessimism in the country and concerns about his own leadership.

His speech before a politically divided Congress comes as the nation struggles to make sense of confounding cross-currents at home and abroad — economic uncertainty, a wearying war in Ukraine, growing tensions with China among them — and warily sizes up Biden's fitness for a likely reelection bid.

The president will stand at the House rostrum at a time when just a quarter of U.S. adults say things in the country are headed in the right direction, according to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. About three-quarters say things are on the wrong track. And a majority of Democrats don't want Biden to seek another term.

Biden will aim to confront those sentiments head on, aides said, while at the same time trying to avoid sounding insensitive to Americans' concerns.

Brian Deese, director of the National Economic Council, said Biden would "acknowledge and meet American people where they are," adding that their "economic anxiety is real."

"I think the core message is: We have to make more progress, but people should feel optimism," he added.

Chapman University presidential historian Luke Nichter said the closest parallel to Biden's present circumstance may be the 1960s, when global uncertainty met domestic disquiet. Biden, he said, has an opportunity to be a "calming presence" for the country.

"Usually we're looking for an agenda: 'Here's what he plans to do.' I don't know that that's really realistic," Nichter said. "I think Americans' expectations are pretty low of what Congress is actually going to achieve. And so I think right now, sentiment and tone, and helping Americans feel better about their circumstances, I think are going to go a long way."

The setting for Biden's speech will be markedly different than a year ago, when it was Democratic stalwart Nancy Pelosi seated behind him as speaker. She's been replaced by GOP House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, and it's unclear what kind of reception restive Republican will give the Democratic president.

McCarthy on Monday vowed to be "respectful" during the address and said he asked Biden to refrain from using the phrase "extreme MAGA Republicans," which he deployed on the campaign trail in 2022.

"I won't tear up the speech, I won't play games," he told reporters, a reference to former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's dramatic action after former President Donald Trump's final State of the Union address.

Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who gained a national profile as Trump's press secretary, was set to deliver the Republican response to Biden's speech.

With COVID-19 restrictions now lifted, the White House and legislators from both parties are inviting guests designed to drive home political messages with their presence in the House chamber. The parents of Tyre Nichols, who was severely beaten by police officers in Memphis and later died, are among those expected to be seated with first lady Jill Biden. Other Biden guests include the rock star Bono and the 26-year-old who disarmed a gunman in last month's Monterey Park, California, shooting.

Biden is shifting his sights after spending his first two years pushing through major bills such as the bipartisan infrastructure package, a bill to promote high-tech manufacturing and climate legislations. With Republicans now in control of the House, Biden is turning his focus to implementing the massive laws and making sure voters credit him for the improvements rather than crafting major new initiatives.

It's largely by necessity. Biden faces a newly empowered GOP that is itching to undo many of his achievements and vowing to pursue a multitude of investigations — including looking into the recent discoveries of classified documents from his time as vice president at his home and former office.

At the same time, Biden will need to find a way to work across the aisle to raise the federal debt limit by this summer and keep the government funded. Biden has insisted that he won't negotiate on meeting the country's debt obligations; Republicans have been equally adamant that Biden must make spending concessions.

On the eve of the president's address, McCarthy challenged Biden to come to the negotiating table with House Republicans to slash spending as part of a deal to raise the debt ceiling.

"Mr. President, it's time to get to work," McCarthy said in remarks from the speaker's balcony at the Capitol.

While hopes for large-scale bipartisanship are slim, Biden was set to reissue his 2022 appeal for Con-

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gress to get behind his "unity agenda" of actions to address the opioid epidemic, mental health, veterans' health and fighting cancer.

The White House said the president would call for extending the new \$35 per month price cap on insulin for people on Medicare to everyone in the country. He would also push Congress to quadruple the one percent tax on corporate share buybacks that was enacted in Democrats' climate and health care bill passed last year known as the Inflation Reduction Act.

The speech comes days after Biden ordered the military to shoot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon that flew brazenly across the country, captivating the nation and serving as a reminder of tense relations between the two global powers.

Last year's address occurred just days after Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine and as many in the West doubted Kyiv's ability to withstand the onslaught. Over the past year, the U.S. and other allies have sent tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance to bolster Ukraine's defenses. Now, Biden must make the case — both at home and abroad — for sustaining that coalition as the war drags on.

"The president will really want to reinforce just what a significant accomplishment has already been achieved and then to reinforce how much more has to be done, how we are committed to doing it, and how we will ask for a bipartisan basis the U.S. Congress to join us in doing that work," national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Monday.

While COVID-19 has eased at home, Biden will turn his sights to other national ills, including the deadly opioid epidemic, gun violence and police abuses.

The president spent much of the weekend into Monday reviewing speech drafts with aides at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland.

Senior White House adviser Anita Dunn will preview broad themes of Biden's address to Democratic lawmakers throughout the day on Tuesday, starting with a breakfast with House Democrats on Capitol Hill.

McCarthy called on Biden to embrace the Republican effort to put the nation's finances on a path toward a balanced budget, which would require deep and politically unpopular reductions in federal spending that Biden and Democrats have vehemently resisted.

"We must move towards a balanced budget and insist on genuine accountability for every dollar we spend," McCarthy said.

He insisted cuts to Medicare and Social Security, the popular health and retirement programs primarily for older Americans, were "off the table" in any budget negotiation. The GOP leader also said "defaulting on our debt is not an option."

The White House has insisted Republicans cannot be trusted to protect the programs and blasted Republicans for "threatening to actively throw our economy into a tailspin with a default" by putting conditions on the debt limit.

Lucky player in Washington wins \$754.6M Powerball prize

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Someone in Washington state overcame steep odds to win a \$754.6 million Powerball jackpot.

The winning numbers Monday night were 05, 11, 22, 23, 69 and the Powerball 07.

Lottery officials said in a statement early Tuesday that a single ticket matched all six numbers and that ticket sales pushed the jackpot higher than an earlier \$747 million estimate.

The full jackpot is for a winner opting for an annuity distributed in one immediate but partial payout followed by additional payments over 29 years that increase by 5% annually. The winner also can opt for a one-time cash payment of \$407.2 million.

Both prizes available are the amounts before taxes, Powerball said.

The jackpot for the next drawing scheduled for Wednesday is \$20 million, according to the lottery's website.

Monday night's win was the first Powerball jackpot win since Nov. 19. That winless streak allowed the prize to grow larger and larger until it stood as the ninth-largest in U.S. history.

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Higher interest rates have allowed annuity payments to increase compared with earlier jackpots, when rates were lower. Most winners prefer the immediate cash prize.

The game's abysmal odds of 1 in 292.2 million are designed to build big prizes drawing more players. That strategy certainly has worked recently, as someone in Maine won a \$1.35 billion Mega Millions prize in January and a California player hit a record \$2.04 billion Powerball jackpot last November. No one has claimed either of those prizes.

Powerball is played in 45 states, as well as Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Russian shells spark hospital fire before expected assault

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian shelling hit more civilian targets in Ukraine, starting a fire at a town's hospital and damaging five apartment buildings, local officials said Tuesday, as Ukrainian authorities reported a Moscow troop buildup in eastern areas before what Kyiv suspected was an impending new offensive by Russia around the anniversary of its invasion.

A hospital in the northeastern town of Vovchansk caught fire late Monday as a result of the shelling, regional Ukrainian emergency services reported.

The shelling caused multiple fires in the town, including at its two-story municipal hospital, the State Emergency Service in the northeastern Kharkiv region said in an online statement.

Emergency crews evacuated eight civilians from the site before putting out the blaze, which caused no casualties, authorities said.

Vovchansk is in the Kharkiv region, which was occupied by Russia after its full-scale invasion began on Feb. 24 and subsequently retaken by Ukraine during a counteroffensive last year.

The anticipated Russian push may seek to recapture territory Moscow lost in that counteroffensive.

Ukrainian officials say they expect the new drive to come in eastern and southern Ukraine, as the Kremlin strives to secure areas it has illegally annexed and where it claims its rule is welcomed.

Russian forces are "regrouping" as they attempt to break Ukrainian lines in five areas in the country's east and northeast, the Ukrainian military reported Tuesday.

The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said Moscow was focusing its efforts near the towns of Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Novopavlivka in the eastern Donetsk region, as well as Kupiansk in the Kharkiv province.

In the Donetsk region, Russian forces also kept up their shelling of Vuhledar, a mining town that has been one of Moscow's key targets, the Ukrainian presidential office said. Five apartment buildings were destroyed in the town, the office said, which had a prewar population of 14,000.

Donetsk province has seen a marked influx of Russian troops in the past few days, according to regional Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko.

"The transfer of Russian army units goes on day and night. (Russian) shelling intensifies, pressure from the Russians intensifies each day," Kyrylenko said on Ukrainian television.

Russia is also preparing for a major offensive in the eastern Luhansk region, directly north of Donetsk, local Gov. Serhii Haidai said in televised remarks.

The number of Russian attacks in the province increased "dramatically" on Monday and overnight, he said.

"The occupiers are looking for weak points and have brought a lot of equipment and thousands of troops to the front line," Haidai said.

A dozen towns and villages in the northeastern Kharkiv region also came under Russian shelling in the past 24 hours, the presidential office said.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres expressed concern about an uptick in fighting as the winter draws to a close.

Peace prospects "keep diminishing" and "the chances of further escalation and bloodshed keep growing," he said in a speech late Monday.

Battlefield setbacks have embarrassed the Kremlin, and Russian President Vladimir Putin is keen to ce-

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ment public support for the war. Ensuring Kremlin rule in the eastern Donbas industrial region, bordering Russia, is expected to be a key objective.

Some military analysts are skeptical, however, about Russia's ability to mount a large new offensive in coming weeks. Ukraine and Russia are both still training their new troops and amassing weapons.

The U.K. Ministry of Defense said in an assessment Tuesday that Russia is "requiring undermanned, inexperienced units to achieve unrealistic objectives due to political and professional pressure."

"Russian leaders will likely continue to demand sweeping advances," it added. "It remains unlikely that Russia can build up the forces needed to substantially affect the outcome of the war within the coming weeks."

Michael Kofman, an American military analyst and director of Russia Studies at the CAN, a research organization in Arlington, Virginia, tweeted on Monday it was unclear how big an offensive Russia is able to mount.

He added, "but I suspect it may prove underwhelming, focused largely on the Donbas."

Meanwhile, the shelling kept Ukraine's civilian population under pressure in some areas of the country.

Russia launched six missile and two dozen air attacks as well as 75 shelling incidents hitting civilian targets in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk and Kherson, over the past 24 hours, the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces said in a statement Tuesday.

About 60,000 households in Marhanets were left without water after Russian shelling near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant cut the power supply to a local pumping station, authorities reported.

Mykola Lukashuk, who heads the Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council, accused Russian forces of firing on towns and villages neighboring the plant, Europe's largest, with heavy artillery and multiple rocket-launchers overnight.

Quake deaths pass 5,000 as Turkey, Syria seek survivors

By MEHMET GUZEL, GHAITH ALSAYED and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ADANA, Turkey (AP) — Rescuers raced Tuesday to find survivors in the rubble of thousands of buildings brought down by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake and multiple aftershocks that struck eastern Turkey and neighboring Syria, with the discovery of more bodies raising the death toll to more than 5,000.

Countries around the world dispatched teams to assist in the rescue efforts, and Turkey's disaster management agency said more than 24,400 emergency personnel were now on the ground. But with such a wide swath of territory hit by Monday's earthquake and nearly 6,000 buildings confirmed to have collapsed in Turkey alone, their efforts were spread thin.

Attempts to reach survivors were also impeded by temperatures below freezing and close to 200 aftershocks, which made the search through unstable structures perilous.

Nurgul Atay told The Associated Press she could hear her mother's voice beneath the rubble of a collapsed building in the city of Antakya, the capital of Hatay province, but that her and others efforts to get into the ruins had been futile without any rescue crews and heavy equipment to help.

"If only we could lift the concrete slab we'd be able to reach her," she said. "My mother is 70-years-old, she won't be able to withstand this for long."

Across Hatay province, just southwest of the earthquake's epicenter, officials say as many as 1,500 buildings were destroyed and many people reported relatives being trapped under the rubble with no aid or rescue teams arriving.

In areas where teams worked, occasional cheers broke out through the night as survivors were brought out of the rubble.

The quake, which was centered in Turkey's southeastern province of Kahramanmaraş, sent residents of Damascus and Beirut rushing into the street and was felt as far away as Cairo.

Sebastien Gay, the head of mission in Syria for Doctors Without Borders, said health facilities in northern Syria were overwhelmed with medical personnel working around "around the clock to respond to the huge numbers of wounded."

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In Turkey's Hatay province, thousands of people sheltered in sports centers or fair halls, while others spent the night outside, huddled in blankets around fires.

Turkey has large numbers of troops in the border region with Syria and has tasked the military to aid in the rescue efforts, including setting up tents for the homeless and a field hospital in Hatay province. Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said a humanitarian aid brigade based in Ankara and eight military search and rescue teams had also been deployed.

A navy ship docked on Tuesday at the province's port of Iskenderun, where a hospital collapsed, to transport survivors in need of medical care to the nearby city of Mersin. Thick, black smoke rose from another area of the port, where firefighters have not yet been able to douse a fire that broke out among shipping containers that were toppled by the earthquake.

In the Turkish city of Gaziantep, a provincial capital about 33 kilometers (20 miles) from the epicenter, people took refuge in shopping malls, stadiums, mosques and community centers.

Turkey's Vice President Fuat Oktay said the total number of deaths in Turkey had passed 3,400, with some 21,000 people injured.

The death toll in government-held areas of Syria climbed over 800 people, with some 1,400 injured, according to the Health Ministry. In the country's rebel-held northwest, the opposition's Syrian Civil Defense, or White Helmets, the paramedic group leading rescue operations, said that at least 790 were killed and more than 2,200 injured.

Authorities fear the death toll will keep climbing as the rescuers look for survivors among tangles of metal and concrete spread across the region beset by Syria's 12-year civil war and refugee crisis.

In the latest pledges of international help, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said he was preparing to swiftly dispatch a 60-person search and rescue team as well as medical supplies and 50 soldiers. Pakistan's government sent a flight carrying relief supplies and a 50-member search and rescue team early Tuesday, and said there will be daily aid flights to Syria and Turkey from Wednesday. India said it would send two search and rescue teams, including specially trained dogs and medical personnel.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will travel to Ankara Wednesday to express his condolences and solidarity, according to a statement from Islamabad.

U.S. President Joe Biden called Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to express condolences and offer assistance to the NATO ally. The White House said it was sending search-and-rescue teams to support Turkey's efforts.

The quake piled more misery on a region that has seen tremendous suffering over the past decade. On the Syrian side, the affected area is divided between government-controlled territory and the country's last opposition-held enclave, which is surrounded by Russian-backed government forces. Turkey is home to millions of refugees from the Syrian civil war.

In the rebel-held enclave, hundreds of families remained trapped in rubble, the opposition emergency organization known as the White Helmets said in a statement. The area is packed with some 4 million people displaced from other parts of the country by the war. Many live in buildings that were already damaged by military bombardments.

Strained medical centers quickly filled with injured people, rescue workers said. Some facilities had to be emptied, including a maternity hospital, according to the SAMS medical organization.

More than 7,800 people were rescued across 10 provinces, according to Orhan Tatar, an official with Turkey's disaster management authority.

The region sits on top of major fault lines and is frequently shaken by earthquakes. Some 18,000 were killed in similarly powerful earthquakes that hit northwest Turkey in 1999.

The U.S. Geological Survey measured Monday's quake at 7.8, with a depth of 18 kilometers (11 miles). Hours later, another quake, likely triggered by the first, struck more than 100 kilometers (60 miles) away with 7.5 magnitude.

The second jolt caused a multistory apartment building in the Turkish city of Sanliurfa to topple onto the street in a cloud of dust as bystanders screamed, according to video of the scene.

Thousands of buildings were reported collapsed in a wide area extending from Syria's cities of Aleppo

and Hama to Turkey's Diyarbakir, more than 330 kilometers (200 miles) to the northeast.

China says will 'safeguard interests' over balloon shutdown

BEIJING (AP) — China said Tuesday it will "resolutely safeguard its legitimate rights and interests" over the shooting down of a suspected Chinese spy balloon by the United States, as relations between the two countries deteriorate further.

The balloon prompted U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to cancel a highly-anticipated visit to Beijing this week that had offered slight hopes for an improvement in relations.

China claims it was a civilian balloon used for meteorological research but has refused to say to which government department or company it belongs.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning on Tuesday reiterated that the "unmanned airship" posed no threat and entered U.S. airspace accidentally.

Mao again criticized the U.S. for overreacting rather than adopting a "calm, professional" manner, and for using force in bringing the balloon down Saturday in the Atlantic Ocean just off the U.S. coast.

Asked if China wanted the debris returned, she only reasserted that the balloon "belongs to China."

"The balloon does not belong to the U.S. The Chinese government will continue to resolutely safeguard its legitimate rights and interests," Mao said at a daily briefing without giving further details.

Beijing's attitude has hardened considerably following a surprisingly mild initial response on Friday, in which it described the balloon's presence as an accident and expressed "regret" for the balloon having entered the U.S.

Subsequent statements have grown firmer, in the same tone used to confront the U.S. over issues from Taiwan to trade, technology restrictions and China's claim to the South China Sea. China says it lodged a formal complaint with the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, accusing Washington of having "obviously overreacted and seriously violated the spirit of international law and international practice."

Recent developments have laid bare the extremely fragile nature of what many had hoped could be a manageable economic, political and military rivalry.

U.S.-China tensions have stirred deep concern in Washington and among many of its allies. They worry that outright conflict could have a strong negative impact on the global economy, especially since Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year, on which China has largely sided with Moscow.

Balloons either suspected of or confirmed to be Chinese have been spotted over countries from Japan to Costa Rica. Taiwanese media have reported that mysterious white balloons had been spotted over the island at least three times in the past two years.

That's especially concerning because China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary and routinely sends warships and military aircraft into the island's air defense identification zone and across the middle line of the Taiwan Strait dividing the sides.

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense has never explicitly linked the balloons to China. However, the recent furor over the Chinese balloon in the U.S. brought attention back to these mysterious sightings.

The size of the Chinese balloon in the U.S., as well as the equipment attached to it, had all drawn intense speculation as to its purpose. Along with Washington, most security experts dismissed Beijing's assertions that the balloon was intended for meteorological rather than spying purposes.

But it doesn't look like any weather balloon that Cheng Ming-dian, head of Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau, has seen.

"In the meteorology world, I haven't found a person who has seen or heard of a weather balloon that looks like this," Cheng said.

While China has in recent months moderated the abrasive tone of its diplomacy, it is "still pursuing those broader, long-term strategic agendas on the economic, tech and security fronts," said Collin Koh Swee Lean research fellow at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University.

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"In other words, if you cast the change in rhetoric aside, we're in fact not seeing any real meaningful improvement in the extant China-U.S. relations, which will continue to be dominated by rivalry," Koh said. "And the latest spy balloon incident only looks set to broaden the schism."

Ticket demand, anticipation grows as LeBron nears Kareem

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Courtside seats 166 and 167 at the arena where the Los Angeles Lakers play their home games are pretty much as good as it gets.

The people occupying those chairs when LeBron James breaks Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's NBA scoring record will have an up-close view, with their feet on the very hardwood where the history-making shot happens.

History, in this case, comes with a cost.

On Monday, those seats for Tuesday's game against the Oklahoma City Thunder could have been had for \$75,000 — each. Total price for the two seats with Ticketmaster fees: \$181,500. And there's no guarantee James will even break the record Tuesday; in fact, at his current scoring pace, he would be just shy of the mark when the Thunder game ends.

Which is why those same seats are even pricier Thursday for the Lakers' next game against the Milwaukee Bucks — the two teams Abdul-Jabbar played for during his Hall of Fame career. For that game: \$242,000, including the fees. But history suggests prices will come down; industry experts have long said extravagantly priced tickets rarely fetch the giant number listed.

Don't be mistaken, though. The best seats will still cost plenty.

"For the game on Thursday, we did sell a pair of tickets, courtside seats, for \$24,000 a ticket, \$48,000 total," said Kyle Zorn, a brand manager at the online ticket marketplace TickPick. "I feel like people are betting on the storyline that he does it against Kareem's former team, but he could easily score 36 points Tuesday and then the market for the game Thursday could completely crash."

Whenever the record falls — maybe Tuesday, maybe Thursday, and it's doubtful the chase goes past that unless James isn't playing for some reason — it will be an event.

The NBA has already changed the national television schedule for Tuesday, rearranging things to get the Lakers-Thunder game into the second slot of the usual TNT doubleheader for that night — with Commissioner Adam Silver saying the league wanted to make sure it got as many eyeballs on the record-breaking moment as possible.

The Lakers will be back on TNT against the Bucks on Thursday, plus have another national TV audience awaiting Saturday when they visit Golden State on ABC. Those were previously scheduled that way, no rearranging required.

Silver said the NBA will pay tribute when James passes Abdul-Jabbar's total of 38,387 points, with likely a larger-scale celebration of the record at All-Star weekend in Salt Lake City later this month.

"There's no doubt we will stop that game and make sure we record for history, the ball, the basket, the uniform," Silver said. "We'll stop and make sure that we've done our jobs as the archivists of the NBA. At the same time, there's that balance that they will be playing against a team that will very much want to win that night and not be distracted. Most likely we will do something in the moment."

Common sense will likely prevail there: If James gets the record with a minute to go in a close game, for example, the NBA probably won't interrupt the proceedings with a lengthy stoppage. If it happens early, a brief halting of play wouldn't be unprecedented.

But for those who want to see it all happen in person, whether that's from courtside seats or the upper levels of the arena, it'll still cost a pretty penny.

Speaking Monday, and with the market likely to fluctuate until game time, Zorn said the cheapest get-in-the-door price for Tuesday's game was around \$176 — about half what it was a week ago, with most people guessing the record falls against the Bucks — and \$796 for Thursday's game.

"It's weird how prices for the game on Tuesday have decreased so significantly, as if it's like a guarantee that he's breaking it on Thursday," Zorn said.

Many price points are likely out of reach for most fans. Then again, if there's a Thunder fan in L.A. who really wants to see their team, they might just want to wait for March 24. The Thunder will be back that night.

Cheapest ticket right now for that game — about \$60.

'Deadly brew': Amid soaring crime, Memphis cops lowered bar

By BERNARD CONDON, JIM MUSTIAN and ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Beyond the beating, kicking, cursing and pepper spraying, the video of Tyre Nichols' deadly arrest at the hands of young Memphis police officers is just as notable for what's missing — any experienced supervisors showing up to stop them.

That points to a dangerous confluence of trends that Memphis' police chief acknowledged have dogged the department as the city became one of the nation's murder hotspots: a chronic shortage of officers, especially supervisors, increasing numbers of police quitting and a struggle to bring in qualified recruits.

Former Memphis police recruiters told The Associated Press of a growing desperation to fill hundreds of slots in recent years that drove the department to increase incentives and lower its standards.

"They would allow just pretty much anybody to be a police officer because they just want these numbers," said Alvin Davis, a former lieutenant in charge of recruiting before he retired last year out of frustration. "They're not ready for it."

The department offered new recruits \$15,000 signing bonuses and \$10,000 relocation allowances while phasing out requirements to have either college credits, military service or previous police work. All that's now required is two years' work experience — any work experience. The department also sought state waivers to hire applicants with criminal records. And the police academy even dropped timing requirements on physical fitness drills and removed running entirely because too many people were failing.

"I asked them what made you want to be the police and they'll be honest — they'll tell you it's strictly about the money," Davis said, adding that many recruits would ask the minimum time they would actually have to serve to keep the bonus money. "It's not a career for them like it was to us. It's just a job."

Another former patrol officer-turned-recruiter who recently left the department told the AP that in addition to drawing from other law enforcement agencies and college campuses, recruits were increasingly coming from jobs at the McDonald's and Dunkin' drive-thrus.

In one case, a stripper submitted an application. And even though she didn't get hired, it reinforced the message that "anyone can get this job. You could have any type of experience and be the police."

"There were red flags," said the former recruiter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel and hiring. "But we're so far down the pyramid nobody really hears the little person."

Many young officers, before ever walking a beat with more experienced colleagues, found themselves thrust into specialized units like the now-disbanded SCORPION high-crime strike force involved in Nichols' arrest. Their lack of experience was shocking to veterans, who said some young officers who transfer back to patrol don't even know how to write a traffic ticket or respond to a domestic call.

"They don't know a felony from a misdemeanor," Davis said. "They don't even know right from wrong yet."

Memphis police did not respond to requests for comment about their hiring standards.

Of the five SCORPION team officers now charged with second-degree murder in Nichols' Jan. 7 beating, two had only a couple of years on the force and none had more than six years' experience.

One of the officers, Emmitt Martin III, 30, a former tight end on the Bethel University football team, appeared to have had at least one arrest, according to files from the Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, a state oversight agency. But the date and details of the case were blacked out.

The section for arrests in the agency's file for another officer, Demetrius Haley, 30, who worked at a Shelby County Corrections facility before joining the force, was also redacted from the state records. Haley was sued for allegedly beating an inmate there, which he denied, and the case was dismissed because papers had not been properly served.

"If you lower standards, you can predict that you're going to have problems because we're recruiting

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from the human race," said Ronal Serpas, the former head of the police in Nashville and New Orleans and the Washington State Patrol. "There's such a small number of people who want to do this and an infinitesimally smaller number of people we actually want doing this."

Memphis, in many ways, stands as a microcosm of the myriad crises facing American policing. Departments from Seattle to New Orleans are struggling to fill their ranks with qualified officers amid a national movement of mounting scrutiny and calls for reform in the wake of the 2020 killing of George Floyd.

Boosting staffing was a major goal of Memphis police Director Cerelyn Davis when she took over in June 2021, with her department announcing it was aiming to increase staff from 2,100 to 2,500, close to the size of the force a decade ago. Instead, the police ranks have dropped to 1,939 officers — like the city, majority Black — even as the population has increased and the number of homicides topped 300 in each of the past two years.

A big part of the reason for the dwindling ranks is that more than 1,350 officers either resigned or retired over the past decade — more than 300 in the last two years alone.

In an interview with the AP last week, Davis said a lack of supervisors was a particular concern, noting that 125 new supervisor slots have been approved by the city but still not filled.

Davis said the department is investigating, among other things, why a supervisor failed to respond to Nichols' arrest despite department policy that requires a ranking officer when pepper spray or a stun gun has been deployed.

"If that had happened somebody could have been there to intercept what happened," Davis said.

"Culture eats policy for lunch in police departments," she added. "If you don't have the checks and balances you will have problems."

Michael Williams, former head of the Memphis Police Association, the officers' union, said strict supervision is essential, especially for the specialized teams like SCORPION.

"Why would you have an elite task force that you know is designed for aggressive policing and you don't cover your bases? They may have to shoot someone. They may have to kick someone's door down. They may have to physically restrain someone," Williams said. "You should have experienced people around to restrain them and keep them from going down a dark path."

Longtime observers of the Memphis police say this is not the first moment of reckoning for a department with a history of civil rights abuses.

After the 2015 death of Darrius Stewart, a 19-year-old Black man fatally shot by a white police officer, activists and U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, a Tennessee Democrat, called on the U.S. Justice Department to conduct a "pattern or practice" investigation of civil rights violations in the department. Such inquiries often result in sweeping reforms, including staffing and training overhauls.

Carlos Moore, an attorney for Stewart's family, warned the Justice Department at the time of a deadly trend that preceded Stewart's death. "There have been over 24 suspicious killings of civilians by officers of the Memphis Police Department since 2009," he wrote in a 2015 letter obtained by AP, "and not one officer has been indicted for killing unarmed, largely Black young men."

The Justice Department decided not to open such an inquiry for reasons it didn't explain at the time, and it declined to comment this week.

"The Department of Justice missed a golden opportunity to properly investigate the Memphis Police Department," Moore said in an interview. "It was just as corrupt then as it is now."

Thaddeus Johnson, a former Memphis police officer who is now a criminal justice professor at Georgia State University, said the missed chance for federal intervention allowed the problems of the department — soaring crime, community distrust and chronic understaffing — to fester until they exploded.

"A deadly brew came together," he said. "But that same mixture is in many other places, too, where the bubble just hasn't burst yet."

Boeing plans to cut about 2,000 finance and HR jobs in 2023

SEATTLE (AP) — Boeing plans to make staffing cuts in the aerospace company's finance and human

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resources departments in 2023, with a loss of around 2,000 jobs, the company said.

"We expect about 2,000 reductions primarily in Finance and HR through a combination of attrition and layoffs," Boeing said in a statement Monday. "While no one has been notified of job loss, we will continue to share information transparently to allow people to plan."

The company, which recently relocated its headquarters to Arlington, Virginia, said it expects to "significantly grow" the overall workforce during the year. "We grew Boeing's workforce by 15,000 last year and plan to hire another 10,000 employees this year with a focus on engineering and manufacturing," the statement said.

Boeing's total workforce was 156,000 employees as of Dec. 31, 2022, the company said.

The Seattle Times reported Boeing, which has been one of the largest private employers in Washington state, plans to outsource about a third of the eliminated positions to Tata Consulting Services in Bengaluru, India.

Mike Friedman, a senior director of communications, told the Times the other positions will be eliminated as the company makes reductions in finance and human resources support services.

"Over time, some of our corporate functions have grown quite large. And with that growth tends to come bureaucracy or disparate systems that are inefficient," Friedman said. "So we're streamlining."

The Times reported about 1,500 of the company's approximately 5,800 finance positions will be cut, with up to 400 more job cuts in human resources, which is about 15% of the department's total staff.

State of the Union? Congress doesn't fully reflect diversity

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — When lawmakers gather for President Joe Biden's State of the Union address, the Republican side of the aisle will look slightly different than it did a few years ago.

Rather than row after row of white men in suits, the House Republican majority increasingly has added Black, Latino and female elected officials to their ranks, an effort toward bolstering GOP diversity that's helping to make the new Congress the most racially and ethnically diverse ever.

It's a slow yet unsteady progress toward creating a Congress more reflective of America. But it also spotlights a still stark gap on the House Republican side, where the new majority remains made up mostly of white, male lawmakers, which does not fully capture the changing demographics of the country.

"Diversity matters," said Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

"Every person who serves in office brings with them a set of life experiences that shape their policy priorities, that shape how they see the world," Walsh said. "It's not that the experiences of white men don't matter, but they don't matter — they shouldn't matter — more than everybody else."

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is largely responsible for making strides at trying to diversify the Republican House. The California leader personally recruited and helped to elect more female candidates and people of color who delivered majority control.

McCarthy and his team worked to diversify their ranks during the 2022 midterm elections with dozens of Black, Hispanic and Asian American nominees on ballots nationwide, some of whom won office.

Still, compared with the diversity on the Democratic side of the aisle, the Republican tally remains slim.

There are four Black Republicans in the House — twice as many as in the last session. That's a record for Republicans in the 20th and 21st centuries.

But it's still fewer Black Republicans in the House than during Reconstruction, the era that followed the Civil War. As many as seven Black Republicans served in the House during the 1875-77 session, according to the U.S. House Historical Office, and the House membership overall was much smaller.

Women are making steady gains in the Republican Party in the House, with 33 GOP women in the House, according to the Center for Women in American Politics. That's up from 13 House Republican women in 2019.

But there are no Black Republican women in the House, compared with 27 Black women on the Democratic side, including some who have been powerful leaders and chairwomen wielding gavels.

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Republicans count five Latina women and two Asian Americans, a fraction of those the Democrats have elected, according to the Center for Women and Politics.

While the House freshman class includes seven new Republican women, the gains were essentially offset by six Republican women leaving, the center said in its analysis of the new Congress.

House Republicans have held steady with about a dozen Latino and Hispanic lawmakers, but overall the proportion of Latinos in Congress is less than in the U.S. population.

"This continues a long-running trend toward more racial and ethnic diversity on Capitol Hill: This is the seventh Congress to break the record set by the one before it," said Pew Research Center, including senators in its tally.

But Pew reports a vast divide by party for the racial and ethnic minority members in the new Congress: 80% are Democrats while 20% are Republicans. The report said that's similar to the last session of Congress. At that time, 83% of non-white lawmakers were Democrats and 17% were Republicans.

Pew said 13 members of Congress identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, the highest number openly identified in history. Among the 11 openly gay or lesbian members of the House, just one is a Republican, Rep. George Santos of New York.

The Senate shows strides, too, with 25 women this session, including nine Republican female senators, matching the record set in 2020, according the Center for Women and Politics.

Among the 100 senators, there is one Black Republican, Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, and two Black Democrats, Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey and Sen. Raphael Warnock of Georgia.

There are no Black women elected to the Senate.

There are six Latino or Hispanic senators, including two Republicans; and there are two Asian American senators, both Democrats.

One new Republican, Sen. Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma, "a member of the Cherokee nation, is the first American Indian to serve in the Senate in almost two decades," the Pew Report said.

"I wouldn't call it strides," said Rashad Robinson, president of the Color of Change, a racial justice organization.

"We have complicated problems in this country that require solutions that come from a range of perspectives and that require us to think seriously about how we move forward," he said.

Arkansas Gov. Sanders to offer State of the Union rebuttal

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, once a White House press secretary for President Donald Trump, is set to return to the national stage when she delivers the GOP response to President Joe Biden's State of the Union address.

Sanders, 40, is giving the speech Tuesday night less than a month after being sworn in as the first female governor of Arkansas. The daughter of former Gov. Mike Huckabee, she is also the first Arkansan to deliver the response to a president's State of the Union since Bill Clinton as governor in 1985.

With her speech, GOP leaders are giving a platform to a figure linked closely to Trump, who remains influential within the party even as Republicans question how much of a hindrance his quest to return to the White House has become. The star turn for Sanders also puts the spotlight on the nation's youngest governor at a time when recent polling suggests that even many Democrats view the 80-year-old Biden's age as a liability.

"I am excited for the nation to hear from Governor Sanders on Tuesday and witness a sharp contrast with this exhausted and failing administration," Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell said in a statement announcing Sanders' selection last week.

Biden is expected to use his speech before Congress to highlight his efforts to create jobs, fight inflation and improve the nation's infrastructure. The president, who's expected to announce in the next few months that he'll seek reelection, faces a tough political environment and a divided Congress. Polling released this week by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed just 37% of Democrats

say they want him to seek a second term

Sanders, who served roughly two years as White House press secretary, focused heavily on her criticism of Biden during her successful bid for governor last year. She frequently railed against the Democratic president's COVID-19 pandemic response, immigration policies and other stances.

But since the election, Sanders has mostly avoided weighing in on Trump, who endorsed her bid for governor and was featured in her campaign materials. Sanders hasn't said whether she plans to endorse Trump, who's making a third bid for president, and she didn't mention the former president during her victory speech on election night.

Sanders has focused her attention on some of the former president's favorite targets, signing several executive orders within hours of taking office that were cheered by conservatives. They included an order prohibiting the teaching of critical race theory in public schools and another banning TikTok from state devices.

Sanders has said her priority is getting her state's majority-Republican Legislature to approve education legislation that she's said will include teacher raises and some form of school choice allowing public money to be used to pay for private schools. She's also called for phasing out the state's income tax.

The speech is a reintroduction for Sanders, already well known from her time as press secretary and one of Trump's closest aides. During her time as Trump's chief spokesperson, she scaled back daily televised briefings after repeatedly sparring with reporters who aggressively questioned her.

She was regularly lampooned by late-night hosts and "Saturday Night Live," which portrayed her as a dishonest loyalist to Trump with an exaggerated Southern drawl. But Sanders also built an intensely loyal following among Republicans, with frequent appearances on Fox News and other conservative-friendly media outlets.

Sanders is delivering the speech at a time when her predecessor, former Gov. Asa Hutchinson, is considering seeking the Republican presidential nomination. Hutchinson has been an outspoken critic of Trump and has said Trump being the GOP's nominee would be the "worst scenario" for the party.

Rescuers scramble in Turkey, Syria after quake kills 4,000

By MEHMET GUZEL, GHAITH ALSAYED and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ADANA, Turkey (AP) — Rescuers in Turkey and war-ravaged Syria searched through the frigid night into Tuesday, hoping to pull more survivors from the rubble after a 7.8 magnitude earthquake killed more than 4,000 people and toppled thousands of buildings across a wide region.

Authorities feared the death toll from Monday's pre-dawn earthquake and aftershocks would keep climbing as rescuers looked for survivors among tangles of metal and concrete spread across the region beset by Syria's 12-year civil war and refugee crisis.

Survivors cried out for help from within mountains of debris as first responders contended with rain and snow. Seismic activity continued to rattle the region, including another jolt nearly as powerful as the initial quake. Workers carefully pulled away slabs of concrete and reached for bodies as desperate families waited for news of loved ones.

"My grandson is 1 1/2 years old. Please help them, please. ... They were on the 12th floor," Imran Bahur wept by her destroyed apartment building in the Turkish city of Adana on Monday.

Tens of thousands who were left homeless in Turkey and Syria faced a night in the cold. In the Turkish city of Gaziantep, a provincial capital about 33 kilometers (20 miles) from the epicenter, people took refuge in shopping malls, stadiums, mosques and community centers. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared seven days of national mourning.

U.S. President Joe Biden called Erdogan to express condolences and offer assistance to the NATO ally. The White House said it was sending search-and-rescue teams to support Turkey's efforts.

The quake, which was centered in Turkey's southeastern province of Kahramanmaraş, sent residents of Damascus and Beirut rushing into the street and was felt as far away as Cairo.

It piled more misery on a region that has seen tremendous suffering over the past decade. On the Syrian

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side, the area is divided between government-controlled territory and the country's last opposition-held enclave, which is surrounded by Russian-backed government forces. Turkey, meanwhile, is home to millions of refugees from the civil war.

In the rebel-held enclave, hundreds of families remained trapped in rubble, the opposition emergency organization known as the White Helmets said in a statement. The area is packed with some 4 million people displaced from other parts of the country by the war. Many live in buildings that are already wrecked from military bombardments.

Strained medical centers quickly filled with injured people, rescue workers said. Some facilities had to be emptied, including a maternity hospital, according to the SAMS medical organization.

More than 7,800 people were rescued across 10 provinces, according to Orhan Tatar, an official with Turkey's disaster management authority.

The region sits on top of major fault lines and is frequently shaken by earthquakes. Some 18,000 were killed in similarly powerful earthquakes that hit northwest Turkey in 1999.

The U.S. Geological Survey measured Monday's quake at 7.8, with a depth of 18 kilometers (11 miles). Hours later, a 7.5 magnitude temblor, likely triggered by the first, struck more than 100 kilometers (60 miles) away.

The second jolt caused a multistory apartment building in the Turkish city of Sanliurfa to topple onto the street in a cloud of dust as bystanders screamed, according to video of the scene.

Thousands of buildings were reported collapsed in a wide area extending from Syria's cities of Aleppo and Hama to Turkey's Diyarbakir, more than 330 kilometers (200 miles) to the northeast.

In Turkey alone, more than 5,600 buildings were destroyed, authorities said. Hospitals were damaged, and one collapsed in the city of Iskenderun.

Bitterly cold temperatures could reduce the time frame that rescuers have to save trapped survivors, said Dr. Steven Godby, an expert in natural hazards at Nottingham Trent University. The difficulty of working in areas beset by civil war would further complicate rescue efforts, he said.

Offers of help — from search-and-rescue teams to medical supplies and money — poured in from dozens of countries, as well as the European Union and NATO. The vast majority were for Turkey, with a Russian and even an Israeli promise of help to the Syrian government, but it was not clear if any would go to the devastated rebel-held pocket in the northwest.

The opposition's Syrian Civil Defense described the situation in the enclave as "disastrous."

The opposition-held area, centered on the province of Idlib, has been under siege for years, with frequent Russian and government airstrikes. The territory depends on a flow of aid from Turkey for everything from food to medical supplies.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said 224 buildings in northwestern Syrian were destroyed and at least 325 were damaged, including aid warehouses. The U.N. had been assisting 2.7 million people each month via cross-border deliveries, which could now be disrupted.

At a hospital in Idlib, Osama Abdel Hamid said most of his neighbors died when their shared four-story building collapsed. As he fled with his wife and three children, a wooden door fell on them, shielding them from falling debris.

"God gave me a new lease on life," he said.

In the small Syrian rebel-held town of Azmarin in the mountains by the Turkish border, the bodies of several dead children, wrapped in blankets, were brought to a hospital.

In the Turkish city of Kahramanmaras, rescuers pulled two children alive from the rubble, and one could be seen lying on a stretcher on the snowy ground. Turkish broadcaster CNN Turk said a woman was pulled out alive in Gaziantep after a rescue dog detected her.

In Adana, 20 or so people, some in emergency rescue jackets, used power saws atop the concrete mountain of a collapsed building to open up space for any survivors to climb out or be rescued.

"I don't have the strength anymore," one survivor could be heard calling out from beneath the rubble of another building in Adana as rescue workers tried to reach him, said Muhammet Fatih Yavuz, a local

resident.

In Diyarbakir, hundreds of rescue workers and civilians formed lines across a huge mound of wreckage, passing down broken concrete pieces and household belongings as they searched for trapped survivors.

At least 2,921 people were killed in 10 Turkish provinces, with nearly 16,000 injured, according to Turkish authorities. The death toll in government-held areas of Syria climbed to 656 people, with some 1,400 injured, according to the Health Ministry. In the country's rebel-held northwest, groups that operate there said at least 450 people died, with many hundreds injured.

Huseyin Yayman, a legislator from Turkey's Hatay province, said several of his family members were stuck under the rubble of their collapsed homes.

"There are so many other people who are also trapped," he told HaberTurk television by phone. "There are so many buildings that have been damaged. People are on the streets. It's raining, it's winter."

Crews release toxic chemicals from derailed tankers in Ohio

By PATRICK ORSAGOS and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio (AP) — Crews released toxic chemicals into the air from five derailed tanker cars that were in danger of exploding Monday and began burning it after warning residents near the Ohio-Pennsylvania state line to leave immediately or face the possibility of death.

Flames and black smoke billowed high into the sky from the derailment site late in the afternoon, about an hour after authorities said the controlled release would begin.

The slow release of vinyl chloride from five rail cars into a trough that was then ignited created a large plume above the village of East Palestine but authorities said they were closely monitoring the air quality.

"Thus far, no concerning readings have been detected," Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro said at a brief evening news conference about three hours after the venting and burning procedure began.

However, he urged Pennsylvania residents within a 2-mile (3.2 kilometer) radius of the derailment site to shelter in place and keep their doors and windows closed through the evening as a precaution in case of wind shifts.

Shapiro also said he had spoken to President Joe Biden, who had offered "the full support of the federal government" to Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine earlier ordered evacuations in the area of the derailment that has been smoldering since Friday night. Authorities believed most, if not all, residents in the danger zone had left but they were knocking on doors one more time before releasing the vinyl chloride inside the cars, he said.

"You need to leave, you just need to leave. This is a matter of life and death," DeWine said at news conference.

Officials warned the controlled burn would send phosgene and hydrogen chloride into the air. Phosgene is a highly toxic gas that can cause vomiting and breathing trouble and was used as a weapon in World War I.

Scott Deutsch of Norfolk Southern Railway earlier said doing this during the daytime would allow the fumes to disperse more quickly and prevent the rail cars from exploding and sending shrapnel and other debris from flying through the neighborhood.

"We can't control where that goes," he said.

The process involves using a small charge to blow a hole in the cars, allowing the material to go into a trench and burning it off before it's released in the air, he said. The crews handling the controlled release have done this safely before, Deutsch said.

About three hours into the procedure, Norfolk Southern Railway issued a statement saying that experts and first responders had breached the rail cars, chemicals were burning off and the cars were expected to drain for several more hours.

The site is very close to the state line, and the evacuation area extends into a sparsely populated area of Pennsylvania. About half of the 4,800 residents in East Palestine had been warned to leave over the weekend before officials decided on Monday to use the controlled release.

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Shapiro said the evacuation zone includes about 20 Pennsylvania residences. Pennsylvania State Police went door-to-door to assist the last remaining residents and ensure they leave.

Shapiro later said he'd been told that residents with a mile (1.6 kilometers) of the controlled burn had left. Forced evacuations began Sunday night in East Palestine after authorities became alarmed that the rail cars could explode after a "drastic temperature change" was observed in a rail car.

Residents were packing overnight bags, loading their pets into cars and searching for hotel rooms Monday morning. Police in the village moved out of their communication center as the threat of an explosion increased.

Police cars, snow plows and military vehicles from the Ohio National Guard blocked streets leading into the area.

About 50 cars, including 10 carrying hazardous materials, derailed in a fiery crash Friday night, according to rail operator Norfolk Southern and the National Transportation Safety Board. No injuries to crew, residents or first responders were reported.

Five were transporting vinyl chloride, which is used to make the polyvinyl chloride hard plastic resin in plastic products and is associated with increased risk of liver cancer and other cancers, according to the federal government's National Cancer Institute

Federal investigators say the cause of the derailment was a mechanical issue with a rail car axle.

The three-member train crew received an alert about the mechanical defect "shortly before the derailment," Michael Graham, a board member of the NTSB, said Sunday. Investigators identified the exact "point of derailment," but the board was still working to determine which rail car experienced the axle issue, he said.

Mayor Trent Conaway, who declared a state of emergency in the village, said one person was arrested for going around barricades right up to the crash. He warned people to stay away and said they'd risk arrest.

"I don't know why anybody would want to be up there; you're breathing toxic fumes if you're that close," he said.

Steady rains set off mudslides that kill at least 36 in Peru

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Landslides triggered by steady rains swept mud, water and rocks into several villages in southern Peru, killing at least 36 people, authorities said Monday.

Wilson Gutierrez, a civil defense official in the Mariano Nicolás Valcárcel municipality in Camana province, told local radio RPP that 36 bodies had been recovered in a remote sector called Miski.

Among the dead were five people who were riding in a van that was pushed into a river by a surge of mud.

Local officials appealed for heavy machinery to be sent in to clear debris blocking three kilometers (nearly two miles) of an important road.

Civil defense officials said an estimated 630 homes were unusable after the landslides, which also hit bridges, irrigation canals and roads.

Constant rains are frequent in February in Peru and often cause deadly landslides.

The Grammys ended in controversy, again. Here's what to know

By NARDOS HAILE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A night in music brimming with shocking upsets, historic wins, tributes for artists like the late rapper Takeoff and hip-hop's 50th anniversary, the 65th Grammys were back in full swing Sunday. Once again, Beyoncé was in the running for the top honor.

Once again, the show ended with someone else winning album of the year.

This year was widely seen as a chance for the Grammys to honor the superstar with a marquee award, especially on a night where she could have (and did) become its most decorated artist.

Instead, Harry Styles won, and a line from his acceptance speech stung those who thought Beyoncé should have won.

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Here's what happened, how it's been perceived and who picks the Grammys' top honors.

WHAT'S CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT STYLES' WIN?

Styles won for his third album, "Harry's House," and even he seemed surprised when his name was called.

The British pop star was competing against other giants in the industry: acts like ABBA, Adele, Bad Bunny, Brandi Carlile, Coldplay, Lizzo, Kendrick Lamar, and Beyoncé.

While accepting the award, he said, "This is really, really kind. I'm so, so grateful... I'm just so — This doesn't happen to people like me very often. And this is so, so nice. Thank you very, very much."

The line, "this doesn't happen to people like me very often," drew criticism in the hours after his win.

Styles was born and raised in Northern England and rose to fame in 2010 when he auditioned for the Simon Cowell-led talent competition show "The X Factor." He placed third with the boyband One Direction. His solo career has earned him several Grammys and Billboard-charting albums and singles.

Styles hasn't said what he meant by his words. Some have interpreted it as him trying to express how far he'd come from his youth. Others, however, see the remark as an example of white privilege.

WHY ARE PEOPLE MAD AT STYLES' WORDS?

Many of Beyoncé's fans are fiercely protective of the singer. They're called the Beyhive, after all.

Despite Beyoncé's 32 Grammy wins — the most of any artist in history — many are troubled by the fact she has yet to win album of the year and that she's lost to white musicians every time she has been nominated.

Washington Post pop music critic Chris Richards, in a story headlined "Beyoncé just made Grammy history. Why does it feel like she still lost?" wrote that her historic achievement feels hollow.

"Why does that feel like not enough," Richards asked. "Because for the past 20 years and counting, the Recording Academy has routinely failed to recognize Black artists at their creative peaks — and to her credit, Beyoncé keeps updating that peak with each new album."

Similar criticism was raised in other stories and by online commenters, some of whom noted a Black woman hadn't won album of the year since Lauryn Hill in the late '90s.

Ashley Smalls, a Black feminism and pop culture doctoral student at Penn State University criticized Styles' speech in a tweet: "this doesn't happen to people like me very often' when a Black woman hasn't won that award since 1999 is crazy lol."

WHAT IS BEYONCÉ'S GRAMMYS HISTORY?

The artist is tied with her husband, Jay-Z, for most nominations all-time with 88 but she has only won 32 times. Most significantly, Beyoncé has lost album of the year four times to Taylor Swift, Beck, Adele and now Styles.

Beyoncé has been nominated in each of the most prestigious categories across her decadeslong career but she has won in these categories just once for "Single Ladies (Put a Ring On It)."

A Black woman has not won album of the year since Lauryn Hill received the accolade for her breakout album, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" in 1999. The last Black person to win the award was Jon Batiste, last year for his album "We Are."

WHO DECIDES ALBUM OF THE YEAR?

According to Billboard, the Recording Academy boasts more than 12,000 voting members. The entire membership is allowed to vote in the big four categories — best new artist, record, song and album of the year. Members are also responsible for nominating in their area of expertise, as well as voting on the winners in these categories.

Numerous artists have criticized how the Grammys nominate artists. The Recording Academy is undergoing a campaign to diversify its membership and has a goal of having 2,500 female members by 2025.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR BEYONCÉ AND STYLES?

Both are hitting the road for international tours.

Styles' next show is in Thailand next week and he'll play shows in Asia and Europe into the summer.

Beyoncé will be starting her "Renaissance" tour in May in Sweden and will play dates in Europe and the United States.

Generators, spoiled food: Slow power repairs anger Austin

By PAUL J. WEBER and ACACIA CORONADO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Like thousands of other Austin residents, Darin Murphy began a sixth day Monday with no power in his home, wrapping his head around the city's latest demoralizing update: Getting the lights fully back on may take another week.

"We are planning for worst-case scenario," he said.

Making any plans has been difficult — and downright infuriating — for nearly 20,000 customers who still had no electricity Monday nearly a week after a deadly ice storm crippled the Texas capital and brought down power lines under the weight of fallen and frozen tree limbs. Schools finally reopened, but noisy generators rattled before dawn and outdoor extension cords running 100 feet (30 meters) or longer became lifelines between neighbors who had power and those who didn't.

The boiling frustration over the slow pace of restoring power, and officials repeatedly saying they could not offer timetables for repairs, escalated Monday as the future of Austin's top city executive plunged into jeopardy even as the number of outages continued falling.

Austin Mayor Kirk Watson, a Democrat, called a meeting for this week that will put City Manager Spencer Cronk's job on the line. The move reflected the rising discontent in America's 11th-largest city, where late Sunday night, Austin Energy issued a statement in the face of growing criticism that full power restoration may not happen until Feb. 12 — nearly two weeks after the outages began.

"To all our Austin citizens who are furious about the ongoing power outage, you're right," Watson tweeted. "There must be accountability."

Cronk, who oversees city staff, responded by telling reporters he was focused on the storm recovery and restoring power. Watson did not outright say whether he thinks Cronk should be fired but said Thursday's meeting would "evaluate the employment" of the city manager.

For the vast majority of Austin residents, the lights were on Monday or never went out in the first place. At the peak of the outages, about 170,000 homes and businesses — nearly a third of utility customers in Austin — had no electricity, and in many cases, no heat. By Monday, the outages were down to about 4% of all customers.

But in neighborhoods still without power, familiar scenes unfolded.

Spoiled food piled up in trash bins. Power outlets in coffee shops and restaurants were snatched up by people charging battery packs and devices. And on text message groups and social media apps, the sights of repair crews were treated as urgent developments.

Katy Manganella, 37, grew so fed up that when Austin Energy came to her neighborhood Sunday with a charging station for residents — but still no repair trucks — she paced in front of the station holding a poster that read, "This pregnant lady is over it!"

"It's been pretty miserable," said Manganella, a therapist who is seven months pregnant and was unable to work last week because of the outages. "How is there no plan for this?"

Austin Energy has described the remaining outages as the most complicated and time-consuming. The storm plunged temperatures near or below freezing and coated trees with ice across Austin, weighing down branches that eventually snapped and crashed onto power lines. Iced-over equipment and crews driving on slick roads also slowed recovery efforts, according to city officials.

Crews have also come across "irate customers" out in the field, said Craig Brooks, director of operations for Austin Energy, including one instance in which police were called. He did not provide specifics about the encounters, describing them as, "Some verbal. Some people protecting their property."

The utility warned Monday that a new front of high winds and potential storms starting Tuesday could further hamper restoration efforts.

Biden 2024? Most Democrats say no thank you: AP-NORC poll

By JOSH BOAK and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

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WASHINGTON (AP) — A majority of Democrats now think one term is plenty for President Joe Biden, despite his insistence that he plans to seek reelection in 2024.

That's according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research that shows just 37% of Democrats say they want him to seek a second term, down from 52% in the weeks before last year's midterm elections.

While Biden has trumpeted his legislative victories and ability to govern, the poll suggests relatively few U.S. adults give him high marks on either. Follow-up interviews with poll respondents suggest that many believe the 80-year-old's age is a liability, with people focused on his coughing, his gait, his gaffes and the possibility that the world's most stressful job would be better suited for someone younger.

"I, honestly, think that he would be too old," said Sarah Overman, 37, a Democrat who works in education in Raleigh, North Carolina. "We could use someone younger in the office."

As the president gives his State of the Union address Tuesday, he has a chance to confront fundamental doubts about his competence to govern. Biden has previously leaned heavily on his track record to say that he's more than up to the task. When asked if he can handle the office's responsibilities at his age, the president has often responded as if he's accepting a dare: "Watch me."

Democratic candidates performed better than expected in the 2022 midterm elections, a testament to Biden's message that he is defending democracy and elevating the middle class. Democrats expanded their control of the Senate by one seat and narrowly lost their House majority even though history indicated there would be a Republican wave.

When asked about the survey's findings at Monday's news briefing, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre indicated that the results in last year's election mattered more than polling numbers.

"The way that we should look at this is what we saw from the midterms," said Jean-Pierre, noting that the relative Democratic successes were "because the president went out there and spoke directly to the American people."

Overall, 41% approve of how Biden is handling his job as president, the poll shows, similar to ratings at the end of last year. A majority of Democrats still approve of the job Biden is doing as president, yet their appetite for a reelection campaign has slipped despite his electoral track record. Only 22% of U.S. adults overall say he should run again, down from 29% who said so before last year's midterm elections.

The decline among Democrats saying Biden should run again for president appears concentrated among younger people. Among Democrats age 45 and over, 49% say Biden should run for reelection, nearly as many as the 58% who said that in October. But among those under age 45, 23% now say he should run for reelection, after 45% said that before the midterms.

Linda Lockwood, a Democrat and retiree from Kansas City, Kansas, said she is not that worried about Biden's age.

"He seems to be in pretty good condition in my opinion and that's coming from a 76-year-old woman," Lockwood said. "You might be a little more careful going down the steps as you get older, but if your brain is still working, that's the important part."

Already the oldest president in U.S. history, Biden has been dogged by questions about his age as he would be 86 if he serves a full eight years as president. He often works long days, standing for hours, remembering the names of strangers he meets while traveling who want to share a story about their lives with him.

Yet he's been a national political figure for a half-century, having first been elected to the Senate from Delaware in 1972, and the moments when he appears lost on stage or stumbles through speeches can garner more attention than his policies.

Voters like Ross Truckey, 35, have been watching the president carefully. A lawyer in Michigan, Truckey did not vote for Biden or Republican Donald Trump in 2020. He feels as though Biden has been the latest in a string of "subpar" presidents.

"His age and possibly his mental acuity is not where I would want the leader of the country to be," Truckey said. "He, at times, appears to be an old man who is past his prime. Sometimes I feel a little bit of pity for the guy being pushed out in front of crowds."

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Biden has repeatedly emphasized in speeches that it's essential for the public to know the totality of what his administration is doing. It's notched four big legislative victories with coronavirus relief, the bipartisan infrastructure law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and tax and spending measures that help to address climate change and improve the IRS' ability to enforce the tax code and help taxpayers.

Yet just 13% have a lot of confidence in Biden's ability to accomplish major policy goals, a possible reflection of the fact that he must now work with a Republican majority in the House that wants to cut spending in return for lifting the government's legal borrowing authority.

The poll also shows only 23% of U.S. adults say they have "a great deal" of confidence in Biden to effectively manage the White House. That has ticked down from 28% a year ago and remains significantly lower than 44% two years ago, just as Biden took office.

Just 21% have a lot of confidence in Biden's ability to handle a crisis, down slightly from 26% last March.

On working with congressional Republicans and managing government spending, roughly half of U.S. adults say they have hardly any confidence in the president, and only around 1 in 10 say they have high confidence.

Republican voters are unwilling to give Biden the benefit of the doubt, hurting his ratings.

John Rodriguez, 76, backed Trump and assumes that Biden is merely doing the bidding of his aides. That creates a challenge for a president who promised to unite the country.

"I believe he's not the one who's calling the shots," said Rodriguez, who lives in Cutler Bay, Florida. "He's a puppet being told where to go, what to say."

But the key obstacle for Biden might be voters such as Vikram Joglekar, 46, who works in the computer industry in Austin, Texas. He backed the president in 2020, only to summarize his feelings about Biden's time in office as "meh."

"It's not up for me to decide whether someone should run or not," Joglekar said. "I don't know who is going to be on the ballot, but I would hope it would be someone better from his party."

AMC to charge more for good seats in movie theaters

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Middle seats at many U.S. movie theaters just got more expensive.

AMC Theaters, the nation's largest movie theater chain, on Monday unveiled a new pricing scheme in which seat location determines how much your movie ticket costs. Seats in the middle of the auditorium will cost a dollar or two more, while seats in the front row will be slightly cheaper.

AMC said the pricing plan, dubbed "Sightline," has already been rolled out in some locations and, by the end of the year, will be in place at all domestic AMC theaters during showings after 4 p.m.

Seats classified as "standard sightline" will be at the regular price. If you want to pay less for the "value sightline" seats, you have to be a member of the chain's subscription service, AMC Stubs.

As movie theaters have attempted to recover from the pandemic, exhibitors have increasingly looked at more variable pricing methods. That's included charging more for sought-after movies like "The Batman" in their first week of release.

Last weekend, Paramount Pictures partnered with theater chains to offer slightly reduced ticket prices for the comedy "80 for Brady." And last year, during a dry spell in theaters, tickets at most movie theaters were \$3 for "National Cinema Day."

But in most circumstances, movie tickets are getting more expensive, especially when factoring in large-format screens and 3D showings. The average 3D premium format ticket for the biggest box-office hit in recent years, "Avatar: The Way of Water," was about \$16.50.

How Manchester City came to face Premier League charges

By GRAHAM DUNBAR AP Sports Writer

GENEVA (AP) — The English Premier League vs. Manchester City: a legal fixture for the ages.

Soccer's richest and most watched league challenged its defending champion on Monday with more

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than 100 charges of alleged financial wrongdoing and failures to cooperate with an investigation that took more than four years.

Dozens of charges allege breaches of the league's financial monitoring rules dating from 2009, or the first full season Man City was owned by the ruling family of Abu Dhabi. Thirty more charges relate to Man City's lack of cooperation in the past five seasons with a Premier League investigation that opened after leaked, and likely hacked, club internal communications were published in 2018.

That leaked evidence led UEFA investigators to examine likely breaches of financial rules designed to create stability in an often-volatile European soccer industry. UEFA-appointed judges imposed a two-year ban from the Champions League in 2020, which the club overturned on appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Man City seems more at risk from the English case, which does not involve a statute of limitations on evidence that was a problem for UEFA lawyers.

The Premier League rule book — signed off by member clubs like Man City — gives its disciplinary commissions sweeping powers to punish teams if charges are proven. That could range from imposing a fine to taking away a title or even ejecting Man City from England's top division.

Here's a closer look at the case:

WHAT ARE THE FINANCIAL RULES?

Known as Financial Fair Play, the regulations are aimed at preventing clubs from spending more than they earn. FFP was established in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, which deepened worries in European soccer that clubs could go out of business if the cost of player transfers and wages kept rising.

Critics believed they would favor storied clubs with established global appeal, such as Bayern Munich, Real Madrid and Manchester United. They said FFP would be used to thwart emerging clubs who had wealthy owners ready to spend heavily and accelerate growth.

At the same time, historically underachieving Manchester City was bought in September 2008 with sovereign wealth from the United Arab Emirates. When UEFA in 2011 began monitoring finances of clubs who qualified for European competition, City had made progress by spending big on players.

The first round of FFP judgments in 2014 saw the heaviest penalties for Man City and Paris Saint-Germain — each lost 20 million euros (\$21.4 million) in Champions League prize money.

Both were suspected of booking inflated revenue in their accounts through sponsor deals at above market rates with companies from Abu Dhabi and Qatar.

"If clubs use unrealistic deals as a way to get around Financial Fair Play," Arsène Wenger had warned in 2012 when coach at Arsenal, "it will make a mockery of the rules."

The English Premier League later adopted a version of UEFA FFP rules.

WHAT WAS THE LEAKED EVIDENCE?

In November 2018, Man City was the Premier League champion with three titles in the first decade of its Abu Dhabi era, and a talented squad coached by Pep Guardiola.

Yet skepticism remained about the club's commercial results.

German magazine Der Spiegel then published the "Football Leaks" series of articles based on the club's internal documents and communications.

They suggested Man City had broken FFP rules in financial relationships with "related-party" sponsors from Abu Dhabi, its use of image rights payments to players and the contract of Roberto Mancini, who was manager from 2009-13. He allegedly doubled his base salary for advising a club in Abu Dhabi.

Man City did not deny the documents were authentic but said they were illegally obtained by a Portuguese man, Rui Pinto. He later went on trial in Lisbon. A verdict is scheduled in April.

WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE UEFA CASE?

After the Football Leaks publication, UEFA's club investigators revisited their case and asked the judging chamber to ban Man City from European competitions.

In February 2020, those judges banned Man City for two seasons for "serious breaches" of rules from 2012-16, including overstating sponsor revenue and failing to cooperate with investigators.

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Three CAS judges overturned the ban in July 2020, ruling that some UEFA charged were not proven and other evidence was excluded as time-barred. The court "strongly condemned" Man City for obstructing UEFA's investigation, though a €10 million (\$10.7 million) fine was one-third of the original punishment.

Allowed to play in the next Champions League, Man City reached the final and earned 119 million euros (\$128 million) in prize money.

WHAT IS THE PREMIER LEAGUE CASE?

The English case against Man City continued separately from the UEFA process in Switzerland.

The Premier League announced charges Monday. A lawyer who chairs the league's judicial panel will appoint a disciplinary commission of three judges.

A hearing will be held in secret, with no timetable yet for a verdict. Any subsequent legal challenge should go to the Premier League's Appeal Board.

Man City said it was surprised by the charges and "we look forward to this matter being put to rest once and for all."

Spiritual advisers offering final comfort in execution rooms

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — For decades, Missouri executions played out in similar fashion: An inmate was strapped to a gurney in a drab room, alone except for the eyes of witnesses staring through thick, soundproof glass as unidentified executioners administered the lethal chemical from behind a cinderblock wall.

But in November, convicted killer Kevin Johnson spent his final moments speaking softly with a pastor, praying, being assured of forgiveness. When Amber McLaughlin was executed in the same room weeks later, her pastor stroked her hand, providing comfort even as McLaughlin expressed that something was causing her pain.

A Supreme Court ruling last March requires states to allow spiritual advisers to join condemned inmates in their final moments, where they can speak together and even touch. Nationwide, spiritual advisers have been alongside 15 of the 19 people who have been executed since the ruling.

"At the end of their lives, they were able to find a peace that they couldn't find elsewhere in their lives, and that was important," said the Rev. Darryl Gray, who was with Johnson.

It takes a toll on the spiritual advisers, though.

"Watching someone be killed when they were fully alive — I just can't get that out of my bones," said the Rev. Lauren Bennett, McLaughlin's spiritual adviser.

States previously had varying laws and rules. Texas in 2021 agreed spiritual advisers could be present — but they couldn't touch the inmate or even speak with them. Convicted killer John Henry Ramirez wanted his pastor's comforting words and touch, and sued. It was Ramirez's case that resulted in the Supreme Court decision.

As Ramirez faced lethal injection in October, the Rev. Dana Moore placed a hand on the inmate's chest, and held it there.

"Look upon John with your grace," Moore prayed. "Grant him peace. Grant all of us peace." Ramirez responded: "Amen," before dying.

Some inmates have used their final moments to express remorse and seek forgiveness. Among them was James Coddington in Oklahoma, who was executed in August.

"I can't give you his exact words, but they were, 'God, forgive me for my sin,'" the Rev. Don Heath said, according to The Oklahoman. "And I said, 'In the name of the the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven.'"

Prisons are still adjusting. On Jan. 12, Scott James Eizember, 62, received lethal injection for killing an elderly couple in Oklahoma. At first, the Department of Corrections rejected the presence of the Rev. Jeffrey Hood, citing his history of anti-death penalty activism. The agency eventually relented, and Hood was with Eizember at the end.

Gray, 68, is pastor at Greater Fairfax Missionary Baptist Church in St. Louis and is a leading racial justice activist. He has been involved in prison ministry for decades. He first met Johnson three months before

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the execution and said he was impressed by how Johnson took responsibility for his crime. Johnson was 19 when he fatally shot Kirkwood, Missouri, Police Officer William McEntee, a father of three, in 2005.

Johnson was baptized in those final months and was serious in his Bible study, Gray said. A favorite passage of his was the story in Luke about the thief on the cross next to Jesus. The thief repented and Jesus responded, "Truly, I say to you, today you'll be with me in paradise."

Throughout their meetings, Gray had a constant refrain.

"They can take your life, but they can't take your dignity," he told Johnson. "You're still a person, you're still a man. Keep that."

When Gray was escorted to the execution chamber on Nov. 29, 2022, Johnson was already on the gurney.

"I'm keeping my dignity, Rev," Johnson said.

One final time, Johnson expressed remorse. God forgave him, Gray responded, rubbing his shoulder. The pastor said he could feel the lethal dose of pentobarbital pulsing into Johnson's bloodstream. He kept praying as Johnson heaved a couple of final breaths, then fell silent.

McEntee's family members were at Johnson's execution. His wife, Mary McEntee, said Johnson acted as "judge, juror and executioner" in killing her husband.

Nearly 1,600 people have been executed in the U.S. since the late 1970s, all but 17 of them men. The execution of McLaughlin, 49, was historic. McLaughlin, who began transitioning about three years ago, was the first openly transgender inmate put to death in the U.S.

Bennett, 33, is pastor at Metropolitan Community Church of St. Louis, where the congregation is predominantly people from the LGBTQ community. She had no previous experience with people behind bars.

Like Johnson, McLaughlin was sorry for her crime, Bennett said. McLaughlin raped and fatally stabbed 45-year-old Beverly Guenther in St. Louis County in 2003. Guenther's relatives did not speak after McLaughlin's execution, and messages seeking comment from them were not returned.

"Amber was haunted by the things she did," Bennett said. "She wanted to find forgiveness from the victim's family and God."

In the execution room on Jan. 3, Bennett and McLaughlin spoke softly about love, peace and the gift of their newfound friendship. Bennett described a "halo of pink" at sunset that evening. Since pink was McLaughlin's favorite color, "we thought that was a sign that God was ready to welcome her home into an embrace of peace, and sparkle, and comfort," Bennett said.

Suddenly, the conversation took an unexpected turn.

"Ouch, ouch, ouch. It hurts," McLaughlin said, according to Bennett. McLaughlin never had time to explain.

"I held her hand and said, 'I'm so sorry that you're in pain,' and 'you can still be at peace even though you're in pain. Remember that we're here for you and we love you and you're not alone,'" Bennett said.

Within moments, McLaughlin was dead. Bennett slumped in a chair and cried, "bitter because her death was physically painful, not peaceful."

Missouri Department of Corrections spokeswoman Karen Pojmann said there was no indication that anything went wrong with the execution. Republican Gov. Mike Parson is "confident in the protocol" and won't order an investigation, his spokeswoman said.

As for future executions, Gray and Bennett aren't sure they're up to doing it again. Another execution is planned for Tuesday in Missouri, when Raheem Taylor is set to die for the deaths of his girlfriend and her three children in 2004. It wasn't immediately clear if Taylor's imam would be present.

Bennett cited a "level of pain, and the cost" she's still dealing with weeks after McLaughlin's execution, and Gray nodded in agreement.

"And yet I believe that everybody should be able to die with dignity," Bennett said. "In a system where dignity is taken away in every way, for someone to be there for comfort and peace and to remind that person that they can have dignity is huge."

What to Watch: New political vibes this State of the Union

By AAMER MADHANI and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Look for new faces and fresh political dynamics as President Joe Biden delivers

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this year's State of the Union address, coupled with attention to some old problems brought back into painful focus by recent events.

The president on Tuesday night will stand before a joint session of Congress for the first time since voters in the midterm elections handed control of the House to Republicans. Biden, like presidents past, will make the case that the nation is strong and that better days lie ahead. But he finds himself in choppy waters as he passes the halfway mark of his term.

After a series of legislative victories during the first two years of Biden's term, Republicans are looking to undo some of his early wins. Recent mass shootings and a police killing in Memphis, Tennessee, have brought renewed focus to the issues of gun violence and excessive police force. And on the foreign policy front, Biden faces the formidable task of keeping a Western alliance — and the American electorate — united behind Ukraine in its effort to repel Russia's ongoing invasion. He's also dealing with fallout from the U.S. downing of a suspected Chinese spy balloon that floated across the U.S. last week. On top of all that, a special counsel is investigating how classified information from Biden's days as vice president and senator ended up at his Delaware home and former office.

Some things to watch for on Tuesday night:

WHERE DO I WATCH OR LISTEN?

The speech is set for 9 p.m. EST and will be broadcast by the major networks and cable news TV channels. The AP will livestream the speech at APNews.com. The White House plans to stream it on its website, and make it available on its YouTube, Facebook and Twitter pages. Live coverage will also be provided by C-SPAN, C-SPAN Radio and C-SPAN.org. NPR is streaming the speech on its website, npr.org, and on its app, in addition to offering live coverage to its member radio stations.

BIDEN v. MCCARTHY

It will be new GOP House Speaker Kevin McCarthy wielding the gavel and seated behind Biden on the dais this time rather than Democrat Nancy Pelosi. Watch the body language between the two — and how Republican legislators treat Biden overall after some sharp GOP outbursts from the audience last year.

The president and new speaker recently had a productive first sit-down but are at an impasse over the nation's borrowing limit. Republicans have refused to raise the statutory debt limit unless Biden accepts cuts in federal spending. Biden has said raising the cap is not up for negotiation, and Congress must pay the nation's bills or the country will face economic calamity.

The Democratic president last week said McCarthy made "absolutely off the wall" commitments to win the speakership. Biden's rhetorical jabs might not be so sharp in the formal address, but look for him to more subtly argue that there's an enormous chasm between how he and Republicans approach the economy, health care and Social Security.

GUN VIOLENCE AND POLICING

The parents of Tyre Nichols, who was severely beaten by police officers in Memphis and later died, are expected to be in the audience for Biden's address. So is Brandon Tsay, who disarmed the gunman who shot and killed 11 people last month in Monterey Park, California, along with others who jumped in during recent mass shootings.

Watch how Biden, in their presence, speaks to the recent rash of mass shootings and the beating death of Nichols, after his past efforts to address gun violence and police excesses have been sharply restricted by resistance in Congress.

NEW FACES

There will be plenty of new faces in the crowd as Biden addresses the nation. The nation has a new Supreme Court justice since last year's address in Ketanji Brown Jackson, and in recent years justices have tended to attend addresses by the president who nominated them. There are new legislators from both parties, as well. Among those getting outsized attention: Rep. George Santos, the New York Republican who has been in the spotlight for embellishments and lies about his education, work experience and other aspects of his personal and professional life.

THE CHINESE BALLOON

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Look for Biden to talk about his decision to have the military shoot down a suspected Chinese surveillance balloon on Saturday, but how tough will he be on China?

His comments on the balloon will be part of a broader section on countering China's more assertive economic and military actions around the world.

WHAT NEXT IN UKRAINE?

Biden has repeatedly said the U.S. is committed to helping Ukraine "as long as it takes" to beat back Russia. The United States has already committed nearly \$30 billion in security assistance since the start of the war.

Polls show Americans remain broadly in favor of providing support to Ukraine as it tries to fend off Russia. Administration officials, however, have made clear to Ukraine that Congress' patience with the cost of war is not endless.

Look for Biden to spotlight that Ukraine has been able to stay in the fight with a more formidable Russian military because of U.S. and allies' generosity. He'll also try to spell out why Americans must remain committed to a war that has ramifications far beyond Europe.

CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT PROBE

Will Biden bring it up? Not likely.

After criticizing his predecessor, Republican President Donald Trump, for holding on to classified documents after his presidency, Biden now finds himself in the middle of a special counsel inquiry into classified documents that were found in his home and former office space.

The White House makes the case it's important to distinguish between Biden voluntarily turning over documents and the behavior of Trump, who refused to hand over hundreds of documents, prompting the FBI to raid his home.

Biden is likely to steer clear of the controversy in his address, as past presidents have tended to avoid mention of whatever's got them into difficulty.

THE 2024 QUESTION

Biden is expected to announce he's running for reelection sometime this spring, but there's growing sentiment among voters that he should stick to one term. Will Biden address the reelection question head on? Probably not. But his speech could well be framed as an argument for an additional four years of a Biden White House. And millions of viewers will be evaluating not just Biden's words but his delivery as they weigh whether that's a good idea.

CULTURE WARS

Arkansas' new governor, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, will deliver the Republican response to Biden's address.

Sanders has staked out ground in the early days of her term on hot cultural issues in schools by issuing executive orders targeting the teaching of critical race theory in Arkansas schools and expressing support for legislation banning instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through the third grade.

Don't expect her to hold back on the national stage in making the case that Democrats are out of touch with mainstream American values.

THE FENCE RETURNS

It's back: the tall, imposing security fencing at the Capitol complex.

Following the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters who refused to accept Biden's election victory, a massive fence went up around the grounds as a temporary security measure.

It stayed there for six months before finally being removed. It went back up briefly before last year's State of the Union address, when Democrats were still in charge of Congress. And now it's back again for this year's address.

Russian forces keep up pressure as Ukraine anniversary nears

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces are keeping Ukrainian troops tied down with attacks in the eastern

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Donbas region as Moscow assembles additional combat power there for an expected offensive in the coming weeks, Ukrainian officials said Monday.

Intense fighting that has been raging for weeks continued around the city of Bakhmut and the nearby towns of Soledar and Vuhledar, Ukraine's presidential office said.

They are located in the Donetsk region, which with neighboring Luhansk region makes up the Donbas, an industrial area bordering Russia.

"The battles for the region are heating up," Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said in televised remarks, adding that "the Russians are throwing new units into the battle and eradicating our towns and villages."

In Luhansk, Gov. Serhii Haidai said shelling there had subsided because "the Russians have been saving ammunition for a large-scale offensive."

Military analysts say the Kremlin's forces may be probing Ukrainian defenses for weak points or could be making a feint while preparing for a main thrust through southern Ukraine.

Ukraine envisages possible Russian offensives in the east and the south, Ukrainian military intelligence spokesman Vadym Skibitsky said. He predicted that Russia will likely press its offensive in the Donbas and could also launch an attack in the southern Zaporizhzhia region.

He didn't say when the offensive might start but noted that the Russian military would need another couple of months to complete the training of new units.

Skibitsky added that Russia plans to mobilize another 300,000-500,000 in addition to the 300,000 mobilized in the fall.

David Arakhamia, who leads Zelenskyy's Servant of the People party in parliament, said Sunday that Ukraine is preparing for a Russian offensive while planning to counterattack and reclaim its occupied territory.

Arakhamia, noting that "time and circumstances call for strengthening and regrouping," also announced that Ukraine's Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov would be moved to another government post and replaced by the head of military intelligence, Kyrylo Budanov. But Arakhamia abruptly changed course Monday and said that no shakeup will happen this week.

Mariana Bezuhla, a Servant of the People party lawmaker, said officials decided to postpone the reshuffle following the analysis of "risks for the system as a whole" ahead of next week's meeting with NATO allies.

One of Reznikov's deputies recently lost his job amid Zelenskyy's crackdown on corruption. Reznikov said over the weekend that he was ready to step down if Zelenskyy decides it is best.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is hungry for some battlefield success, especially securing illegally annexed territory in eastern Ukraine, to mark the anniversary of his invasion on Feb. 24.

Russian forces made gains in the first few months of the war, though they failed to clinch key objectives and were then driven back from large areas by a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Western military help has been essential for Kyiv to fend off a far larger military force.

The government of Norway aims to donate 75 billion kroner (\$7.3 billion) in a multi-year support package to Ukraine, making the oil-rich Scandinavian country one of the world's top donors.

Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre said Monday the money would be used for a military and civilian aid package over a five-year period once parliament gives its approval.

Canadian Defense Minister Anita Anand tweeted late Sunday that the first German-made Leopard tank Canada is donating to Ukraine had arrived in Poland. It is part of a broad tank commitment by Ukraine's Western allies to help it defeat Russia.

Training for Ukrainian military on how to use the tank was due to begin "soon," Anand said, as the allies race to get Ukraine's forces ready before the looming offensive.

Ukraine's presidential office said Monday that at least one civilian had been killed and 10 others wounded by Russian shelling over the past 24 hours.

Five of those were injured during the shelling of Kharkiv city, where Russian shells struck residential buildings and a university, the presidential office said.

The Russians again fired at targets across the Dnieper River from the Russia-occupied Zaporizhzhia

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nuclear power plant, damaging residential buildings and power lines in Nikopol and Marhanets, Ukrainian authorities reported.

Russian forces occupied Zaporizhzhia, Europe's biggest nuclear power plant, early in the war, and regular shelling of the area stoked major safety concerns.

The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog is due to visit Moscow this week to discuss safety at Zaporizhzhia. International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Rafael Grossi aims to "continue his consultations aimed at agreeing and implementing a nuclear safety and security protection zone" around the plant, IAEA spokesman Fredrik Dahl said.

Martin Griffiths, the U.N. humanitarian chief, said Monday that nearly 8 million Ukrainians have fled to neighboring countries since the war started and 5.3 million are displaced within the country. He told the U.N. Security Council Monday that 17.6 million Ukrainians — almost 40% of the population — need humanitarian assistance.

Griffiths said that he will be launching an appeal later this month in Geneva for \$3.9 billion to help more than 11 million people this year.

Purdue stays No. 1 in AP Top 25; NC State in at No. 22

By AARON BEARD AP Basketball Writer

Purdue's unquestioned grip on No. 1 in The Associated Press men's college basketball poll is gone after a weekend loss. That didn't stop the Boilermakers from remaining at the top anyway.

The Boilermakers earned 38 of 62 first-place votes in the poll released Monday to remain at No. 1 for a third straight week and seventh time this season. Purdue was the unanimous choice last week, the first for any team this season, before falling at Indiana over the weekend for only its second loss.

The Boilermakers (22-2, 11-2) have a leading candidate for national player of the year in Zach Edey and KenPom's No. 1-ranked offense (121.1 points scored per 100 possessions) to go with a top-25 defense. But they got down big, committed 16 turnovers and allowed the Hoosiers — up to No. 18 this week — to shoot nearly 53% in a 79-74 loss Saturday.

"When we go to Zach and we make some perimeter shots, the defense gets better sometimes when the offense flows," Purdue coach Matt Painter said at his postgame news conference. "And you can't do that. You can always rebound, you can always take care of the ball, you can always make your free throws, those things there."

The loss meant Houston collected 22 first-place votes as it rose one spot to No. 2, followed by No. 3 Alabama and No. 4 Arizona in each claiming one.

THE TOP TIER

Texas jumped five spots to No. 5, shooting past Tennessee, which fell four spots to No. 6 after losing last week at Florida.

UCLA, Virginia, Kansas and Marquette rounded out the top 10, with Shaka Smart's Golden Eagles cracking the top 10 for the first time since 2019.

RISING

The Longhorns' jump marked the biggest of the week, followed by Marquette and Miami each rising four spots. No. 13 Xavier, No. 15 Saint Mary's and No. 21 UConn joined Indiana in each moving up three positions.

In all, 12 teams rose from last week's rankings.

SLIDING

Kansas State took the week's biggest tumble, falling five spots to No. 12 after losing at Kansas and at home to Texas last week. No. 16 Gonzaga joined Tennessee in falling four spots after its overtime loss at Saint Mary's.

In all, nine teams fell from last week's rankings.

STATUS QUO

Purdue was the only team to remain in the same position this week.

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WELCOME

North Carolina State earned its first AP Top 25 ranking in four years, checking in at No. 22.

The Wolfpack (19-5, 9-4 Atlantic Coast Conference) spent six weeks in the poll during the 2018-19 season. N.C. State already has surpassed the win total for each of the last two seasons and is in contention for the program's first NCAA Tournament berth since 2018.

Creighton and Rutgers joined N.C. State as this week's new additions to the poll, though both were ranked earlier this season. The Bluejays were No. 9 in the preseason poll and peaked at No. 7 before falling out by mid-December, while the Scarlet Knights spent a week at No. 23 in mid-January.

FAREWELL (FOR NOW)

Florida Atlantic (No. 19), Clemson (No. 20) and Auburn (No. 25) fell out of this week's poll.

CONFERENCE WATCH

The Big 12 leads all leagues with six ranked teams, including No. 11 Iowa State, No. 14 Baylor and No. 17 TCU. The Big East is next with five ranked teams, followed by the Big Ten and ACC with three each.

The Pac-12, Southeastern and West Coast conferences each have two ranked teams, while the American Athletic and Mountain West each have one.

Shiffrin's Beijing lesson helps after another big-race DNF

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

MERIBEL, France (AP) — Practically the only person not asking Mikaela Shiffrin if this was the Beijing Olympics all over again was herself.

That's because the American skier learned so much from that disappointing performance a year ago when she didn't finish three of her five individual races and didn't win a medal amid enormous expectations. She was able to quickly compartmentalize another DNF — "Did Not Finish" in skiing lingo — on Monday in the opening race of the world championships.

This time, Shiffrin straddled the third-to-last gate in the slalom portion of the combined race, ending what had appeared destined to be a gold-medal winning run.

"Everyone's going to ask, 'Oh is this Beijing again?'" she said. "I didn't really think about that for myself, but more for the people asking.

"But I also said before coming into this world champs multiple times, I'm not afraid if it happens again," Shiffrin added, her voice cracking with emotion. "What if I don't finish every run like what happened last year? I survived and I've had some pretty amazing races this season. So I would take the season that I've had with no medals at the world championships. But I'm going to be pushing for medals because that's what you do at world champs. ... And I'm not afraid of the consequences as long as I have that mentality, which I had today. So, it's good."

It's the same mentality Shiffrin has had all season, as she's won 11 of her 23 World Cup races to put her well on her way to a fifth overall title — generally regarded as the most important prize in ski racing.

She won three races within six days two weeks ago to raise her career tally to 85 World Cup wins, breaking former teammate Lindsey Vonn's women's record of 82 and moving within one of the overall mark set by Ingemar Stenmark in the 1970s and 80s.

World championship races do not count toward World Cup wins. It's the medals that skiers are after.

Having stood sixth and nearly a full second behind eventual gold medalist Federica Brignone after the super-G run, Shiffrin was charging to make up time in the slalom leg and was doing a great job at that until she lost control and stuck her right ski high in the air like an acrobat to regain her balance. The recovery, however, forced Shiffrin to place one ski on the wrong side of a red gate.

In a split second, she went from eyeing gold to being disqualified.

Seconds later, when she came to a stop in the finish area and realized what happened, Shiffrin dropped her mouth open incredulously. Then she rested on her ski poles and started analyzing what went wrong. Or better yet, what went right.

Because to be fair, this was an improvement from Beijing, where she often fell early in her runs and was

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nowhere near the form she's in now.

"Of course, I'm disappointed not to finish and not to get a medal, but I'm also quite excited because I was skiing really well," Shiffrin said as the Italian anthem played and Brignone was awarded the winner's honors right behind her. "My mentality in the start for the slalom was to take all the risk, full-gas skiing top to bottom, push the whole way and take the risk that it might not work. I might ski off the course because slalom is like that — there's no room for error."

Grippier snow at the end of the Roc de Fer course — the slope used for the 1992 Albertville Olympics — tripped Shiffrin up.

"I saw that in inspection," she said. "So I thought, 'I have to be very strong with my position. I have to stay active, but I can't take my foot off the gas. And this could be a section that's tricky. It could be something that actually gets me if I take the full speed of the course.' And in the end it did."

The biggest positive takeaway was that she made up all of the time on Brignone before her mishap.

"I didn't know if I could do that," said Shiffrin, who didn't finish a run of a technical race for the first time since the Olympics. "So I'm excited that I accomplished that."

Now Shiffrin has a day to recover before racing again Wednesday in the super-G, an event she won't be the outright favorite in. Then she'll likely leave Meribel for several days to train elsewhere for her best events of giant slalom and slalom at the end of next week.

"I love how I'm skiing. I love the feeling I have every time I get on my skis, no matter what event," Shiffrin said. "Unfortunately, you also have to face the side of the sport where it doesn't work, you don't finish and everyone's disappointed — that's the negative side or the sad side. But overall, it's just been such an insane, amazing season and I feel like I don't have to get motivated. I just keep it rolling and keep going with the skiing I have because it's been the best I've ever done."

For Super Bowl ads this year, crypto is out, booze is in

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The hottest ticket in town for advertisers is officially sold out. Fox said Monday that in-game ads for Super Bowl LVII have all been sold.

The big game between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles takes place on Sunday.

The Super Bowl is advertising's biggest stage, with advertisers jockeying to get their products in front of the more than 100 million people that watch each year. Mark Evans, executive vice president of ad sales for Fox Sports, said a few ads went for more than \$7 million for a 30-second spot. Most sold between \$6 million and \$7 million.

Anheuser-Busch remains the biggest advertiser with three minutes of national airtime. The beverage giant gave up its deal to be the exclusive alcohol advertiser this year, so Heineken, Diageo, Remy Martin and Molson Coors are also in the game. Other big categories advertising include packaged food like Doritos and M&Ms, movie studios and streaming services, automakers and tech companies, Evans said. Out this year: crypto companies.

Last year's Super Bowl was dubbed the "Crypto Bowl" because four cryptocurrency companies — FTX, Coinbase, Crypto.com and eToro — ran splashy commercials. It was part of a larger effort by crypto companies to break into the mainstream with sports sponsorships. But in November, FTX filed for bankruptcy and its founder was charged in a scheme to defraud investors.

This year, two crypto advertisers had commercials "booked and done" and two others were "on the one-yard line," Evans said. But once FTX news broke, those deals weren't completed.

Now, "There's zero representation in that category on the day at all," he said.

Evans said most Super Bowl ads sold much earlier than usual, with more than 90% of its Super Bowl ad inventory gone by the end of the summer, as established advertisers jockeyed for prime positions. But the remaining spots sold slower. Partly that was due to the implosion of the crypto space, as well as general advertiser concerns about the global economy, Evans said.

Last year, NBC sold out of its ad space briskly and said an undisclosed number of 30-second spots went

for \$7 million, a jump from the \$6.5 million that 2021's ads went for.

Brignone wins worlds combined race after Shiffrin straddles

By ANDREW DAMPF and ERIC WILLEMSEN Associated Press

MERIBEL, France (AP) — Leaning on her ski poles and shaking her head, Federica Brignone thought she had squandered her chance for a gold medal in the women's combined.

The Italian had just finished her slalom run on the opening day of the world championships, but a costly mistake slowed her down just before the flat finishing section. She didn't believe the lead she had built earlier Monday in the super-G portion of the race would hold up.

Especially with someone like Mikaela Shiffrin still to come down.

Minutes later, though, Brignone screamed and put the hands on her head in disbelief. The defending champion from the United States straddled the third-to-last gate when it appeared she was about to beat Brignone's time.

"I am so happy and grateful for today," said Brignone, who became the first world champion from Italy in the women's combined. "It was an amazing day. I did two really good runs, also super-G and then slalom. What's missing in my career was a gold medal and I'm so, so excited and so happy about today."

Wendy Holdener had the fastest slalom time. The two-time world champion from Switzerland climbed from 13th after the opening run to win silver, 1.62 seconds behind Brignone. Bronze went to Ricarda Haaser of Austria, who was 2.26 behind.

The combined event adds the results of a super-G run and a slalom run.

"Today, I was just focused on my skiing. It was sure my perfect day," said Brignone, who led Shiffrin by 0.96 after the super-G portion. "She told me: 'Oh, you put me under a lot of pressure. You did a great super-G.'"

The Italian also led the combined event at her home world championships two years ago, but skied out early in the slalom run.

"In slalom, anything can happen. I was first in Cortina and then I did three gates," Brignone said. "I am also a nice slalom skier, for sure not the best, but I can do some pretty good runs."

Brignone's gold came 12 years after winning bronze in giant slalom, her only previous medal at worlds, though she has won three Olympic medals since, including bronze in the combined event at last year's Beijing Games.

Also, her triumph came 40 years after her mother, Maria Rosa Quario, won the last of her four slalom World Cup races. Skiing is a family affair for Brignone — she learned the sport from her father and she is currently coached by her brother, Davide.

"My career was already great and I didn't need anything more," Brignone said. "But I had a great time singing with the team afterward. I had so many emotions."

Brignone's win could mark the start of a triumphant week for the Italian team with the super-G to follow Wednesday. Olympic champion Sofia Gioggia is the favorite in Saturday's downhill.

Shiffrin was competing in her first major event since failing to win a medal in six starts at last year's Beijing Games. It's the first time since the Olympics that Shiffrin failed to finish a run of a technical race.

"The only way I have a chance is to ski full, full gas. So I was doing that, take the risk that you don't finish," Shiffrin said. "So, that's disappointing, but it's always quite positive how I was skiing."

Shiffrin was the defending champion in the combined event. She has won six world titles and 11 medals overall from 13 previous starts at world championships.

American teammate Breezy Johnson came off the race line and crashed through a gate halfway through her super-G run but said she was unhurt.

Holdener, who won the combined world title in 2017 and 2019 and added Olympic silver last year, used a strong slalom run to jump onto the podium.

"I didn't know what happened in the slalom, so when I saw the second place, I was really happy and enjoyed it a lot," the Swiss skier said. "The last couple of weeks were hard to have the right balance. But

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when I arrived here, I enjoyed myself, had the right balance again.”

Petra Vlhova, the silver medalist from 2019 and 2021, sat out the race to focus on her core events of giant slalom and slalom. The 2021 overall World Cup champion from Slovakia has struggled with health issues in recent weeks.

On Tuesday, the men start their championships with the combined.

Grammys Moments: A rap tribute for the ages, Beyoncé triumph

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

As he accepted an innovator’s award named for him, Dr. Dre mused about what he had in common with many of the people he saw from the Grammy Awards stage.

“Where would a lot of people in here be without hip-hop?” the renowned rapper, producer and entrepreneur said.

The 2023 Grammy Awards may ultimately be remembered as the year the music industry’s top event tried to embrace rap, whose leaders have regarded the institution with suspicion for almost as long as the 50 years of history that were celebrated on Sunday.

It was only four years ago that song of the year winner Childish Gambino boycotted the show over perceived disrespect for rap. Kanye West and Eminem were among past stars with groundbreaking work overlooked for more middling fare and, for years, rappers complained their work was banished from TV.

The 15-minute Questlove-curated travel through time was a joy that brought dozens of stars to the stage, including Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five, Run-DMC, Public Enemy, Ice T, Missy Elliott, Queen Latifah, Method Man, Salt-N-Pepa ... the list goes on, and still there were those you wished were there.

Nearly as important was the eight-minute version of DJ Khaled’s “God Did” that closed the show — Khaled took public note of the length — that featured a spellbinding appearance by Jay-Z.

Quavo’s tribute to Takeoff of Migos was arguably the highlight of a packed and memorable “in memoriam” segment to artists who died over the past year.

Kendrick Lamar gave an incisive acceptance speech after “Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers” won a Grammy for best rap album, his third trophy in this category.

It was a night it seemed the Grammys finally accepted rap as music’s dominant form. Will rappers finally accept the Grammys? That remains to be seen.

QUEEN BEY’S HAUL

Beyoncé took a place in history on Sunday when her four Grammys gave her a career total of 32, better than anyone else.

And yet...

The Grammys have a clear pecking order, with four of its awards the most prestigious: song, record and album of the year, and best new artist. Beyoncé has won only one of those awards, when “Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)” was named top song in 2010.

She’s been nominated eight times for record of the year, and never won. Her most memorable Grammy moments came when two peers stood onstage with their own trophies and saluted her: when Adele said Beyoncé’s “Lemonade” should have won instead of her in 2017, and Sunday when Lizzo spoke of skipping school in fifth grade to see Beyoncé perform.

Thirty-two trophies. It’s still hard to shake an empty feeling.

TRIVIA QUESTION

Whose record did Beyoncé beat? That would be classical conductor Georg Solti.

RAITT’S TRIUMPH

It may take Bonnie Raitt a few days to lose that look of shock. The 73-year-old guitarist won best song for “Just Like That,” a piece inspired by a story of a heart transplant, where she tried to emulate the writing style of the late John Prine. It was especially gratifying because Raitt is more of an interpreter. “I don’t write a lot of songs, but I’m proud that you appreciate this one,” she said. It was 33 years after “Nick of Time” was named album of the year.

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NOAH'S NIGHT

Show host Trevor Noah skillfully played the role of a fan, instead of serving snark from the stage, moving through the audience "like a floating Chinese balloon," he said. And why not? With Adele, Lizzo, Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, Harry Styles and the like around, there was plenty of star power. Noah was neither insulting nor obsequious. And one delightful device — having fans talk about their favorite albums — paid off when a memorable grandma got to announce Styles' album of the year win.

HARRY'S STYLE

OK, while he was performing "As it Was" Styles was dressed a little like one of those holiday tinsel decorations you thought you'd put away. The smooth pop composition clearly served him well. Later, he marveled at the quality of the competition and how hard it is to pick a winner. "You never know with this stuff," he said backstage. "I don't think you can look at any of the nominees and not feel as if they're deserving. I'm really grateful they chose us."

PETRAS' MOMENT

In accepting a Grammy for her duet on Sam Smith's "Unholy," Kim Petras proudly took note of her status as a transgender woman and paid tribute to heroes like the late transgender singer Sophie and Madonna. The latter returned the favor by introducing a performance of the song. Petras and Lizzo, who won record of the year for "About Damn Time," made strong, joyful statements about accepting differences. "I felt on the outside looking in and I stayed true to myself because I wanted to make the world a better place," Lizzo said.

INTRODUCING...

One element that worked less well was an effort to have family or friends introduce performances. You lose the idea of "real people" when Madonna is one of the choices. The best was the first — Catherine Shepherd, the proud wife, and the two children of Brandi Carlile (the kids also debuted in a hotel ad). "I'm a very, very lucky queer," Carlile said backstage.

WHY AM I HERE?

The Rock as one of the Grammy presenters? Jill Biden? James Corden? At least the outgoing talk show host noted the incongruity of him giving an award for dance and electronic music. There's enough musical firepower in the room that would surely relish the opportunity to present an award. And while we're asking why someone was there, Ben Affleck turned himself into an unwanted internet star when the camera panned to him in the audience and it seemed like he'd rather be anywhere else. Don't actors know how to fake looking like they're having a good time?

Retailers try to curb theft while not angering shoppers

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When the pandemic threat eased, Maureen Holohan was eager to scale back her online shopping and return to physical stores so she could more easily compare prices and scour ingredients on beauty and health care products for herself and her three children.

But that experience was short lived. In the past six months or so, CVS, Target and other retailers where Holohan shops have been locking up more everyday items like deodorant and laundry detergent as a way to reduce theft. And the 56-year-old Chevy Chase, Maryland resident is now back to shopping online or visiting stores where she doesn't have to wait for someone to retrieve products.

"I know they've got to do something, but locking the stuff up definitely just has me walking by that aisle," said Holohan, a business consultant.

Across the retail landscape, businesses have been putting items under lock and key as a quick way to stop thieves. Some are considering extreme measures, including Rite Aid Corp., whose chief retail officer Andre Persaud told analysts on an earnings call late last year that it's looking at "literally putting everything behind showcases to ensure the products are there for customers who want to buy it." It's also considering using off-duty police officers at some of its stores.

But by trying to solve one problem, these businesses may be creating another: turning off shoppers

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with overreaching measures.

"Everything has changed. We used to be catered to," said Sheila Schlegel, 43, of Queens, New York.

But now, "if you're coming to the store, there's one person at that store, and that person you can tell has been there for 15 hours," said Schlegel, who recalled an incident where she waited for a sales clerk to unlock an item only to be told he didn't have the key. "You don't want to ask them for something if you don't have to."

For consumers of color especially, the stepped-up security measures risk alienating a population that already feels overpoliced. That could unravel some of the inroads that chains like CVS, Sephora and Walmart made in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder in 2020, when they promised to avoid racially biased practices like locking up products only for Black customers.

"Whenever there's a push toward greater criminalization, whenever there's a narrative of increased crime and things like that, it is always consumers of color that are going to be bearing the brunt," said Tiffany Gill, associate professor of history at Rutgers University, and an expert in African American Women's History, fashion and beauty culture.

CVS Health Corp. and Sephora declined to comment for the story. Walmart said that its position of not locking up beauty products for women of color remains the same. Target confirmed it was locking up more products but instead of targeting certain items, it locks up entire categories.

It's unclear how much money retailers are losing due to organized retail crime -- or if the problem has substantially increased. But the issue has received more notice in the past few years as high-profile smash-and-grab retail thefts and flash mob robberies have garnered national media attention.

The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, said its latest security survey of roughly 60 retailers found that inventory loss -- called shrink -- clocked in at an average rate of 1.4% last year, representing \$94.5 billion in losses.

The greatest portion of shrink -- 37% -- came from external theft, including products taken during organized shoplifting incidents, the trade group said. It also noted retailers, on average, saw a 26.5% uptick in organized theft incidents last year.

But while high theft in stores depletes inventory and limits sales, locking up items also reduces sales -- by 15% to 25%, according to Joe Budano, CEO of Indyme, a technology company that sells retailers security devices.

John Catsimatidis, who owns the New York supermarket chains Gristedes and D'Agostino's, said the chain has locked up more products like aspirin and deodorant in the past year but not as many as his drug store chain rivals. His chains have also doubled the number of security guards at some of its stores.

He acknowledged that the move has resulted in some lost sales from impulse shopping but the added security has made shoppers more comfortable and has helped reduce theft, although he's not sure by how much.

"This is not an exact science," he said.

Store workers, meanwhile, face the pressure of trying to do their jobs while also monitoring theft. Isabela Burrows, 20, a manager at pet supplies chain PetSmart in Howell, Michigan, noted that her store in recent months has had to lock up more items like diffusers to calm dogs and cats and electric shaving shears. But while she feels more comfortable, she's also had to deal with shopper annoyance.

"I feel overwhelmed," Burrows said. "They're frustrated with me, and I have to find the item."

In what could be a sign of the overall challenges, drugstore chain Walgreens acknowledged that it might have overblown the shoplifting threat and gone too far in its security measures.

"Maybe, we cried too much last year," James Kehoe, global chief financial officer at Walgreens told analysts during an earnings call last month. "Probably we put in too much and we might step back a little bit from that."

But a Walgreens spokesman cautioned that while the company is pleased to see retail theft levels starting to stabilize, they are "still a serious national problem affecting all retailers."

Some retailers are coming out with less intrusive solutions to store theft. Home improvement retailer

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Lowe's has followed Home Depot in testing technology that unlocks power tools when shoppers buy them at the cash registers instead of resorting to keeping the items in cages.

Anat Shakedd, the CEO and co-founder of Nexite, a company that makes tiny Bluetooth tags that can go on items, says her company has partnered with a top department store in the U.S. and other brands across Europe and Israel to help them monitor their inventory without locking things up.

The Freedom Case, developed by Indyme, asks shoppers for a cell phone number to opt into its service. The shoppers then receive a text message with a four-digit code that lets them open the case. Customers can retain their self-service privileges as long as they show normal shopping behaviors. But if they exhibit suspicious behaviors, store workers will be notified to provide assistance, he said.

Holohan said she doesn't mind extra security guards, but she's not interested in giving out her phone number.

"It's invasive," she said. "If they're going to make it that hard to buy something, I'll find somewhere else to buy that."

National Enquirer, caught in 'catch-and-kill' scandal, sold

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

The National Enquirer, the scandal-plagued tabloid that engaged in "catch-and-kill" practices to bury stories about Donald Trump during his presidential campaign, has been sold.

VVIP is buying the National Examiner and another tabloid, the Globe, from magazine publisher a360 Media in an all-cash deal, though exact financial terms were not disclosed.

In December 2018 the parent company of publications including the National Enquirer, Us Weekly and In Touch admitted to engaging in a journalistically dubious practice known as "catch-and-kill" in order to help Donald Trump become president.

Federal prosecutors revealed at the time that they had agreed not to prosecute American Media Inc. for secretly assisting Trump's campaign by paying \$150,000 to Playboy model Karen McDougal for the rights to her story about an alleged affair with Trump. The company then intentionally suppressed McDougal's story until after the election.

Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, also accused the paper of attempting to bribe him in 2019 with embarrassing "below the belt" photos sent to his girlfriend.

American Media sold the National Enquirer and some other publications in April 2019 to James Cohen, former head of the airport newsstand company Hudson News. However, the transaction was never completed.

In August 2020 David Pecker stepped down as CEO of American Media. At the time, American Media Inc. was being taken over by Accelerate360, a logistics firm based in Smyrna, Georgia. Under Pecker, the National Enquirer for years buried potentially embarrassing stories about Trump and other favored celebrities by buying the rights to them and never publishing.

The Federal Election Commission fined a360 Media \$187,500 in June 2021 for squashing the McDougal story. The FEC said the publisher's "payment to Karen McDougal to purchase a limited life story right combined with its decision not to publish the story, in consultation with an agent of Donald J. Trump and for the purpose of influencing the election, constituted a prohibited corporate in-kind contribution."

VVIP Ventures is a joint venture between digital media and content technologies holding company Vinco Ventures Inc. and ICON Publishing.

Beyoncé emerges as Grammys queen; Styles wins album honor

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Beyoncé sits alone atop the Grammy throne as the ceremony's most decorated artist in history, but at the end of Sunday's show it was Harry Styles who walked away with the album of the year honor.

The Grammys spread its top awards among other artists, leaving Beyoncé off stage at the end of the

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night. But the superstar was a constant presence throughout the night, even when she wasn't in the room, especially once she won her 32nd award and surpassed late conductor Georg Solti in all-time wins.

"I'm trying not to be too emotional," the superstar said after her historic win as her husband Jay-Z stood and applauded her. The singer thanked her late uncle, her parents, Jay-Z and her children for supporting her. "I'm just trying to receive this night. I want to thank God for protecting me. Thank you, God."

The Grammys stage at the end of the night has eluded Beyoncé since 2010, when she won song of the year for "Single Ladies." She added four trophies to her collection for her album "Renaissance."

Styles was emotional accepting his album of the year award, saying he was inspired by everyone in the category. "A lot of different times of my life, I've listened to everyone in these categories. It's so important to remember that there is no such thing as best."

The British singer-actor took home three awards Sunday. "It feels like validation that you're on the right path," said the singer backstage. "When we get in the studio and begin the record, we just make the music we want to make. It feels really nice to feel like 'Oh, that's the right thing to do.'"

Beyoncé missed being in the room when she tied Solti's record early in the telecast. Host Trevor Noah said she was on her way to the ceremony but blamed Los Angeles traffic for not being in person to accept it.

Once Beyoncé — the night's leading nominee — finally arrived, Noah presented her with the best R&B song award at her table.

Beyoncé won for best R&B song for "Cuff It," dance-electric music recording for "Break My Soul," traditional R&B performance for "Plastic Off the Sofa" and dance-electric album for "Renaissance," which was nominated for album of the year.

Lizzo won record of the year for "About Damn Time," delivering a rousing speech that brought many in the audience, including Beyoncé, Taylor Swift and Adele, to their feet.

"Me and Adele were having a good time, rooting for our friends. This is an amazing night. This is so unexpected," Lizzo said, dedicating her award to Prince.

"I wanted to make the world a better place, so I had to be that change to make the world a better place. Now, I look around and see these songs are about loving your body and feeling comfortable in your skin and feeling good."

Jazz singer Samara Joy won best new artist, shrugging off challenges by such acts as Wet Leg, Anitta and Maneskin. The New Yorker was virtually in tears when she collected the award and noted that her little brother was her date. "I'm so, so grateful. Thank you." She has released two albums as a lead artist and also won the Grammy for best jazz vocal album earlier in the night.

Veteran singer-songwriter Bonnie Raitt shrugged off big-name rivals like Adele, Swift and Beyoncé to win the song of the year award. "I'm so surprised. I don't know what to say," a visibly stunned Raitt said, adding that the song "Just Like That" explores organ donation. It capped a night when Raitt won two other Grammys — for best Americana performance and best American roots song.

A who's who of hip-hop royalty took the stage for an epic, rousing 15 minute tribute to the genre's 50th anniversary. The performance included Grandmaster Flash doing part of his seminal hit "The Message," Run DMC, Chuck D and Flavor Flav along with Ice-T, Queen Latifah, Busta Rhymes and Nelly all taking the stage.

It ended with everyone on the stage and LL Cool J shouting "multi-generational! Fifty years!"

The performance was a crowd-pleasing moment for a ceremony that has long had a shaky history of not recognizing rap.

Bad Bunny opened the show with a festive, high-energy performance that brought many of the audience including Swift who rose to her feet and danced near her table at Los Angeles' Crypto.com Arena.

Sam Smith and Kim Petras won best pop duo-group performance for their song "Unholy." Petras said Smith wanted Petras to make the acceptance speech because "I'm the first transgender woman to win this award."

"I want to thank all the incredible transgender legends before me who kicked these doors open for me so I could be here tonight," said Petras, who made a reference to friend and Grammy-nominated musician Sophie, who died after an accidental fall in Athens, Greece in 2021. "You told me this would happen. I always believed in me. Thank you so much for your inspiration, Sophie. I adore you, and your inspiration

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will forever be in my music.”

Petras thanked Madonna for being a tremendous supporter of LGBTQ rights.

“I don’t think I could be here without Madonna,” Petras said. “My mother, I grew up next to a highway in nowhere Germany. And my mother believed me that I was a girl. I wouldn’t be here without her and her support.”

During the in memoriam segment, the Grammys recognized the lives of Loretta Lynn, Migos rapper Takeoff and Christine McVie with several star-studded performers paying them homage. The touching performances included Kacey Musgraves singing “Coal Miner’s Daughter” in tribute to Lynn; Quavo and the Maverick City Music hit the stage to honor his nephew Takeoff with the song “Without You;” and Sheryl Crow, Mick Fleetwood and Bonnie Raitt performed “Songbird” to remember McVie.

Kendrick Lamar won sixth career trophy for best rap performance for “The Heart Part 5” and also won best rap album for his studio offering, “Mr. Morales & The Big Steppers.”

“You know, as entertainers, we say things to provoke thoughts and feelings and emotions,” he said. “So making this record is one of my toughest. ... I would like to thank the culture for allowing me to evolve in order to make this. I finally found imperfection with this album.”

Viola Davis emerged from Sunday’s show an EGOT — a term for those who have won an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony — after her win for best audio book, narration and storytelling recording. The actor gave an emotional speech and emphatically said “I just EGOT” after she marched on stage to collect her award.

“Oh, my God,” she said. “I wrote this book to honor the 6-year-old Viola, to honor her, her life, her joy, her trauma, everything,” Davis said. “It has just been such a journey.”

The show made its return to Los Angeles after the pandemic first delayed, then forced the Grammys to move to Las Vegas last year. Noah hosted the ceremony as well, which saw Jon Batiste take home album of the year.

Israeli troops kill 5 Palestinian gunmen in West Bank raid

By IMAD ISSEID and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

AQABAT JABR, West Bank (AP) — Israeli forces killed five Palestinian gunmen linked to the Islamic militant Hamas group in a raid on refugee camp in the occupied West Bank on Monday, the latest bloodshed in the region that will likely further exacerbate tensions.

The Palestinian president’s office called the violence a crime, urging the United States to pressure Israel to hold back on its incursions. The military said the raid was meant to apprehend a militant cell that staged a botched shooting attack on a restaurant in a Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

The violence extends one of the deadliest periods in years in the West Bank and comes during the first weeks of Israel’s new government, its most right-wing ever, which has promised to take a tough stance against the Palestinians.

The Israeli military said it was operating in the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp to apprehend the suspects behind a failed shooting attack last month at a West Bank restaurant, where attackers allegedly were thwarted by a weapon malfunction. The attackers then fled the scene, the military said, adding that they were members of Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip and has elements in the West Bank as well.

The military said it was searching Monday for the militant cell behind the shooting that it said had sealed itself inside a home in the refugee camp. During the search, troops encountered gunmen and a gun battle erupted. The military said several of the gunmen who were killed were involved in the attempted attack on the restaurant.

“The new Israeli government is continuing its series of crimes against our Palestinian people,” a statement from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’ office said.

In Aqabat Jabr, bullets were strewn across a blood-streaked floor at the scene of the gunfight. Bullet marks pocked a door and glass shards from a broken window littered the ground.

Jihad Abu al-Assal, the governor of Jericho and the Jordan Valley, said the military was holding on to the gunmen’s bodies. The Palestinian Health Ministry later confirmed that five Palestinians had been killed.

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Speaking at an event at the site of a recent deadly Palestinian shooting attack, Netanyahu confirmed earlier reports by Israeli security officials that five gunmen were killed.

Hamas said all five of those killed were members of its armed wing. Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said the violence would be met with a response.

"Our people and their resistance will not delay in responding to this crime," he said.

The raid comes days after an earlier incursion in the Aqabat Jabr camp, which is near the Palestinian city of Jericho, a desert oasis in an area of the West Bank that rarely sees such unrest, where troops were also searching for the suspects.

Since the shooting at the nearby settlement, the Israeli military has blocked access to several roads into Jericho — a closure that has placed the city under a semi-blockade, disrupting business and creating hourslong bottlenecks at checkpoints that affected even Palestinian security forces, footage showed.

Monday's violence comes days after an Israeli military raid on the Jenin refugee camp killed 10 Palestinians, mostly militants but also a 61-year-old woman. The next day, a Palestinian shooting attack outside an east Jerusalem synagogue killed seven people, including a 14-year-old.

The Israeli army has ramped up near-nightly raids in the occupied West Bank since a series of deadly Palestinian attacks within Israel last spring. Over the last year of escalating raids, Jericho has remained a sort of sleepy desert town, spared much of the violence.

The Palestinian Authority, in retaliation for the raid into the Jenin refugee camp, declared a halt to security coordination with Israel.

Nearly 150 Palestinians were killed last year in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, making it the deadliest year in those areas since 2004, according to figures by the Israeli rights group B'Tselem. Since the start of this year, 41 Palestinians have been killed in those territories. Palestinian attacks against Israelis killed some 30 people in 2022.

The Israeli army says most of the Palestinians killed have been militants. But stone-throwing youths protesting the incursions and others not involved in confrontations have also been killed.

Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek those territories for their hoped-for independent state.

Today in History: FEB 7, Kennedy imposes Cuba embargo

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 7, the 38th day of 2023. There are 333 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 7, 1964, the Beatles arrived at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport to begin their first American tour.

On this date:

In 1857, a French court acquitted author Gustave Flaubert of obscenity for his serialized novel "Madame Bovary."

In 1943, the government abruptly announced that wartime rationing of shoes made of leather would go into effect in two days, limiting consumers to buying three pairs per person per year. (Rationing was lifted in October 1945.)

In 1948, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower resigned as U.S. Army chief of staff; he was succeeded by Gen. Omar Bradley.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy imposed a full trade embargo on Cuba.

In 1971, women in Switzerland gained the right to vote through a national referendum, 12 years after a previous attempt failed.

In 1984, space shuttle Challenger astronauts Bruce McCandless II and Robert L. Stewart went on the first untethered spacewalk, which lasted nearly six hours.

In 1985, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena was kidnapped in Gua-

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dalajara, Mexico, by drug traffickers who tortured and murdered him.

In 1991, Jean-Bertrand Aristide (zhahn behr-TRAHN' ahr-ihs-TEED') was inaugurated as the first democratically elected president of Haiti (he was overthrown by the military the following September).

In 1999, Jordan's King Hussein died of cancer at age 63; he was succeeded by his eldest son, Abdullah (ab-DUH'-luh).

In 2009, a miles-wide section of ice in Lake Erie broke away from the Ohio shoreline, trapping about 135 fishermen, some for as long as four hours before they could be rescued (one man fell into the water and later died of an apparent heart attack).

In 2014, the Sochi Olympics opened with a celebration of Russia's past greatness and hopes for future glory.

In 2020, two days after his acquittal in his first Senate impeachment trial, President Donald Trump took retribution against two officials who had delivered damaging testimony; he ousted Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, a national security aide, and Gordon Sondland, his ambassador to the European Union.

Ten years ago: CIA Director-designate John Brennan strongly defended anti-terror attacks by unmanned drones under close questioning at a protest-disrupted confirmation hearing held by the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Five years ago: Biotech billionaire Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong struck a \$500 million deal to buy the Los Angeles Times, the San Diego Union-Tribune and some other publications; the deal would take effect in June. St. John's beat top-ranked Villanova, 79-75, for its second win that week over a top-five team. (St. John's had earlier snapped an 11-game losing streak by beating fourth-ranked Duke.)

One year ago: President Joe Biden's top science adviser Eric Lander resigned after the White House confirmed that an internal investigation found credible evidence that he mistreated his staff, marking the first Cabinet-level departure of the Biden administration.

Today's birthdays: Author Gay Talese is 91. Former Sen. Herb Kohl, D-Wis., is 88. Sen. John Hickenlooper, D-Colo., is 71. Comedy writer Robert Smigel is 63. Actor James Spader is 63. Country singer Garth Brooks is 61. Rock musician David Bryan (Bon Jovi) is 61. Actor-comedian Eddie Izzard is 61. Actor-comedian Chris Rock is 58. Actor Jason Gedrick is 56. Actor Essence Atkins is 50. Rock singer-musician Wes Borland is 48. Rock musician Tom Blankenship (My Morning Jacket) is 45. Actor Ashton Kutcher is 45. Actor Tina Majorino is 38. Actor Deborah Ann Woll is 38. NBA player Isaiah Thomas is 34. NHL center Steven Stamkos is 33.