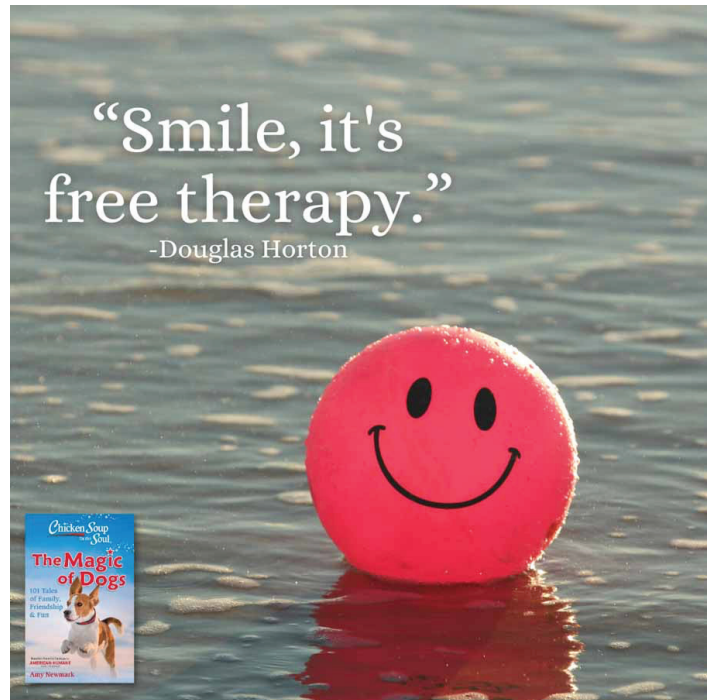


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## Groton Community Calendar

**Wednesday, May 31**

Senior Menu: Ham, au gratin potatoes, cauliflower, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.

Jr. Legion Baseball: Mobridge at Groton (DH), 5 p.m.

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

**OPEN:** **Recycling Trailer in Groton**  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.  
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## JAMES VALLEY TELECOMMUNICATIONS 66<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 1st  
Groton Area High School Arena  
11:30am Registration & Lunch  
12:30pm Meeting

- Membership Gift
- Lunch catered by Ken's SuperFair Foods
- Door Prizes, including a \$500 JVT credit
- Call 605-397-2323 to reserve a free bus ride to the meeting
- JVT's Office will be closed 11am-2pm



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## The Bulletin

by Newsweek

JANUARY 24, 2023

### World in Brief

Nevada Gov. Joe Lombardo signed a measure into law that would enshrine protections for out-of-state abortion seekers and in-state providers, a significant move by the Republican leader to solidify Nevada's status as a safe haven for seeking abortions.

A California appeals court ruled that Leslie Van Houten, who was convicted of murder after participating in two killings at the direction of Charles Manson in 1969, should be eligible for parole.

Whistleblowers from the Justice Department have reportedly come forward to Sen. Chuck Grassley, alleging "irregular handling" of evidence and "standard" procedures that are hindering the investigation into Hunter Biden's business practices.

The U.S. slapped sanctions on 17 individuals and entities in China and Mexico, accusing them of supplying equipment used in the production of counterfeit fentanyl-spiked pills that are destined for the U.S.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, a full-blown NATO war with Russia is the West's "worst-case scenario" but is possible as the gulf between the Western nations and Moscow grows wider, said General Karel Rehka, the chief of the general staff of the Czech armed forces.

### WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis begins his first full-day presidential campaign in Iowa, making multiple appearances in an attempt to connect with voters and portray himself as a credible contender to take on Donald Trump. His visit comes as Trump will also be in the state for two days to meet with supporters and elected officials.

Markets will watch for two jobs reports today — ADP employment and JOLTS job openings — which could give clues on the health of the labor market ahead of Friday's nonfarm payrolls data, from 8:15 a.m. ET. Economists expect ADP's employment report to show that private employers hired 180,000 workers in May, far lower than the 296,000 hired in April. The Federal Reserve's beige book is due at 2 p.m.

Salesforce, NetApp, and Advance Auto Parts are among the major companies scheduled to report their quarterly results.

North Korea said the launch of its first spy satellite launch ended in failure, with the rocket carrying the satellite crashing into the sea.

Tara Reade, a former Senate aide who in 2020 accused President Joe Biden of sexually assaulting her in 1993, has revealed that she has defected to Russia after allegedly receiving death threats.

Elizabeth Holmes has entered prison in Bryan, Texas, to begin an 11-year sentence for defrauding investors with her blood-testing company Theranos.

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## Groton Legion Post 39 Falls to Watertown Post 17 on Walk-off

Groton Legion Post 39 fell to Watertown Post 17 Legion 6-5 on Tuesday on the final play of the game. The game was tied at five with Watertown Post 17 Legion batting in the bottom of the eighth when Treyton Himmerich singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 lost despite out-hitting Watertown Post 17 Legion ten to nine.

Watertown Post 17 Legion knotted the game up at five in the bottom of the sixth inning. An error scored one run for Watertown Post 17 Legion.

After Groton Legion Post 39 scored two runs in the top of the fifth, Watertown Post 17 Legion answered with two of their own. Groton Legion Post 39 scored when Tate Larson's sac fly scored two runs for Groton Legion Post 39. Watertown Post 17 Legion then answered when Himmerich singled on a 1-1 count, scoring one run.

Ryan Roby got the win for Watertown Post 17 Legion. Roby surrendered one run on four hits over three innings, striking out three and walking one. Chase Christanwon threw two innings in relief out of the bullpen.

Cole Simon took the loss for Groton Legion Post 39. The pitcher went two innings, allowing one run on two hits, striking out three and walking one.

Ryan Groeblinghoff started the game for Groton Legion Post 39. Groeblinghoff went five and two-thirds innings, allowing five runs on seven hits and striking out six Dylan Rawdon started the game for Watertown Post 17 Legion. The righty surrendered one run on four hits over three innings, striking out two

Groton Legion Post 39 racked up ten hits in the game. Brevin Fliehs, Cade Larson, Dillon Abeln, and Bradin Althoff all had multiple hits for Groton Legion Post 39. Althoff, Abeln, Larson, and Fliehs each collected two hits to lead Groton Legion Post 39.

Watertown Post 17 Legion collected nine hits. Himmerich and Spencer Weintjes each managed multiple hits for Watertown Post 17 Legion. Himmerich went 3-for-4 at the plate to lead Watertown Post 17 Legion in hits. Watertown Post 17 Legion tore up the base paths, as two players stole at least two bases. Himmerich led the way with two.

Groton lost the second game, 10-0, in three innings. Cade Larson had the lone hit for Groton. Watertown scored seven runs in the first inning and three in the third.

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Groton Legion Post 39 **5 - 6** Watertown Post 17 Legion

📍 Away 📅 Tuesday May 30, 2023

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	R	H	E
GRTN	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	5	10	3
WTRT	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	6	9	2

## BATTING

Groton Legion Post	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Flihs (2B, CF)	5	0	2	0	0	0
C Simon (CF, P)	3	1	0	0	2	1
B Althoff (1B)	4	1	2	1	1	1
T Larson (3B)	2	0	0	1	1	2
R Groeblichhoff (...)	3	0	1	0	1	0
L Ringgingberg (R...)	3	0	0	0	1	1
C Larson (C)	3	1	2	0	1	0
T Diegel (C)	0	0	0	0	0	0
C Dunker (LF)	4	1	1	0	0	1
D Abeln (SS)	4	1	2	1	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>

**2B:** B Althoff 2, **3B:** B Flihs, **TB:** D Abeln 2, B Althoff 4, C Larson 2, R Groeblichhoff, C Dunker, B Flihs 4, **SF:** T Larson, **LOB:** 10

## PITCHING

Groton Legion	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
R Groeblichhoff...	5.2	7	5	3	2	6	0
C Simon	2.0	2	1	1	1	3	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>

**L:** C Simon, **P-S:** R Groeblichhoff 105-60, C Simon 38-19, **WP:** R Groeblichhoff, C Simon, **HBP:** R Groeblichhoff 2, C Simon, **BF:** R Groeblichhoff 28, C Simon 10

Watertown Post 17	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
D Denzer (CF)	5	2	1	0	0	0
D Rawdon (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
T Himmerich (2B)	4	0	3	3	1	0
J Heesch (SS)	4	0	1	0	0	1
K Rylance (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	0
W Engstrom (3B)	4	0	1	0	0	3
S Weintjes (CF)	3	1	2	0	1	0
C Beynon (LF)	2	1	0	1	0	2
P Buisker (RF)	3	0	0	0	0	2
M Krause (C)	3	2	1	0	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>

**3B:** S Weintjes, **TB:** W Engstrom, T Himmerich 3, D Denzer, J Heesch, M Krause, S Weintjes 4, **SF:** C Beynon, **HBP:** K Rylance, C Beynon, P Buisker, **SB:** T Himmerich 2, C Beynon, D Denzer 2, M Krause, **LOB:** 8

Watertown Post 17	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
D Rawdon	3.0	4	1	0	2	2	0
C Christanwon...	2.0	2	3	2	4	1	0
R Roby	3.0	4	1	1	1	3	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** R Roby, **P-S:** R Roby 56-33, C Christanwon 41-20, D Rawdon 59-34, **WP:** R Roby, C Christanwon, D Rawdon, **BF:** R Roby 14, C Christanwon 11, D Rawdon 14



## Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Loses Lead Early in Defeat

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U fell behind early and couldn't come back in a 20-7 loss to Huron Tigers 14U on Tuesday. Huron Tigers 14U took the lead on a walk in the first inning.

Despite the loss, Groton Jr. Teeners 14U did collect four hits in the high-scoring affair. Unfortunately, Huron Tigers 14U had 16 hits on the way to victory.

Huron Tigers 14U got things moving in the first inning. Anderson Porisch drew a walk, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U notched five runs in the sixth inning. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U batters contributing to the big inning included Nick Groeblinghoff, Ryder Schelle, TC Schuster, and Gavin Kroll, who all drove in runs.

Huron Tigers 14U scored eight runs in the seventh inning. The big inning for Huron Tigers 14U came thanks to singles by Teagen Lien, Diego Colon, and Korbin Brock and a home run by Landon Hulst.

Porisch was credited with the victory for Huron Tigers 14U. The righthander went four innings, allowing zero runs on zero hits, striking out eight and walking one. Tyce Huber, Crayton Siedschlag, and Gavin Waldner all put in work in relief out of the bullpen, steering their team towards the victory.

Groeblinghoff started the game for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The righty lasted four innings, allowing six hits and eight runs while striking out three. Karson Zak and Tristan Mcgannon entered the game as relief, throwing two innings and one inning respectively.

Huron Tigers 14U tallied three home runs on the day. Hulst had a four bagger in the third and seventh innings. Porisch went yard in the third inning.

Kroll, Schelle, Ethan Kroll, and Schuster all had one hit to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U tore up the base paths, as five players stole at least two bases. Schuster led the way with two.

Huron Tigers 14U racked up 16 hits in the game. Brock, Cooper Bischoff, Lien, and Hulst each managed multiple hits for Huron Tigers 14U. Brock went 3-for-4 at the plate to lead Huron Tigers 14U in hits. Huron Tigers 14U didn't commit a single error in the field. Colon had seven chances in the field, the most on the team. Huron Tigers 14U stole 21 bases during the game as seven players stole more than one. Davis Chase led the way with four.

## Early Lead For Huron Tigers 14U Seals Fate For Groton Jr. Teeners

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U watched the game slip away early and couldn't recover in an 18-1 loss to Huron Tigers 14U on Wednesday. Huron Tigers 14U scored on a double by Anderson Porisch, a walk by Nolan Stahly, a single by Chase Schuchhardt, and a single by Crayton Siedschlag in the first inning.

The Groton Jr. Teeners 14U struggled to put runs on the board and had a tough time defensively containing Huron Tigers 14U, giving up 18 runs.

Huron Tigers 14U got things started in the first inning when Porisch doubled on a 2-0 count, scoring two runs.

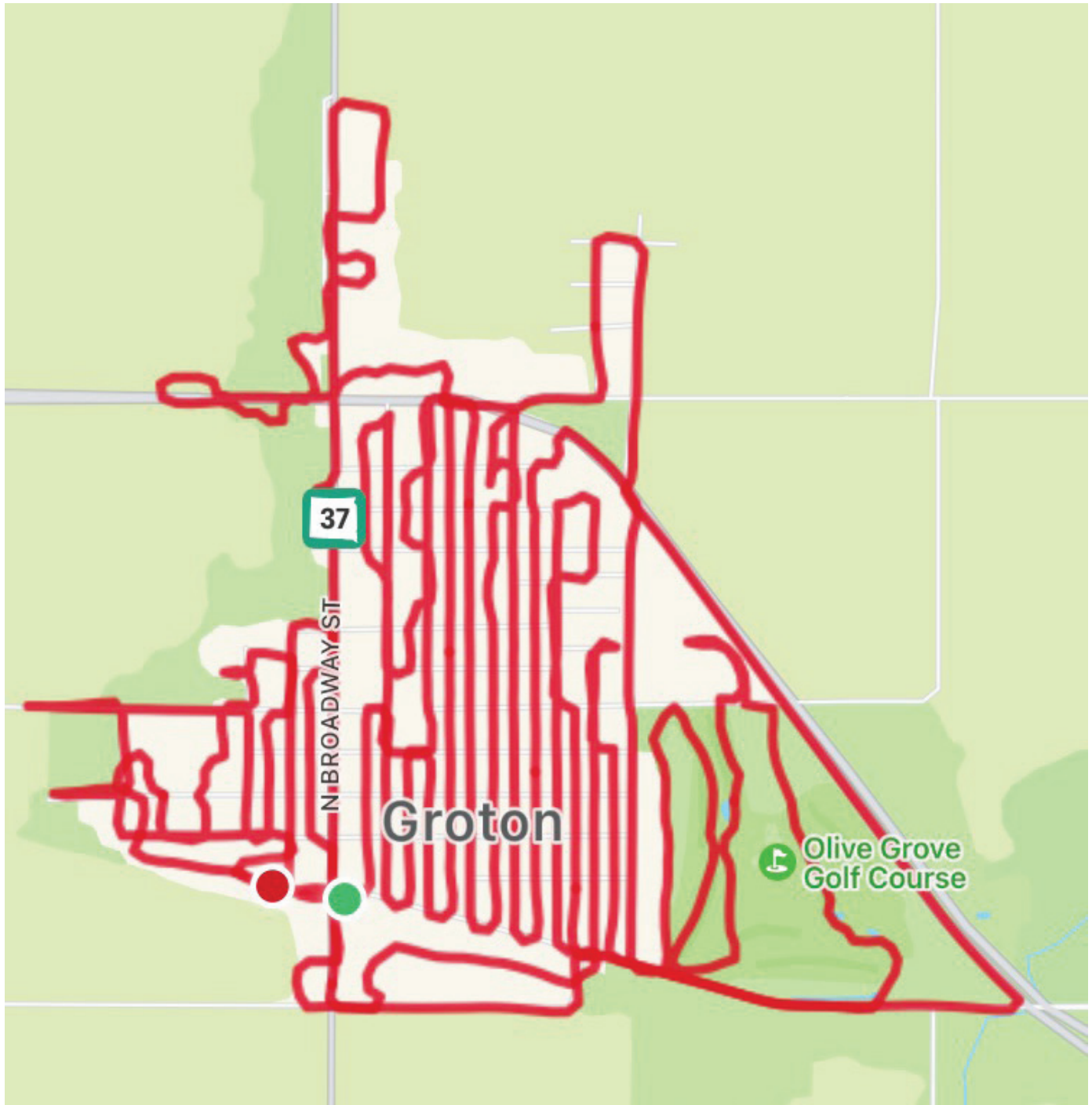
Huron Tigers 14U scored nine runs in the second inning. Huron Tigers 14U big bats were led by Stahly, Jeremy Hofer, Tyce Huber, Schuchhardt, Zach Scheer, and Gavin Waldner, all driving in runs in the inning.

Hofer led things off on the hill for Huron Tigers 14U. Hofer allowed three hits and one run over four innings, striking out nine.

Lincoln Krause was on the pitcher's mound for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Krause allowed four hits and 12 runs over one inning. TC Schuster, Ethan Kroll, and Kason Oswald each contributed in relief for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U.

Ryder Schelle led Groton Jr. Teeners 14U with two hits in two at bats.

Porisch went 2-for-2 at the plate to lead Huron Tigers 14U in hits. Cooper Bischoff led Huron Tigers 14U with two stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with five stolen bases. Huron Tigers 14U was sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Porisch had the most chances in the field with eight.



## Adult Mosquito Control done last night

The City of Groton conducted adult mosquito control Tuesday night. 7.5 gallons of Evolver 4x4 was used. An area of 25 miles was traveled. Wind was light out of the west and the temperature was 77 degrees.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### For-profit businesses in, tribes out in housing infrastructure rules update

**Rulemaking for \$200 million funding pool will continue with public hearing Wednesday**

**BY: JOHN HULT - MAY 30, 2023 5:22 PM**

For-profit entities might have a shot at some of the \$200 million in housing infrastructure funding, the Housing Development Authority's board members learned on Tuesday.

Tribal entities, however, likely won't be eligible unless the Legislature rewrites the law next year.

Those two changes to the proposed rules of the long-delayed workforce housing incentive program came as a result of public comments and legal reviews submitted through May 27 to the authority, which will hold a public hearing on the rules Wednesday afternoon.

It's the latest in a series of events that began with a summer study on workforce housing in 2021. Lawmakers passed a bill allocating \$150 million in state and \$50 million in federal money to the authority in 2022, the goal being to deliver the money to developers to help them pay for curb and gutter, water and sewer, and other infrastructure.

The authority did not award any funds in 2022 because its board members were concerned about the legality of doing so. Gov. Kristi Noem had warned lawmakers against rewriting the bill and funneling the money to the authority and not the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED), as the original bill had.

Legislators returned to Pierre in 2023 to pass what they characterized as a legislative fix early in the session, but the authority reported in April – weeks after the abrupt resignation of former Executive Director Lorraine Polak – that the bureaucratic rule-making process would likely delay the release of the funds for another construction season.

Tuesday's housing authority meeting saw Interim Executive Director Chas Olson walk board members through another round of changes to the program's rules. GOED staff had already pushed for adjustments, a rulemaking speed bump that helped jettison hopes that the money would be available for the 2023 construction season.

Olson said Tuesday that the majority of the public comments from 10 groups and individuals focused on the prohibition against for-profit businesses.

About a month ago, Olson told the Legislature's Interim Appropriations Committee that his staff had written them out because for-profit developers interested in the money were likely to build regardless of incentives.

The public comments in favor of including for-profit businesses, from groups like the South Dakota Homebuilders Association, were bolstered by a review of the rules by the Legislative Research Council's Code Counsel.

"The LRC doesn't believe we have the authority to prohibit for-profit entities from applying," Olson said.

Tribal entities had hoped to see themselves included in the list of potential beneficiaries, as well, and the draft rules included them.

The LRC told the authority that lawmakers had, perhaps unwittingly, written tribes out of eligibility.

The definition of infrastructure in the law is "a right of way, water distribution system, sanitary sewer system, storm sewer system, lift station, street, road, bridge, curb, gutter, sidewalk, traffic signal, or streetlight, which is or will be owned, maintained, or provided by a political subdivision of this state."



LRC's view of tribal eligibility is tied to the words "political subdivision." A city that takes ownership of a sidewalk after a developer builds it is a "political subdivision" of the state under the law.

"Most tribal entities are not considered political subdivisions," Olson said.

For tribes to be awarded housing incentives, he said, lawmakers would need to pass a bill allowing them to do so. One public comment suggested that the authority set aside a portion of the funds for tribes, but "we're not sure that that's within the scope of South Dakota Housing Authority," Olson said.

"So again, we're likely waiting on a legislative fix for that," he said.

The only other major concern for commenters was differing caps for monetary awards. Developers in smaller cities would be eligible for up to \$25,000 per home; their counterparts in larger cities could get up to \$15,000. The rules will be adjusted to have a single dollar figure applied to all locales, Olson said, provided the LRC doesn't overrule the authority on the matter.

"We received several comments with some valid points on why that should be perhaps straight across the board, the \$25,000 limit," Olson said.

The board took no formal action on the rules Tuesday. At Wednesday's public hearing, the board will hear and consider comments, make adjustments as needed and vote on the rules. The document would then head to the Legislature's Interim Rules Review Committee, which meets June 13. If that committee signs off, the authority would be set to begin handing out monetary awards in late summer or early fall.

The public hearing will take place at 1 p.m. Central on Wednesday at 3060 E. Elizabeth St. in Pierre. The meeting will also be streamed over Skype.

*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**

### **The exception to South Dakota's pioneering role in direct democracy**

**Recall elections not available at the state level, and the local option is seldom used**

**JOSHUA SPIVAK**

An effort to kick Baltic Mayor Deborah McIsaac out of office over a fight about a housing development highlights a surprising fact about South Dakota's political process: Voters have been unusually hesitant to use recall elections against officials.

As the very first state to adopt the initiative and referendum back in 1898, the Mount Rushmore State has long been a direct democracy pioneer. But South Dakota has never taken the third part of the direct democracy, the right to use a recall election on the state level.

With only 48 state-level officials, including four governors and 39 legislators, facing a recall in U.S. history, and only 19 or 20 states granting this power to the voters, this omission may not seem like a big deal. After all, South Dakota is one of many states (perhaps 40 or 41, depending on how you count) that have long granted voters the ability to kick out officials on the local level. But even at the local level, the state stands out.

South Dakotans rarely target local officials with a recall. There is no central database of recalls in the state, but over 12 years of keeping track of recalls nationwide, there seems to have been only one elected official who faced an actual vote over the last 12 years — Whitewood Mayor Deb Schmidt, who easily survived the vote in 2011. Additionally, one other official, Trent President Bob Dickey, resigned in 2018 after recall petitions were taken out and signature collection started.

The state has had some close calls during this time. In 2015, a recall against Hartford's mayor was kept from the ballot by the refusal of the city council to schedule an election after signatures were verified. The mayor eventually resigned, but the Legislature began looking into possible changes to the law to remove the scheduling power from city councils. In 2016, a recall in Rapid City failed after 1,700 signatures were

tossed out because the court found that the petitioners hired out-of-state signature gatherers.

In 2011, petitioners seemingly handed in enough signatures for the recall of Huron's mayor, but the effort failed as a good number of signatures were declared invalid (not an uncommon occurrence).

Other than those notable efforts, there were only a handful of recall threats that even made the newspapers over the years.

For the last time a recall seems to have succeeded in actually removing an official we would have to go back to Yankton in 2007, where the mayor and a city commissioner were kicked out of office.

It may not be fair to compare the state to the largest states that regularly see recalls take place, like California, Michigan, Oregon or Wisconsin. But even among the smaller population states, South Dakota stands out for this fairly paltry total. As a comparison, North Dakota has held 33 recall votes in the last 12 years, with 22 officials removed, 11 surviving recall votes and two officials resigning. Nebraska has had 43 recalls.

It is not clear what explains this discrepancy or why South Dakota never adopted the recall on the statewide level. Looking at the history, it does not appear that voters ever got an initiative on the ballot that would have expanded the right of recall to state-level officials. In 1913, the Legislature did apparently consider a recall law, though that did not advance to the ballot. In 2021, a group called "South Dakota Voters for the Right to Recall" was certified by the Secretary of State's Office to start collecting signatures for an initiative. However, the effort seems to have died out without much notice. There was also a bill during the most recent legislative session to allow recalls for school board members, but it failed. Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic began, school board members have been a popular target of recalls nationwide.

It is reasonable to argue that the state would not benefit from expanded use of the recall, but there was a high-profile recent example of where recall may have helped solve a particularly difficult political problem. After State Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg struck and killed a pedestrian, it took nearly two years for him to be removed from office by the Legislature. If voters had the power of the recall, Ravnsborg may have been kicked out by voters; been pushed to resign early, as happens in other jurisdictions when the threat of a recall is brought forth; or the Legislature may have felt much greater haste to act.

While voters seem to like the recall power in other states, there is no real evidence to show that it results in better (or worse) governance. It rarely takes place on the state level, and, as we saw recently in both California and Wisconsin, voters have chosen to ratify their past decisions when asked to decide on the recall of a governor. Instead, as with the few in South Dakota, most recalls take place on the local level and do not involve partisan issues so much as policy debates. In that way, the Baltic recall effort fits right in. For South Dakota, the Baltic recall could be an example for other officials. Or, as is likely, it will be an unusual event that passes out of notice for officials once the votes are counted.

*Joshua Spivak is the author of "Recall Elections: From Alexander Hamilton to Gavin Newsom." He is a senior research fellow at Berkeley Law's California Constitution Center and a senior fellow at the Hugh L. Carey Institute for Government Reform at Wagner College.*

## New work requirements for some SNAP recipients included in debt limit deal

**South Dakota's Rep. Johnson sparked work-requirement discussion with bill in March**

**BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - MAY 30, 2023 5:07 PM**

WASHINGTON — The holiday weekend debt ceiling deal struck by President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy preserves in part new work requirements for some food stamp recipients but now with exceptions for certain populations, including veterans.

The agreement released late Saturday night showed concessions from both sides — from GOP members, who wanted to tighten eligibility for not just food stamps but also low-income health care, and from the Democrats, who called such restrictions a nonstarter.

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The Biden administration and the Republican House majority arrived at a compromise, titled the Fiscal Responsibility Act, the day after Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned the U.S. would default if a deal wasn't brokered by June 5.

Work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, and other government benefits were a sticking point during the months of stalemate leading right up to the edge of Treasury exhausting all reserves to pay the nation's bills.

The House is expected to vote on the deal by late evening Wednesday, after which the bill will head to the Democratic-led Senate.

## New work rules

The Fiscal Responsibility Act proposes additional work requirements, with a sunset date of 2030, for adults without dependents age 18 to 55, unless the recipient has veteran status, is a homeless person or is under 24 and aging out of the foster care system.

The House GOP majority maintains the new rules would "lift Americans out of poverty" and that the "consequential reforms" will "save taxpayer dollars, get Americans back to work, and grow the economy," according to a document released Saturday by the office of GOP Majority Whip Tom Emmer of Minnesota.

The move softens McCarthy's original proposal that raised the work requirements for food assistance beneficiaries without dependents up to age 55 without exceptions for veterans, homeless people or young adults exiting foster care.

As the law stands now, all recipients of federal nutrition aid ages 16 to 59 must either be looking for work, enrolled in a SNAP employment training program, or pulling in wages equivalent to 30 hours per week at the federal minimum wage.

Some exceptions exist, for example, for people who already have a job, are physically or mentally unable, or are caring for a child under 6.

Those considered able-bodied adults ages 18 to 49 are subject to additional rules and must work for pay, attend a training program or volunteer 80 hours a month — though some states can waive these requirements depending on unemployment figures and other factors.

Beneficiaries in that age range who don't meet the current additional work requirements, and cannot secure an exemption, can only receive SNAP benefits, formerly called food stamps, for three months over a three-year period.

The left-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimated that raising the age to 55 would have put food assistance in jeopardy for roughly 1 million adults without dependents.

In a statement Sunday, the center's president, Sharon Parrott, called the new proposal a "significant improvement over the radical House bill."

But she continued: "It is not the deal the country deserves. There are a number of troubling elements, including the provision that will put at risk food assistance for very low-income older adults. This policy will increase hunger and poverty among that group, runs contrary to our nation's values, and should be rejected. The nation must pay its bills — but that shouldn't mean enacting legislation that leaves people who already struggle to afford the basics worse off."

The most conservative wing of the GOP demanded McCarthy tie spending cuts to a debt ceiling increase in exchange for their support in securing McCarthy the speaker's gavel.

The original debt ceiling proposal — the Limit, Save, Grow Act that was narrowly approved by the GOP House majority — included the expanded SNAP work rules along with new work requirements for Medicaid recipients, and for the poorest Americans who rely on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF.

Together those expanded welfare requirements would have cut \$100 billion and \$120 billion in government spending over the next ten years, according to respective analyses from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget and Moody's Analytics. But, as both analyses concluded, the Limit, Save, Grow Act's clawback of new IRS funding, passed in 2022 to modernize tax collection, would have offset that savings by costing the government roughly \$100 billion over the next decade.

"Oh, Republicans want to reduce the deficit? I've got an easy idea — tax the rich," tweeted Democratic Rep. Pramila Jayapal, Washington congresswoman and head of the Congressional Progressive Caucus,

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which is criticizing the White House for agreeing to any new SNAP work requirements.

Some limitations on TANF made it into Saturday's agreement, but work requirements for Medicaid were dropped.

The Congressional Budget Office, the nonpartisan body that calculates the cost and savings of legislation, has not yet released its score of the Fiscal Responsibility Act.

Shalanda Young, director of the U.S. Office Management and Budget, said Tuesday at the White House press briefing that the administration does not yet have an estimate for how many SNAP recipients will be subject to the new work requirements.

"Some people who have these requirements now will no longer if they're homeless, if they're veterans, if they're foster youth aged out of the system up to 24. So the analysis is being finalized, but we believe those who are off of those requirements because of those exemptions, will be about the same number as those who are phased in on age," said Young, who was among the negotiators for the new deal.

"And you have to remember this: This entire SNAP change (will) sunset in 2030 to give Congress a chance to see how the new exemptions work and how the new ages work," she continued. "And (Congress) can opine on a future farm bill if these changes have made a difference in the SNAP program."

## Farm bill

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which administers SNAP, analyzes the number of beneficiaries and any changes to the program. Nutrition programs make up the majority of the multi-year omnibus legislation referred to as the farm bill.

Congress is in the process of negotiating a new farm bill, which reauthorizes spending for food and agriculture programs.

The idea for expanding SNAP work requirements gained traction in March when Republican Rep. Dusty Johnson of South Dakota, a member of the House Committee on Agriculture, introduced the America Works Act, which proposed adjusting the work rules for recipients up to 65.

Johnson's office did not respond to an inquiry on whether the congressman would push for the tightened rules under the farm bill.

A congressional aide for the GOP-led House Agriculture Committee said the effort is unlikely. Attempts to re-litigate work requirements for SNAP during the farm bill process would present an unnecessary hurdle in drafting and passing a timely, bipartisan farm bill, the aide said.

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

## Debt limit deal hits turbulence in Congress as leaders prep for vote

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND ARIANA FIGUEROA - MAY 30, 2023 3:54 PM

WASHINGTON — Congress began moving the bipartisan debt limit package forward Tuesday, though frustrations with provisions in the bill could make for narrow passage in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate.

Conservative Republicans and progressive Democrats both aired their disappointment with the agreement forged over the weekend, but only GOP lawmakers are looking to possibly remove Kevin McCarthy as speaker because of the deal.

U.S. House Freedom Caucus Chair Scott Perry said Tuesday that conservative Republicans will do whatever they can to block the legislation, arguing the agreement "totally fails to deliver" on conservative priorities.

Perry, a Pennsylvania Republican, declined to directly answer questions about whether the group of about a dozen conservative lawmakers at the press conference would use the so-called motion to vacate to remove McCarthy as speaker.

"I am focused on defeating this bill," Perry said. "What happens post that ... we will decide once we've determined the disposition of this bill."

Texas GOP Rep. Chip Roy said there will be a "reckoning" if the debt limit package moves forward following a floor vote and North Carolina Rep. Dan Bishop indicated he may move for the floor vote to oust McCarthy as speaker.



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The House is expected to vote on Wednesday around 8:30 p.m. Eastern to send the legislation to the Senate, where lawmakers need to approve the measure before Monday. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned last week that if the debt limit is not addressed before that date, the country would begin a default.

The House Rules Committee took up the bill Tuesday afternoon, a requirement for all major legislation heading to the floor. The House must vote Wednesday to approve the rule before it can move on to formally debate and vote on the bill.

## Concern among progressives

Democrats will be key to moving the bill through the Republican-controlled House, even if some of their members are not entirely happy with the outcome.

Congressional Progressive Caucus Chair Pramila Jayapal said Tuesday the group was undergoing its whip count and determining whether to take an official position on the package.

Jayapal, a Washington Democrat, said the Republican Party "did not win any major concessions on spending" in the agreement, but said the legislation does include some provisions she is "seriously concerned about."

Jayapal said she is in talks with the White House about how exactly the handshake agreements that aren't included in bill text would work, especially the promise that some of the funds being clawed back will be redirected to domestic spending in the annual appropriations bills.

She also expressed concerns about the changes to work requirements for two federal safety net programs — Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — and for energy permitting.

"That is a significant problem," Jayapal said. "I've said before that the United States is the only industrialized country that puts these kinds of bureaucratic red tape requirements on people who are just trying to get food for their families."

Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young, who had a heavy hand in negotiations, said during a White House press briefing Tuesday the deal "represents a compromise, which means no one gets everything that they want, and hard choices had to be made."

Young said the agreement with House Republican leaders protects key legislative priorities of the Biden administration, such as the climate provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act.

## Here's a look at what's in the 99-page bill:

**Debt limit:** It would suspend the nation's debt limit through Jan. 1, 2025, meaning whoever wins the 2024 presidential election will likely negotiate the next agreement with that Congress.

**Federal government spending levels:** The agreement would cap discretionary spending at \$886.35 billion for defense and \$703.65 billion for nondefense during fiscal 2024, set to begin Oct. 1. That's about a 3% increase for defense and roughly flat funding for nondefense.

Spending levels for the following fiscal year, 2025, would be set at \$895.21 billion for defense and \$710.69 billion for nondefense. That would represent about a 1% boost for nondefense accounts.

Discretionary spending accounts for about one-third of federal spending while mandatory spending on programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security make up the other two-thirds.

Nondefense accounts fund the vast majority of federal departments and agencies, including Agriculture, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs, while defense funding goes predominantly to the Pentagon.

Some of the spending on nondefense programs would be paid for by moving around, or repurposing, unspent COVID-19 funding and part of the \$80 billion Democrats approved last year for the Internal Revenue Service.

In order to actually achieve those spending levels, the House, Senate and Biden administration must reach agreement on all dozen of the annual appropriations bills in the months ahead.

**Tax code:** The deal doesn't include any changes to the tax code, something President Joe Biden pushed for but McCarthy rejected.

**Work requirements:** The legislation doesn't alter Medicaid eligibility, but it does make changes to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.



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Changes to all three were pushed for by Republicans.

TANF recipients could experience some changes to the program on Oct. 1, 2024, while others would go into place a year later on Oct. 1, 2025.

The program now requires states to have 50% of TANF recipients working, though states can lower that threshold based on how much their caseload has fallen since 2005, according to a White House official.

This legislation would set that year to 2015, give states two years to implement the changes and "allow states to do things like spending additional TANF dollars and in exchange being able to get a lower work participation rate because of that," according to the White House official.

SNAP's current work requirements for many able-bodied adults extend from age 18 through 49. This bill text says it would raise the ceiling to age 51 during the current fiscal year, to age 53 during the fiscal year slated to begin Oct. 1 and to 55 during fiscal 2025.

Veterans, homeless individuals and people 24 or younger who were in the foster care system when they turned 18 wouldn't be subject to SNAP's time limits, according to the White House.

The changes to SNAP would sunset on Oct. 1, 2030.

Energy permitting: Members of both political parties have expressed interest in overhauling how the federal government permits energy projects under the National Environmental Policy Act, known as NEPA.

NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the environmental effects of major federal actions, and the process can take years. Democrats have sought to speed construction for renewable energy projects, and Republicans have complained for years that the burdens of federal permitting restrict development.

The bill amends NEPA by limiting requirements on some projects and requires environmental reviews to be completed in a one-to-two-year time frame.

Separately, the White House agreed to streamline permits for the more than \$6 billion Mountain Valley Pipeline, a decision that has angered environmentalists and climate conscious Democrats.

West Virginia's Sens. Joe Manchin III, a centrist Democrat, and Shelley Moore Capito, a Republican, have lobbied for the approval of the outstanding permits for the more than 300 miles of Mountain Valley Pipeline, also known as MVP, that would deliver gas from West Virginia into Virginia.

As part of the deal, the White House agreed to expedite permits for the long-disputed Appalachian natural gas pipeline, which has been on halt due to court cases brought on by environmentalists who have fought for years to prevent its construction.

Permits for the Mountain Valley Pipeline will be issued within 21 days after the debt ceiling bill is signed into law, according to the bill text. It also bars any judicial review of permits issued for the pipeline project by any government agency.

"I am pleased Speaker McCarthy and his leadership team see the tremendous value in completing the MVP to increase domestic energy production and drive down costs across America and especially in West Virginia," Manchin, the chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources panel, said in a statement. "I am proud to have fought for this critical project and to have secured the bipartisan support necessary to get it across the finish line."

The MVP has had more than 500 violations in state environmental laws, regulations and permit conditions, according to a report by the environmental group Appalachian Voices.

COVID-19 funds: The agreement rescinds, or claws back, about \$28 billion in some of the unspent federal funding that was approved during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Federal student loan repayment pause: The bill would codify the end of the pause on federal student loan repayments by August and bar the administration from reinstating a pause on repayments unless approved by Congress.

The Biden administration announced last year its plans to resume requiring repayments on student loans either after the Supreme Court's decision on the administration's student debt cancellation policy or 60 days after June 30.

A pause on student loan repayments was first enacted in 2020 by the Trump administration due to the coronavirus pandemic, and later extended by the Biden administration.

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The Biden administration's one-time student debt cancellation has been a target for Republicans. Last week, the House voted to overturn the policy that would cancel up to \$20,000 in federal student loan debt for borrowers who qualify. The Senate is expected to vote on the resolution of disapproval this week, where if passed, it would block the policy. The White House has vowed to veto it.

Internal Revenue Service funding: The agreement would allow Congress to pull \$10 billion during fiscal 2024 and another \$10 billion during fiscal 2025 from the IRS to pay for other domestic spending initiatives, according to the White House.

The money would come from the \$80 billion boost to the IRS that Democrats approved last August as part of their signature climate change, health care and tax package known as the Inflation Reduction Act, or IRA.

The \$20 billion claw back provision is not in the bill text, which only includes a \$1.39 billion rescission to that IRS funding.

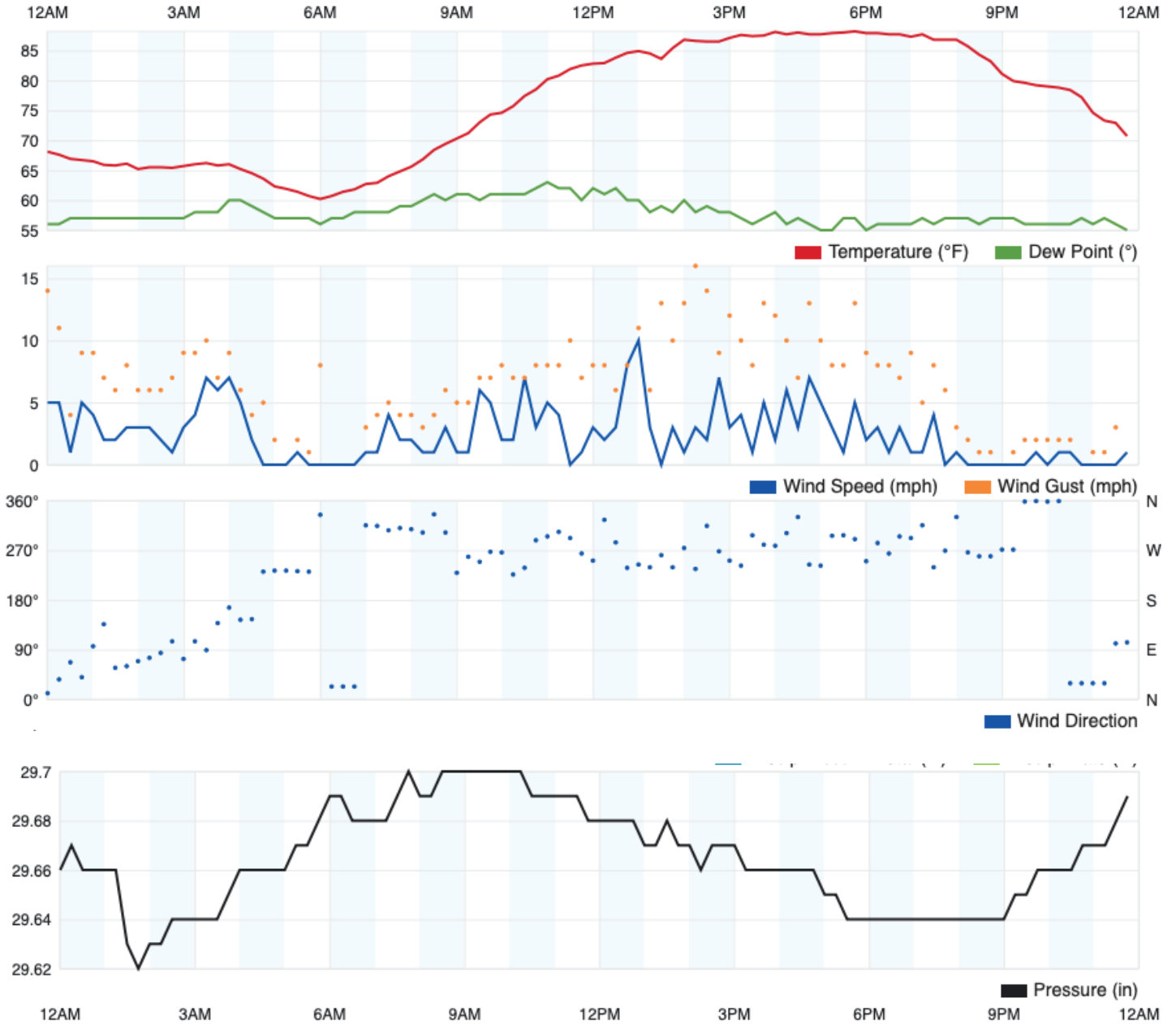
*Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

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

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



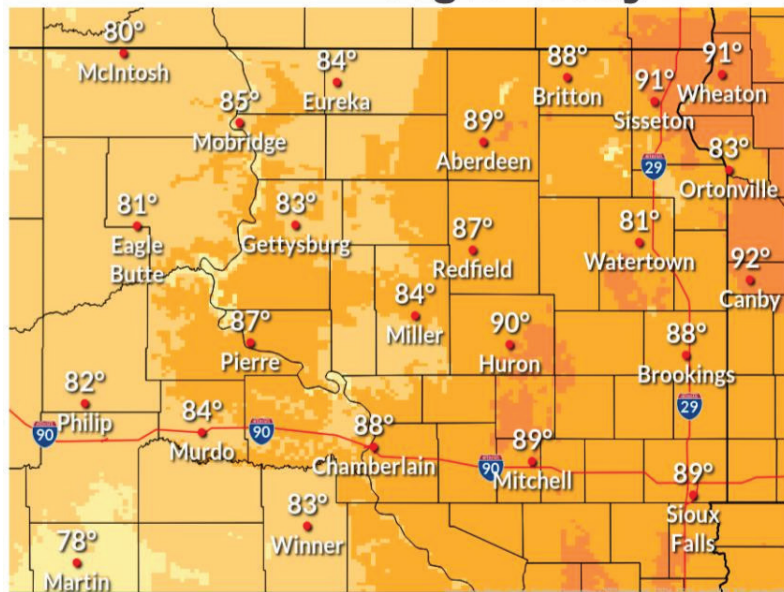
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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Partly Sunny then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms then Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Mostly Sunny then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Sunny then Chance Showers
High: 89 °F	Low: 61 °F	High: 90 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 88 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 89 °F

## Continued Warm with Storm Chances

May 31, 2023 3:45 AM



	Wed				Thu							
	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	20	30	25	20	15	10	10	10	25	35	35	25
Britton	20	40	35	20	20	20	15	10	30	40	40	30
Brookings	25	55	55	55	35	35	25	20	40	40	40	20
Chamberlain	25	25	45	45	30	30	15	10	30	30	30	20
Clark	25	40	30	35	15	20	15	15	35	35	35	20
Eagle Butte	10	20	15	20	15	10	5	5	25	35	40	40
Ellendale	20	40	35	25	10	15	10	10	25	35	35	35
Eureka	25	35	40	20	20	10	5	5	20	30	35	35
Gettysburg	15	25	20	15	10	10	15	5	20	30	30	30
Huron	30	55	60	60	30	30	20	15	35	35	35	20
Kennebec	10	15	20	20	10	5	5	5	30	35	35	20
McIntosh	15	20	20	20	15	15	10	5	25	30	40	40
Milbank	20	45	45	20	15	15	10	10	25	35	35	20
Miller	15	25	25	25	15	15	15	10	30	35	35	25
Mobridge	20	25	25	20	15	10	10	5	20	30	35	35
Murdo	10	10	15	20	10	5	5	5	35	40	40	25
Pierre	15	15	15	15	15	5	5	5	25	35	35	25
Redfield	20	25	25	25	15	15	15	10	30	30	30	25
Sisseton	15	40	40	25	25	25	15	10	30	35	35	25
Watertown	30	45	45	25	10	15	15	15	30	30	30	20
Webster	25	45	35	20	20	15	10	10	30	35	35	30
Wheaton	10	40	40	35	25	30	15	10	25	35	35	20

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

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

While the upper level pattern shifts over the next few days, the end result will be the continued slightly above average temperatures, temperate humidity, and a chance for mostly heat of the afternoon thunderstorms with a low risk for severe weather.



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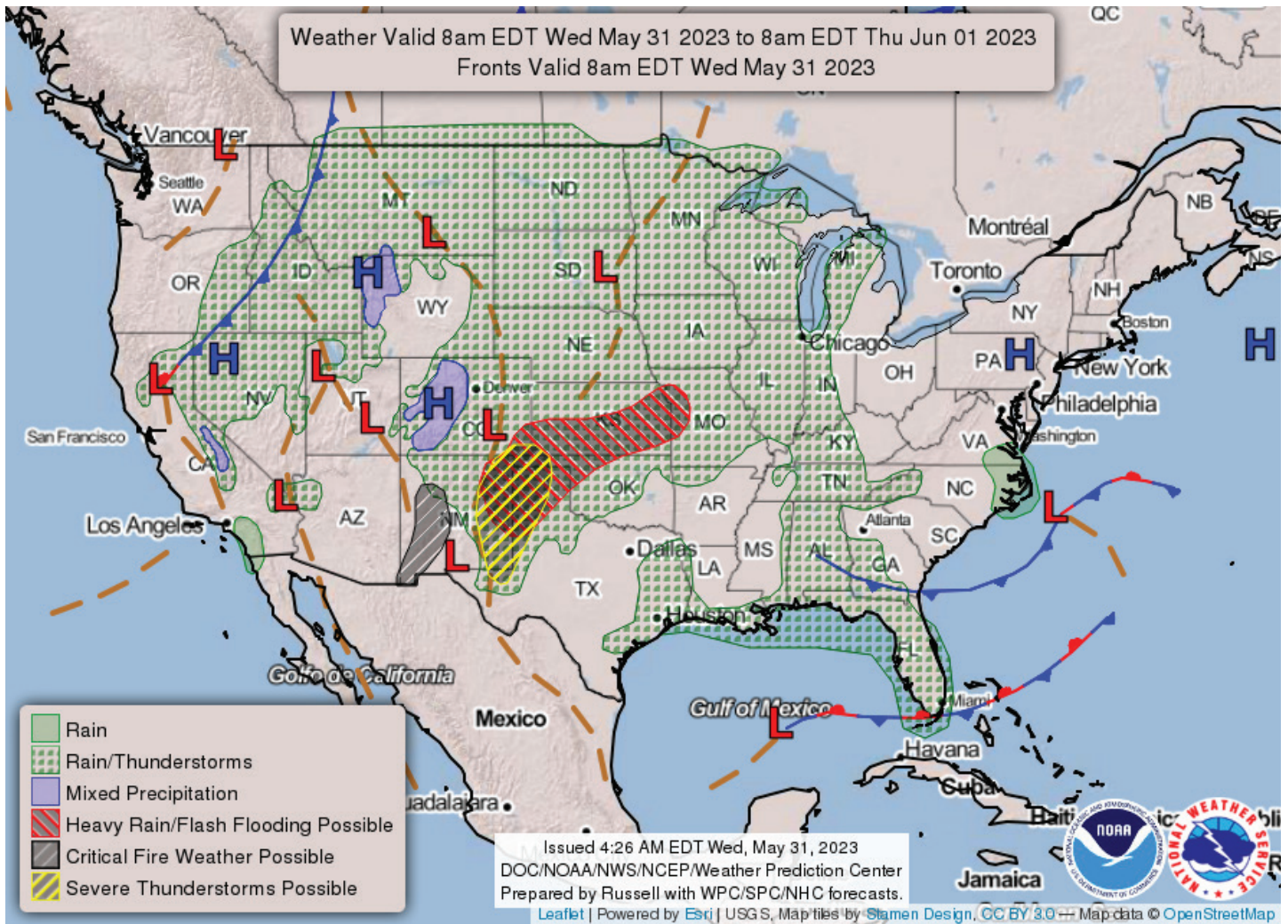
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 88 °F at 4:06 PM**  
**Low Temp: 60 °F at 5:57 AM**  
**Wind: 16 mph at 2:13 PM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 28 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1934  
Record Low: 23 in 1897  
Average High: 76  
Average Low: 51  
Average Precip in May.: 3.28  
Precip to date in May.: 2.19  
Average Precip to date: 7.25  
Precip Year to Date: 7.91  
Sunset Tonight: 9:14:14 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45:23 AM





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## Today in Weather History

May 31, 1960: A late evening thunderstorm cut a path of destruction, principally from high winds from Beadle County, northeast to Roberts and Grant Counties. Twelve head of cattle electrocuted for a downed high tensions wire occurred at Wolsey. Winds with gusts of 65 to 75 mph were observed at Huron and Watertown. A grain elevator tipped over, and a windmill was destroyed near Willow Lake. A Steel corn crib was blown over at Hayti and damaged occurred to other farm buildings and implements.

1830: Shelbyville, Tennessee was turned into "a heap of ruins" as a tornado moved east through the center of the town. This tornado destroyed 15 homes and 38 businesses along with churches and other public buildings. Losses were estimated to be as high as \$100,000. A book was said to be carried seven miles away.

1889: The Johnstown, Pennsylvania disaster occurred, the worst flood tragedy in U.S. history. Heavy rains collapsed the South Fork Dam sending a thirty-foot wall of water rushing down the already flooded Conemaugh Valley. The wall of water, traveling as fast as twenty-two feet per second, swept away all structures, objects, and people. The flood killed around 2100 people.

1941 - Thunderstorms deluged Burlington KS with 12.59 inches of rain to establish a 24 hour rainfall record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - Severe thunderstorms spawned forty-one tornadoes across the Lower Great Lakes Region and southeastern Ontario which killed 74 persons. (Storm Data)

1987 - Thunderstorms in New England produced wind gusts up to 90 mph at Worcester, MA, and Northboro, MA, and hail an inch and a half in diameter at Williston, VT. Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the northeastern U.S. The afternoon high of 94 degrees at Portland, ME, was a record for the month of May. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Hot and humid weather prevailed in the eastern U.S. Thirteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. Cape Hatteras, NC, reported their first ninety degree day in May in 115 years of records. "Dust buster" thunderstorms in northwest Texas drenched Amarillo with more than three inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather and torrential rains in northern Indiana, northern Ohio and southern Lower Michigan. Saint John IND was drenched with four inches of rain in two hours, and Woodland MI was deluged with two inches in twenty minutes. Pittsburgh PA reported a record 6.55 inches of rain for the month of May, with measurable rain reported on twenty-five days during the month. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing along a warm front produced severe weather from northwest Texas to southeastern Louisiana. The thunderstorms spawned sixteen tornadoes, including thirteen in northwest Texas. One tornado hit the town of Spearman, TX, causing more than a million dollars damage, and seven other tornadoes were reported within twenty-five miles of Spearman. Thunderstorms over northwest Texas also produced baseball size hail at Monahans, and wind gusts to 80 mph at Paducah. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2013: The 2nd of the top 10 weather events for 2013 was EL Reno, Oklahoma tornado of May 31, 2013. Part of the multi-day storm outbreak caused \$2 billion in damage. The EF3 that traveled through the western suburbs of Oklahoma City was the largest tornado ever observed with a width of 2.6 miles. It took eight lives including four tornado chasers.

Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### GROWING UP

One Sunday morning, the pastor was visiting the first grade Sunday school class. With a bright smile, he said to a small child, "Who made you, Jimmy?"

"Well," he said thoughtfully, "God made part of me."

"What do you mean that God made part of you?" asked the pastor.

"First, God made me real little, and I grewed the rest all by myself."

How insightful! God begins a "good work in us" when we accept Christ as our Savior. We are, so to speak, "real little" like Jimmy. But, He does not expect us to remain "little." When God started the process of the new birth within us, He did so with the intention of bringing it to completion - for us to grow into the likeness of Christ. This is possible because the Holy Spirit lives with us and is willing and able, with our involvement, to let it happen through prayer, Bible study, and worship. Come, grow with Him. He has great things waiting for each of us.

Prayer: Lord, may we work with You to grow into Christlikeness. May we, with determination and surrender, commit our lives to become who You created us to be. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. Philippians 1:6



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 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 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:

05.30.23

13 16 40 64 68 21

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$203,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 15

DRAW: Mins 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.29.23

19 34 42 50 52 2

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$3,270,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 15 Mins 54

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.30.23

25 28 35 43 46 2

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 14 Hrs 45 Mins

DRAW: 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.27.23

3 8 11 17 22

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$77,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 15 Mins 54

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.29.23

5 12 17 46 65 16

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 14 Mins 53

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.29.23

21 33 35 62 64 24

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$239,000,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 14 Mins 53

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



## News from the Associated Press

### Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined  
Yankton Press & Dakotan. May 29, 2023.

Editorial: Noem Challenges The Board Of Regents

Gov. Kristi Noem's challenge to the South Dakota Board of Regents (BOR) last week to improve higher education in the state contained some valid points of concern amid other political calculations.

She issued her challenge in a letter to the BOR that, according Board of Regents spokesperson Shuree Mortenson, the board had not seen until it was issued to the public. That could be taken as an indication of the governor's real target audience.

Another indication came in the first paragraph, when Noem declared that, "for the last several decades, many states have allowed liberal ideologies to poison their universities and colleges." That's not particularly subtle.

Neither is her plan to establish a "whistleblower hotline" that "will help keep our institutions accountable."

Other items, like ordering the BOR to remove references to preferred pronouns, to ensure that no funding for public institutions is coming from China and to prohibit drag shows (despite also calling for respecting freedom of speech, which technically contradicts a drag show ban) is more political meat that will have no impact on the quality of higher education on any campus.

However, her concerns about the graduation rate seem valid, although the precise number is in dispute. Noem said the graduation rate from South Dakota's public institutions is just 47% over eight years while the BOR puts the number at about 59%. But either number is below the national average of 63%.

One big reason for this is escalating costs, which can derail plans and force some students to withdraw from school with practically nothing to show for the money already invested.

"Countless students have been set up for failure — and charged tens of thousands of dollars for their trouble," Noem said in her letter.

She challenged the BOR to raise the graduation rate to 65% by 2028 as well as to make college more affordable. How the latter might be accomplished was not made clear, although it dovetails into discussions and proposals heard on the national level lately. South Dakota is far from alone in this situation.

(Here is one possible idea that might be considered as a start, if it isn't being done already. Incoming freshmen should have a guaranteed level of costs, with predictable and reasonable expectations for increases factored in, over a five-year educational window. That way, students — and their parents, guardians, etc.— will at least have a better understanding of the financial road ahead of them. This wouldn't be a cure-all or a path etched in stone — especially given that the BOR has frozen tuition recently — but it could be a step toward some predictability.)

Encouraging the BOR to set up apprenticeship programs with businesses also seems like a good suggestion (again, if it's not being done already). It would provide real-world experience and promote interconnectivity between the schools and the communities they serve.

On the other hand, her idea of mandating a government course and a history course as part of a college graduation requirement may be an impractical idea. That's something that should already have been handled at the high school level, which is another topic for another time.

So, there are some good intentions in this letter, but whether they are ultimately undercut by the parallel political effort at scapegoating higher education remains to be seen.

END

## North Korea spy satellite launch fails as rocket falls into the sea

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

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea's attempt to put the country's first spy satellite into space failed Wednesday in a setback to leader Kim Jong Un's push to boost his military capabilities as tensions with the United States and South Korea rise.

After an unusually quick admission of failure, North Korea vowed to conduct a second launch after learning what went wrong with its rocket liftoff. It suggests Kim remains determined to expand his weapons arsenal and apply more pressure on Washington and Seoul while diplomacy is stalled.

South Korea and Japan briefly urged residents to take shelter during the launch.

The South Korean military said it was salvaging an object presumed to be part of the crashed North Korean rocket in waters 200 kilometers (124 miles) west of the southwestern island of Eocheongdo. Later, the Defense Ministry released photos of a white, metal cylinder it described as a suspected rocket part.

A satellite launch by North Korea is a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions that ban the country from conducting any launch based on ballistic technology. Observers say North Korea's previous satellite launches helped improve its long-range missile technology. North Korean long-range missile tests in recent years demonstrated a potential range that could reach all of the continental U.S., but outside experts say the North Korea still has some work to do to obtain functioning nuclear missiles.

The newly developed Chollima-1 rocket was launched at 6:37 a.m. at the North's Sohae Satellite Launching Ground in the northwest, carrying the Malligyong-1 satellite. The rocket crashed off the Korean Peninsula's western coast after it lost thrust following the separation of its first and second stages, the North's official Korean Central News Agency said.

South Korea's military said the North Korean rocket had "an abnormal flight" before it fell in the water. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters that no object was believed to have reached space.

North Korean media said the country's space agency will investigate what it calls "the serious defects revealed" by the launch and conduct a second launch as soon as possible.

"It is impressive when the North Korean regime actually admits failure, but it would be difficult to hide the fact of a satellite launch failure internationally, and the regime will likely offer a different narrative domestically," Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said. "This outcome also suggests that Pyongyang may stage another provocation soon, in part to make up for today's setback."

Adam Hodge, a spokesperson at the U.S. National Security Council, said in a statement that Washington strongly condemns the North Korean launch because it used banned ballistic missile technology, raised tensions, and risked destabilizing security in the region and beyond.

The U.N. imposed economic sanctions on North Korea over its previous satellite and ballistic missile launches, but has not responded to recent tests because China and Russia, permanent council members now locked in confrontations with the U.S., have blocked attempts to toughen sanctions.

Seoul's military said it boosted military readiness in coordination with the United States, and Japan said it prepared to respond to any emergency. The U.S. said it will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the American homeland and the defense of South Korea and Japan.

South Korea's capital, Seoul, issued alerts over public loudspeakers and cellphone text messages telling residents to prepare for evacuation after the launch was detected, and Japan activated a missile warning system for Okinawa prefecture in southwestern Japan, in the rocket's suspected path.

"Please evacuate into buildings or underground," the Japanese alert said.

Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said Japan plans to keep missile defense systems deployed to its southern islands and in southwestern waters until June 11, which is the end of North Korea's announced launch window.

KCNA didn't provide details of the rocket and the satellite beyond their names. But experts earlier said North Korea would likely use a liquid-fueled rocket as most of its previously tested long-range rockets and missiles have done.

Though it plans a fuller investigation, the North's National Aerospace Development Administration attrib-

uted the failure to “the low reliability and stability of the new-type engine system applied to (the) carrier rocket” and “the unstable character of the fuel,” according to KCNA.

On Tuesday, Ri Pyong Chol, a top North Korean official, said the North needed a space-based reconnaissance system to counter escalating security threats from South Korea and the United States.

However, the spy satellite disclosed in the country’s state-run media earlier didn’t appear to be sophisticated enough to produce high-resolution imagery. Some outside experts said it may still be able to detect troop movements and large targets such as warships and warplanes.

Recent commercial satellite imagery of the North’s Sohae launch center showed active construction indicating North Korea plans to launch more than one satellite. In his Tuesday statement, Ri also said North Korea would test “various reconnaissance means” to monitor moves by the United States and its allies in real time.

With three to five spy satellites, North Korea could build a space-based surveillance system that allows it to monitor the Korean Peninsula in near real-time, according to Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea’s Science and Technology Policy Institute.

The satellite is one of several high-tech weapons systems that Kim has publicly vowed to introduce. Other weapons on his wish list include a multi-warhead missile, a nuclear submarine, a solid-propellant intercontinental ballistic missile and a hypersonic missile. In his visit to the space agency in mid-May, Kim emphasized the strategic significance of a spy satellite in North Korea’s standoff with the United States and South Korea.

Easley, the professor, said Kim has likely increased pressure on his scientists and engineers to launch the spy satellite as rival South Korea successfully launched its first commercial-grade satellite aboard the domestically-built Nuri rocket earlier this month.

South Korea is expected to launch its first spy satellite later this year, and analysts say Kim likely wants his country to launch its spy satellite before the South to reinforce his military credentials at home.

After repeated failures, North Korea successfully put its first satellite into orbit in 2012, and the second one in 2016. The government said both are Earth-observation satellites launched under its peaceful space development program, but many foreign experts believed both were developed to spy on rivals.

Observers say there has been no evidence that the satellites have ever transmitted imagery back to North Korea.

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Associated Press writer Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo contributed to this report.

## **North Korea’s failed satellite launch triggers public confusion, security jitters in neighbors**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, KIM TONG-HYUNG and JOHNSON LAI Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea’s launch of a spy satellite on Wednesday ended in an embarrassing failure, but still prompted public confusion and security jitters in neighboring South Korea and Japan, which are wary of the North’s growing weapons arsenal.

About 14 minutes after the launch at 6:27 a.m., authorities in Seoul, South Korea’s capital, sent text messages to all mobile phones in the city urging people to prepare to move to safer places, without explaining the reason. In some areas, the warning was broadcast over loudspeakers.

Then, about 22 minutes later, the Interior and Safety Ministry sent messages to Seoul residents saying the earlier warning was sent in error. Ministry officials said it was only intended for people living on a front-line island off the west coast that is closer to the rocket’s flight path, and that a warning had been sent to them at 6:29 a.m.

Seoul, a city of 10 million people, is only an hour’s drive from the heavily fortified border with rival North Korea. It would only take a few minutes for forward-deployed North Korean missiles to reach Seoul.

But it’s extremely rare for South Korea to issue such missile alerts, even though North Korea has conducted more than 100 missile tests in the past 17 months. Wednesday’s text messages were only the

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third of their kind since 2016.

South Korea's military said it asks the safety ministry to send such phone alerts only when North Korean rockets fly in the direction of South Korean territory or falling debris is expected. Most North Korean launches have ended with weapons falling harmlessly in the ocean, except in a few cases when missiles were sent over Japan.

Social media in South Korea were abuzz with criticism of the alert message.

"Is it OK for us to receive an alert at 6:41 a.m.? If a real missile was launched, it could have landed in Seoul earlier than the alert message," one Twitter user said.

Others complained that the alert didn't provide any useful details, such as why they needed to go to safer places and where to go.

"People received a flurry of texts today, but nothing really happened. When they receive evacuation alerts next time, their thinking would be, 'It's going to be fine, let's wait a little,'" said Betty Lee, an English teacher in Seoul.

Another Seoul resident said she struggled to calm her crying 10-year-old daughter who begged her not to go to work after the early morning alert.

"She kept crying as we turned on the TV news to see what was going on. She thought things were going to fall from the sky," said the resident, who asked to be identified only by her family name, Byeon, citing privacy concerns.

Later Wednesday, Seoul City Mayor Oh Se-hoon apologized for causing confusion for many residents. He described the incident as a possible overreaction by an official, not a mistaken alert, saying that safety-related issues must be dealt with aggressively.

In Japan, authorities activated a missile warning system at 6:30 a.m. for Okinawa prefecture in the southwest, which was believed to be in the rocket's path. The advisory was lifted more than 30 minutes later after the government determined that the rocket wasn't heading to Japan.

Residents of Okinawa said they returned to their daily lives as schools and businesses opened as usual, though they still worried about a possible second launch attempt by North Korea. Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said Japan will continue to deploy missile defense systems on a number of remote southern islands, at least until North Korea's announced launch window ends June 11.

Eri Nakajima, a hotel employee in Naha, Okinawa's capital, said her family woke up when the alert went off on all of their mobile phones. She said she has frequently heard of North Korean missile launches in the past, but was still worried when she saw a map of Okinawa flashing in yellow on TV.

"About 80% to 90% of my feeling was that it would be OK, but I also worried that something might go wrong and debris might come falling down," Nakajima said.

Yui Nose, a cafe owner in Naha, said residents were asked to turn off ventilation fans in their kitchens and seal off windows.

"It was scary because there was nothing we could do about it. There are no underground shelters here," she said.

Shigeyuki Azuma, a jewelry shop owner in Naha, said he's worried about a negative impact on local tourism.

"But we cannot do anything about it and just have to leave it to the government to take measures," Azuma said.

Lai reported from Okinawa. Associated Press journalists Hiro Komae in Okinawa and Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo contributed to this report.



## DeSantis looks to connect with voters during 1st full day of campaigning in Iowa

By STEVE PEOPLES, WILL WEISSERT, THOMAS BEAUMONT and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press  
SIOUX CITY, Iowa (AP) — Ron DeSantis begins his first full day of presidential campaigning on Wednesday with a four-stop blitz through Iowa, trying to prioritize personally connecting with voters while proving he has the mettle to take on former President Donald Trump.

The Florida governor has appearances in Sioux City, Council Bluffs, Pella and Cedar Rapids, packing in early events in the state whose caucuses kick off the Republican presidential primary voting. From there, he will head to New Hampshire on Thursday and South Carolina on Friday.

At his Iowa kickoff event on Tuesday night with wife Casey, DeSantis was initially cautious while addressing an energetic crowd of roughly 500 gathered inside a suburban Des Moines church. But speaking to reporters afterward, he pushed back against Trump in a way he had not before on the national stage.

He accused Trump of essentially abandoning "America First" principles on immigration, supporting coronavirus pandemic-related lockdowns and generally having "moved left" on key issues.

And DeSantis laughed off any criticism the former president had lobbed his way over his leadership in Florida, particularly on the state's response to COVID-19.

"Hell, his whole family moved to Florida under my governorship. Are you kidding me?" DeSantis said.

DeSantis' comments came a week after a stumbling Twitter announcement that raised questions about his readiness for a national campaign. Beyond the glitchy launch, DeSantis opens his campaign looking up at Trump in the polls amid persistent questions about the Florida governor's ability to connect with voters in person.

Despite only recently formally joining the race, DeSantis has for months been dogged by criticism that he seems halting and uncomfortable when interacting with everyday Americans — despite a stage presence that can be commanding.

He also tends to limit his interactions with the media to those involving reporters from friendly media outlets, largely ensuring he doesn't have to answer tough questions.

Kate Romano, 60, of Indianola, Iowa, said Tuesday night that she was more impressed by DeSantis than she expected, calling him energetic and fun to hear. She voted reluctantly for Trump in 2016 and 2020, and she's interested in hearing from other candidates.

DeSantis, she said, is "the one who's piqued my interest right now."

"I liked to hear that he'll stand up to Trump," she said.

Kim Riesberg, 59, who attended DeSantis' campaign kickoff with her husband, said she, too, voted for Trump in 2016 and 2020 but is not necessarily committed to him this time around.

DeSantis is a "little softer," said Riesberg, of Dallas Center, Iowa. And "more appealing to the masses."

Trump and his allies unleashed a fresh round of anti-DeSantis attacks on Tuesday, sharing new polls showing the former president is the heavy favorite in the GOP race and taking aim at DeSantis' leadership during the pandemic.

At the same time, a pro-Trump super PAC was running ads on Iowa television accusing DeSantis of wanting to raise taxes, an accusation DeSantis has denied.

The feud will have an opportunity to play in public as the week progresses, with both men courting voters in key states on the presidential primary calendar.

Trump, who was already scheduled to be in Iowa on Thursday, added a couple of stops in the state to his schedule for Wednesday, ensuring he would overlap with DeSantis for a time. Trump will tape a radio appearance in Des Moines before attending a GOP legislative dinner.

DeSantis, meanwhile, will be back in Iowa on Saturday for an event for 2024 GOP hopefuls hosted by Sen. Joni Ernst. They will be joined by declared candidates including Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., and former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley, along with former Vice President Mike Pence, who is expected to launch a campaign soon.

DeSantis met with evangelical pastors Tuesday ahead of his evening speech at the church, where he



largely received an energetic response as he called for "a revival of American greatness."

The crowd was especially receptive to his focus on conservative cultural issues, particularly gender identity, which he has targeted with legislation that bans instruction or classroom discussion of LGBTQ+ issues in Florida public schools for all grades.

"Our country is going in the wrong direction. We can see it, and we can feel it," DeSantis told the crowd in the church auditorium plastered with red, white and blue signs proclaiming a "Great American Come-back." Hundreds more watched from an overflow room.

In his hourlong speech, DeSantis included a handful of indirect jabs at Trump. He said the nation needs "a disciplined, energetic president who will spit nails and fight the needed battles every single day over an eight-year period."

Trump, of course, would be limited to one more term.

DeSantis also said Republicans would end their "culture of losing" only by making the 2024 election a referendum on President Joe Biden. Trump, with his big personality and legal entanglements, has essentially made every election a referendum on himself.

But speaking to reporters and a small group of supporters in another room afterward, DeSantis addressed the feud head on. He noted that he avoided criticizing Trump while he was in the White House.

"When we disagreed, I never bashed him publicly because he was taking all this incoming from the media, the left, and even some Republicans," DeSantis said. "And the whole collusion was a total farce. And he was treated very, very poorly. And that bothered me, and it still bothers me to be honest.

"So, I never really would air those disagreements," DeSantis added. "Well, now he's attacking me over some of these disagreements, but I think he's doing it in a way that the voters are going to side with me."

There are signs the attacks could be wearing on voters who might otherwise support Trump.

Jack Spoonmore, a 20-year-old of Adel, Iowa, attended DeSantis' appearance to see what energy the Florida governor would bring. He said he supported Trump in 2020 but he's interested in perusing other candidates.

"I'm not a huge fan of the shade," he said of Trump's attacks on DeSantis.

Fingerhut and Peoples reported from Clive, Iowa. Weissert reported from Washington.

## Nevada Republican governor approves abortion protections in cross-party move

By GABE STERN Associated Press/Report for America

CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP) — Nevada's Joe Lombardo on Tuesday became one of the first Republican governors to enshrine protections for out-of-state abortion patients and in-state providers, adding the western swing state to the list of those passing new laws to solidify their status as safe havens for abortion patients.

The legislation codifies an existing executive order from former Gov. Steve Sisolak last year — who lost reelection to Lombardo — that bars state agencies from assisting in out-of-state investigations that could lead to the prosecution of abortion patients who travel to Nevada. It also ensures medical boards and commissions that oversee medical licenses do not discipline or disqualify doctors who provide abortions.

Lombardo, who describes himself as "pro-life" and was endorsed by the National Right to Life Committee, said on the campaign trail that he would respect the will of voters who codified abortion rights up to 24 weeks in a 1990 referendum vote. He was the only Republican to defeat a state Democratic incumbent in the last election.

"I want to thank (Lombardo) for following through on his commitment to ensuring that Nevada won't participate in prosecutions of women who come here to exercise their reproductive rights," said Democratic Senate Majority Leader Nicole Cannizzaro, who sponsored the legislation, in a statement Tuesday.

Lombardo is one of the only Republican governors — following Vermont Gov. Phil Scott and former Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker — to sign a law enshrining protections for abortion.

The provisions were a major flashpoint in one of the closest governor's races of the 2022 midterms and

became the latest reflection point for how Republican lawmakers and candidates navigate abortion policy debates in blue to purple states. Lombardo originally said he would repeal the executive order, but said months later he would uphold it, a reversal that Sisolak's campaign repeatedly emphasized. In February, he signaled that he would sign the bill, which does not add any additional protections to Sisolak's executive order.

"Governor Lombardo made a campaign commitment to ensure that Nevada would not participate in prosecuting those seeking legal medical care in the state," spokesperson Elizabeth Ray said in a statement. "Today, Governor Lombardo kept that commitment."

Cannizzaro told The Associated Press last month that she was not aware of particular cases of outside states prosecuting women who have come to Nevada for abortions, but said that could happen with more restrictive laws coming from other states. She referenced restrictions approved in neighboring Idaho and Utah.

Democratic-controlled states from California to Colorado to Rhode Island have approved similar legislation to the one in Nevada.

Nevada's state Senate advanced the legislation last month, with two Republican women joining Democrats in support of the bill. Following the vote, the Nevada Republican Party said it was "horrified" that the two voted for the measure, exposing an intra-Republican rift about how to handle abortion legislation in a post-Roe world. In other cases, that involves to what extent abortion access should be restricted. The Nevada GOP did not immediately respond to a request for comment about Tuesday's signing.

Earlier this month, Nevada's Democratic-controlled Legislature advanced a resolution that would enshrine the existing abortion rights in the state constitution, which would make it much harder to repeal. After passing the 2023 session, it must also pass in 2025 before appearing in front of voters on the 2026 ballot. That process does not include the governor's approval.

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Stern is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms. Follow Stern on Twitter: @gabestern326.

## Ahead of House debt ceiling vote, Biden shores up Democrats and McCarthy scrambles for GOP support

By LISA MASCARO, KEVIN FREKING and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hard-fought to the end, the debt ceiling and budget cuts package is heading toward a crucial U.S. House vote as President Joe Biden and Speaker Kevin McCarthy assemble a coalition of centrist Democrats and Republicans to push it to passage over fierce blowback from conservatives and some progressive dissent.

Biden is sending top White House officials to meet early Wednesday at the Capitol to shore up support ahead of voting. McCarthy is working furiously to sell skeptical fellow Republicans, even fending off challenges to his leadership, in the rush to avert a potentially disastrous U.S. default.

Despite deep disappointment from right-flank Republicans that the compromise falls short of the spending cuts they demanded, McCarthy insisted he would have the votes needed to ensure approval.

"We're going to pass the bill," McCarthy said as he exited a lengthy Tuesday night meeting at the Capitol.

Quick approval by the House and later in the week the Senate would ensure government checks will continue to go out to Social Security recipients, veterans and others and would prevent financial upheaval at home and abroad. Next Monday is when the Treasury has said the U.S. would run short of money to pay its debts, risking an economically dangerous default.

The package leaves few lawmakers fully satisfied, but Biden and McCarthy are counting on pulling majority support from the political center, a rarity in divided Washington, testing the leadership of the Democratic president and the Republican speaker.

Overall, the 99-page bill restricts spending for the next two years, suspends the debt ceiling into January

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2025 and changes policies, including new work requirements for older Americans receiving food aid and greenlighting an Appalachian natural gas line that many Democrats oppose.

For more than two hours late Tuesday as aides wheeled in pizza at the Capitol, McCarthy walked Republicans through the details, fielded questions and encouraged them not to lose sight of the bill's budget savings.

The speaker faced a sometimes tough crowd. Leaders of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus spent the day lambasting the compromise as falling well short of the spending cuts they demand, and they vowed to try to halt passage by Congress.

"This deal fails, fails completely," Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., the chairman of the Freedom Caucus, said earlier in the day, flanked by others outside the Capitol. "We will do everything in our power to stop it."

A much larger conservative faction, the Republican Study Committee, declined to take a position. Even rank-and-file centrist conservatives were unsure, leaving McCarthy desperately hunting for votes.

Rep. Nancy Mace, R-S.C., said after the "healthy debate" late into the night she was still a no.

Ominously, the conservatives warned of potentially trying to oust McCarthy over the compromise.

"There's going to be a reckoning," said Rep. Chip Roy of Texas.

Biden was speaking directly to lawmakers, making more than 100 one-on-one calls, the White House said.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said the spending restrictions in the package would reduce deficits by \$1.5 trillion over the decade, a top goal for the Republicans trying to curb the debt load.

McCarthy told lawmakers that number was higher if the two-year spending caps were extended, which is no guarantee.

But in a surprise that could further erode Republican support, the GOP's drive to impose work requirements on older Americans receiving food stamps ends up boosting spending by \$2.1 billion over the time period. That's because the final deal exempted veterans and homeless people, expanding the food stamp rolls by 78,000 people monthly, the CBO said.

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said it was up to McCarthy to turn out votes from some two-thirds of the Republican majority, a high bar the speaker may not be able to reach. In the 435-member House, 218 votes are needed for passage.

Still, Jeffries said the Democrats would do their part to avoid failure.

"It is my expectation that House Republicans would keep their promise and deliver at least 150 votes as it relates to an agreement that they themselves negotiated," Jeffries said. "Democrats will make sure that the country does not default."

Liberal Democrats decried the new work requirements for older Americans, those age 50-54, in the food aid program. And some Democratic lawmakers were leading an effort to remove the surprise provision for the Mountain Valley Pipeline natural gas project. The energy development is important to Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., but many others oppose it as unhelpful in fighting climate change.

The top Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee, Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona, said including the pipeline provision was "disturbing and profoundly disappointing."

Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, had this warning for McCarthy: "He got us here, and it's on him to deliver the votes."

Wall Street was taking a wait-and-see approach. Stock prices were mixed in Tuesday's trading. U.S. markets had been closed when the deal was struck over the weekend.

The House aims to hold procedural votes Wednesday afternoon with final action expected in the evening. It would then send the bill to the Senate, where Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senate Republican leader McConnell are working for passage by week's end.

Schumer called the bill a "sensible compromise." McConnell said McCarthy "deserves our thanks."

Senators, who have remained largely on the sidelines during much of the negotiations between the president and the House speaker, began inserting themselves more forcefully into the debate.

Some senators are insisting on amendments to reshape the package from both the left and the right flanks. But making any changes to the package at this stage seemed unlikely with so little time to spare before Monday's deadline.

Associated Press writers Farnoush Amiri, Mary Clare Jalonick and Seung Min Kim contributed to this report.

## **CEOs got smaller raises. It would still take a typical worker two lifetimes to make their annual pay**

By ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Business Writer

After ballooning for years, CEO pay growth is finally slowing.

The typical compensation package for chief executives who run S&P 500 companies rose just 0.9% last year, to a median of \$14.8 million, according to data analyzed for The Associated Press by Equilar. That means half the CEOs in the survey made more and half made less. It was the smallest increase since 2015.

Still, that's unlikely to quell mounting criticism that CEO pay has become excessively high and the imbalance between company bosses and rank-and-file workers too wide. Discontent over that gap has helped fuel labor unrest, and even some institutional investors have pushed back against a few of the most eye-popping packages.

The smaller increase came after CEO pay soared 17% in 2021, when boards rewarded top executives handsomely for steering their companies through the pandemic-induced recession.

Many of the compensation packages were approved early in 2022 but even a small raise might seem lavish in retrospect against the backdrop of a year in which stock markets tanked to their worst performance since 2008, inflation erased wage gains, fears of a recession grew, and tech giants began laying off workers.

"I'm not surprised that after two record years in a row, pay hikes cooled somewhat," said Sarah Anderson, who directs the Global Economy Project at the progressive Institute for Policy Studies. "What we shouldn't lose sight of is that CEO pay is still off the charts by historical measures." She said even a small hike last year was "outrageous."

In contrast to recent years, CEO pay gains were lower than the 5.1% increase in wages and benefits netted by private-sector workers through 2022.

Still, worker pay failed to keep up with inflation, which was sitting at 6.4% at the end of last year. And the pay disparity between CEOs and rank-and-file workers, which has been widening for years, narrowed only slightly.

The median pay for workers at companies included in the AP survey was \$77,178, up 1.3% from \$76,160 the previous year. That means it would take that worker 186 years to make what a CEO making the median pay earned just last year. At the same group of companies in 2021, it would have taken 190 years.

The timing of some of the biggest pay packages struck a discordant note against the backdrop of difficult times for their industries.

Alphabet's CEO, Sundar Pichai, ranked No. 1 in the AP's pay survey this year with a package valued at nearly \$226 million. The vast majority of his compensation came from a grant of restricted stock, valued at \$218 million, and which Google grants its CEO every three years.

The leader of Google won't reap most of the benefits of the stocks awards right away and how much he realizes ultimately depends on how Alphabet's stock performs. Alphabet noted in its annual proxy filing that, compared with Pichai's 2019 stock awards, a greater proportion of the latest batch will only vest if the company reaches goals for shareholder return.

Even so, Pichai received a total compensation package 15 times higher than this year's median CEO pay just before Google laid off tens of thousands of workers. The company's total shareholder returns fell 39% last year.

Stephen McMurtry, a Google software engineer and member of the Alphabet Workers Union-CWA, said he was not impressed when Pichai told employees shortly after the layoffs that executives would take significant bonus cuts in 2023 because "bonuses are a small part of executives' primarily stock-based compensation." Pichai didn't receive a bonus in 2022.



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"The clear disparity between executive rewards and our jobless former coworkers erodes trust and further underscores the need for transparency," McMurtry said in a statement e-mailed to AP.

Like many companies, Alphabet's equity portion of executive compensation is designed to reflect results over several years. Since Pichai started as CEO in 2015, Alphabet's stock has nearly quadrupled, and the company has become the third most valuable on Wall Street.

Alphabet declined to comment beyond its proxy statement.

Nearly 130 CEOs in the AP's survey saw pay cuts last year. Among them was UPS CEO Carol Tomé, who received a total compensation package valued at nearly \$19 million, most of it in stock awards. That's down 31% from \$27.6 million in 2021. UPS said Tomé's compensation was lower because she didn't exceed performance targets by as much in 2022 as she did in 2021.

Tomé is trying to stave off a potentially crippling strike by unionized workers, who feel they saw little of the company's windfall in profits, which nearly tripled during the pandemic as consumer reliance on deliveries grew.

"I don't feel bad for her that she got a decrease," said Jimi Hadley, UPS package driver in Roswell, Georgia, and Teamsters shop steward. "Nineteen million? Most workers will never make that in their entire life."

Tomé's pay was 364 times higher than \$52,144 median pay for UPS workers, although the company notes that the average pay for full-time drivers is \$95,000. UPS says its executive pay is "at the midpoint when compared to other companies of similar size and global scale."

Some boards put the brakes on CEO compensation following pushback from institutional investors, who get the chance to vote in "Say On Pay" tallies at annual shareholder meetings, although such votes are only advisory and don't compel boards to make changes.

Homebuilder Lennar, for example, capped the annual cash bonuses for its co-CEOs, Rick Beckwitt and Jonathan Jaffe, at \$6 million each in response to complaints from investors about their \$16.6 million bonuses in 2021. Just 63% of Lennar's investors voted to approve the pay packages at last year's shareholder meeting, compared to 84% in 2021.

Beckwitt and Jaffe saw their total compensation fall 11% and 12% in 2022, respectively, to \$30.4 million and \$30 million.

Higher up the pay scale, Apple CEO Tim Cook was no. 3 in the AP survey with a compensation package valued at \$99.4 million, nearly identical to what Apple gave him in 2021. But Cook has requested a 40% pay cut for 2023, in response to the vote at last year's annual meeting, where just 64% of shareholders approved of Cook's pay package, compared to 94% the previous year.

Such shareholder pushback remains rare, however. The vast majority of companies included in AP's survey received more than 90% support for their executive compensation programs in 2022.

The AP's and Equilar's compensation study included pay data for 343 CEOs at S&P 500 companies who have served at least two fiscal years at their companies, which filed proxy statements between Jan. 1 and April 30. Some well-paid CEOs are not included because they don't fit the criteria, such as Amazon's Andy Jassy and Microsoft's Satya Nadella.

The biggest cuts to CEO pay last year were in annual performance-based cash awards, which were down 15.5% to a median of \$2.3 million. On the other hand, stock awards rose 10.5% to a median of \$8.5 million.

Cash salaries and bonuses comprised less than a quarter of compensation for the typical CEO in the survey. The bulk comes from stock and stock options because shareholders have advocated for CEO pay to closely aligned with their own returns.

Executives will likely see steeper pay cuts in 2023 when boards consider the full effect of the stock market's downturn, said Kelly Malafis, a partner at Compensation Advisory Partners, a consulting firm that works with boards.

"We're not seeing companies slash and burn," Malafis said. "We might see some of that next year."

AP Business Writers Alex Veiga in Los Angeles, Matt Ott in Silver Spring, Maryland, and Michael Liedtke in Washington, D.C., contributed to this story.

## China warns of artificial intelligence risks, calls for beefed-up national security measures

BEIJING (AP) — China's ruling Communist Party has warned of the risks posed by advances in artificial intelligence while calling for heightened national security measures.

The statement issued after a meeting Tuesday chaired by party leader and President Xi Jinping underscores the tension between the government's determination to seize global leadership in cutting-edge technology and concerns about the possible social and political harms of such technologies.

It also followed a warning by scientists and tech industry leaders in the U.S., including high-level executives at Microsoft and Google, about the perils that artificial intelligence poses to humankind.

The meeting in Beijing discussed the need for "dedicated efforts to safeguard political security and improve the security governance of internet data and artificial intelligence," the official Xinhua News Agency said.

"It was stressed at the meeting that the complexity and severity of national security problems faced by our country have increased dramatically. The national security front must build up strategic self-confidence, have enough confidence to secure victory, and be keenly aware of its own strengths and advantages," Xinhua said.

"We must be prepared for worst-case and extreme scenarios, and be ready to withstand the major test of high winds, choppy waters and even dangerous storms," it said.

Xi, who is China's head of state, commander of the military and chair of the party's National Security Commission, called at the meeting for "staying keenly aware of the complicated and challenging circumstances facing national security."

China needs a "new pattern of development with a new security architecture," Xinhua reported Xi as saying.

China already dedicates vast resources to suppressing any perceived political threats to the party's dominance, with spending on the police and security personnel exceeding that devoted to the military.

While it relentlessly censors in-person protests and online criticism, citizens have continued to express dissatisfaction with policies, most recently the draconian lockdown measures enacted to combat the spread of COVID-19.

China has been cracking down on its tech sector in an effort to reassert party control, but like other countries it is scrambling to find ways to regulate fast-developing AI technology.

The most recent party meeting reinforced the need to "assess the potential risks, take precautions, safeguard the people's interests and national security, and ensure the safety, reliability and ability to control AI," the official newspaper Beijing Youth Daily reported Tuesday.

Worries about artificial intelligence systems outsmarting humans and slipping out of control have intensified with the rise of a new generation of highly capable AI chatbots such as ChatGPT.

Sam Altman, CEO of ChatGPT-maker OpenAI, and Geoffrey Hinton, a computer scientist known as the godfather of artificial intelligence, were among the hundreds of leading figures who signed the statement on Tuesday that was posted on the Center for AI Safety's website.

"Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war," the statement said.

More than 1,000 researchers and technologists, including Elon Musk, who is currently on a visit to China, had signed a much longer letter earlier this year calling for a six-month pause on AI development.

The missive said AI poses "profound risks to society and humanity," and some involved in the topic have proposed a United Nations treaty to regulate the technology.

China warned as far back as 2018 of the need to regulate AI, but has nonetheless funded a vast expansion in the field as part of efforts to seize the high ground on cutting-edge technologies.

A lack of privacy protections and strict party control over the legal system have also resulted in near-blanket use of facial, voice and even walking-gait recognition technology to identify and detain those seen as threatening, particularly political dissenters and religious minorities, especially Muslims.

liked it.

The video attracted over 1,000 comments — many of them baffled northerners who were intrigued about the taste but turned off by the preparation methods.

“The way it’s made, especially by some men, is not appealing for the eyes,” said Nada Azzam, a Gaza City woman.

She said she has never tried Lasima. But after watching a video of women making it with “clean cooking means,” she vowed to give it a taste.

## Who are the bride and groom in Jordan’s royal wedding?

The Associated Press undefined

He’s heir to the throne in one of the oldest monarchies in the Middle East and a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. She’s a Saudi architect with an aristocratic pedigree of her own.

Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, 28, and Rajwa Alseif, 29, are to be married on Thursday at a palace wedding in Jordan, a Western-allied monarchy that has been a bastion of stability for decades as Middle East turmoil has lapped at its borders.

The families have not said how the couple met or provided any details about their courtship. They were formally engaged at a traditional Muslim ceremony in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, in August 2022 that was attended by senior members of Jordan’s royal family.

The bride and groom are destined to become a power couple in the Middle East, forging a new bond between Jordan and Saudi Arabia as the latter seeks to transform itself into a regional power broker.

Here’s a look at the bride and groom.

### A US-EDUCATED ARCHITECT WITH ARABIAN TRIBAL ROOTS

Rajwa Alseif was born in Riyadh on April 28, 1994, the youngest of four children.

Her mother, Azza bint Nayef Abdulaziz Ahmad Al Sudairi, is related to Husa bint Ahmed Al Sudairi, who is said to have been the favorite wife of Saudi Arabia’s founder, King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, and gave birth to seven of his sons, including the country’s current ruler, King Salman.

For decades, the so-called Sudairi Seven, most of whom are now deceased, were seen as a major locus of power within the Saudi royal family.

Alseif’s father, Khalid, is a member of the Subai, a prominent tribe in the Arabian Peninsula with ancient roots. He’s also the founder of El Seif Engineering Contracting, which built Riyadh’s iconic Kingdom Tower and other high-rises across the Middle East.

Rajwa studied architecture at Syracuse University in New York, where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in 2017. A graduation video shows her receiving her degree in sparkling silver sneakers.

The year before, she led a Spring Break architecture symposium in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, that was funded by her father’s company.

“What made this trip so memorable for me... was seeing the students in the studio experience Arabic culture and architecture for the first time,” she was quoted as saying by a university newspaper.

She went on to earn a degree in visual communications from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles.

An official biography shared by the Jordanian royal palace says her hobbies include horseback riding and handmade arts, and that she is fluent in English, French and her native Arabic.

### A CROWN PRINCE LONG GROOMED TO LEAD

Crown Prince Hussein was born June 28, 1994. His path to succession became clear when his father, King Abdullah II, stripped his own half-brother, Prince Hamzah, of the title of crown prince in 2004. Hussein was formally named heir to the throne five years later, at the age of 15.

He is the oldest son of Abdullah, 61, who has ruled Jordan as a reliable Western ally and voice of moderation through more than two decades of turmoil in Israel, the Palestinian territories, Syria and Iraq, all of which border the small, resource-poor kingdom.

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The Hashemites, as Jordan's ruling family is known, trace their lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad. They dwelled in the Hejaz region of what is now Saudi Arabia for centuries before King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud's forces drove them out in 1925.

The Hashemites had led the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I, a rebellion dramatized by the 1962 film "Lawrence of Arabia." They had hoped to rule over an Arab state encompassing much of the Middle East, but Western imperial powers betrayed them. The French drove them out of Syria and a nationalist uprising toppled them in Iraq, leaving them with only Jordan.

The crown prince is named for his grandfather, King Hussein, who ruled Jordan for 46 years until his death in 1999 and remains a beloved figure for many Jordanians.

It could be years before the crown prince becomes king, but his training has already begun.

He graduated from Georgetown University with a degree in international history in 2016 and from the British Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst the following year. He holds the rank of captain in the Jordanian military and routinely takes part in drills and ceremonies.

He has joined his father on overseas trips, including a recent meeting at the White House with President Joe Biden. The prince shared pictures from the visit on his Instagram feed, which has over 4 million followers and also features more casual photos.

In 2015, Hussein was the youngest person to ever chair a meeting at the U.N. Security Council, leading a discussion about how to help young people confront violent extremism and promote peace. Two years later, and just out of college, he addressed the U.N. General Assembly.

His experiences to date may have prepared him to rule Jordan, but he also exists in a world apart from most of his fellow citizens, who have suffered in recent years from diminishing economic prospects. Elected governments in Jordan have long served as a seawall for public anger, even as the king has always held the real power.

It's a reality the young crown prince may have to confront someday, long after his palace wedding.

## Japanese knuckleball pitcher Eri Yoshida plays on her own 'Field of Dreams'

By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

OYAMA, Japan (AP) — Eri Yoshida sat in the dugout of an all-dirt baseball field in rural Japan, surrounded by rice paddies, narrow roads, and traditional Japanese houses.

The scene recalled instantly the 1989 film "Field of Dreams" — Asian style — and Yoshida certainly has her own.

The 31-year-old Japanese woman is a knuckleball pitcher with a sidearm delivery that she hopes might carry her to the big leagues in the United States or Japan.

"I know it's a really difficult challenge, but I have a dream in my heart that I really want to stand on a mound in the majors with a knuckleball," Yoshida told the Associated Press, speaking in Japanese and showing off her knuckleball grip.

"So I've decided to challenge myself."

Even Yoshida acknowledges that it's a far-fetched fantasy. But it's also very real and reminds of another film, the 1992 classic "A League of Their Own" that celebrates a women's baseball league in the United States during World War II.

She travels this week to play for two months in the Empire League, an independent baseball league in upstate New York. She's accustomed to chasing oversized objectives.

Yoshida has pitched in Japan, the United States, and Canada — against men and women — and for the last several years has been a player-coach with a women's team called Agekke — the sponsor's name — in Tochigi prefecture in north central Japan.

"I feel that my personality is really like a knuckleball," Yoshida said. The famously mercurial pitch has been her lifeline to keep playing baseball, a great equalizer for a small woman — she's only 1.55 meters (5-feet-1) — but a very difficult one to control.



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As a high school student, Yoshida was the first female professional baseball player in Japan, dubbed the “Knuckle Princess” in newspaper headlines. She’s never played softball, though some female baseball players have started that way.

She added to her renown after this, again playing with the men as an 18-year-old on an independent team in Chico, California, managed by former major league shortstop Garry Templeton.

“He was like my father,” Yoshida said.

In her early teen years she realized that the boys were growing taller and stronger. How to compete? Then she saw former Boston Red Sox pitcher Tim Wakefield throw a knuckleball that helped him to 200-career wins.

“I was not tall enough or powerful enough to throw a 160-kph (100 mph) straight ball, but it seemed like maybe I could throw a 105-kph (65 mph) knuckleball,” she explained. “And after watching Wakefield pitching for the first time, I wanted to be like him by pitching knuckleballs.”

She still wears his No. 49 and has talked with him about the unpredictable pitch.

The aim of the knuckleball — it’s actually thrown off the fingertip and fingernails — is to put as little spin as possible on the ball, allowing the wind currents to move it. The best ever was Phil Niekro, who earned 318 victories — the most ever by a knuckleballer — and a spot in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

Like the knuckleball, Yoshida has been inconsistent. And she has to face the fact that knuckleball pitchers are almost extinct, too prone to wild pitches and passed balls and seen as risky in an era driven by analytics.

She was 0-4 in her 2010 stint in California, but Templeton recognized that any 18-year-old would have had trouble against older competition. The record book shows her at 5-10 in three seasons in various independent leagues in North America.

Yoshida returned to Japan in 2013 and has been slowed periodically with injuries to her elbow and collarbone. Only now does she feel physically ready to continue the odyssey.

In one of baseball’s great ironies — certainly contrary to logic — a uniform worn by Yoshida and her bat were given to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. But it was for her hitting prowess playing for the Chico Outlaws, and not for her pitching.

In her first at bat — pitchers had to bat in the league — and with the bases loaded, Yoshida singled to right field for her first hit and her first RBI.

“That was as a hitter not a pitcher, but they were all firsts so I donated my uniform and bat,” she said.

“But it’s only because of the knuckleball that I have been able to play baseball up until now,” she added.

Maybe her ball and glove will next be in Cooperstown.

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Associated Press video journalist Koji Ueda contributed to this report.

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Follow Japan-based AP Sports Writer Stephen Wade on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/StephenWadeAP>

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## **Victims of violent crime drive legislative change to state programs, pushing against barriers to aid**

By CLAUDIA LAUER and MIKE CATALINI The Associated Press

Vanessa Martinez was finishing preparations for her daughter’s second birthday in September 2021 when her ex-boyfriend broke into her Mesa, Arizona, condo and shot her in the head as she frantically tried to shield their three young children.

Doctors had to remove a third of her skull, but Martinez survived.

She left the hospital facing a fight for custody of her kids, who’d been placed in state care after the at-

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tack. She needed a new place to live after much of the house was damaged in a standoff between police and her shooter. Her 4-year-old son needed trauma counseling.

Arizona has a state safety net — local victim compensation programs — for victims of violent attacks like Martinez. But she was denied help because she was behind on about \$900 in court fines from unrelated incidents, including one dating back nearly a decade. Program officials told Martinez she could reapply if she got current with a payment plan, but every dollar she made was needed for things like finding a place to live, work scrubs for her home-care job, after-school day care — and the list grows.

Across the country, victims like Martinez are using their stories to advocate for changes to state victim compensation programs, where thousands of crime survivors turn for help with medical bills, relocation, funerals or other expenses. The programs disburse millions of dollars each year, but The Associated Press found racial inequities and other barriers in how claims are denied in many states.

Crime survivors have organized rallies, testified at legislatures and met with dozens of lawmakers — with much success.

Legislatures in more than half of U.S. states have passed measures to improve their programs in recent years. The changes vary widely: A victim's criminal history is no longer an automatic disqualifier in Illinois. The time limit to apply for help was increased from three to seven years in California. In Michigan, the cap on aid will nearly double to \$45,000 this year and more people like caretakers of victims will be eligible for survivor benefits.

States have cut back on their denials to families based on the behavior of homicide victims and loosened requirements that crime victims must have cooperated with or reported the crime to police.

In Ohio, denials are no longer automatic for crime victims who have felony convictions or for surviving family if a murder victim had drugs in their system. Those reasons were used to deny help for a handful of victims in the 2019 mass shooting at a Dayton bar where nine people were killed and 17 others were wounded.

Dion Green was at the bar that night with his father, Derrick Fudge, who was killed. Green helped fight for the changes to Ohio's program after being denied help because his father had an almost 10-year-old felony conviction.

"I told them that I miss my father everyday, but the survivors, the people left here, are the ones still moving through their pain," Green said.

Changes have incrementally rolled through states over decades as more is learned about victimization. Mental health treatment wasn't a commonly covered expense when the programs started in the 1960s and 1970s, but now is widely covered. Pennsylvania passed a law to allow eligible victims access to counseling whether or not the program determined the victim contributed to their own victimization.

Sometimes, however, change runs up against institutional inertia.

Nevada doesn't require sexual assault victims to go to police as long as they report the crime to nurses or other health professionals. But a 2021 federal audit found 175 claims from those victims had been denied over a five-year period because of missing or incomplete police reports.

Nevada retrained staff after the audit, and revised the denials notifications sent to victims. Program officials confirmed that as of early 2023, none of those denied claims had been reopened. They declined an interview request from the AP.

"The consensus has been that the potential re-traumatization to victims of sexual assault is too great of a risk in contacting victims regarding their claims," program spokeswoman, Karla Delgado wrote in an emailed response.

In Ohio, Green recently helped a woman who had lost her children's father to gun violence start the compensation process by contacting a county representative. The woman was initially turned away because the victim had a previous felony record. Green helped her inform the official of the 2021 law change.

"It's the awareness part. People inside and outside the program need to know," Green said.

Christelle Perez sought an immediate attitude shift among staff when she took over as chief of the Illinois Crime Victims Compensation Bureau in May 2021. She wanted to stop decades of autopilot denials

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from holding up recently passed reforms.

"There was this culture of, 'How can we deny a claim?' because that's what the staff were instructed to do," Perez said. "I met with the staff and I told them that we are a service organization and it is our job to serve."

A similar mission realignment happened when New York's program changed from a five-member board that made inconsistent and sometimes subjective decisions to a division where staff received uniform training on how to decide claims. Elizabeth Cronin took over as executive director of the division in 2013 — a few years after the shift — and has pushed to make sure the program operates equitably.

"My top priority was to identify marginalized communities, underserved communities and spend more time out in the community to find out what we aren't seeing and why we aren't seeing it," Cronin said.

Lenore Anderson, president and co-founder of the Alliance for Safety and Justice, which organizes victims to advocate for criminal justice reforms, has pushed program administrators for years to shift their focus from eligibility requirements to victim needs.

"It feels so obvious that the very least we can do when someone is hurt by crime and violence is ask, 'What do you need?' And the fact that that is completely counter to how these bureaucratic systems operate is shocking," she said.

Anderson said she's seen signs of change at the federal level, where the Justice Department's U.S. Office for Victims of Crime provides state programs with matching dollars that are tied to some regulations and a set of suggested guidelines. In a 2021 memo to state programs, the office encouraged states to add exceptions to police cooperation requirements.

Some victims advocates want the federal office to mandate changes to all programs as a condition for receiving federal funds to address the piecemeal map of state programs that dole out inconsistent decisions.

The office is in the process of overhauling compensation guidelines for the first time since 2001, with an "emphasis on equity and addressing programmatic barriers," according to an emailed statement from the department. But it's unclear how much of that new guidance will be mandatory. Green, part of an advocates committee giving input on those changes, said he's pushed the agency not only to take down existing barriers but mandate that states increase public awareness of their compensation programs.

At the state level, hundreds of advocacy organizations are working for reforms, and with more than 100,000 members, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice is one of the largest. Bernice "Tammi" Ringo is one of those members.

After a lifetime living around Detroit, Ringo had plans to move to Alabama with her 23-year-old son Natalian to get him away from the crime she had feared most of his life. Those plans were shattered in 2019, when Natalian was fatally shot while sitting in his parked car in an enclave of Detroit.

Ringo applied for funeral and counseling aid. She was denied because the program said she could rely on life insurance instead. She appealed, and while the program overturned its initial decision, it denied her again, saying her son had committed misconduct related to his own murder. The state commission provided no details, Ringo said, and Highland Park police were little help.

Overwhelmed with grief, Ringo, 64, later spoke before the Michigan Legislature about the trauma of being told her son had somehow caused his murder.

"They put me through more hell," she said of the program denial. "I'm heavily involved because I couldn't leave and go to Alabama and take my son with me and... just start a new life."

After she and other victims testified, Michigan lawmakers passed legislation, set to go into effect in August, that makes numerous changes, including increasing money available to victims, eliminating police reporting deadlines and increasing eligibility.

Data are not available for the handful of states that passed recent sweeping reforms. But New Jersey, which overhauled its program rules in 2020, saw an immediate change.

In 2018 and 2019, Black victims accounted for about 44% of applications but received nearly 60% of the denials, according to data obtained by the AP. After the overhaul, that disparity dwindled, and by 2021 it had disappeared.

Martinez hopes that speaking at rallies supporting a bill that would fund a pilot trauma-recovery center

Members of the Uyghur and other mainly Muslim ethnic groups have been singled out for mass electronic monitoring and more than 1 million people have been detained in prison-like political re-education camps that China calls deradicalization and job training centers.

AI's risks are seen mainly in its ability to control robotic, self-governing weaponry, financial tools and computers governing power grids, health centers, transportation networks and other key infrastructure.

China's unbridled enthusiasm for new technology and willingness to tinker with imported or stolen research and to stifle inquiries into major events such as the COVID-19 outbreak heighten concerns over its use of AI.

"China's blithe attitude toward technological risk, the government's reckless ambition, and Beijing's crisis mismanagement are all on a collision course with the escalating dangers of AI," technology and national security scholars Bill Drexel and Hannah Kelley wrote in an article published this week in the journal *Foreign Affairs*.

## Gaza Strip's Palestinians polarized by unorthodox watermelon delicacy

By FARES AKRAM Associated Press

KHUZAA, Gaza Strip (AP) — Locals call it "watermelon salad." But this delicacy popular in the southern Gaza Strip at this time of year is far from the sweet, refreshing taste the name evokes.

"Lasima," "Ajar," or "Qursa" are different names for the hot, savory meal that takes hours to prepare. There's watermelon inside, but one can hardly taste it.

In a territory that prides itself on its culinary traditions, Lasima is surprisingly divisive. Residents in southern Gaza love the dish. Just a few kilometers (miles) to the north, people shun it as unclean, due to its hands-on preparation.

Lasima is available just two months a year. It is made with melons that are picked when they are small and not yet ripe. They are roasted on a fire and peeled, and the soft flesh is mixed with roasted eggplants and thinly sliced tomatoes, lemon, garlic, onion and olive oil. Then it is eaten with a special dough baked in the ashes of the fire.

The name "Ajar," or "unripe" in Arabic, refers to the baby melons. "Qursa" is the word for the thick dough. "Lasima," which means "messy," refers to the sloppy meal served in a large clay bowl.

Many say the dish originated more than 100 years ago with Bedouin Arab tribes in the neighboring Sinai desert in Egypt.

Others claim it's a traditional Palestinian food. There is little evidence to support this claim, however. The food is popular only in southern Gaza, near the Sinai border. Farther north, the meal is barely known.

Amona Abu Rjila, 70, of Khuzaa, says it's a little of each. She says she remembers her parents and grandfathers making it outdoors in the watermelon season. "It's a traditional Palestinian dish with Bedouin roots," she said.

Farther north, few would agree with her. Those familiar with the dish object to its preparation, with the ingredients typically mashed together with bare hands, as unclean.

On a recent day, a group of friends gathered in a yard adjacent to Israel's frontier with Gaza. They diced the vegetables and roasted the ingredients in a fire. When the flames faded and the vegetables were charred, the thick dough was buried in the ash.

Abdelkarim al-Satari, 33, a jobless accountant, started mixing the Lasima. He shredded the dough and put all the ingredients in the large bowl, squeezing everything with his fist. Wary of the onlookers, he put on black cooking gloves.

"In every season, people call me to make Lasima for them about 20 times," he said.

To challenge the dish's negative image, social media content creator Mohammed Aborjela brought the meal in smaller clay pots and offered samples to random passers-by in Gaza City.

Most of the respondents in a nearly two-minute video said they'd never heard of it, but all who tried it



in Arizona will lead to more people getting help. The model moves money to victims faster and has fewer restrictions, like those that disqualified Martinez.

"I didn't really get any time to heal even emotionally from what happened," Martinez said. "But I really feel like this is my life's mission to get this changed."

Catalini reported from Trenton, New Jersey and Lauer reported from Philadelphia.

This is the second in an occasional Associated Press series examining crime victim compensation programs. Send confidential tips to [ap.org/tips](https://ap.org/tips). The Associated Press receives support from the Public Welfare Foundation for reporting focused on criminal justice. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Former Connecticut lawmaker to be sentenced for coronavirus aid thefts

By DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — A former Connecticut state representative is scheduled to be sentenced Wednesday for stealing more than \$1.2 million from the city of West Haven — most of it in federal coronavirus-related aid — and using a good chunk of it to fuel his gambling addiction.

Michael DiMassa, 32, a West Haven Democrat, could get more than four years in prison under federal sentencing guidelines. He is asking Judge Omar Williams for leniency.

"Mr. DiMassa suffered from a debilitating gambling addiction at the time of the offense," his lawyer, John Gulash, wrote in a court filing, "and his essentially unfettered access to a deep pool of federal funds and total lack of impulse control facilitated his precipitous downward spiral."

The lawyer compared DiMassa to Howard Ratner, the gambler played by Adam Sandler in the movie "Uncut Gems." He said he bet on things as frivolous as how long the national anthem would take to perform at the Super Bowl, or what color Gatorade would be poured on the winning coach.

He did much of his gambling and betting at the Mohegan Sun casino in eastern Connecticut.

At the time of the thefts, which began in mid-2020, DiMassa was both a state representative and an aide to the West Haven City Council with authority to approve reimbursements for coronavirus-related expenses. He pleaded guilty in November to three counts of wire fraud conspiracy, admitting that he and others billed West Haven for legal, lobbying and consulting services that were never provided.

DiMassa and a business partner, John Bernardo, also a former West Haven city employee, pilfered nearly \$637,000, prosecutors said.

Bernardo pleaded guilty to wire fraud and was sentenced to 13 months in prison in March.

In a second scheme, DiMassa and another business owner, John Trasacco, conspired to submit fraudulent invoices from Trasacco's companies to the city, netting nearly \$432,000 in COVID-19 aid, with nearly all of it going to Trasacco. Trasacco was sentenced to eight years in prison in March after a jury convicted him of fraud.

The final conspiracy involved DiMassa and his wife, Lauren DiMassa, and the theft of nearly \$148,000, authorities said. The couple submitted phony requests for payments by the city related to a youth violence prevention program. The pilfered funds were not federal coronavirus aid.

Lauren DiMassa, who is pregnant with the couple's second child, pleaded guilty last year and was sentenced in March to six months in prison. She recently reported to prison.

Federal prosecutors are seeking a prison sentence in the federal guidelines range for Michael DiMassa and want the judge to order him to pay more than \$1 million in restitution to West Haven.

"The defendant was a public official elected to serve his constituents," prosecutors wrote in their sentencing documents. "Instead, he completely betrayed that trust by stealing public funds for his own benefit."

DiMassa resigned from the Legislature and the city of West Haven after his arrest in 2021.

He has cited several reasons for leniency including his lack of any previous criminal record, his testicular cancer and being able to care for his children.

## Amazon workers upset over job cuts, return-to-office mandate stage walkout

By ED KOMENDA Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A group of Amazon workers upset about recent layoffs, a return-to-office mandate and the company's environmental impact is planning a walkout at the company's Seattle headquarters Wednesday.

The lunchtime protest comes a week after Amazon's annual shareholder meeting and a month after a policy took effect requiring workers to return to the office three days per week.

"We respect our employees' rights to express their opinions," the company said in a statement.

As of Tuesday night, more than 1,800 employees had pledged to walk out around the world, with about 870 in Seattle, according to Amazon Employees for Climate Justice, a climate change advocacy group founded by Amazon workers.

While some plan to gather at the Amazon Spheres — a four-story structure in downtown Seattle that from the outside looks like three connected glass orbs — others will participate remotely.

Brad Glasser, an Amazon spokesperson, said there has been a good energy on the company's South Lake Union campus and at its other urban centers since more employees returned to the office. More than 20,000 workers, however, signed a petition urging Amazon to reconsider the return-to-office mandate.

"As it pertains to the specific topics this group of employees is raising," Glasser said in a statement, "we've explained our thinking in different forums over the past few months and will continue to do so."

In a February memo, Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said the company made its decision to return corporate employees to the office at least three days a week after observing what worked during the pandemic. Among other things, he said senior leadership watched how staff performed and talked to leaders at other companies. He said they concluded employees tended to be more engaged in person and collaborate more easily.

In a note asking Amazon employees to pledge their participation in the walkout, organizers said Amazon "must return autonomy to its teams, who know their employees and customers best, to make the best decision on remote, in-person, or hybrid work, and to its employees to choose a team which enables them to work the way they work best."

Some employees have also complained that Amazon has been slow to address its impact on climate change. Amazon, which relies on fossil fuels to power the planes, trucks and vans that ship packages all over the world, has an enormous carbon footprint. Amazon workers have been vocal in criticizing some of the company's practices.

In an annual statement to investors, Amazon said it aims to deploy 100,000 electric delivery vehicles by 2030 and reach net-zero carbon by 2040. But walkout organizers contend the company must do more and commit to zero emissions by 2030.

The walkout follows widespread cost-cutting at Amazon, where layoffs have affected workers in advertising, human resources, gaming, stores, devices and Amazon Web Services, the company's cloud computing division. The company has cut 27,000 jobs since November.

Like other tech companies, including Facebook parent Meta and Google parent Alphabet, Amazon ramped up hiring during the pandemic to meet the demand from homebound Americans who were increasingly shopping online to keep themselves safe from the virus.

Amazon's workforce, in warehouses and offices, doubled to more than 1.6 million people in about two years. But demand slowed as the worst of the pandemic eased. The company began pausing or canceling its warehouse expansion plans last year.

Amid growing anxiety over the potential for a recession, Amazon in the past few months shut down a subsidiary that's been selling fabrics for nearly 30 years, shuttered Amazon Care, its hybrid virtual, in-home care service, and closed Amazon Smile, a philanthropic program.

## How and when to remove children from their homes? A federal lawsuit raises thorny questions

By STEVE LeBLANC Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — When child welfare workers and police knocked on Sarah Perkins' and Joshua Sabey's front door well past midnight one weekend last summer, the parents were shocked to learn the state of Massachusetts had come to take their two young sons.

It's the kind of harrowing scene that plays out daily across the country as social workers motivated by a desire to protect children run up against confused and concerned parents.

What followed was emotional anguish, a bureaucratic battle, vindication for the parents and a lawsuit filed earlier this month by a legal advocacy group. The couple hopes for a favorable ruling that will increase oversight of child removals nationwide.

The children were taken in Massachusetts because of a child abuse report stemming from a hospital visit. On July 13, 2022, Perkins whisked their 3-month-old son Cal to an emergency room. He had a 103-degree fever.

An X-ray checking for pneumonia found a rib fracture the couple hadn't noticed. After speaking with the boy's grandmother, they learned the injury may have happened weeks earlier as she removed Cal from a car seat. He slipped, and she caught him with one arm.

Citing the fracture, hospital officials reported potential abuse to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

"It was such a roller coaster — this total terror that we're going to lose this child at the hospital and then complete relief after we're allowed to go home with a safety plan," Perkins said.

They returned to their Waltham, Massachusetts, home. DCF social workers made a surprise visit and found no evidence of abuse, according to the lawsuit.

Days later, around 1 a.m. on July 16, DCF workers and police officers knocked at their door to take both sons away. They didn't have a warrant or a court order, neither of which are required to remove a child in Massachusetts and other states.

"It was intense. We see that these police officers are armed. We're asking for paperwork and there's none to be had," Perkins said. "Eventually we were told that either we hand over the kids or they're going to break down our door and take them by force."

Within 24 hours, Sabey's parents were allowed to act as foster parents. Four weeks later DCF let Sabey and Perkins take their children home, and after another three months and eventually about \$50,000 in private attorney fees, the government restored full parental custody. A short time later the couple moved to Idaho.

The couple's lawsuit alleges constitutional violations including the unreasonable search of their house, the unreasonable seizure of their children and the deprivation of parental rights without due process.

"What's really frightening is that it happens a lot. What was unique was our ability to hire an attorney," Sabey said.

The couple are plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed by the Pacific Legal Foundation, a nonprofit focused on parental rights and other issues. It asks for compensatory and punitive damages.

It's also part of a legal strategy to set precedent nationwide "confirming the importance of parental rights and clarifying the need to include a neutral judge in child removal decisions unless there is an emergency situation involving a risk of imminent harm to a child," said Glenn Roper, a lawyer for the foundation.

The lawsuit names individual social workers, police officers and the City of Waltham, not the DCF. That's in part because state agencies effectively can't be sued in federal court for damages, according to Joshua Thompson, Pacific's director of legal operations.

Perkins and Joshua Sabey say they feel responsible to pursue the lawsuit because many other parents can't pay private attorney fees.

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Joyce McMillan wasn't so fortunate.

She relied on a public defender 23 years ago when her two children were removed after a drug test turned up positive for what the New York resident described as an illicit substance. McMillan said she had a job, a home, and was providing for her children.

"A drug test is not a parenting test," she said.

McMillan said she fell into a depression and became homeless before getting her children back more than two years later. She's currently executive director of the nonprofit JMACforFamilies. The group advocates for dismantling the child welfare system, which it calls "the family policing system."

Welfare agencies should be required to advise families that they have a right to an attorney and typically don't have to let them speak to their children or enter their home without a court order, McMillan said.

If she had deeper pockets at the time, "absolutely there would have been a different outcome," she said.

A representative from the City of Waltham had no comment on the Massachusetts case.

The DCF also declined to comment. DCF policy allows the removal of a child without a court order when needed to avoid "a substantial risk of death, serious emotional or physical injury or sexual abuse" and when there's "inadequate time to seek" one, but it must immediately file an affidavit.

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey, a Democrat, declined to comment on the lawsuit. She said her administration "is committed to making sure we do everything we can for the health and well-being of children and families."

There are efforts to restrict the authority of child welfare agencies.

A bill before Massachusetts lawmakers would require child welfare workers get judicial approval within four hours of removing a child, according to bill sponsor Democratic state Rep. Joan Meschino. It would also make it easier for workers to contact judges outside of regular court hours, including overnight and on weekends.

An estimated 3 million children came under the scrutiny of child welfare agencies in the 2021 fiscal year. Nearly 600,000 were victims of mistreatment, according to a report by the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families.

An estimated 1,820 children died from mistreatment during that same period.

The report found that 76% were victims of neglect while 16% were physically abused, and 10% were sexually abused.

The child welfare system can be particularly risky for Black and indigenous families, according to Dorothy Roberts, professor of Africana studies, law and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania.

"The main reason why families get investigated is accusations of child neglect, which is basically defined as not meeting the needs of children like sufficient clothing or housing or child care," she said. "It's basically a definition of poverty."

Instead of removing children, the government could help parents meet their needs, she argued.

Roberts pointed to a 2017 study that estimates more than one-third of all U.S. children will be the subject of a child abuse or neglect report before they turn 18, an estimate that jumps to more than half for Black children.

But social workers aren't out to get children; they're trying to protect them, said Yvonne Chase, president-elect of the National Association of Social Workers.

When a hospital, school, neighbor or older child reports mistreatment, social workers apply a risk assessment to determine how agencies should respond, she said.

"The child protective agency doesn't create the reports of harm. Somebody calls us," said Chase, a former head of child protective agencies in Alaska and Washington. "If a child is being seriously abused, they may be very happy to see that some relief is coming."



## As Supreme Court considers affirmative action, colleges see few other ways to diversity goals

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — As an alternative to affirmative action, colleges from California to Florida have tried a range of strategies to achieve the diversity they say is essential to their campuses. Many have given greater preference to low-income families. Others started admitting top students from every community in their state.

But after years of experimentation — often prompted by state-level bans on considering race in admissions — there's no clear solution. In states requiring race-neutral policies, many colleges have seen enrollment drops among Black and Hispanic students, especially at selective colleges that historically have been mostly white.

Now, as the Supreme Court decides the fate of affirmative action, colleges nationwide could soon face the same test, with some bracing for setbacks that could erase decades of progress on campus diversity. A ruling is expected by the end of June.

At Amherst College, officials have estimated that going entirely race-neutral would reduce Black, Hispanic and Indigenous populations by half.

"We fully expect it would be a significant decrease in our population," said Matthew McGann, Amherst's director of admission.

Facing a conservative Supreme Court that appeared skeptical from the start, colleges have been preparing for a rollback. Some are considering adding more essays to get a better picture of an applicant's background. Others are planning to boost recruiting in racially diverse areas, or admit more transfer students from community colleges.

The court took up affirmative action in response to challenges at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina. Lower courts upheld admission systems at both schools, rejecting claims that the schools discriminated against white and Asian-American applicants.

Meanwhile, other schools have been taking lessons from colleges that don't consider race. Nine states previously banned affirmative action, starting with California in 1996 and most recently Idaho in 2020.

After Michigan voters rejected it in 2006, the University of Michigan shifted attention to low-income students.

It sent graduates to work as counselors in low-income high schools. It started offering college prep in Detroit and Grand Rapids. It offered full scholarships for low-income Michigan residents. More recently, it started accepting fewer early admission applications, which are more likely to come from white students.

Despite those efforts, the university offers itself as a cautionary tale. The share of Black and Hispanic undergraduates hasn't fully rebounded from a falloff after 2006. And while Hispanic enrollments have been increasing, Black enrollments continued to slide, going from 8% of undergraduates in 2006 to 4% now.

The campus is drawing more low-income students, but that hasn't translated to racial diversity, said Erica Sanders, the director of undergraduate admissions at Michigan.

"Socioeconomic status is not a proxy for race," Sanders said.

At the same time, some of Michigan's less selective colleges have fared better. At nearby Eastern Michigan University, the number of students of color increased, reflecting demographic shifts in the state. It illustrates what experts say is a chilling effect seen most acutely at selective colleges — students of color see fewer of their peers at places like Ann Arbor, prompting them to choose campuses that appear more welcoming.

Growing up in Ann Arbor, there was an expectation that Odia Kaba would attend the University of Michigan. When her application was deferred, she started at Eastern Michigan with plans to transfer to Ann Arbor her sophomore year.

By then, Kaba was getting daily texts from her sister, who attended U-M, describing the microaggressions she faced as a Black student on campus. Rooms went silent when she walked in. She was ignored in group projects. She felt alone and suffocated.

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"Why would I go to U of M?" Kaba, 22, remembers thinking. "I'm just going to be stuck with people that don't look like me, can't relate to me, and with no way to escape it."

Kaba stayed at Eastern Michigan and graduated with a degree in quantitative economics this year. Even though it's a mostly white campus, Kaba said she found pockets of diversity that helped make her comfortable.

"I'm in economics, which is a white male-dominated space. But I can walk out of the classroom and be surrounded by my people, and I just feel safe," she said.

The University of California saw similar enrollment slides after a statewide ban in 1996. Within two years, Black and Hispanic enrollments fell by half at the system's two most selective campuses, Berkeley and UCLA. The system would go on to spend more than \$500 million on programs aimed at low-income and first-generation college students.

The system also started a program that promises admission to the top 9% of students in each high school across the state, an attempt to reach strong students from all backgrounds. A similar promise in Texas has been credited for expanding racial diversity, and opponents of affirmative action cite it as a successful model.

In California, the promise drew students from a wider geographic area but did little to expand racial diversity, the system said in a brief to the Supreme Court. It had almost no impact at Berkeley and UCLA, where students compete against tens of thousands of other applicants.

Today at UCLA and Berkeley, Hispanic students make up 20% of undergraduates, higher than in 1996 but lower than their 53% share among California's high school graduates. Black students, meanwhile, have a smaller presence than they did in 1996, accounting for 2% of undergraduates at Berkeley.

Opponents of affirmative action say some states have fared well without it. After Oklahoma outlawed the practice in 2012, the state's flagship university saw "no long-term severe decline" in minority enrollments, the state's attorney general told the Supreme Court.

It pointed to a recent freshman class at the University of Oklahoma that had more Hispanic, Asian and Native American students than in 2012. The share of Black students fell, but it wasn't far from flagship universities in other states that allow affirmative action, the state said.

Still, many colleges expect racial diversity could take a hit. If affirmative action is struck down, colleges fear they will unknowingly admit fewer students of color. In the long run, it can be self-perpetuating — if numbers fall, the campus can appear less attractive to future students of color.

That's a problem, colleges say, because racial diversity benefits the entire campus, exposing students to other worldviews and preparing them for a diverse workforce.

"We need to make sure we're sending the message that we're committed to diversity, independent of what the court does," said Doug Christiansen, dean of admissions at Vanderbilt University.

The stakes are high for colleges like Vanderbilt, where Black students make up 9% of the student body, more than most highly selective colleges. But the school isn't planning a major shift in strategy. Instead, it plans to build on efforts to recruit in diverse areas and expand its outreach.

In some ways, colleges have been preparing for an end to affirmative action since earlier legal challenges, Christiansen said. "These are things we've had to think about for quite some time," he said.

Beyond race, the decision has the impact to reshape other admissions policies. To draw more underserved populations, experts say colleges may need to do away with policies that advantage white students, from legacy preferences and early admission to standardized test scores.

At Amherst, officials ended legacy preferences in 2021 and expanded financial aid. The college is looking for ways to sustain its diversity, but officials say options are limited.

"I don't know if there's going to be some terrific innovation," McGann said. "If a school had figured it out, they would be doing it already."

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## Iowa apartment collapse leaves residents missing, rubble too dangerous to search

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE, HANNAH FINGERHUT and ERIN HOOLEY Associated Press

DAVENPORT, Iowa (AP) — Five residents of a six-story apartment building that partially collapsed in eastern Iowa remained unaccounted for Tuesday, and authorities feared at least two of them might be stuck inside rubble that was too dangerous to search.

The three other missing residents are not believed to have been in the building when it started collapsing Sunday evening, said state Rep. Monica Kurth. Mayor Mike Matson confirmed at a news conference that not all the residents were accounted for.

A group of protesters held signs and chanted near the building Tuesday morning, arguing the city was moving too quickly toward demolishing the 116-year-old brick and steel structure. Built as a hotel, it had more recently been used as apartments, and tenants had been allowed to remain even as bricks began falling from the building.

After the partial collapse, the city had announced plans to begin demolishing the unstable remains of the structure as early as Tuesday morning, but they delayed after a woman was found Monday evening.

Officials now say immediate demolition was never intended, but they did want to quickly stage the site for the tear-down. The woman's rescue prompted officials to see if they could safely enter and ensure others weren't inside. But that is extremely difficult when the building could collapse at any time, they said.

"This could be a place of rest for some of the unaccounted," Matson said. The city is trying to determine how to bring down what remains of the building while maintaining the dignity of people who may have been killed, he said.

Later Tuesday, there were no signs that authorities were conducting any sort of search. About 50 people had gathered outside a perimeter of fencing and police tape. Children drew hearts in chalk on the pavement, and a candlelight vigil included five minutes of silence in honor of the five people still missing.

Fire Marshal James Morris said explosives will not be used on the building, which is near other structures and is "unstable and continues to worsen." Removing the debris that is propping up the rest of the building could cause further collapse, he said.

"We're very sympathetic to the possibility that there's two people" still left inside, Morris said as he fought back tears.

He said there will be an investigation into what caused the collapse but that it's unclear so far whether a criminal investigation is warranted.

Officials sought to explain why Fire Chief Michael Carlsten said Monday morning that "no known individuals are trapped." The city also had issued a statement saying the owner was served Monday with a demolition order and the process would begin Tuesday morning.

The discovery of another survivor Monday evening, rescued by ladder truck from a fourth-floor window, prompted the city to reevaluate, they said Tuesday. The woman was pulled to safety only after popping out a window screen and waving to people gathered below.

"We had no indications from any of the responders that we had, any of the canines, any of the tools at the time" that there was anyone else left alive in the building, Morris said.

Patricia Brooks said her sister, Lisa, attempted to leave the building but rushed back to where she thought she could shelter most safely — in her bathtub. Brooks spoke with her sister when she was being evaluated at the hospital following rescue from a window on the side of the building that was still standing.

"It was just exhausting and a nightmare," Chicago resident Patricia Brooks said of the roughly 24 hours before Lisa's rescue.

The family begged with police and city officials to find Lisa in the apartment starting Sunday, said daughter Porshia Brooks.

"They allegedly did a sweep and said they didn't find anybody," said Porshia Brooks of Moline, Illinois. "They're trying to tear the building down without doing a proper sweep."

On Tuesday, protesters held signs saying "Find Them First" and "Who is in the Rubble?" Some used a

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megaphone to shout out names of residents. The building had 53 tenants in about 80 units, the police chief said.

City officials said rescue crews escorted 12 people from the building shortly after a middle section collapsed at about 5 p.m. Sunday, and rescued several others, including one person who was taken to safety overnight Sunday.

"There was a lot of screams, a lot of cries, a lot of people saying 'Help!' when the building came down," Tadd Mashovec, a building resident, told KCCI-TV. "But that did not last, and two or three minutes, and then the whole area was silent."

It's unclear what caused the collapse, which left a gaping hole in the center of what was once the Davenport Hotel, a building listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. Built in 1907, the structure had been renovated into a mixed-use residential and commercial building.

The building was designed so the exterior brick and steel frame support each other, so the loss of exterior brick can threaten the building's integrity, said structural engineer Larry Sandhaas.

"When you lose the brick, you lose the stability of the building," Sandhaas said.

Building workers had been completing interior and exterior repairs in recent months, city records show. Reports of falling bricks were part of that work, said Rich Oswald, the city's director of development and neighborhood services.

The fire marshal said Tuesday a structural engineer hired by the owner determined that the building was safe enough to remain occupied during the repairs.

Gov. Kim Reynolds issued a disaster proclamation activating assistance programs for the residents left homeless. After demolition was ordered, residents were prevented from going back inside for belongings due to the instability.

Davenport Hotel, L.L.C., owned by Andrew Wold, acquired the building in 2021 in a property deal worth \$4.2 million, according to county records.

The city declared the building a nuisance in May 2022 "due to numerous solid waste violations" involving its overflowing dumpster, court records show.

Wold did not contest the nuisance declaration and inspectors noted similar problems 19 times between then and March 2023, records show. The city took civil enforcement action, and a judge ordered Wold to pay a \$4,500 penalty after he did not appear in court.

Tuesday, the city filed a new enforcement action against Wold, saying that he had failed to maintain the property "in a safe, sanitary, and structurally sound condition" before the collapse. The city is seeking a \$3,000 fine.

City inspectors reviewed the ongoing repairs three days before the collapse, records show. Plans called for replacing 100 feet of brick to comply with city code starting May 25, and an interior cinder block wall with rebar and grout was partially installed as of last week, according to online inspection and permitting notes.

"Wall bracing will be installed per engineer's design," the notes said. "Engineer will stop over periodically to ensure work is being done per his design. City inspector will stop over periodically to see progress."

An email sent to an attorney believed to be representing Wold was not immediately returned Tuesday night.

The collapse didn't surprise former resident Schlaan Murray, who told The Associated Press that his one-year stay there was "a nightmare."

Murray, 46, moved into his apartment in February 2022 and almost immediately had issues with heat, air conditioning and bathroom plumbing. Calls to the management company rarely got a response, and even if workers did stop by, "they didn't fix stuff, they just patched it up," he said.

He questions how the building, where he said he didn't even want to bring his children, passed inspections. He moved out a month before his lease was up in March.

"It was horrible," Murray said.

McFetridge and Fingerhut reported from Des Moines. Associated Press contributors include Ryan J.



Foley in Iowa City, Kathy McCormack in Concord, New Hampshire, and Beatrice Dupuy in New York City.

## **GOP chairman moves to hold FBI director Wray in contempt over Biden doc**

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chairman of the House Oversight Committee said Tuesday he is moving forward with holding FBI Director Chris Wray in contempt of Congress because the department has not turned over a bureau record that purports to relate to President Joe Biden and his family.

Rep. James Comer, R-Ky., criticized the federal law enforcement agency after he said his committee was told it would not gain access to an unclassified form that describes “an alleged criminal scheme” involving the president and a foreign national.

“The FBI’s decision to stiff-arm Congress and hide this information from the American people is obstructionist and unacceptable,” Comer said in a statement.

In response, the FBI said in a statement that it remains committed to cooperating with lawmakers in “good faith,” and that “any discussion of escalation under these circumstances is unnecessary.”

The FBI said it offered to give the Oversight committee “access to information responsive to the Committee’s subpoena in a format and setting that maintains confidentiality and protects important security interests and the integrity of FBI investigations.”

The bureau called that offer “an extraordinary accommodation.”

Comer and Wray are scheduled to speak by phone on Wednesday amid the standoff.

Calls to move forward with contempt were elevated by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy earlier Tuesday, who told Fox News that he had personally called Wray to urge the release of the document to Congress.

“If he does not act, he’s not above the law. He’s not above Congress. And we will hold him in contempt. Now I want to be very clear about that,” McCarthy said.

Comer subpoenaed Wray earlier this month seeking a specific FBI form from June 2020 that is a report of conversations or interactions with a confidential source. These reports are routine, contain uncorroborated and unvetted information and do not on their own establish any wrongdoing.

In a May 3 letter to Wray with Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, Comer said that “it has come to our attention” that the bureau has such a document that “describes an alleged criminal scheme” involving Biden and a foreign national “relating to the exchange of money for policy decisions” when Biden was vice president and includes “a precise description” about it.

Comer and Grassley said those “disclosures” demand further investigation, and they want to know whether the FBI investigated and, if so, what agents found.

The subpoena seeks all so-called FD-1023 forms and accompanying attachments and documents.

Democrats on the Oversight committee called Comer’s narrative of the FBI obstructing “a radical distortion of the situation.” And they accused the chairman of stonewalling them from the call with Wray on Wednesday.

“This subpoenaed document, by definition, reveals nothing more than an unverified and unsubstantiated tip made to Donald Trump’s Justice Department, which presumably led to no evidence of criminal wrongdoing,” Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., the top Democrat on the committee, said in a statement late Tuesday.

The lawmakers used the word “alleged” three times in the opening paragraph of the letter and offered no evidence of the veracity of the accusations or any details about what they contend are “highly credible unclassified whistleblower disclosures.”

The White House has called the subpoena effort further evidence of how congressional Republicans long “have been lobbing unfounded, unproven, politically motivated attacks” against the Biden family “without offering evidence for their claims or evidence of decisions influenced by anything other than U.S. interests.”

A contempt of Congress charge would require a full committee vote before going to the House floor.

If the House were to approve a contempt resolution against Wray, the decision about whether to pros-

ecute him would fall to prosecutors in the Justice Department, where Wray works.

Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

## **Brother: Authorities told family that body of missing Missouri ER doctor was found in Arkansas**

By LISA BAUMANN and JIM SALTER Associated Press

The body of a Missouri emergency room doctor who has been missing for more than a week has been found in northwest Arkansas, his brother told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Dr. John Forsyth was last heard from in text messages around 7 a.m. May 21. His brother, Richard Forsyth, said authorities called the family Tuesday night to say his brother was found deceased. He said he and other family members were waiting for more details from detectives.

Messages left with the Missouri State Highway Patrol were not immediately returned.

Police said John Forsyth, 49, was reported missing when he failed to show up for work May 21 at Mercy Hospital in Cassville, a town of 3,100 residents deep in the Missouri Ozarks.

His black Infiniti was found parked in a remote area near an aquatic park in Cassville. The car was unlocked with his wallet, two phones and a laptop and other items inside.

"It doesn't seem like a person who left with a plan," Richard Forsyth told the AP earlier Tuesday. "Right now, we really don't have any breaks in the case. I'm confused, and I'm worried. And I don't like this one bit."

Several law enforcement agencies, including the Missouri State Highway Patrol, searched about a 9-mile radius around the park using people, dogs and drones. Forsyth's family set up a Facebook page seeking information.

"My brother has now been missing for week. I'm grieving, I'm afraid, and it feels like the world has tipped into sheer chaos," his sister, Tiffany Andelin, wrote Monday.

Richard Forsyth said the last person his brother texted with was a woman to whom his brother had recently gotten engaged. The last time Richard saw him was a few days before he went missing.

"We had dinner Wednesday before he disappeared, and we sat and talked for three hours," Richard Forsyth said. "I told him this is the happiest I'd seen him in a long time. His divorce was final May 11, and I think that gave him energy for the future."

Phone and email messages left Tuesday with Cassville police were not immediately returned. Police have said there were no signs of foul play.

Richard Forsyth said his brother had been at the Cassville hospital for about 15 years. He described John Forsyth as a doting father, family physician and part-time math nerd.

"He really cared about his patients," Richard Forsyth said, adding that his brother stayed in his RV near the hospital when he was on-call. "And he loved his kids."

## **Debt limit deal heads to vote in full House while McCarthy scrambles for GOP approval**

By LISA MASCARO, KEVIN FREKING and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Under fire from conservatives, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy worked furiously Tuesday to sell fellow Republicans on the debt ceiling and budget deal he negotiated with President Joe Biden and win approval in time to avert a potentially disastrous U.S. default.

Meeting behind closed doors over pizza for more than two hours at the Capitol, McCarthy walked Republicans through the details, fielded questions and encouraged them not to lose sight of the bill's budget savings, even though they are far less than many conservatives wanted.

"We're going to pass the bill," McCarthy said as he exited the session.

The hard-fought measure is now headed to a House vote Wednesday. Quick approval by both the House

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and Senate would ensure government checks will continue to go out to Social Security recipients, veterans and others, and prevent financial upheaval worldwide by allowing Treasury to keep paying U.S. debts.

Overall the 99-page package restricts spending for the next two years, lifts the debt limit and includes policy changes such as new work requirements for older Americans receiving food aid and approval of an Appalachian energy pipeline that many Democrats oppose. The House Rules Committee on Tuesday voted 7-6, with two Republicans opposed, to advance the measure to the floor, signaling the tough vote still ahead.

With few lawmakers expected to be fully satisfied, Biden and McCarthy are counting on pulling majority support from the political center, a rarity in divided Washington, to prevent a federal default. Some 218 votes are needed for passage in the 435-member House.

Leaders of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus lambasted the compromise as falling well short of the spending cuts they demand, and they vowed to try to halt passage by Congress. A much larger conservative faction, the Republican Study Committee, declined to take a position. Even rank-and-file centrist conservatives were not sure, leaving McCarthy desperately hunting for votes.

Biden was speaking directly to lawmakers, making more than 100 one-on-one calls, the White House said. Top administration officials are heading to Capitol Hill to brief Democrats privately ahead of Wednesday's planned vote.

Late in the day, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said the spending restrictions in the package would reduce deficits by \$1.5 trillion over the decade, a top goal for the Republicans trying to curb the debt load.

But in a surprise that could further erode Republican support, the GOP's drive to impose work requirements on older Americans receiving food stamps ends up boosting spending by \$2.1 billion over the time period. That's because the final deal exempted veterans and homeless people, expanding the food stamp rolls by some 78,000 people monthly, the CBO said.

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said it was up to McCarthy to turn out votes from some two-thirds of the Republican majority, a high bar the speaker may not be able to reach. Still, Jeffries said the Democrats would do their part to avoid failure.

"It is my expectation that House Republicans would keep their promise and deliver at least 150 votes as it relates to an agreement that they themselves negotiated," Jeffries said. "Democrats will make sure that the country does not default."

McCarthy could expect no help from the far right.

"This deal fails, fails completely, and that's why these members and others will be absolutely opposed to the deal," Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., the chairman of the Freedom Caucus, said, flanked by others outside the Capitol. "We will do everything in our power to stop it."

Ominously, the conservatives warned of potentially trying to oust McCarthy over the compromise.

"There's going to be a reckoning," said Rep. Chip Roy of Texas.

Despite the late-night meeting at the Capitol, Rep. Nancy Mace, R-S.C., said after the "healthy debate" she was still a no.

Liberal Democrats decried the new work requirements for older Americans, those 50-54, in the food aid program. And some Democratic lawmakers were leading an effort against a surprise provision to greenlight a controversial Mountain Valley Pipeline natural gas project through Appalachia.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, said she appreciated that Biden was able to minimize the "extreme demands" Republicans made on spending, but she raised serious concerns about the food stamps and other environmental policy changes.

She also had this warning for McCarthy: "He got us here and it's on him to deliver the votes."

Wall Street was taking a wait-and-see approach. Stock prices were mixed in Tuesday's trading. U.S. markets had been closed when the deal was struck over the weekend.

Overall, the package is a tradeoff that would impose some federal spending reductions for the next two years along with a suspension of the debt limit into January 2025, pushing the volatile political issue past

the next presidential election. Raising the debt limit, now \$31.4 trillion, would allow Treasury to continue borrowing to pay the nation's already incurred bills.

All told, it would hold spending essentially flat for the coming year, while allowing increases for military and veterans accounts. It would cap growth at 1% for 2025.

Policy issues were raising the most objections.

Questions were also being raised about the unexpected provision that essentially would give congressional approval to the Mountain Valley Pipeline, a natural gas project important to Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W. Va., that many Democrats and others oppose as unhelpful in fighting climate change.

The top Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee, Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona, said including the pipeline provision was "disturbing and profoundly disappointing."

But Manchin on Tuesday touted the pipeline project as something "we know we need."

The House aims to vote Wednesday and send the bill to the Senate, where Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senate Republican leader McConnell are working for passage by week's end.

Schumer called the bill a "sensible compromise." McConnell said McCarthy "deserves our thanks."

Senators, who have remained largely on the sidelines during much of the negotiations between the president and the House speaker, began inserting themselves more forcefully into the debate.

Some senators are insisting on amendments to reshape the package from both the left and right flanks. That could require time-consuming debates that delay final approval of the deal.

For one, Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia planned to file an amendment to remove the pipeline provision.

But making any changes to the package at this stage seemed unlikely with so little time to spare. Congress and the White House are racing to meet the Monday deadline now less than a week away. That's when Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said the U.S. would run short of cash and face an unprecedented debt default without action.

A default would almost certainly harm the U.S. economy and spill around the globe, as the world's reliance on the stability of the American dollar and the country's leadership fell into question.

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Associated Press writers Amer Madhani, Seung Min Kim, Farnoush Amiri, Darlene Superville and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

## 3rd man charged in 2002 shooting death of Run-DMC star Jam Master Jay

NEW YORK (AP) — A third man has been charged in the 2002 shooting death of Run-DMC star Jam Master Jay, prosecutors said Tuesday, marking the latest movement in a case that languished for years.

Federal prosecutors in the Eastern District of New York filed a superseding indictment on Tuesday, charging Jay Bryant, 49, in the death of Jason "Jay" Mizell, known professionally as Jam Master Jay.

Two other men, Ronald Washington and Karl Jordan Jr., had previously been indicted in August 2020 for the death of Jay. The hip-hop trailblazer was shot in the head in his studio on Oct. 30, 2002.

Bryant's attorney, César de Castro, said in an email that they had just learned of the charges.

"Securing an indictment in a secret grand jury, applying an extremely low burden of proof, is one thing. Proving it at trial is another matter," he said.

Bryant, from Queens, was in custody already on unrelated federal drug charges.

At the time the other two men were indicted, authorities said Jay's death involved a drug deal gone bad. In a letter filed with the court on Tuesday, prosecutors said Bryant and the two other men entered the building that evening, and then fled after the shooting. They said Bryant was seen going into the building, and his DNA was recovered at the scene.

Jay was in Run-DMC with Joseph "Run" Simmons and Darryl "DMC" McDaniel in the early 1980s. The group helped bring hip-hop music into the mainstream. Run DMC's hits include "King of Rock," "It's Tricky" and a remake of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way."



For years, Jay's death lingered as a cold case, with witnesses reluctant to speak up despite reward money being offered.

## Donald Trump's legal team and Manhattan prosecutors spar over where he will stand trial

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ten months before Donald Trump is scheduled to stand trial in his historic New York City criminal case, Manhattan prosecutors are turning the former president's words against him in a tug of war over precisely where he will be tried.

Trump's lawyers have spent weeks angling to have the hush money case moved to federal court. The Manhattan district attorney's office responded Tuesday that the case should remain in the state court where it originated, citing old Trump tweets that they say undermine his lawyers' jurisdictional challenge.

Trump, a Republican, pleaded not guilty in state court last month to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records related to money paid to his former lawyer, Michael Cohen, for orchestrating hush money payments during the 2016 campaign to bury allegations of extramarital sexual encounters.

Prosecutors allege that Trump's company, the Trump Organization, falsely logged the Cohen payments as being for a legal retainer that didn't exist.

Trump, the leading contender for next year's Republican presidential nomination, is slated to go on trial in state court March 25, 2024, in the heat of the primaries.

Trump's lawyers argue he can't be tried in state court because some of the alleged conduct occurred in 2017 while he was president, including checks he purportedly wrote while sitting in the Oval Office. They argue the case belongs in federal court because it "involves important federal questions" including alleged violations of federal election law.

The DA's office, in its response, pointed to tweets from 2018 in which Trump said he was paying Cohen a monthly retainer and that Cohen was being reimbursed for a \$130,000 "private agreement" the lawyer made with porn actor Stormy Daniels to keep her from speaking about an alleged affair.

Trump tweeted that the payments had "nothing to do" with his campaign. Prosecutors also cited a statement in which Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer at the time, said the Daniels payment "was made to resolve a personal and false allegation in order to protect" Trump's family.

Ultimately it will be Manhattan federal judge Alvin Hellerstein who decides whether to seize control of the case or keep it in state court. likely after the two sides duke it out at a hearing on the issue June 27.

Such transfer requests are rarely granted, although Trump's is unprecedented because he's the first ex-president charged with a crime. In the meantime, the case will continue in state court.

Matthew Colangelo, a senior counsel to Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg, urged Hellerstein to keep the case as is, arguing in court papers Tuesday that Trump's lawyers had failed to meet a high legal bar.

Trump's lawyers argue that he must be tried in federal court because, as commander-in-chief, he was a "federal officer." Colangelo contended that Trump's legal team hasn't satisfied any of three grounds for moving the case under that standard and questioned whether it would even apply to Trump.

Over the years, he wrote, courts have debated whether the legal definition of "federal officer" applies to a president or only to other members of the government.

Trump's charges pertained to efforts "to conceal criminal conduct that largely occurred before his inauguration," Colangelo wrote. That includes alleged violations of New York laws regulating record-keeping at private businesses — laws that have no federal equivalent, he added.

Trump's "alleged criminal conduct had no connection to his official duties and responsibilities" but instead "arose from his unofficial actions relating to his private businesses and pre-election conduct," Colangelo wrote in a 40-page filing.

The Trump legal team's inability to connect his conduct to his official duties negates any potential defense he might invoke, such as presidential immunity, Colangelo wrote.

In addition to Trump and Giuliani's public statements, prosecutors on Tuesday cited secret grand jury

material including unspecified exhibits, a court order and a document obtained by a grand jury subpoena. That evidence was filed under seal.

Manhattan's state and federal courthouses are just a block apart, but where Trump's trial is held could impact how it plays out.

The Manhattan DA's office, which conducts most of its business in state court, would still prosecute either way, but Trump could gain an advantage in federal court with a broader and more politically diverse jury pool drawing from the New York City suburbs in addition to heavily Democratic Manhattan.

Manhattan federal prosecutors previously investigated and charged only Cohen, who pleaded guilty to violating federal campaign finance law in connection with the hush money payments and is a key witness in the state case against Trump.

Trump sued Cohen last month, accusing him of "vast reputational harm" for talking publicly about the payments.

Cohen's lawyer, Lanny Davis, accused Trump of "using and abusing the judicial system as a form of harassment and intimidation" and said the lawsuit wouldn't deter Cohen's cooperation with prosecutors.

Follow Michael Sisak on Twitter at [twitter.com/mikesisak](https://twitter.com/mikesisak) and send confidential tips by visiting <https://www.ap.org/tips/>.

## **Brazilian president's support of Venezuela's leader mars unity at South America summit**

By CARLA BRIDI and DIANE JEANTET Associated Press

BRASILIA (AP) — The Brazilian president's strong support of Venezuela's authoritarian leader marred the unity Tuesday at a South American summit that Brazil convened in hopes of reviving a bloc of the region's 12 politically polarized countries.

Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva proposed during his opening speech the creation of a regional currency to rival the U.S. dollar in his bid for the dozen countries to work more closely together.

But Lula's warm embrace of Venezuela's authoritarian leftist President Nicolás Maduro just ahead of the meeting drew pushback from some of his neighbors and threatened the sense of unity the Brazilian president was seeking.

Uruguay's President Luis Lacalle Pou said the "worst thing we can do" is pretend there are no significant human rights problems in Venezuela.

Lula, in response, said that "no one is forced to agree with anybody".

Lula wants to revive the Union of South American Nations, or Unasur, which launched in 2008 to boost cooperation but became largely defunct a decade later in disputes over leadership. Countries with right-leaning leaders at the time — including Brazil — saw the bloc as having a leftist bent and objected especially to the inclusion of Venezuela's Maduro.

A former trade unionist who took office in January, Lula has moved to revive the bloc now that the region has a greater number of leftist and centrist leaders. He called a South America Summit for Tuesday in Brasilia, which drew all but one of the region's presidents.

A day ahead of the meeting he hosted Maduro in their first bilateral meeting and came out in full support of the Venezuelan leader, calling it "absurd" for some governments not to recognize him as the duly elected leader. He also criticized economic sanctions that countries such as the U.S. have imposed to get Venezuela to liberalize its politics, calling them "completely exaggerated."

Lula said it is up to Maduro to build his country's "narrative" and "make Venezuela a sovereign country once again. And our opponents will have to apologize for the damage they've done."

The Brazilian president drew criticism from colleagues in the region both on the right — Uruguay's Lacalle — and the left — Chile's President Gabriel Boric.

Boric suggested that Lula was making light of human rights violations in Venezuela by indicating they were merely a "narrative" that could be changed at will by the Venezuelan government.

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"I showed respectfully my disagreement with what President Lula said yesterday, that the human rights situation in Venezuela was a 'narrative.' It's not a narrative. It's a reality, it is serious," Boric told reporters on the sidelines of the conference.

At a press conference after the meeting, Lula said Maduro's image was built on a narrative that Lula himself was also subjected to while running for elections. Questioned about differences among South American presidents, the Brazilian leader said that "there was a lot of respect about Maduro's participation."

Maduro did not answer questions after the summit and told reporters the meeting represented "a respectful dialogue, tolerance, with union among diversity."

Lula, in his opening speech, had stressed the need for unity and consensus across the region. He said the group should discuss creating a currency to challenge the hegemony of the U.S. dollar, forging a common energy market, fighting climate change, and integrating the region's defense and security.

"As long as we're not united, we won't make South America a developed continent in all its potential," Lula said.

Lula's predecessor, the right wing populist Jair Bolsonaro, had followed the lead of other right-leaning leaders and pulled Brazil out of Unasur in 2019. A key priority of Lula is to re-establish ties with regional neighbors severed under Bolsonaro.

Lula also is trying to reclaim Brazil's role as regional leader, said Vanessa Matijascic, a foreign affairs professor at Armando Alvares Penteado Foundation in Sao Paulo.

"All countries recognize that when Brazil is absent from this collective effort of gathering 12 countries, each of them migrates to other agendas," Matijascic said.

Pablo Ibañez, who teaches geopolitics at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, said it was urgent for Lula to mend ties with Venezuela in part because of their shared border and the need to deal with Venezuela migrants and refugees.

But he may have gone too far in his embrace of Maduro's government, Ibañez said. "The Brazilian government gave massive ammunition to opposition groups," Ibañez said.

Including Lula and Maduro, 11 South American presidents are attending the summit, as well as the leader of the Council of Ministers of Peru, where the president, Dina Boluarte, faces charges and cannot leave the country.

Political analysts say Lula sensed an opportunity for integration because of the political affinities of the region's current governments, but they say it will be a challenge to have the bloc survive the region's political shifts and instability.

Jorge Arias, Argentine director of the consultancy Polilat, said that Brazil would seek to "imprint a less ideological stamp" on the current integration initiative to achieve some unity and try to ensure that it lasts.

The 12 heads of state at Tuesday's meeting signed the Brasilia Consensus, a document that reaffirms the need for regional integration in many areas, and establishes a contact group with each country's foreign affairs' minister to continue dialogue.

While the majority of South America's current presidents are leftist or centrist, there's no guarantee the situation will remain that way. This was underscored in May by the success of right-wingers in Chile in a vote to select commission members to write a new constitution. A similar swing toward the right is possible in Argentina, given that incumbent President Alberto Fernández will not seek reelection this year amid rampant inflation.

In a sign of the diverse initiatives on the minds of South American leaders, Colombia's leftist President Gustavo Petro told reporters that Tuesday's meeting could promote progress on climate change, by developing systems in which creditor nations provide debt relief for debtor nations in return for their commitments to reduce carbon.

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AP journalist Almudena Calatrava contributed to this story.

## Manson follower Leslie Van Houten should be paroled, California appeals court rules

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER and AMY TAXIN Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A California appeals court said Tuesday that Leslie Van Houten, who participated in two killings at the direction of cult leader Charles Manson in 1969, should be released from prison on parole.

The appellate court's ruling reverses an earlier decision by Gov. Gavin Newsom, who rejected parole for Van Houten in 2020. She has been recommended for parole five times since 2016. All of those recommendations were rejected by either Newsom or former Gov. Jerry Brown.

Newsom could request that California Attorney General Rob Bonta petition the state Supreme Court to stop her release. Bonta's office referred questions to Newsom's office, which didn't respond to queries about possible next steps.

Van Houten, now in her 70s, is serving a life sentence for helping Manson and other followers kill Leno LaBianca, a grocer in Los Angeles, and his wife, Rosemary.

Newsom has said that Van Houten still poses a danger to society. In rejecting her parole, he said she offered an inconsistent and inadequate explanation for her involvement with Manson at the time of the killings.

The Second District Court of Appeal in Los Angeles ruled 2-1 to reverse Newsom's decision, writing there is "no evidence to support the Governor's conclusions" about Van Houten's fitness for parole.

The judges took issue with Newsom's claim that Van Houten did not adequately explain how she fell under Manson's influence. At her parole hearings, she discussed at length how her parents' divorce, her drug and alcohol abuse, and a forced illegal abortion led her down a path that left her vulnerable to him.

They also argued against Newsom's suggestion that her past violent acts were a cause for future concern were she to be released.

"Van Houten has shown extraordinary rehabilitative efforts, insight, remorse, realistic parole plans, support from family and friends, favorable institutional reports, and, at the time of the Governor's decision, had received four successive grants of parole," the judges wrote. "Although the Governor states Van Houten's historical factors 'remain salient,' he identifies nothing in the record indicating Van Houten has not successfully addressed those factors through many years of therapy, substance abuse programming, and other efforts."

The dissenting judge argued that there was some evidence Van Houten lacked insight into the heinous killings, and agreed with Newsom that her petition to be released should be denied.

Nancy Tetreault, an attorney for Van Houten, said she expects Newsom to request that Bonta ask the state Supreme Court to review the lower court's decision, a process that could take years.

In addition, Bonta will likely request a stay of the appellate court's ruling, Tetreault said. The high court could order Van Houten's release while it decides on whether to grant the stay.

"I will, of course, vigorously oppose any stay," Tetreault said. "And they could let her out during that process."

Van Houten was 19 when she and other cult members stabbed the LaBiancas to death in August 1969. She said they carved up Leno LaBianca's body and smeared the couple's blood on the walls.

The slayings came the day after other Manson followers, not including Van Houten, killed pregnant actress Sharon Tate and four others in violence that spread fear across Los Angeles and captivated the nation.

Anthony DiMaria, whose uncle Jay Sebring was killed along with Tate, said the judges' ruling is the latest painful twist that the victims' families have endured over the decades.

"To say the appellate court's decision is a travesty of justice is a perverse understatement," DiMaria said in an email to The Associated Press. "When you look at the profound, horrific nature of her crimes and the historic scars she has dealt American culture, it is unconscionable that an appellate court would make amends for Leslie Van Houten."

Van Houten was found suitable for parole after a July 2020 hearing, but her release was blocked by Newsom. She filed an appeal with a trial court, which rejected it. She then sought her release through



the appellate courts.

Hadar Aviram, a professor at UC College of the Law, San Francisco, said that for many years, some criminals seeking parole in California were kept in custody solely due to the heinousness of their past crimes, a practice that was stopped by a state Supreme Court ruling.

Since then, state officials have made other arguments to block parole, such as claiming defendants lacked sufficient insight about their crimes, said Aviram, who wrote a book about the parole process in Manson-related cases.

Van Houten, in particular, has largely stayed out of trouble since being incarcerated and has an advanced degree, Aviram said, adding that the law also requires that her young age at the time of her crimes be taken into account.

"There is no reason whatsoever to keep her behind bars except for the politics and optics of it," she said.

\_\_\_ Taxin reported from Orange County, California.

## **Guilt-ridden man confesses to landlord's killing 15 years later, recordings show**

By SUSAN MONTTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Police officers found Tony Peralta earlier this month sitting on a curb not far from the convenience store in a small southeastern New Mexico community where he borrowed a cellphone — so he could call 911 and confess to killing his landlord 15 years earlier.

Sweating and taking puffs from his cigarette, he told them he's tired of covering it up, tired of living with the lie and tired of being overwhelmed by guilt. He agreed to take the officers to where he buried the body before standing up and volunteering to be cuffed.

Police in Roswell released the 911 recording and nearly an hour of officer body camera video in response to a records request filed by The Associated Press. The May 1 footage shows Peralta repeatedly thanking the officers for picking him up.

"I confess, man. I confess. I don't want to live life anymore without confessing," he said while sitting in an interview room at police headquarters.

The uniformed officers and detectives who talked with Peralta peppered him with questions about when the killing happened, how he did it and why. Peralta kept answering that he didn't know or didn't remember, acknowledging that he had been drinking "a lot" the day he called 911.

Peralta, 37, was arraigned Tuesday on a charge of first-degree murder but did not attend the hearing. He pleaded not guilty to the charge through his public defender, Ray Conley, who declined to comment after the hearing. Conley has said he will ensure Peralta's due process is respected as the case moves through court.

A judge on Tuesday also set Peralta's trial for October but said that date could change.

At times, the authorities had asked if Peralta was making up the story and leading them on a goose chase since he wasn't providing many details, other than saying he had killed someone a long time ago.

"There's a dead body in there, dude!" he told one officer while in the back of a patrol car parked in front of the home where he once was a tenant of 69-year-old William Blodgett. Peralta said he'd feel better once the body was found.

Investigators said they obtained a search warrant and found a boot, bones and dentures after removing plywood floorboards from a detached room on the side of the house.

The dentures were compared with Blodgett's dental records — obtained in early 2009 after he was reported missing — and that led to a positive identification, according to police.

A tearful Peralta told police he didn't know why he had killed Blodgett. At one point, police video shows him putting his head down onto a table during an interview and sobbing.

Peralta told police he decided to come forward because "his heart hurts" and that he thought about it every day. He told an officer that Blodgett was a good man and that he took his life for no reason while high on methamphetamine.

"I don't have an excuse," he told police. "A lot of people have an excuse. I don't have one."

Blodgett's girlfriend and family had not seen him since late December 2008. She told police that Peralta, who was considered a suspect by police early on, allegedly had some sort of argument or fight with Blodgett, who had tried to evict him.

Authorities at the time had talked to Blodgett's family, friends and neighbors and visited the home the two men shared, which appeared to have been abandoned with personal belongings still in place. Police found no immediate signs of foul play and Blodgett's vehicle was still there, according to the original missing person report.

Detectives would periodically drive by the house but never spotted anyone. They also brought a dog trained to sniff for bodies to the property but found nothing.

Police said the case went cold after investigators exhausted all leads until Peralta's 911 call.

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Associated Press writer Rio Yamat in Las Vegas, Nev., contributed to this report.

## Malaysia finds 100 old artillery shells on Chinese barge, says it likely plundered WWII shipwrecks

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia's maritime agency said Tuesday a Chinese barge likely plundered two World War II British shipwrecks in the South China Sea after discovering 100 more old artillery shells on the detained vessel.

Malaysian media reported that illegal salvage operators are believed to have targeted the HMS Repulse and the HMS Prince of Wales, which were sunk in 1941 by Japanese torpedoes days after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

A total of 842 sailors perished, and the shipwrecks off the coast of Malaysia's central Pahang state are designated war graves. Fishermen and divers alerted authorities after spotting a foreign vessel near the area last month.

The maritime agency detained the barge, registered in Fuzhou, China, on Sunday for anchoring without a permit off southern Johor state. Upon investigation, the agency found piles of scrap metal and an artillery shell believed to be from World War II on the vessel.

The agency said a thorough search Tuesday found 100 more artillery shells of various sizes on the Chinese vessel. It said the shells were taken by the police bomb disposal unit to be detonated.

It said it "does not rule out the possibility that the vessel ... is the same ship that plundered the British warships."

Britain's National Museum of the Royal Navy said last week it was "distressed and concerned at the apparent vandalism for personal profit." Known as prewar steel, the material from the two warships is valuable and could be smelted for use in manufacturing of sensitive scientific and medical equipment.

The maritime agency said it believes the artillery shells are linked to the police seizure of dozens of artillery shells and other relics at a scrapyard in Johor earlier this month. The New Straits Times newspaper said the shells are believed to be from the warships and that police conducted on-site controlled detonations of them.

The agency said there were 32 crew members aboard the barge — 21 Chinese, 10 Bangladeshis and a Malaysian.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters that the government has asked Malaysia to "handle the case fairly in accordance with law." She said Chinese citizens' safety and legitimate rights and interests must be protected and urged Malaysia to notify Beijing of the progress of the investigation.

It is not the first time the two shipwrecks have been targeted.

The New Straits Times reported that foreign treasure hunters used homemade explosives in 2015 to break the heavy steel plates on the ships for easy plundering. Other media said authorities detained a Vietnamese vessel involved in looting the wreckage at the time.

## Florida police search for 3 gunmen who wounded 9 at crowded beach on Memorial Day

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (AP) — Police launched a search Tuesday for three suspects they believe to be the gunmen who opened fire along a crowded Florida beachside promenade on Memorial Day, wounding a 1-year-old and eight others while sending people frantically running for cover.

Hollywood police sought the public's help in identifying the gunmen, who ran from the scene during the chaos of hundreds of people fleeing for their lives and diving for cover as shots hit bystanders.

Two people involved in the altercation that led to the shooting — Morgan Deslouches and Keshawn Stewart, both 18 — have been arrested on firearms charges, police said. Five handguns have been recovered, with one of them reported stolen in the Miami area and another in Texas, they said.

Police and witnesses said the shooting began as a group of people fought in front of a busy stretch of shops on the Hollywood Oceanfront Broadwalk about 7 p.m. Monday.

The sound of gunshots sent witness Alvie Carlton Scott III ducking for cover behind a tree before he fled on foot at the command of a police officer. Another witness, Jamie Ward, said several young men were fighting when one of them pulled a gun and started firing.

One witness told police that she recognized a group of young men in the area later Monday as being involved in the shooting, according to an arrest report. When an officer approached the group, he noticed one of the men, later identified as Deslouches, trying to hide a black backpack. The officer reported that he ordered the man to sit and then took the man's bag. Inside, the officer found a 9mm handgun loaded with seven rounds, the report said.

Meanwhile, a detective was transporting witnesses to be interviewed when he spotted Stewart walking down a street, an arrest report said. Earlier, a witness had taken photos and video of Stewart and one of the shooting suspects. The witness told police the shooting suspect had given Stewart a gun. When the detective stopped and searched Stewart, the detective reported finding a fully loaded 9mm handgun in Stewart's backpack.

The shooting upended busy holiday weekend festivities at the popular beach destination where there was already a heavy police presence to oversee the big crowds.

Police spokesperson Deanna Bettineschi said four children between the ages of 1 and 17 were hit, along with five adults between 25 and 65. Six of those shot remain hospitalized in stable condition, while three have been released, police said.

The names of those wounded have not been released.

Hollywood Mayor Josh Levy said that he was "deeply saddened and angered" by the shooting. Dozens of officers are assigned to the beach on busy holiday weekends and that meant there was an immediate response and multiple people were detained, Levy said in a statement.

"People come to enjoy a holiday weekend on the beach with their families and to have people in complete reckless disregard of the safety of the public and to have an altercation with guns in a public setting with thousands of people around them is beyond reckless," he said.

Videos posted Monday evening on Twitter showed emergency medical crews responding and providing aid to multiple injured people.

Hollywood Beach is a popular beach destination about 11 miles (17 kilometers) south of Fort Lauderdale and 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of Miami. The beach was expected to see more visitors than usual because of the Memorial Day holiday.

Deslouches is charged with grand theft of a firearm, carrying a concealed firearm and removing serial numbers from a firearm. He's being held on \$20,000 bail.

Stewart is charged with carrying a concealed firearm and was being held on \$15,000 bail.

Jail records didn't list attorneys for Deslouches or Stewart.

## **NYPD officer cites 'courtesy cards,' used by friends and family of cops, as source of corruption**

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York City police officer is speaking out against the use of "courtesy cards" by friends and relatives of his colleagues on the force, accusing department leaders of maintaining a sprawling system of impunity that lets people with a connection to law enforcement avoid traffic tickets.

Though not officially recognized by the NYPD, the laminated cards have long been treated as a perk of the job. The city's police unions issue them to members, who circulate them among those who want to signal their NYPD connections — often to get out of minor infraction like speeding or failing to wear a seat belt.

In a federal lawsuit filed in Manhattan this week, Officer Mathew Bianchi described a practice of selective enforcement with consequences for officers who don't follow the unwritten policy. Current and retired officers now have access to hundreds of cards, giving them away in exchange for a discount on a meal or a home improvement job, he said.

In the Staten Island precinct where he works, a predominantly white area with a high percentage of cops and other city workers, Bianchi said multitudes of people he pulled over for traffic infractions flashed him one of the cards.

"I see card after card. You're not allowed to write any of them (up)," he told The Associated Press. "We're not supposed to be showing favoritism when we do car stops, and we shouldn't be giving them out because the guy mows my lawn."

Bianchi said he was reprimanded on numerous occasions for writing a ticket to a relative or parent of an officer. In some cases, his commanding officer would personally review body camera footage to see if he was giving those with cards a "hard time," the lawsuit states.

The final straw came last summer, when Bianchi wrote a ticket to a friend of the NYPD's highest-ranking uniformed officer, Chief Jeffrey Maddrey, according to the lawsuit. Three days later, Bianchi said he was ousted from his job in the traffic unit and moved to a night patrol shift.

The top chief, a long-time ally of New York City Mayor Eric Adams, is currently facing a department trial over allegations that he improperly voided the arrest of a former officer accused of menacing children with a gun.

A spokesperson for the NYPD said the department would review the lawsuit. Inquiries to Maddrey were not returned.

John Nuthall, a spokesperson for the Police Benevolent Association, the NYPD's largest union, didn't deny the existence of courtesy cards but said it was up to management to decide department policy.

"The law and NYPD policies afford police officers discretion in taking enforcement action," Nuthall said. "Each police officer determines how to exercise that discretion based on the specifics of each case."

The city's police unions have long faced media scrutiny over the cards, both over the appearance of corruption and over their appearance for sale on eBay.

Bianchi said it was common for officers to receive stacks of cards from different union delegates. Dozens of courtesy cards are currently listed for sale online.

The ubiquity of the cards means that those without connections to law enforcement are less likely to get off with a warning, since officers are expected to write a certain amount of tickets, Bianchi said. In his experience, he said minority motorists were less likely to have access to the cards.

## **Stables, trainers try to move through grief over euthanized horses as racing thunders on**

By GARY B. GRAVES AP Sports Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Frank Sumpter has spent the past few weeks reflecting on Wild On Ice's remarkable journey to somehow work through his grief over the horse's catastrophic injury just nine days before he was supposed to race in the Kentucky Derby.

Coming so close has provided some consolation through a rollercoaster of emotions.



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"I felt that if heaven felt like this, I can't wait to get to heaven, you know?" the Texas owner and trainer said of his colt, who was euthanized after a pre-Derby workout at Churchill Downs on April 27. "It kind of jerks the rug out from under you. For the trainer, myself and his family, it's very devastating."

The numbers suggest that horse racing is the safest it has been for the animals since at least 2009. Yet every death draws fresh criticism that the sport is far too cruel to continue and it sends every stable into mourning all over again, often out of sight.

Trainer Joe Lejzerowicz said he frequently flips through his phone for photos of Freezing Point, the horse he brags about like parents do about their children. In many respects, the majestic animals are like family to their handlers and owners. It makes their stunning deaths all the more painful to grasp.

That grief has been felt in particular with a recent spate of horse deaths at the home of the Kentucky Derby. Wild On Ice was the first of seven thoroughbreds to die at the track leading up to the marquee race on May 6, including two on the Derby undercard. More horses have been euthanized since then, include two last week to bring the shocking total to 12 at Churchill Downs over the past month.

The deaths have affected 11 trainers and 10 stables. Industry officials set up an emergency summit this week to discuss the problems at Churchill Downs, but the deaths stretch beyond the famous track.

The Preakness undercard in Baltimore was marred when Havnameltdown, trained by Hall of Famer Bob Baffert, was euthanized following a leg injury. The incident provided a sad footnote to a triumphant day in which Baffert-trained National Treasure won the second jewel of the Triple Crown.

"When he got hurt, it's just the most sickening feeling a trainer can have," Baffert said.

While the sport endures scrutiny over the safety of its horses, their owners, trainers, jockeys and handlers must move forward after the wrenching decision to put a horse down simply because it is considered so difficult to heal a leg injury.

The emotional challenge is huge, especially at smaller stables run by Lejzerowicz and Sumpter.

Lejzerowicz struggled for words after 3-year-old Freezing Point went down with a leg injury during the Pat Day Mile before the Derby. Just like that, his Keeneland-based stable was down to one horse and the trainer still chokes up recalling the close relationship; Lejzerowicz even slept in a corner of Freezing Point's stall one cold night last December at Fair Grounds track in New Orleans.

He hung the horse's halter outside an empty stall after his death.

"That's just the way that horse and I were," said Lejzerowicz, who came up with the nickname of "Snowball" for the gray colt to reflect the slim chances he faced in buying the then-2-year-old at auction for \$13,000. Freezing Point earned \$102,910 with a win and two thirds in six starts.

"There were so many people saying how much that horse loved me, and I loved him," he said. "It's very hard getting past. ... I mean, it's kind of like losing a child."

In the absence of organized grief counseling, horsemen find solace and support within the community around the barns.

Horsemen interviewed for this story said they understand that racing carries risk for such large animals even with diligent attention given to their health, safety and training. Earlier this month, new medication and anti-doping rules established by the federally-mandated Horseracing Safety Integrity Authority took effect. Other safety rules began last year.

The recent string of fatalities at racing's most famous track is a reminder that a lot of work remains.

"It hits you bad every time it happens," said trainer Dale Romans, whose 3-year-old colt, Rio Moon, was euthanized after sustaining a left leg injury at Churchill Downs on May 14. "We own these race horses, (and) they give us so much pleasure. We owe it to them to do whatever we can to make sure they don't break down, to make sure that it's as small a percentage as possible."

Sumpter, 69, has leaned heavily on his faith and believes he and his wife, Ida, will find another special thoroughbred like Wild On Ice, whose stunning victory in the Grade 3 Sunland Park Derby in New Mexico as a 35-1 long shot earned a spot in the Derby.

Sumpter is determined to nurture another hopeful toward the Derby.

"I can't look back so much on the negative because I couldn't stay in this business if I did that," he said.

"I'll always be talking about him and have his pictures and the memories that he gave us."

AP sports: <https://apnews.com/hub/sports> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Lawyers for Pittsburgh synagogue defendant admit he carried out deadliest US antisemitic attack

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Robert Bowers carried out the deadliest antisemitic attack in U.S. history when he killed 11 people and injured seven others by storming a Pittsburgh synagogue and shooting everyone he could find. On that, everyone agrees.

Even though Bowers' defense acknowledged at the outset of his federal trial Tuesday that he was the gunman, they hope to spare the suburban truck driver from a possible death sentence over the Oct. 27, 2018, massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue.

Bowers "shot every person he saw" that day in the building, his lead lawyer, Judy Clarke, said in her opening statement. But she questioned whether Bowers had acted out of hatred, as prosecutors contend, or an irrational belief that he needed to kill Jews to save others from the genocide he claimed they were enabling by helping immigrants come to the U.S.

"He had what to us is this unthinkable, nonsensical, irrational thought: that by killing Jews, he would attain his goal," Clarke said. "There is no making sense of this senseless act. Mr. Bowers caused extraordinary harm to many, many people."

Prosecutors — who rejected Bowers' offer to plead guilty in exchange for taking the death penalty off the table — opened their case by describing the terror he sowed as he moved through the synagogue, opening fire indiscriminately.

Jurors heard a 911 call played by Tree of Life Rabbi and attack survivor Jeffrey Myers, who took shelter in the first minutes of the attack.

"I hear people screaming," he said on the call, his voice shaky and urgent. "The person is still shooting."

On the witness stand, Myers testified that he was in front of the congregation at the start of the service and, after hearing gunfire in the lobby, urged worshippers to flee if they were able — and told those who were elderly and frail to lie down or hide.

He wiped away tears as prosecutor Eric Olshan asked him about a portion of the 911 recording in which he could be heard whispering.

"I was praying," Myers explained, adding after a long pause: "I expected to die."

He said he was trying to decide whether to make a last phone call or video for his wife, but decided that leaving such a legacy "wouldn't be fair to her." Instead, he stayed on the line with 911 and prayed an ancient Jewish profession of faith.

"I thought about the history of my people, how we've been persecuted and hunted and slaughtered for centuries, and how all of them must have felt the moments before their death, and what did they do," Myers testified.

He said he knew some of his congregants had been killed, and "I asked God to forgive me because I couldn't save them."

Prosecutors say Bowers made incriminating statements to investigators and left an online trail of anti-semitic statements that they say shows the attack was motivated by religious hatred. Police shot Bowers three times before he surrendered.

"The depths of the defendant's malice and hate can only be proven in the broken bodies" of the victims and "his hateful words," Assistant U.S. Attorney Soo C. Song told the 12 jurors and six alternates hearing the case.

Song described in detail how worshippers from three congregations who shared the synagogue — Dor Hadash, New Light and the Tree of Life — arrived that Sabbath to pray and socialize in what should have

been a safe place.

As she spoke, some of the survivors in the somber courtroom dabbed tears. Bowers, seated at the defense table, showed no reaction.

The jury also heard a 911 call from congregant Bernice Simon, who reported “we’re being attacked!” and that her husband, Sylvan Simon, had been shot. Bernice Simon was shot while still on the line — her last, labored breaths clearly audible.

“Bernice, are you still with me?” Shannon Basa-Sabol, the dispatcher who took the call, asked in the recording. There was no answer. Neither of the Simons survived.

In a filing earlier this year, prosecutors said Bowers “harbored deep, murderous animosity towards all Jewish people.” They said he also expressed hatred for HIAS, founded as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, a nonprofit humanitarian group that helps refugees and asylum seekers.

Prosecutors wrote in a court filing that Bowers had nearly 400 followers on his Gab social media account “to whom he promoted his antisemitic views and calls to violence against Jews.”

In the long run-up to the trial, Bowers’ lawyers did little to cast doubt on whether he was the gunman and instead focused on trying to save his life. As an indication that the trial’s guilt-or-innocence phase would be almost a foregone conclusion, they spent little time during jury selection asking how potential jurors would reach a verdict.

Instead, they focused on the penalty phase and how jurors would decide whether to impose the death penalty in a case of a man charged with hate-motivated killings in a house of worship. The defense lawyers, who recently said Bowers has schizophrenia and brain impairments, probed whether potential jurors could consider factors such as mental illness or a difficult childhood.

The families of those killed are divided over whether the government should pursue the death penalty, but most have voiced support for it.

The three congregations have spoken out against antisemitism and other forms of bigotry since the attack. The Tree of Life congregation also is working with partners on plans to overhaul its current structure, which still stands but has been closed since the shootings, by creating a complex that would house a sanctuary, museum, memorial and center for fighting antisemitism.

The death penalty trial, which is being presided over by Judge Robert Colville, is proceeding three years after now-President Joe Biden said during his 2020 campaign that he would work to end capital punishment at the federal level and in states that still use it. His attorney general, Merrick Garland, has temporarily paused executions to review policies and procedures, but federal prosecutors continue to vigorously work to uphold death sentences that have been issued and, in some cases, to pursue new death sentences at trial.

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Associated Press reporter Michael Rubinkam in northeastern Pennsylvania contributed to this report.

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## **Djokovic draws criticism from Kosovo tennis federation for comments at French Open**

PARIS (AP) — Novak Djokovic has drawn criticism from Kosovo’s tennis federation — but not from French Open organizers — after offering his thoughts on clashes in northern Kosovo between ethnic Serbs and police and NATO peacekeepers.

Djokovic is a 36-year-old from Serbia who has won 22 Grand Slam titles and is scheduled to play in the second round at Roland Garros on Wednesday.

After a first-round victory on Monday, Djokovic wrote in Serbian on the lens of a courtside TV camera: “Kosovo is the heart of Serbia. Stop the violence.”

Kosovo’s tennis federation said Tuesday that Djokovic’s comments were “deplorable” because he was stoking tensions between Serbia and Kosovo.

A former province of Serbia, Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence is not recognized by Belgrade. Ethnic Albanians make up most of the population, but Kosovo has a restive Serb minority in the north of the country bordering Serbia.

NATO said Tuesday it will send 700 more troops to northern Kosovo to help quell violent protests after clashes with ethnic Serbs left 30 international soldiers wounded. Tensions first increased over the weekend, after ethnic Albanian officials elected in votes overwhelmingly boycotted by Serbs entered municipal buildings. When the Serbs tried to block them, Kosovo police fired tear gas to disperse the crowd.

Speaking to reporters in Serbian, Djokovic said Monday that he thought what he wrote on the TV camera was "the least I could do."

"I feel responsibility as a public figure ... as well as a son of a man who was born in Kosovo," Djokovic said.

Without mentioning Djokovic by name, French Open organizers indicated in a statement issued Tuesday that no rules had been broken: "Occasionally, discussions about international news events enter the realm of the tournament, which is understandable."

AP tennis: <https://apnews.com/hub/tennis> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## **Elizabeth Holmes enters Texas prison to begin 11-year sentence for notorious blood-testing hoax**

By LEKAN OYEKANMI and MICHAEL LIEDTKE Associated Press

BRYAN, Texas (AP) — Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes entered a Texas prison Tuesday where she could spend the next 11 years for overseeing a blood-testing hoax that became a parable about greed and hubris in Silicon Valley.

Holmes, 39, could be seen from outside the prison's gates walking into the federal women's prison camp located in Bryan, Texas, wearing jeans, a brown sweater and smiling as she spoke with two prison employees accompanying her.

The minimum-security facility — where the federal judge who sentenced Holmes in November recommended she be incarcerated — is about 95 miles (150 kilometers) northwest of Houston, where she grew up aspiring to become a technology visionary along the lines of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

As she begins her sentence, Holmes is leaving behind two young children — a son born in July 2021 a few weeks before the start of her trial and a 3-month old daughter who was conceived after a jury convicted her on four felony counts of fraud and conspiracy in January 2022.

She was free on bail up until Tuesday, most recently living in the San Diego area with the children's father, William "Billy" Evans. The couple met in 2017 around the same time Holmes was under investigation for the collapse of Theranos, a startup she founded after dropping out of Stanford University when she was just 19.

While she was building up Theranos, Holmes grew closer to Ramesh, "Sunny" Balwani, who would become her romantic partner as well as an investor and fellow executive in the Palo Alto, California, company.

Together, Holmes and Balwani promised Theranos would revolutionize health care with a technology that could quickly scan for diseases and other problems with a few drops of blood taken with a finger prick.

The hype surrounding that purported breakthrough helped Theranos raise nearly \$1 billion from enthralled investors, assemble an influential board of directors that include former Presidential cabinet members George Shultz, Henry Kissinger and James Mattis and turned Holmes into a Silicon Valley sensation with a fortune valued at \$4.5 billion on paper in 2014.

But it all blew up after serious dangerous flaws in Theranos' technology were exposed in a series of explosive articles in The Wall Street Journal that Holmes and Balwani tried to thwart. Holmes and Balwani, who had been secretly living together while running Theranos, broke up after the Journal's revelations and the company collapsed. In 2018, the U.S. Justice Department charged both with a litany of white-collar crimes in a case aimed at putting a stop to the Silicon Valley practice of overselling the capabilities of a



still-developing technology — a technique that became known as “fake it ‘til you make it.”

Holmes admitted making mistakes at Theranos, but steadfastly denied committing crimes during seven often-fascinating days of testimony on the witness stand during her trial. At one point, she told the jury about being sexually and emotionally abused by Balwani while he controlled her in ways that she said clouded her thinking. Balwani’s attorney steadfastly denied Holmes allegations, which was one of the key reasons they were tried separately.

Balwani, 57, was convicted on 12 felony counts of fraud and conspiracy in a trial that began two months after Holmes’ ended. He is currently serving a nearly 13-year sentence in a Southern California prison.

Maintaining she was treated unfairly during the trial, Holmes sought to remain free while she appeals her conviction. But that bid was rejected by U.S. District Judge Edward Davila, who presided over her trial, and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, leaving her no other avenue left to follow but the one that will take her to prison nearly 20 years after she founded Theranos.

Attorneys representing Holmes did not immediately respond when contacted by The Associated Press for statement on Tuesday.

FPC Bryan, a minimum-security prison camp located encompasses about 37 acres (15 hectares) of land and houses about 650 women — including “Real Housewives of Salt Lake City” star Jennifer Shah, who was sentenced earlier this year to 6 1/2 years in prison for defrauding thousands of people in a yearslong telemarketing scam.

Most federal prison camps don’t even have fences and house those the Bureau of Prisons considers to be the lowest security risk. The prison camps also often have minimal staffing and many of the people incarcerated there work at prison jobs.

According to a 2016 FPC Bryan inmate handbook, those in the Texas facility who are eligible to work can earn between 12 cents and \$1.15 per hour in their job assignments, which include food service roles and factory employment operated by Federal Prison Industries.

Federal prison camps were originally designed with low security to make operations easier and to allow inmates tasked with performing work at the prison, like landscaping and maintenance, to avoid repeatedly checking in and out of a main prison facility. But the lax security opened a gateway for contraband, such as drugs, cellphones and weapons. The limited security has also led to a number of escapes from prison camps.

In November, a man incarcerated at another federal prison camp in Arizona pulled out a smuggled gun in a visitation area and tried to shoot his wife in the head. The gun jammed and no one was injured. But the incident exposed major security flaws at the facility and the agency’s director ordered a review of security at all federal prison camps around the U.S.

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Liedtke reported from San Francisco. AP U.S. Law Enforcement News Editor Mike Balsamo and AP Business Writer Wyattte Grantham-Philips contributed to this report.

## **NATO to send 700 more troops to Kosovo to help quell violent protests**

By ZENEL ZHINIPOTOKU and LLAZAR SEMINI Associated Press

PRISTINA, Kosovo (AP) — NATO will send 700 more troops to northern Kosovo to help quell violent protests after clashes with ethnic Serbs there left 30 international soldiers wounded, the alliance announced Tuesday.

The latest violence in the region has stirred fear of a renewal of the 1998-99 conflict in Kosovo that claimed more than 10,000 lives, left more than 1 million people homeless and resulted in a NATO peacekeeping mission that has lasted nearly a quarter of a century.

The clashes grew out of a confrontation that unfolded last week after ethnic Albanian officials elected in votes overwhelmingly boycotted by Serbs entered municipal buildings to take office. When Serbs tried to block them, Kosovo police fired tear gas to disperse the crowd.

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More violence followed on Monday when Serbs clashed with police and NATO peacekeepers.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said an additional reserve battalion would be put on high readiness in case additional troops are needed.

"These are prudent steps," said Stoltenberg, who made the announcement in Oslo after talks with the Norwegian prime minister.

The NATO-led peacekeeping mission in the region is known as KFOR and currently consists of almost 3,800 troops.

Also Tuesday, KFOR's multinational peacekeepers used metal fences and barbed-wire barriers to reinforce positions in a northern town that has become a hot spot. The troops sealed off the municipal building in Zvecan, where unrest on Monday sent tensions soaring.

A former province of Serbia, Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence is not recognized by Belgrade. Ethnic Albanians make up most of the population, but Kosovo has a restive Serb minority in the north of the country bordering Serbia.

Stoltenberg condemned the violence and warned that NATO troops would "take all necessary actions to maintain a safe and secure environment for all citizens in Kosovo."

He urged both sides to refrain from "further irresponsible behavior" and to return to EU-backed talks on improving relations.

The United States and most European Union nations have recognized Kosovo's independence from Serbia while Russia and China have sided with Belgrade. China on Tuesday expressed its support for Serbia's efforts to "safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity," and Moscow has repeatedly criticized Western policies in the dispute.

In response to the confrontation last week, Serbia put the country's military on the highest state of alert and sent more troops to the border with Kosovo. The Serbs protested again Monday, insisting that both ethnic Albanian mayors and Kosovo police must leave northern Kosovo.

The confrontations worsened when Serbs attempted to enter the municipal offices in Zvecan, 45 kilometers (28 miles) north of the capital, Pristina. They clashed first with Kosovo police and then with the international peacekeepers.

In a video message issued Tuesday evening, Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti said the mayors elected on April 23 "are the only ones who have the legitimacy to be at the municipal buildings and to the citizens' service."

Instigators of the violence have been identified, according to the prime minister, who named some Serb businessmen who oblige their employees to protest.

"In Kosovo, power is won through elections, not with violence and crime," he said.

The United States and the EU recently stepped up their efforts to negotiate an agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, fearing instability as Russia's war rages in Ukraine. The EU has made it clear to both Serbia and Kosovo that they must normalize relations if they're to make any progress toward joining the bloc.

"We have too much violence in Europe already today. We cannot afford another conflict," the EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, told reporters Tuesday in Brussels.

As a first step to easing tensions, he said, Kosovo police should suspend the operation focusing on municipal buildings in the north, and violent protesters should "stand down."

In response to the recent unrest, NATO has decided to increase its KFOR troops with the deployment of "operational reserve forces" for the Western Balkans, a statement said, without specifying a number. Another unit will be on standby "to be ready to reinforce KFOR if necessary."

A statement issued Tuesday by KFOR said 30 soldiers — 11 Italians and 19 Hungarians — were hurt, including fractures and burns from improvised explosive incendiary devices.

Three Hungarian soldiers were "wounded by the use of firearms," but their injuries were not life-threatening, the statement added.

Serb officials said 52 people were injured, including three seriously. Four protesters were detained, according to Kosovo police.

"Both parties need to take full responsibility for what happened and prevent any further escalation, rather

than hide behind false narratives," KFOR commander Maj. Gen. Angelo Michele Ristuccia said.

Belgrade and Pristina have blamed each other for the escalation.

Meanwhile, ambassadors from the so-called Quint countries — France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the U.S. — met Monday with Kurti in Pristina and on Tuesday with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in Belgrade.

Vucic later also met with the ambassadors in Serbia of Russia and China.

In a statement from his office, Vucic expressed "immense dissatisfaction and strong concern" over what he described as international "tolerance" of Kurti's actions that fueled violence against Serbs.

Urgent measures to guarantee the security of the Serbs in Kosovo are a precondition for any future talks, Vucic insisted.

Kurti has thanked KFOR troops for "valiant action to preserve peace in the face of violent extremism."

Russia and China both have sharply criticized Western backing for Kosovo's independence. Russian President Vladimir Putin often has cited the "precedent" of NATO bombardment of Serbia in 1999 to justify his unlawful annexation of parts of Ukraine.

The conflict in Kosovo erupted in 1998 when separatist ethnic Albanians rebelled against Serbia's rule, and Serbia responded with a brutal crackdown. About 13,000 people, mostly ethnic Albanians, died.

NATO's military intervention in 1999 eventually forced Serbia to pull out of the territory and paved the way for the establishment of the KFOR peacekeeping mission.

Semini reported from Tirana, Albania. Associated Press writers Dusan Stojanovic and Jovana Gec in Belgrade, Serbia; Lorne Cook in Brussels; and Nicole Winfield in Rome, contributed to this report.

## What to know about the Texas prison where Elizabeth Holmes is serving her 11-year sentence

BRYAN, Texas (AP) — Disgraced Theranos CEO Elizabeth Holmes has reported to a federal prison in Texas — marking the start of her 11-year sentence for overseeing a notorious blood testing hoax.

Holmes, 39, was convicted of fraud last year for duping investors who contributed hundreds of millions of dollars in the failed Silicon Valley startup.

Holmes and Ramesh "Sunny" Balwani, Holmes' former partner and fellow executive who is currently serving a nearly 13-year prison sentence, said Theranos had developed a device that could quickly scan for diseases and other medical conditions with a just few drops of blood. But the technology never worked as advertised — leading to the meteoric downfall of a company that once promised to revolutionize health care.

On Tuesday, Holmes entered a federal women's prison camp in Bryan, Texas — a minimum-security facility where the federal judge who sentenced Holmes in November recommended she be incarcerated.

Here are some things to know about Federal Prison Camp Bryan and Holmes' arrival at the facility.

### WHY IS HOLMES BEING INCARCERATED IN BRYAN NOW?

Holmes reported to FPC Bryan on Tuesday, the Federal Bureau of Prisons confirmed. The arrival comes more than a year after a jury convicted Holmes on four felony counts of fraud and conspiracy in January 2022. She was sentenced to 11 years in November.

Holmes had originally been ordered to begin her prison sentence on April 27, but won a reprieve with a last-minute legal maneuver that gave her more time with her two young children. Earlier this month, U.S. District Judge Edward Davila set Holmes' revised prison-reporting date for May 30.

In a separate ruling, Davila also ordered that Holmes and Balwani pay a \$452 million in restitution.

Attorneys representing Holmes did not immediately respond when contacted by The Associated Press for statement on Tuesday.

### WHERE IS FEDERAL PRISON CAMP BRYAN?

FPC Bryan is located about 95 miles (150 kilometers) northwest of Houston. The facility encompasses about 37 acres (15 hectares) of land.

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According to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, FPC Bryan is one of a handful of “minimum security” facilities of its kind across the nation.

## WHO ELSE IS HELD IN FPC BRYAN?

About 650 women are housed in FPC Bryan — including “Real Housewives of Salt Lake City” star Jennifer Shah, who was sentenced earlier this year to 6 1/2 years in prison for defrauding thousands of people in a yearslong telemarketing scam.

In addition to Shah, other recognizable figures who have served sentences at FPC Bryan in the past include former Enron executive Lea Fastow, participant in the Jan. 6 Capitol attack Jenna Ryan, and Michelle Janavs, heir to the Hot Pockets fortune and a former investment executive who participated in the college admissions scandal, according to The New York Times.

## WHAT IS A MINIMUM-SECURITY PRISON LIKE?

Federal prison camps like FPC Bryan are minimum-security institutions. Most of those types of facilities don’t even have fences and hold inmates the Bureau of Prisons considers to be the lowest security risk.

The prison camps also often have minimal staffing and many of the people incarcerated there work at prison jobs. According to a 2016 FPC Bryan inmate handbook, those in the Texas facility who are eligible to work can earn between 12 cents and \$1.15 per hour in their job assignments, which include food service roles and factory employment operated by Federal Prison Industries.

Federal prison camps were originally designed with low security to make operations easier and to allow inmates tasked with performing work at the prison to avoid repeatedly checking in and out of a main prison facility. But the lax security opened a gateway for contraband, such as drugs, cellphones and weapons. The limited security has also led to a number of escapes from prison camps.

## With vocabulary more important than ever, National Spelling Bee requires different prep

By BEN NUCKOLS Associated Press

OXON HILL, Md. (AP) — Navneeth Murali would strongly prefer for the Scripps National Spelling Bee to get rid of the onstage, multiple-choice vocabulary questions that were introduced to the competition two years ago.

“It’s sort of hit or miss, the onstage vocab format, and it’s sort of brutal in my opinion,” the 17-year-old former speller said.

The vocabulary questions are part of a series of changes to the post-pandemic bee, which is leaner and, in some ways, meaner. Accomplished spellers can be bounced from the bee without ever misspelling a word. And because there is no alternative path to the bee as there was in the late 2010s, the regional bees spellers must win to qualify can be incredibly tense, and sometimes shocking. Last year’s national runner-up, Vikram Raju, didn’t make it back in his final year of eligibility.

The tweaks help ensure the bee, which began Tuesday with the preliminary rounds and concludes Thursday, finishes on schedule with a sole champion. That’s an important consideration after the eight-way tie of 2019. But some in the spelling community say they make the competition more dependent on luck and less about rewarding spellers for their years spent mastering roots and language patterns and exploring the farthest reaches of Merriam-Webster’s Unabridged dictionary.

During their initial appearances onstage Tuesday at a convention center outside Washington, spellers were asked to spell one word and define another, both from a list provided in advance. Of the 229 spellers, 57 were ousted for misspelling (24.9%), while 33 of the 172 who spelled their first word correctly (19.2%) got vocabulary answers wrong.

“Scripps has done a good job of evolving and not staying fixed in place, even if some of the particular choices they make, I would not myself have made if I were in their shoes,” said Scott Remer, a former speller, study guide author and coach who is tutoring 29 competitors in this year’s bee.

Navneeth, a high school junior from Edison, New Jersey, had his last, best chance to win a national title wiped out by the pandemic in 2020, and he has since poured his energy into coaching. Along with another



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ex-speller-turned-guru, Grace Walters, he mentored last year's champion, Harini Logan.

The way Navneeth sees it, the SAT-style vocabulary questions are here to stay, and there's no excuse for spellers not to be prepared.

"Last year, I did miss on a vocabulary word, and it felt like it was the type of vocabulary word I should have known," said 13-year-old Shradha Rachamreddy of San Jose, California, one of Navneeth's pupils. "They're not obscure. It's a mix of general knowledge and specific speller knowledge."

During Navneeth's time as a speller, vocabulary was only part of a written test that also included spelling. It was important — the test score determined who made the semifinals — but the stakes weren't as high. Spellers could get a few definitions wrong and still make it through.

Now, vocabulary rounds are sprinkled through the onstage competition, and if a speller gets one multiple-choice question wrong, they're out. Yet Navneeth still observes spellers treating vocabulary as an afterthought in their preparation. His students have been working on it for a full year, and he also wrote a book, "Defining Success," intended to help spellers prepare for the vocabulary portion.

"Since the stakes are much higher, it's not something you can wing," Navneeth said. "It's something that you need to prepare for and practice and get used to. Because I've placed an emphasis on it from the beginning of the next season, I feel that it's something my students are primed for."

## SURPRISING ABSENCE

Vikram, last year's runner-up, took eventual champion Harini all the way to a "spell-off" — Scripps' term for its lightning-round tiebreaker. He looked forward to returning this year as an eighth-grader, the last school year in which spellers are eligible.

Instead, Vikram was bounced in his regional bee in Denver, which lasted 53 rounds over a span of more than five hours. Vikram and his parents argued that he misspelled because the bee's pronouncer made one of several mistakes, but their appeal was unsuccessful.

"The bee went so deep off-list, there were several words that Vikram had to actually anticipate what the word might be based on the language or the definition," said his mother, Sandhya Ayyar. "After these several rounds, he reached a point where, 'I don't know what's the word or what I'm supposed to spell here.'"

In 2018 or 2019, Vikram still could have gone to nationals, because Scripps had a wild-card program meant to ensure that spellers from highly competitive regions had a chance to compete on the biggest stage. However, the program was open to spellers of widely varying abilities as long as their families were able to pay their way, and the 2019 bee swelled to more than 500 competitors, some of whom clearly didn't belong.

Scripps had planned to curtail the wild cards in 2020, making them available only to eighth-graders like Vikram who had previously competed at nationals. But that bee was canceled because of the pandemic, and in 2021, Scripps got rid of the wild cards altogether. Ayyar's request to Scripps to bring them back this year was rebuffed.

Corrie Loeffler, the bee's executive director, wouldn't rule out creating a new qualifying system in the future, but she declined to change this year's competition rules retroactively.

"We heard from a handful of people, and it's a tough thing," Loeffler said. "You're talking about kids who have worked really hard and want the opportunity to show off what they've worked for, and that's something we don't take lightly, but we also take the rules of our competition very seriously."

"I feel for Vikram very strongly, especially as a former speller. I told his parents that; I told him that. He has so much to be proud of. That spell-off from last year, nobody is going to forget that."

## UNAVOIDABLE ABSENCE

The bee began with television host Paul Loeffler — Corrie's brother — sending well wishes to 12-year-old Lance Sanchez of Guam, who was unable to travel to Washington to compete because the U.S. territory's airport was closed by Typhoon Mawar. Lance is a sixth-grader and has two years of eligibility remaining.

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Ben Nuckols has covered the Scripps National Spelling Bee since 2012. Follow him at <https://twitter.com/APBenNuckols>

## Nun whose body shows little decay since 2019 death draws hundreds to rural Missouri

By TRISHA AHMED Associated Press/Report for America

Hundreds of people flocked to a small town in Missouri this week and last to see a nun whose body has barely decomposed since 2019. Some say it's a sign of holiness in Catholicism, while others say the lack of decomposition may not be as rare as people think.

Sister Wilhelmina Lancaster was exhumed in April, according to a statement from the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles, in Gower, Missouri.

The nuns had been preparing for the addition of a St. Joseph shrine, and that involved "the reinterment of the remains of our beloved foundress, Sister Wilhelmina," the statement said.

When they exhumed Lancaster, they were told to expect only bones, since she had been buried in a simple wooden coffin without any embalming four years ago.

Instead, they discovered an intact body and "a perfectly preserved religious habit," the statement said. The nuns hadn't meant to publicize the discovery, but someone posted a private email publicly and "the news began to spread like wildfire."

Volunteers and local law enforcement have helped to manage the crowds in the town of roughly 1,800 people, as people have visited from all over the country to see and touch Lancaster's body.

"It was pretty amazing," said Samuel Dawson, who is Catholic and visited from Kansas City with his son last week. "It was very peaceful. Just very reverent."

Dawson said there were a few hundred people when he visited and that he saw many out-of-state cars.

Visitors were allowed to touch her, Dawson said, adding that the nuns "wanted to make her accessible to the public ... because in real life, she was always accessible to people."

The monastery said in a statement that Lancaster's body will be placed in a glass shrine in their church on Monday. Visitors will still be able to see her body and take dirt from her grave, but they won't be able to touch her.

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph also released a statement.

"The condition of the remains of Sister Wilhelmina Lancaster has understandably generated widespread interest and raised important questions," the diocese said. "At the same time, it is important to protect the integrity of the mortal remains of Sister Wilhelmina to allow for a thorough investigation."

"Incorruptibility has been verified in the past, but it is very rare. There is a well-established process to pursue the cause for sainthood, but that has not been initiated in this case yet," the diocese added.

The Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles, also said that Lancaster has not yet reached the required minimum of five years since death for the sainthood process to begin.

Rebecca George, an anthropology instructor at Western Carolina University in North Carolina, said the body's lack of decomposition might not be as rare as people are expecting.

George said the "mummification" of un-embalmed bodies is common at the university's facility and the bodies could stay preserved for many years, if allowed to.

Coffins and clothing also help to preserve bodies, she said.

"Typically, when we bury people, we don't exhume them. We don't get to look at them a couple years out," George said. "With 100 years, there might be nothing left. But when you've got just a few years out, this is not unexpected."

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Trisha Ahmed is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on under-covered issues. Follow Trisha Ahmed on Twitter: @TrishaAhmed15.

## Ex-Trump White House official Peter Navarro to go on trial in September in Jan. 6 contempt case

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Trump White House official Peter Navarro will stand trial in September on contempt of Congress charges filed after he refused to cooperate with a congressional investigation into the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta set a Sept. 5 trial date during a court appearance on Tuesday in Washington.

Navarro was charged last year with one contempt count for failing to appear for a deposition before the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack and a second charge for failing to produce documents the committee requested. He has pleaded not guilty.

His attorneys declined to comment after Tuesday's hearing.

A former economics professor, Navarro served as a White House staffer under former President Donald Trump and later promoted his baseless claims of mass voter fraud. Navarro has argued that Trump invoked executive privilege, barring him from cooperating with the committee.

Navarro was the second Trump aide to face criminal charges after former White House adviser Steve Bannon. He was convicted of two counts of contempt of Congress and sentenced to four months behind bars, though Bannon has been free pending appeal.

## Moscow drone attack exposes Russia's vulnerabilities, fuels criticism of military

By The Associated Press undefined

A drone attack that targeted Moscow on Tuesday exposed glaring breaches in its air defenses and underlined the capital's vulnerability as more Russian soil comes under fire amid expectations of a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

The attack, which lightly damaged three apartment buildings, angered Russia's hawks, who scathingly criticized President Vladimir Putin and the military brass for failing to protect the heart of Kremlin power more than 500 kilometers (310 miles) from the front line.

Five of the eight drones that took part in the raid were shot down, the Defense Ministry said, while three others were jammed and forced to veer off course. Some Russian media and bloggers alleged a larger number of drones were involved, but those claims couldn't be verified.

The attack followed a May 3 drone strike on the Kremlin that lightly damaged the roof of the palace that includes one of Putin's official residences. Other drones have crashed near Moscow in what Russian authorities described as botched Ukrainian attempts to attack the city and infrastructure facilities in the suburbs.

Last week, the Russian border region of Belgorod was the target of one of the most serious cross-border raids since the war began, with two far-right pro-Ukrainian paramilitary groups claiming responsibility. Officials in the southern Russian city of Krasnodar near annexed Crimea said two drones struck there Friday, damaging residential buildings. The attacks also drew calls for bolstering Russia's borders.

Ukrainian authorities rejoiced over Tuesday's drone attack but customarily avoided a claim of responsibility, a response similar to what they said after previous attacks on Russian territory.

In a sarcastic tweet, Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said that "even artificial intelligence is already smarter and more far-sighted than the Russian military and political leadership."

The Russian military pummeled the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv and other cities with cruise missiles and exploding drones for the past three nights, a significant spike in such attacks that have been regularly launched since October. The Ukrainian military said it shot down most of the missiles and remained coy about reporting damage from the strikes.

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Putin cast the attack on Moscow as a Ukrainian attempt to intimidate its residents. He said Moscow's air defenses worked as expected, but admitted that protecting a huge city is a daunting task.

"It's clear what needs to be done to beef up air defenses, and we will do it," he added.

Military watchers said the drones used in the attack were relatively crude and cheap but could have a range of up to 1,000 kilometers (over 620 miles). They predicted more could follow.

Some of the drones seen flying toward Moscow were the Ukrainian-made UJ-22s, capable of carrying explosives; others spotted in the skies near Moscow were similarly small vehicles.

Mark Cancian, a senior adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies International Security Program, noted that part of the reason why drones could make it all the way to Moscow undetected was because Russian air defenses are mostly focused on fending off attacks by more sophisticated weapons.

"They are oriented on missiles, ballistic missiles, regional missiles, aircraft, bombers, but not short-range drones, you know, which might be flying very low over the ground," Cancian told The Associated Press. "The Russian air defense was just not designed to do this."

The Russian military will likely move some of its air defense assets away from the front line to help protect Moscow, Cancian said, a move that would weaken Russian troops in the face of a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

"That's good for the Ukrainians in the sense that they're pulling these systems away from other areas where they could be used maybe from front-line units," he said.

The Kremlin's muted response to the attack irked some hawkish commentators and military bloggers in Moscow, who had criticized the Russian leadership for failing to mount a stronger response.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the maverick millionaire head of the Wagner private military contractor that plays a key role on the battlefield in Ukraine, scolded the Russian military leadership and denounced them as "scum" and "swine" for failing to protect Moscow.

"You, the Defense Ministry, have done nothing to launch an offensive," Prigozhin said in a statement released by his office. "How dare you to allow the drones to reach Moscow?"

Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman leader of the Russian province of Chechnya who sent forces from the region to fight in Ukraine, urged the Kremlin to declare martial law nationwide and use all its resources in Ukraine "to sweep away that terrorist gang."

Some Kremlin watchers noted that Putin's calm reaction that contrasted with angry statements from Russian hawks reflects his belief that the public won't be unsettled by the attack.

"Putin has talked repeatedly about the Russian people's remarkable patience and tenacity," Tatiana Stanovaya of the Carnegie Endowment said in a commentary. "No matter how defiant another Ukrainian attack is, Putin doesn't think that it could provoke public discontent with the government."

She noted that while playing down the strikes makes the authorities look "embarrassed and helpless," it fits Putin's course to drag out the conflict.

James Nixey, the director of the Russia and Eurasia program at Chatham House, said Tuesday's attack signaled a growing Ukrainian determination to launch strikes deep inside Russia and predicted more will come.

"This is not the first and it's not the last," Nixey told AP. "The Ukrainians are in various respects flexing their muscles, seeing what they're capable of hitting back. It is one more part of the Ukrainian play to ensure that they are not just playing defense, but they can play some offense as well."

Despite the loud calls for revenge, the Russian military can't do much more than what it has been doing since starting the war, Nixey noted.

"The reality is that Russia does have limits in what it can do. It's got limits on manpower, limits on its finances, limits on its artillery munitions, missiles, drones, everything," he said. "They're already expending all their efforts, all their monies, all their treasure, all their blood if you like on prosecuting their war in Ukraine."

Follow AP coverage of the war in Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine-war>



## Former first lady Rosalynn Carter has dementia, The Carter Center says

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Former first lady Rosalynn Carter has dementia, her family announced Tuesday.

Carter, now 95, remains at home with former President Jimmy Carter, 98, who has been at home receiving hospice care since early this year.

"She continues to live happily at home with her husband, enjoying spring in Plains and visits with loved ones," the family said via The Carter Center, the global humanitarian organization the couple founded in 1982, less than two years after Jimmy Carter's landslide defeat.

Married nearly 77 years, the Carters are the longest-married first couple in U.S. history.

The family noted in its statement that Rosalynn Carter has spent her long public life advocating for individuals and families affected by mental illness and for those in caregiving relationships with loved ones.

"Mrs. Carter often noted that there are only four kinds of people in this world: those who have been caregivers; those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers," the family statement reads. "We are experiencing the joy and the challenges of this journey."

The Carters have been visiting only with family and close friends since the former president's announcement in February that he would forgo further medical intervention after a series of short hospital stays.

The family has not disclosed any specific diagnosis for either the former president or the former first lady. The statement Tuesday said the Carter family would have no further comment.

The Carters often described themselves as "full partners" throughout his political career and their long public life that followed. Rosalynn Carter campaigned vigorously for her husband in his bids for Georgia governor and the presidency. She used her platform to prioritize mental health awareness, working to address the stigma attached to the condition.

After their White House years, Rosalynn Carter continued her mental health advocacy at The Carter Center, and she traveled extensively with her husband as part of their work promoting democracy globally and fighting disease in the developing world.

One in 10 older Americans have dementia, the family's statement said. "We recognize, as she did more than half a century ago, that stigma is often a barrier that keeps individuals and their families from seeking and getting much-needed support. We hope sharing our family's news will increase important conversations at kitchen tables and in doctor's offices around the country."

Eleanor Rosalynn Smith was born in Plains on Aug. 18, 1927. Jimmy Carter's mother, a nurse, delivered her in the Smith family home. Lillian Carter brought her young son back a few days later to visit, allowing the future president and first lady to meet as preschooler and newborn.

They were married July 7, 1946.

Jimmy Carter enjoyed telling everyone that his wife was "more political" than he was, a point she did not protest.

"I would be out there campaigning right now if Jimmy would run again," she wrote just a few years after his defeat. "I miss the world of politics."

— NOTE: An earlier version of this story misstated Rosalynn Carter's birth year as 1924. She was born in 1927.

## Sick workers tied to 40% of restaurant food poisoning outbreaks, CDC says

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

Food workers who showed up while sick or contagious were linked to about 40% of restaurant food poisoning outbreaks with a known cause between 2017 and 2019, federal health officials said Tuesday.

Norovirus and salmonella, germs that can cause severe illness, were the most common cause of 800 outbreaks, which encompassed 875 restaurants and were reported by 25 state and local health departments.

Investigators with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called for better enforcement of "comprehensive food safety policies," which emphasize basic measures like hand washing and keep sick workers off the job.

Although 85% of restaurants said they had policies restricting staff from working while sick, only about 16% of the policies were detailed enough to require workers to notify managers and to stay home if they had any of the five key symptoms — including vomiting, diarrhea, and sore throat with fever.

About 44% of managers told the CDC their restaurants provided paid sick leave to workers. That's a problem, according to Mitzi Baum, the chief executive of STOP Foodborne Illness, a nonprofit advocacy group.

She said it means workers are forced to choose between earning money or showing up sick — or there's social pressure not to leave fellow employees short-staffed.

"If there's a positive food safety culture, you're not penalized for illness," Baum said.

It can be hard for consumers to know when sick workers might be on the job, she said, but there are some signs to look for: "Is your server sniffing? Are they sneezing? How are they handling the utensils?"

About 48 million people a year in the U.S. are sickened by foodborne illness, including 128,000 who are hospitalized and 3,000 who die, according to the CDC.

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The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Woman who threatened Nancy Pelosi with hanging during Capitol riot gets over 2 years in prison

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

A Pennsylvania restaurant owner who screamed death threats directed at then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi while storming the U.S. Capitol was sentenced on Tuesday to more than two years in prison.

Pauline Bauer was near Pelosi's office suite on Jan. 6, 2021, when she yelled at police officers to bring out the California Democrat so the mob of Donald Trump supporters could hang her.

In January, U.S. District Judge Trevor McFadden convicted Bauer of riot-related charges after hearing trial testimony without a jury. The judge sentenced her to two years and three months of imprisonment, giving her credit for the several months she already has served in jail, court records show.

Prosecutors had recommended a prison sentence of six years and six months for Bauer, 55, of Kane, Pennsylvania.

Bauer was part of the mob that forced police officers on the East Plaza to retreat. After forcing her way into the Capitol, she accosted officers who were trying to secure the Rotunda, shoving one of them, and yelled at police to "bring them out or we're coming in," according to federal prosecutors.

"They're criminals. They need to hang," she screamed. "Bring Nancy Pelosi out here now. We want to hang (her). Bring her out."

Other rioters shouted threats against Pelosi while they roamed through the Capitol.

"Bauer's threat to hang Speaker Pelosi was real, imminent, and placed the Speaker of the House in danger," prosecutor James Peterson wrote in a court filing.

Bauer traveled from her north Pennsylvania home to attend then-President Donald Trump's "Stop the Steal" rally in Washington on Jan. 6. She had attended a "Stop the Steal" rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a day earlier.

She came to Washington with at least five other people who have been charged in the Capitol riot, including co-defendant William Blausler, who pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge. Last year, McFadden ordered Blausler to pay a \$500 fine but didn't sentence him to any term of incarceration or probation.

McFadden convicted Bauer of all five counts in her indictment, including a felony charge that she obstructed the Jan. 6 joint session of Congress that certified President Joe Biden's 2020 electoral victory.

Defense attorney Komron Jon Maknoon said Bauer never intended to interfere with the process of cer-

tifying the Electoral College vote. She “genuinely regrets her past actions” and doesn’t pose a threat to the public, her lawyer said.

“The international spotlight showcasing her at her worst has deeply affected her,” Maknoon wrote.

Prosecutors said Bauer lied during her trial testimony, giving a bogus explanation for her confrontation with police and claiming she didn’t remember threatening Pelosi.

Bauer has used “sovereign citizen” extremist rhetoric and filed “nonsense” court documents while defending herself, prosecutors said.

More than a year before the trial, McFadden ordered Bauer to be jailed for several months for violating conditions of her release. She had claimed the court has no authority over her and told the judge that she doesn’t want “any lawyering from the bench.”

During an interview in 2021, Bauer said her arrest on Capitol riot charges led to a mixed reaction from neighbors in Kane, a small town on the edge of the 517,000-acre Allegheny National Forest.

“A lot of people say that they’re proud of me for standing up for my rights,” she told The Associated Press.

Bauer said her restaurant, Bob’s Trading Post, was thriving before the COVID-19 pandemic. She became known in her hometown as an outspoken critic of lockdown measures that cost her business.

More than 1,000 people have been charged with federal crimes for their conduct on Jan. 6. More than 500 of them have been sentenced, with over half receiving terms of imprisonment ranging from one week to 18 years.

## **Artificial intelligence raises risk of extinction, experts say in new warning**

By MATT O’BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Scientists and tech industry leaders, including high-level executives at Microsoft and Google, issued a new warning Tuesday about the perils that artificial intelligence poses to humankind.

“Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war,” the statement said.

Sam Altman, CEO of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, and Geoffrey Hinton, a computer scientist known as the godfather of artificial intelligence, were among the hundreds of leading figures who signed the statement, which was posted on the Center for AI Safety’s website.

Worries about artificial intelligence systems outsmarting humans and running wild have intensified with the rise of a new generation of highly capable AI chatbots such as ChatGPT. It has sent countries around the world scrambling to come up with regulations for the developing technology, with the European Union blazing the trail with its AI Act expected to be approved later this year.

The latest warning was intentionally succinct — just a single sentence — to encompass a broad coalition of scientists who might not agree on the most likely risks or the best solutions to prevent them, said Dan Hendrycks, executive director of the San Francisco-based nonprofit Center for AI Safety, which organized the move.

“There’s a variety of people from all top universities in various different fields who are concerned by this and think that this is a global priority,” Hendrycks said. “So we had to get people to sort of come out of the closet, so to speak, on this issue because many were sort of silently speaking among each other.”

More than 1,000 researchers and technologists, including Elon Musk, had signed a much longer letter earlier this year calling for a six-month pause on AI development, saying it poses “profound risks to society and humanity.”

That letter was a response to OpenAI’s release of a new AI model, GPT-4, but leaders at OpenAI, its partner Microsoft and rival Google didn’t sign on and rejected the call for a voluntary industry pause.

By contrast, the latest statement was endorsed by Microsoft’s chief technology and science officers, as well as Demis Hassabis, CEO of Google’s AI research lab DeepMind, and two Google executives who lead its AI policy efforts. The statement doesn’t propose specific remedies but some, including Altman, have

proposed an international regulator along the lines of the U.N. nuclear agency.

Some critics have complained that dire warnings about existential risks voiced by makers of AI have contributed to hyping up the capabilities of their products and distracting from calls for more immediate regulations to rein in their real-world problems.

Hendrycks said there's no reason why society can't manage the "urgent, ongoing harms" of products that generate new text or images, while also starting to address the "potential catastrophes around the corner."

He compared it to nuclear scientists in the 1930s warning people to be careful even though "we haven't quite developed the bomb yet."

"Nobody is saying that GPT-4 or ChatGPT today is causing these sorts of concerns," Hendrycks said. "We're trying to address these risks before they happen rather than try and address catastrophes after the fact."

The letter also was signed by experts in nuclear science, pandemics and climate change. Among the signatories is the writer Bill McKibben, who sounded the alarm on global warming in his 1989 book "The End of Nature" and warned about AI and companion technologies two decades ago in another book.

"Given our failure to heed the early warnings about climate change 35 years ago, it feels to me as if it would be smart to actually think this one through before it's all a done deal," he said by email Tuesday.

An academic who helped push for the letter said he used to be mocked for his concerns about AI existential risk, even as rapid advancements in machine-learning research over the past decade have exceeded many people's expectations.

David Krueger, an assistant computer science professor at the University of Cambridge, said some of the hesitation in speaking out is that scientists don't want to be seen as suggesting AI "consciousness or AI doing something magic," but he said AI systems don't need to be self-aware or setting their own goals to pose a threat to humanity.

"I'm not wedded to some particular kind of risk. I think there's a lot of different ways for things to go badly," Krueger said. "But I think the one that is historically the most controversial is risk of extinction, specifically by AI systems that get out of control."

O'Brien reported from Providence, Rhode Island. AP Business Writers Frank Bajak in Boston and Kelvin Chan in London contributed.

## See the images of North Korea's launch pad activity as it prepares its first spy satellite

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Tuesday it would launch its first military spy satellite in June and described space-based reconnaissance as crucial for monitoring U.S. "reckless" military exercises with South Korea.

The statement came a day after North Korea notified Japan's coast guard that the launch, sometime between May 31 and June 11, might affect waters in the Yellow Sea, East China Sea and east of the Philippines' Luzon Island. Japan's defense minister warned its forces to shoot down the satellite or debris if any entered Japanese territory, and its coast guard issued a safety warning for ships that would be in the affected seas during the expected launch, citing a risk of falling debris.

While North Korea's rivals have condemned the country's planned launch as a banned test of ballistic missile technology, it's less clear whether the satellite itself is advanced enough to support the North's stated goals of tracking and monitoring U.S. and South Korean military activities in real time.

Satellite images taken Tuesday analyzed by The Associated Press showed activity at a main pad at North Korea's Sohae Satellite Launching Station — suggesting the satellite's blast off would be soon.

The images by Planet Labs PBC showed the massive orange gantry at the pad with its arms open. The gantry houses a rocket on the launch pad. Next to the gantry, a long, rectangular object could be seen



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with two other objects nearby. Those objects hadn't been seen in prior days' images of the site — and could potentially be rocket parts.

All that movement taken together, along with the announcement of a pending launch, means one is likely imminent, said Dave Schmerler, a senior research associate at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, which is part of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.

Schmerler said it was highly unusual for North Korea to be assembling the rocket in daylight, knowing that satellites overhead would be able to watch the site, as opposed to constructing it under a rail-mounted transfer structure as they have in the past.

"The point is that we're seeing activity in a launch system that was designed to obscure activity," Schmerler told the AP. "So this is new and interesting because it's not using the usual processes."

Meanwhile, North Korean workers also have quickly built in the span of a month a new launch pad just 2.7 kilometers (1.6 miles) southeast of the launch pad where all the activity Tuesday was seen. That site as well appears to have a rail-mounted transfer system, freshly paved asphalt, lightning towers, floodlights and a stand for cameras.

Given that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un likely would attend the satellite launch, Schmerler said the missile site probably wanted to show off its new facilities. That also would allow them to have a second launch as well if North Korea chose to do so.

"When Kim shows up, he's not going to be underwhelmed. He should be fairly impressed they just threw this whole thing together," Schmerler said. "They're going to use this. Now, when they use it, we don't know."

The International Maritime Organization told the AP it received an email from North Korea's Maritime Administration that spelled out the country's satellite launch plans, including the May 31-June 11 launch window and coordinates of areas where debris might fall.

The pace of both North Korea's weapons testing and U.S.-South Korean joint military exercises have increased in past months in a tit-for-tat cycle.

Since the start of 2022, North Korea has test-fired about 100 missiles, including ICBMs designed to reach the U.S. mainland and a slew of launches it described as simulated nuclear attacks on targets in South Korea. North Korea has said its intensified testing activity is meant to counter its rivals' joint military exercises as it continues to use those drills as a pretext to advance its arsenal of nuclear-capable weapons.

In comments published by North Korean state media, senior military official Ri Pyong Chol criticized the combined U.S.-South Korean military exercises, which the North has long described as invasion rehearsals. He said North Korea considers space-based reconnaissance "indispensable" to monitor the military exercises.

Last week, the South Korean and U.S. militaries conducted large-scale live-fire drills near the border with North Korea — the first of five rounds of exercises marking 70 years since the establishment of their alliance. Washington and Seoul describe their regular military exercises as defensive and have expanded their training since 2022 to cope with North Korea's evolving threats.

Ri said the expanding U.S.-South Korean drills and other military activities underline their "sinister intention" to prepare for preemptive military action against North Korea. He said the "dangerous military acts by the U.S." and its forces created a concerning security environment that makes it necessary for North Korea to gather real-time, reliable information on military movements in the region.

South Korea has warned that North Korea will face consequences if it goes ahead with the satellite launch in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, which ban the North from conducting any launch using ballistic technology. Space-launch vehicles for satellites share core technologies with long-range missiles that are built to deliver warheads aimed at destroying intercontinental targets.

"It's absurd to use our legitimate joint exercises, and the maintenance of the South Korea-U.S. joint defense posture to respond to advancing North Korean nuclear and missile threats, as an excuse to launch a reconnaissance satellite," South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lim Soo-suk said during a briefing.

"We strongly urge North Korea to immediately cancel its launch plans."

Last week, South Korea launched its first commercial-grade satellite, which experts say could provide Seoul with key technology and expertise to place its first military spy satellite into orbit later this year and build more powerful missiles.

Han Sung Geun, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a briefing that the South Korean and U.S. militaries were closely watching North Korea over the possible satellite launch and other provocative military moves. He did not provide specific assessments about the potential capabilities of the North Korean satellite and refused to say whether the South Korean military was preparing for the possibility that debris could fall in nearby waters.

Spy satellites are among an array of high-tech weapons systems Kim Jong Un has publicly vowed to develop. Other weapons systems on his wish list include solid-propellant intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear-powered submarines, hypersonic missiles and multi-warhead missiles.

North Korea placed Earth-observation satellites in orbit in 2012 and 2016, though their capabilities have been questioned.

Foreign experts say the earlier satellites never transmitted imagery back to North Korea, and analysts say the new device displayed in state media in recent weeks appeared too small and crudely designed to process and transfer high-resolution imagery.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Find more AP coverage of the Asia-Pacific region at <https://apnews.com/hub/asia-pacific>

## **Juror and spouse: Texas state Sen. Angela Paxton could vote in trial on husband's impeachment**

By JIM VERTUNO and PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — On the way to Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton becoming a rising figure in the GOP, his wife, Angela, used to entertain crowds with a guitar and a song.

"I'm a pistol-packin' mama, and my husband sues Obama," she sang at campaign events and Republican clubs in Texas.

When it came time for the high school teacher and guidance counselor to launch her own political career, a \$2 million loan from her husband propelled Angela Paxton to a narrow victory for a state Senate seat in the booming Dallas suburbs. Once elected, she filed bills to expand his office's powers, and approved budgets over his state agency and salary.

Now, Sen. Paxton is a key figure in the next phase of Ken Paxton's historic impeachment: as a "juror" in a Senate trial that could put her husband back in office or banish him permanently.

It's a role that raises an ethical cloud over the Senate proceeding. State law compels all senators to attend, but is silent on whether she must participate.

"If it were a trial in the justice system, she would be completely required to (step aside)," said Kenneth Williams, professor of criminal procedure at the South Texas College of Law in Houston. "It's a clear conflict of interest."

The trial is to start no later than Aug. 28, and it promises to be quite personal for Angela Paxton.

The 20 articles of impeachment brought against Ken Paxton include sweeping charges of abuse of office and unethical behavior. They include a bribery charge related to an extramarital affair with an aide to a state senator. Another suggested Angela Paxton was involved in the installation of \$20,000 countertops at their home, paid for by a political donor.

Angela Paxton hasn't said if she'll recuse herself from the trial. She declined comment when approached by The Associated Press outside the Senate chamber on Monday.

State Rep. Andrew Murr, who led the impeachment investigation in the state House, declined to say if he thinks Angela Paxton should step aside. The Senate gets to set the rules, he said.

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Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick tightly controls the Senate and its 19-12 Republican majority. He suggested to a Dallas television state before last week's House impeachment vote that Angela Paxton will participate in the trial.

"I will be presiding over that case and the senators — all 31 senators — will have a vote," Patrick told WFAA-TV. "We'll set the rules for that trial as we go forward and we'll see how that develops."

Asked Tuesday whether Sen. Paxton would participate in the trial, Patrick declined comment, saying he could not take questions about the impeachment proceedings.

The state constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the chamber to convict. But there is little historic precedent in drafting impeachment trial rules, and nothing with a similar spousal conflict, Williams said.

In nearly 200 years of Texas history, Ken Paxton is just the third official to be impeached and the first statewide official impeached since Gov. James "Pa" Ferguson in 1917.

There's no legal mechanism to force Angela Paxton out of the trial like there would be a criminal trial, Williams said.

"It's up to her ethical standards and compass, basically," Williams said.

The trial comes not only after Paxton was overwhelmingly reelected in November, but so was his wife, who cruised to a second term backed by wide support among conservative activists. They included Jonathan Saenz, president and attorney of Texas Values, who has worked closely with the senator on legislation, including a bill she carried this year that banned sexual content in public school libraries.

He said Sen. Paxton "has earned the right to decide what she thinks is best in this situation."

"Senator Paxton is certainly in the highest category of elected officials in how she treats people and her position. I have high confidence in her moral compass in coming down on the side of what she thinks is best," Saenz said.

The Paxtons come to each other's aid in politics and legal fights.

Angela pushed Ken to chase his political ambitions in his first run for a House seat in 2002. In 2018, she touted Ken's political expertise and advice in her first campaign for the Senate. That included the \$2 million loan from his reelection campaign in a bruising Republican primary.

One of Angela Paxton's first moves as a state lawmaker was filing a bill to give the attorney general's office new powers over licensing exemptions for investment advisers. Ken Paxton was indicted in 2015 for failing to register as an investment adviser while raising money for a technology startup where he was invested and being paid. He has yet to go to trial on the felony charge.

Angela Paxton insisted her bill had nothing to do with his criminal charges, but legal experts said it struck near the heart of his indictment. The bill ultimately failed.

In 2022, Angela was the get-away driver from their house when Ken jumped in the family truck to avoid a process server with a subpoena in a federal abortion lawsuit.

Angela Paxton isn't the only lawmaker with a potential conflict of interest at trial.

The House impeachment articles accuse Paxton of using state Sen. Bryan Hughes as a "straw requestor" for a legal opinion that protected a political donor from property foreclosure.

Hughes has not addressed whether he expects to be called as a witness or if he will recuse himself. He did not respond to requests for comment Monday.

Ken Paxton and his allies, from former President Donald Trump to Texas grassroots organizations, have called the House impeachment process a politically motivated sham, rushed through in the final week of the legislative session.

The suspended attorney general now hopes for a fighting chance in a Senate controlled by Patrick.

When Patrick first endorsed Angela Paxton in that tough 2018 primary, he called her a "dynamic conservative leader and a person of integrity deeply rooted in her Christian faith."

Patrick this year appointed her vice-chair of the Senate State Affairs committee, and to seats on the powerful finance and education committees.

Mark Phariss, the Democrat who lost to Angela Paxton by 2 percentage points in 2018, noted her sharp political instincts. He predicted she won't step aside from a trial.

"My assumption is she will not recuse herself. Because she does not seem to distance herself from her

husband, either when she ran for office in 2018 initially or at any time subsequently," Phariss said.

Associated Press reporter Acacia Coronado contributed to this report.

## **Notre Dame's fire-ravaged roof rebuilt using medieval techniques**

By JEFFREY SCHAEFFER Associated Press

SAINT-LAURENT-DE-LA-PLAINE, France (AP) — If time travel was possible, medieval carpenters would surely be amazed to see how woodworking techniques they pioneered in building Notre Dame Cathedral more than 800 years ago are being used again today to rebuild the world-famous monument's fire-ravaged roof.

Certainly the reverse is true for the modern-day carpenters using medieval-era skills. Working with hand axes to fashion hundreds of tons of oak beams for the framework of Notre Dame's new roof has, for them, been like rewinding time. It's given them a new appreciation of their predecessors' handiwork that pushed the architectural envelope back in the 13th century.

"It's a little mind-bending sometimes," says Peter Henrikson, one of the carpenters. He says there are times when he's whacking mallet on chisel that he finds himself thinking about medieval counterparts who were cutting "basically the same joint 900 years ago."

"It's fascinating," he says. "We probably are in some ways thinking the same things."

The use of hand tools to rebuild the roof that flames turned into ashes in 2019 is a deliberate, considered choice, especially since power tools would undoubtedly have done the work more quickly. The aim is to pay tribute to the astounding craftsmanship of the cathedral's original builders and to ensure that the centuries-old art of hand-fashioning wood lives on.

"We want to restore this cathedral as it was built in the Middle Ages," says Jean-Louis Georgelin, the retired French army general who is overseeing the reconstruction.

"It is a way to be faithful to the (handiwork) of all the people who built all the extraordinary monuments in France."

Facing a tight deadline to reopen the cathedral by December 2024, carpenters and architects are also using computer design and other modern technologies to speed the reconstruction. Computers were used in the drawing of detailed plans for carpenters, to help ensure that their hand-chiseled beams fit together perfectly.

"Traditional carpenters had a lot of that in their head," Henrikson notes. It's "pretty amazing to think about how they did this with what they had, the tools and technology that they had at the time."

The 61-year-old American is from Grand Marais, Minnesota. The bulk of the other artisans working on the timber frame are French.

The roof reconstruction hit an important milestone in May, when large parts of the new timber frame were assembled and erected at a workshop in the Loire Valley, in western France.

The dry run assured architects that the frame is fit for purpose. The next time it is put together will be atop the cathedral. Unlike in medieval times, it will be trucked into Paris and lifted by mechanical crane into position. Some 1,200 trees have been felled for the work.

"The objective we had was to restore to its original condition the wooden frame structure that disappeared during the fire of April 15, 2019," says architect Remi Fromont, who did detailed drawings of the original frame in 2012.

The rebuilt frame "is the same wooden frame structure of the 13th century," he says. "We have exactly the same material: oak. We have the same tools, with the same axes that were used, exactly the same tools. We have the same know-how. And soon, it will return to its same place."

"It is," he adds, "a real resurrection."

John Leicester contributed to this report from Paris.



## The easiest way to get a \$7,500 tax credit for an electric vehicle? Consider leasing.

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Thanks to a boost from the government, leasing — not buying — is becoming the most affordable way to get your hands on an electric vehicle.

Last year's Inflation Reduction Act provided a federal tax credit of up to \$7,500 to use toward an EV. Under the rules, a dealer can apply that credit to any leased electric vehicle, no matter where it's made, to reduce a customer's monthly payment.

Not so for people who buy an EV.

For buyers, only EVs made in North America qualify for the full tax credit. And only 10 of the 49 electric vehicles for sale in the United States this year meet that requirement. Even then, the EV must contain certain percentages of battery parts from the United States or countries with which it has a trade deal for the buyer to receive a full \$7,500 credit.

Why the distinction between leased and purchases vehicles?

The Treasury Department says that in establishing the tax credit, Congress classified leased — but not purchased — EVs as "commercial" vehicles. Under the law, commercial vehicles are exempt from the North America manufacturing and battery-content requirements. The result is that people who lease enjoy a much wider selection of EVs that qualify for the \$7,500 credit.

"Lease affordability has surpassed purchase affordability" in a J.D. Power index that includes total cost of ownership, said Elizabeth Krear, vice president of the EV practice at J.D. Power.

Many consumers have become aware of the difference and are capitalizing on it. In April, Krear said, leases accounted for 41% of all U.S. EV deliveries — four times the percentage in December, before the new rules took effect.

Geoff Pohanka, president of a 21-dealership group in Maryland, Virginia and Texas, said he is anticipating an increase in leasing. Buyers, he predicts, will increasingly recognize that the tax credit will help defray the typically substantial cost difference between an EV and a similar gas-powered vehicle.

"It definitely makes sense," he said. "Incentives can move the market if that narrows the affordability issue between gas and electric cars."

Pohanka, whose group sells vehicles from multiple automakers, said the tax credits have just begun to lower the cost of leasing. Still, the rules governing the credit are complex enough that some buyers appear unsure if they would qualify for it. The rules not only make distinctions between leased and purchased vehicles. They also include income thresholds that disqualify some buyers.

To qualify for the tax credit, a car cannot cost more than \$55,000. SUVs, pickups and vans can't exceed \$80,000. And a buyer's gross income must be no more \$150,000 if single, \$300,000 if filing jointly and \$225,000 if head of a household.

Given the confusion he has noticed among customers about qualifying for the tax credit, Pohanka said some EVs are sitting longer on dealer lots than they otherwise would.

"This disruption, I think, is very damaging to the momentum on electric vehicles," he said.

Critics, including some lawmakers on Capitol Hill, say they regard the Treasury rules that allow many leased, but not purchased, EVs to receive the full tax credit to be an unfair loophole. They argue that it benefits automakers that produce all their vehicles overseas and have yet to build EV and battery factories in the United States. These foreign manufacturers, they say, can devote themselves to leasing EVs in the United States at the expense of domestic automakers.

Sen. Joe Manchin, a West Virginia Democrat and a key author of the tax-credit language, wanted the North American manufacturing requirement to help boost U.S. manufacturing jobs. He included the battery requirements to incentivize companies to build a domestic EV supply chain. But Manchin says the Biden administration is circumventing the law's intent by allowing tax credits for vehicles manufactured overseas.

"The administration continues to ignore the purpose of the law, which is to bring manufacturing back to America and ensure we have reliable and secure supply chains," he said in a statement.

Foreign automakers had complained that they were excluded from the tax credit for buyers despite doing what the bill intended — building U.S. battery and assembly plants.

The Treasury Department denies creating a loophole and says it was Congress that exempted commercial vehicles from the manufacturing and battery requirements. When a dealer buys a vehicle and leases it to someone, it amounts to a commercial transaction. The dealer or a finance company receives the tax credit and retains ownership of the vehicle.

“Eligibility for the commercial vehicle credit is a straightforward reading of the Inflation Reduction Act as written by Congress and application of longstanding tax law regarding leased assets,” Ashley Schapitl, a spokeswoman, wrote in a statement. “There was no room for Treasury interpretation.”

Hyundai, with three EV models made in South Korea and for sale in the United States, is among the beneficiaries of the leasing provision. A spokesman for the Korean automaker said that leases amounted to 30% of its U.S. EV deliveries in the United States from January through March. In 2022, that proportion was only 5%.

The average monthly ownership cost on an EV leased for three years has dropped \$403 since December, largely because of the tax credits, J.D. Power found. By contrast, for an EV purchase financed over five years, the average monthly cost has declined by only \$118.

Hyundai is offering to lease an Ioniq 5 SE rear-wheel-drive EV for \$499 a month for three years, though the customer must put down nearly \$4,000. Buying the same EV would cost \$865 a month for five years at the average new-auto loan rate of 7%.

Though it may be cheaper, leasing won't fit into everyone's financial plans. Unlike with a purchase, monthly payments don't end when a loan is paid off.

Experts note, too, that not everyone who leases an EV will receive the tax credit, even if they qualify for it. The automakers and dealers are allowed to decide whether to pass along the tax credit to their customers; they aren't required to do so.

Krear said some companies are passing the entire \$7,500 credit on to qualifying consumers, thereby reducing their monthly payments. Others are passing on only a portion of it.

Eventually, as automakers make adjustments to comply with the North American manufacturing and battery-composition requirements, buying an EV could cost less than leasing over the long run, Krear said, though there are too many variables to predict when that might happen.

“At that time, it will be a different playing field,” she said.

## How to plant a container like the pros do

By JESSICA DAMIANO Associated Press

Have you ever gone to the grocery store for, say, milk, and left with a cartful of impulse buys? Well, I visited a couple of nurseries last week in search of one specific plant and left with nearly everything except that plant, which both retailers had sold out.

As usual, I was seduced by the colorful, pre-planted annual containers on display, and hemmed and hawed about whether I should buy them or make my own.

I often do the latter, but sometimes can't resist the allure of all that beautifully arranged eye candy.

Those thoughtfully planted pots and baskets are often created by talented garden center workers, sometimes following recipes provided by the plants' wholesale nursery growers. They're a great option if you're looking for instant gratification, which, if I'm being honest, I often am.

However, creating your own mixed container is an easy, fun and often money-saving project that will reward you with flowers and pride all season long.

I'd love to tell you that you're limited only by your own tastes and desires, but the truth is there are some killjoy considerations that need to be taken into account when selecting plants.

You'll need to consider the mature sizes and aesthetic coordination of the plants you combine in a planter, and ensure they all have the same watering and sunlight requirements.

Choose a pot or window box that will accommodate plants when they're fully grown, and make sure they

have holes in the bottom for drainage. If not, poke or drill the holes.

Never use garden soil in containers. It's heavy and too dense for young, tender roots to grow through. It also may contain weed seeds, or harbor fungal spores, bacteria or viral diseases that can kill plants.

Instead, use a prepared potting mix that's formulated for the types of plants you're growing. Or make your own by combining:

- One-third peat moss, coco coir or rice hulls (if using peat, add ¼ cup of garden lime per 6 gallons to balance the pH of your final product)
- One-third compost
- One-third vermiculite (replace with perlite if planting succulents, cacti or other plants that require quick-draining soil)
- A slow-release, balanced fertilizer (read the label for dosages)

For lush, abundant container arrangements, the traditional recipe includes a cute, rhyming threesome of plant types: thrillers, fillers and spillers.

Thrillers are tall upright plants intended to draw the eye upward. Plant your thriller first, placing it in the center of the container.

Surround the thriller with fillers, which are shorter plants that will spread to fill in the space between the thriller and spillers.

Spillers are vining plants that will cascade over the edge of the pot as they grow. Place them just inside the perimeter of the container.

If your potting mix doesn't contain nutrients, apply a fast-release fertilizer right after planting.

Plants growing in containers will need more attention than their in-ground counterparts. That's because plants growing in the garden can spread their roots far and wide to reach distant nutrient and water resources. Potted plants are limited by the contents of the container, so they're entirely reliant on you.

Soil in containers dries out much more quickly than in the garden. Sometimes I water pots in the morning only to return to wilting, thirsty plants at night. Check them twice a day, especially during hot, dry spells.

Follow fertilizer directions for potted plants; typically they recommend more frequent fertilizing than for beds and borders.

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Got questions about spring gardening? Please send them to Jessica Damiano at [jessica@jessicadamiano.com](mailto:jessica@jessicadamiano.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line. She'll answer selected questions in a future AP gardening column. Damiano writes regular gardening columns for The AP. She publishes the award-winning Weekly Dirt Newsletter. You can sign up here for weekly gardening tips and advice.

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For more AP gardening stories, go to <https://apnews.com/hub/gardening>.

## Teenager walks at brain injury event weeks after getting shot in head for knocking on wrong door

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Ralph Yarl — a Black teenager who was shot in the head and arm after mistakenly ringing the wrong doorbell — walked at a brain injury awareness event in his first major public appearance since the shooting.

The 17-year-old suffered a traumatic brain injury when he was shot while trying to pick up his younger brothers in April, the Kansas City Star reported.

Yarl walked with family, friends and other brain injury survivors Monday at Going the Distance for Brain Injury, a yearly Memorial Day race at Loose Park in Kansas City, Missouri.

"It takes a community. It takes a family. It takes a support group, all of that," Yarl's mother, Cleo Nagbe, said ahead of the race, adding: "Let's raise more awareness to stop the things that cause brain injuries and should not be causing them, especially gun violence."

As many as 1,000 people raced through the park, including many in neon green T-shirts who registered

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to be part of "Team Ralph," said Robin Abramowitz, executive director of the Brain Injury Association of Kansas and Greater Kansas City.

"It's important for Ralph to see that he is not alone," Yarl's aunt, Faith Spoonmore, said. She added that Yarl has debilitating migraines and issues with balance. He is also struggling with his emotions, mood changes and the trauma of the shooting.

Andrew Lester, an 84-year-old white man, is accused of shooting Yarl. The teen had confused Lester's address with a home about a block away where he was supposed to pick up his siblings.

The shooting drew worldwide attention and prompted rallies and protests in the Kansas City area, with critics saying Lester was given preferential treatment when police released him just two hours after he was arrested.

## Today in History: May 31, the Johnstown Flood

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, May 31, the 151st day of 2023. There are 214 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 31, 1889, some 2,200 people in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, perished when the South Fork Dam collapsed, sending 20 million tons of water rushing through the town.

On this date:

In 1790, President George Washington signed into law the first U.S. copyright act.

In 1859, the Big Ben clock tower in London went into operation, chiming for the first time.

In 1921, a race riot erupted in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as white mobs began looting and leveling the affluent Black district of Greenwood over reports a Black man had assaulted a white woman in an elevator; hundreds are believed to have died.

In 1949, former State Department official and accused spy Alger Hiss went on trial in New York, charged with perjury (the jury deadlocked, but Hiss was convicted in a second trial).

In 1962, former Nazi official Adolf Eichmann was hanged in Israel a few minutes before midnight for his role in the Holocaust.

In 1970, a magnitude 7.9 earthquake in Peru claimed an estimated 67,000 lives.

In 1977, the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline, three years in the making despite objections from environmentalists and Alaska Natives, was completed. (The first oil began flowing through the pipeline 20 days later.)

In 1989, House Speaker Jim Wright, dogged by questions about his ethics, announced he would resign. (Tom Foley later succeeded him.)

In 2009, Dr. George Tiller, a rare provider of late-term abortions, was shot and killed in a Wichita, Kansas, church. (Gunman Scott Roeder was later convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole for 50 years.) Millvina Dean, the last survivor of the 1912 sinking of the RMS Titanic, died in Southampton, England at 97.

In 2014, Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, the only American soldier held prisoner in Afghanistan, was freed by the Taliban in exchange for five Afghan detainees from the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. (Bergdahl, who'd gone missing in June 2009, later pleaded guilty to endangering his comrades by walking away from his post in Afghanistan; his sentence included a dishonorable discharge, a reduction in rank and a fine, but no prison time.)

In 2019, a longtime city employee opened fire in a municipal building in Virginia Beach, Virginia, killing 12 people on three floors before police shot and killed him; officials said DeWayne Craddock had resigned by email hours before the shooting.

In 2020, tens of thousands of protesters again took to the streets across America, with peaceful demonstrations against police killings overshadowed by unrest; officials deployed thousands of National Guard soldiers and enacted strict curfews in major cities.

Ten years ago: A tornado in the Oklahoma City metro area claimed eight lives, including those of storm



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chasers Tim Samaras, his son, Paul, and Carl Young; 13 people died in flash flooding. Four firefighters searching for people in a blazing Houston motel and restaurant were killed when part of the structure collapsed. Actor Jean Stapleton, who played Archie Bunker's far better half, the sweetly naive Edith, in TV's groundbreaking 1970s comedy "All in the Family," died in New York at age 90.

Five years ago: The Trump administration imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum from Europe, Mexico and Canada in a move that drew immediate vows of retaliation. Western Europe got its first populist government as Italy's anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and the right-wing League formed a governing coalition. Comedian Samantha Bee apologized to Ivanka Trump and to her viewers for using an expletive to describe the president's daughter on Bee's TBS show "Full Frontal." President Donald Trump pardoned conservative commentator Dinesh D'Souza, who had pleaded guilty to campaign finance fraud; Trump said D'Souza had been "treated very unfairly by our government." The Golden State Warriors won Game 1 of the NBA finals over the Cleveland Cavaliers in overtime; Cleveland's J.R. Smith inexplicably failed to take a go-ahead shot after a missed free-throw as time ran out in regulation.

One year ago: A week after a gunman ran into an Uvalde, Texas grade school and started shooting, the first of 21 funerals was held. Hundreds of mourners turned out for an afternoon Mass to remember Amerie Jo Garza, with six pallbearers carrying her small casket into Sacred Heart Catholic Church. She was one of 19 students killed, along with two teachers. The European Union agreed to ban the overwhelming majority of Russian oil imports after tense negotiations. The move was the most significant effort to that point to punish Russia for its war in Ukraine. K-Pop sensation BTS visited the White House to discuss combating the rise in hate crimes targeting Asian Americans with President Biden.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-director Clint Eastwood is 93. Singer Peter Dinklage is 85. Humanitarian and author Terry Waite is 84. Singer-musician Augie Meyers is 83. Actor Sharon Gless is 80. Football Hall of Famer Joe Namath is 80. Broadcast journalist/commentator Bernard Goldberg is 78. Actor Tom Berenger is 73. Actor Gregory Harrison is 73. Actor Kyle Secor is 66. Actor Roma Maffia (ma-FEE'-uh) is 65. Actor/comedian Chris Elliott is 63. Actor Lea Thompson is 62. Singer Corey Hart is 61. Actor Hugh Dillon is 60. Rapper Darryl "DMC" McDaniels is 59. Actor Brooke Shields is 58. TV host Phil Keoghan is 56. Jazz musician Christian McBride is 51. Actor Archie Panjabi is 51. Actor Merle Dandridge (TV: "Greenleaf") is 48. Actor Colin Farrell is 47. Rock musician Scott Klopfenstein (Reel Big Fish) is 46. Actor Eric Christian Olsen is 46. Rock musician Andy Hurley (Fall Out Boy) is 43. Country singer Casey James (TV: "American Idol") is 41. Actor Jonathan Tucker is 41. Rapper Waka Flocka Flame is 37. Pop singer Normani Hamilton (Fifth Harmony) is 27.