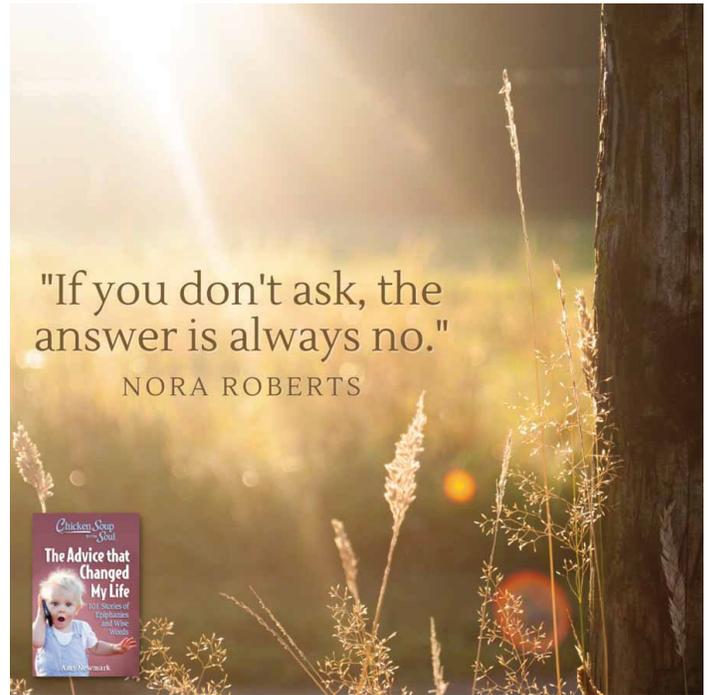


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Amateurs at Redfield, 7 p.m.
Legion at Milbank Tourney

Monday, June 5

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken breast, boiled potatoes, mixed vegetables, pineapple tidbits, whole wheat bread.

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., community center
Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Belden wins Queen of Hearts

Greg Belden was the lucky winner of the first Queen of Hearts jackpot in Thursday night's drawing. He won half of the \$29,000 jackpot after his name was drawn and the number he choose was indeed, the Queen of Hearts.

Groton Community Calendar

Saturday, June 3

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

Legion at Milbank Tourney

Jr. Teener at Mobridge, 3 p.m. (2)

Sunday, June 4

United Methodist: Worship with communion: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran worship with communion, 9 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

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

St. John's worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Zion worship with communion, 11 a.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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The Bulletin

by Newsweek

JANUARY 24, 2023

World in Brief

New Haven, Connecticut. Two of the injured individuals were in critical condition, according to the city's mayor.

LGBTQ advocacy group Human Rights Campaign is criticizing the Pentagon for canceling a drag show initially scheduled to take place at a U.S. military base on June 1, the first day of Pride Month.

More than 230 people are dead and hundreds more injured after two trains derailed in eastern India, according to The Associated Press.

A Utah school district decided to remove the Bible from elementary and middle schools after a parent raised concerns about "vulgarity or violence" in the text. Another parent has appealed the decision, according to local media reports.

The federal judge set to reside over Disney's First Amendment lawsuit against Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis removed himself from the case, citing a relative's ownership of some Disney stock.

Some Chase Bank customers are reporting duplicate transactions and fees while banking online. The bank said it will reverse duplicates and adjust fees as it works on resolving the problem.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Kharkiv Oblast Governor Oleh Syniehubov said Russian bombs killed two people and injured four others in Kivsharivka. Meanwhile, a woman was killed and three children were injured after a vehicle triggered an explosive near Morozova Dolyna.

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

Republican 2024 presidential candidate Nikki Haley will participate in a CNN town hall event while in Iowa on Sunday. The event will be moderated by CNN anchor Jake Tapper and is scheduled to air at 8 p.m. ET.

President Joe Biden is expected to sign legislation on Saturday to raise the debt ceiling, just two days before the U.S. Treasury warned that the country would struggle to pay its bills.

The first Republican presidential primary debate of the 2024 election cycle will take place on August 23 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the Republican National Committee announced.

Eight construction workers were injured after a building partially collapsed near Yale University's medical school in

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Celebrate 605 Day Across South Dakota

PIERRE S.D. – June 5th is more than just a day in South Dakota. It's 605 Day! On Monday, June 5, 2023, join Travel South Dakota in celebrating the eighth annual 605 Day.

"South Dakota is the best state in the nation to live, work, and raise a family. From our national and state parks, to our rolling prairies and granite peaks, this state is filled with so much beauty," said Governor Kristi Noem. "605 Day is a day to celebrate the Freedom that our residents and visitors enjoy when they spend time in South Dakota communities, businesses, and in our great outdoors."

Travel South Dakota encourages people to share photos of their favorite restaurants, scenic views, hidden gems, parks & trails, and daily life in South Dakota. They encourage everyone to tag social media posts with #605Day.

Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Tourism Jim Hagen said he's looking forward to another great 605 Day.

"We want to hear stories from South Dakotans and visitors about places that make South Dakota so special," said Hagen. "We can't wait to see how people celebrate our great state and its beautiful places on June 5th," said Hagen.

Travel South Dakota first started celebrating 605 Day as a community rallying point in 2016.

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

Gov. Noem Declares Disaster for Counties Impacted by Spring Flooding

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Kristi Noem signed Executive Order 2023-08, which declares a disaster in counties impacted by spring flooding that occurred April 9 through May 5, 2023.

The order declares a disaster to exist in the counties of Brown, Clark, Codington, Day, Faulk, Grant, Hand, Marshall, Potter, and Roberts, as well as the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation. The order also states federal resources are needed to help with the impacts of the flooding for state, tribal, and local governments.

The Executive Order is part of a request for public assistance and a Presidential Disaster Declaration request. An estimated \$2,305,362 in damage was incurred during the flooding in those counties listed.

Above normal seasonal snowfall and unusually cold late spring conditions resulted in a persistent and unusually deep snowpack into early April. In the second week of April temperatures became abnormally warm, surging to the 70s and 80s. This resulted in a period of very rapid snowmelt and both river and overland flooding. As a result of the flooding many roads were not suitable for travel. Ten counties and one Reservation suffered severe impacts to public infrastructure.

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James Valley Telecommunications Cooperative held its annual meeting with several individuals winning credit toward this bill. Pictured left to right are William and Mary Lynn James \$100 credit; Lyle Busch \$500 credit; Donna Hearnen \$250 credit; David Sigdestad \$250 credit; and Sue Wattier \$100 credit. (Courtesy Photo)

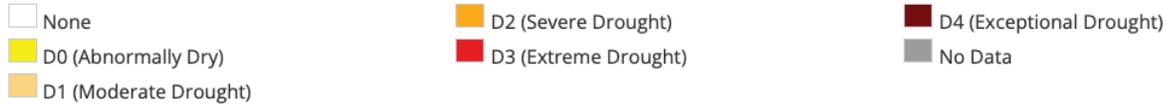


The board of directors for James Valley Telecommunications are pictured above. Left to right they are Roger Zastrow, Bill Ewalt, Garrett Rahm, Bob Wegner, Wendell Rye, Duane Jark, Mark Wattier and James Groft, CEO. (Courtesy Photo)

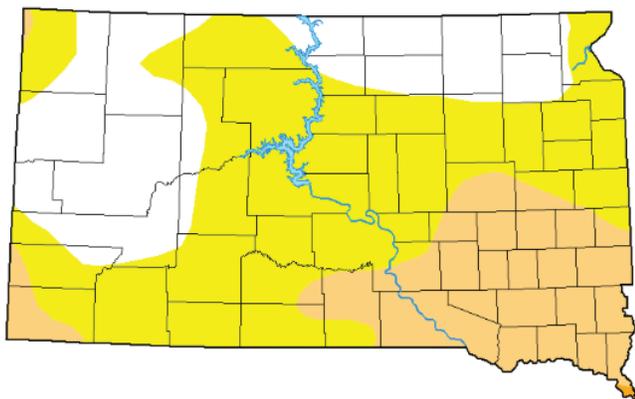
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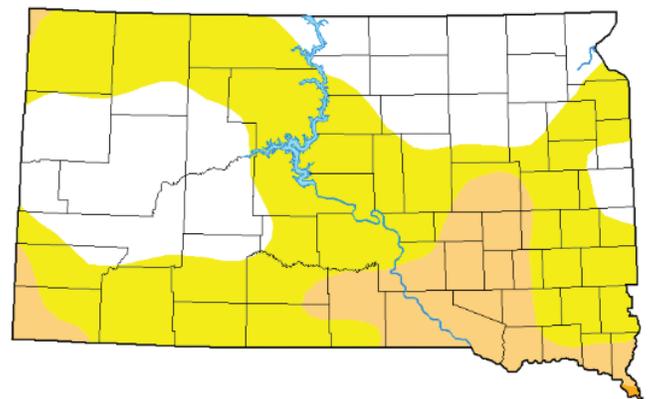
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



May 30



May 23

Locally heavy rain fell over western parts of the High Plains region while eastern parts had a dry week. Several stations in southwest Nebraska received over 5 inches of rain during this USDM week, with 10 inches reported near McCook. The rain replenished soil moisture, but caused extensive flooding. The rain caused a 2-category improvement in drought conditions in southwest Nebraska. Two inches or more of rain fell in localized parts of northeast Colorado, western Kansas, northeast Wyoming, and the western Dakotas, prompting pullback of abnormal dryness or moderate to exceptional drought. But continued dry conditions in the eastern portions of the region resulted in expansion of abnormal dryness or moderate drought in the Dakotas, abnormal dryness to extreme drought in eastern Kansas, and severe to exceptional drought in eastern Nebraska. Based on May 28 USDA data, 69% of the winter wheat crop in Kansas and 51% in Nebraska was in poor to very poor condition, and more than 40% of the topsoil moisture was short or very short in Nebraska (57%), Kansas (50%), and South Dakota (46%). More than two-thirds of the subsoil moisture was short or very short in Nebraska (75%) and Kansas (68%).

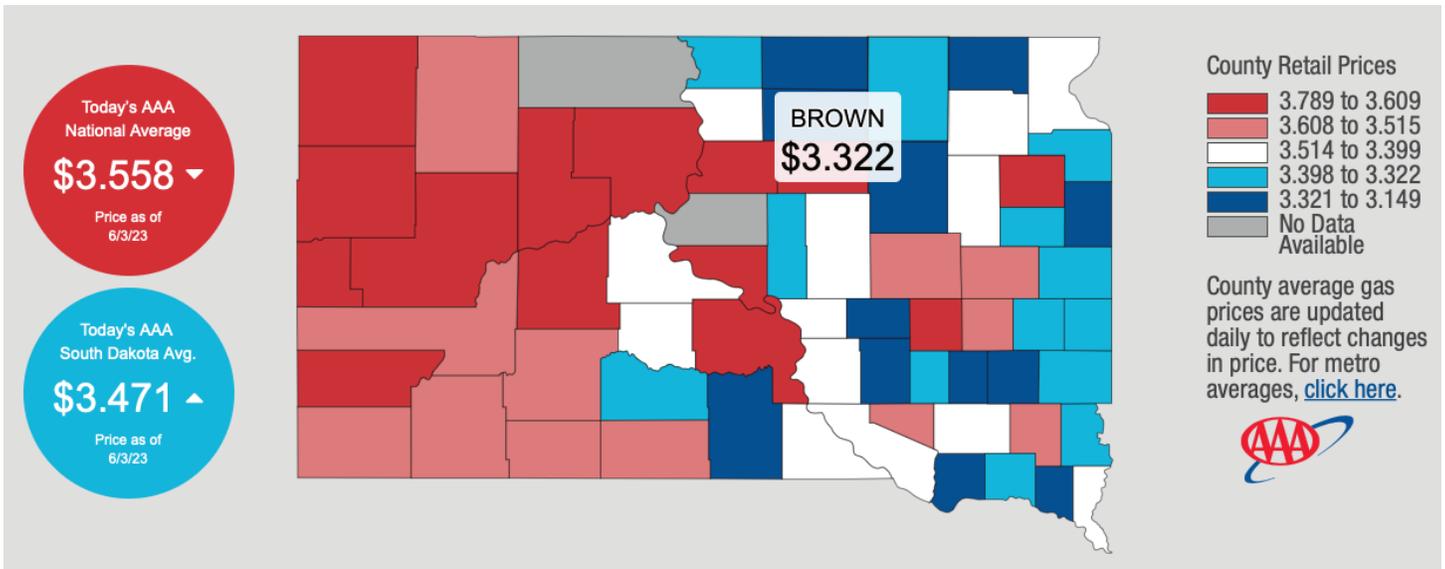
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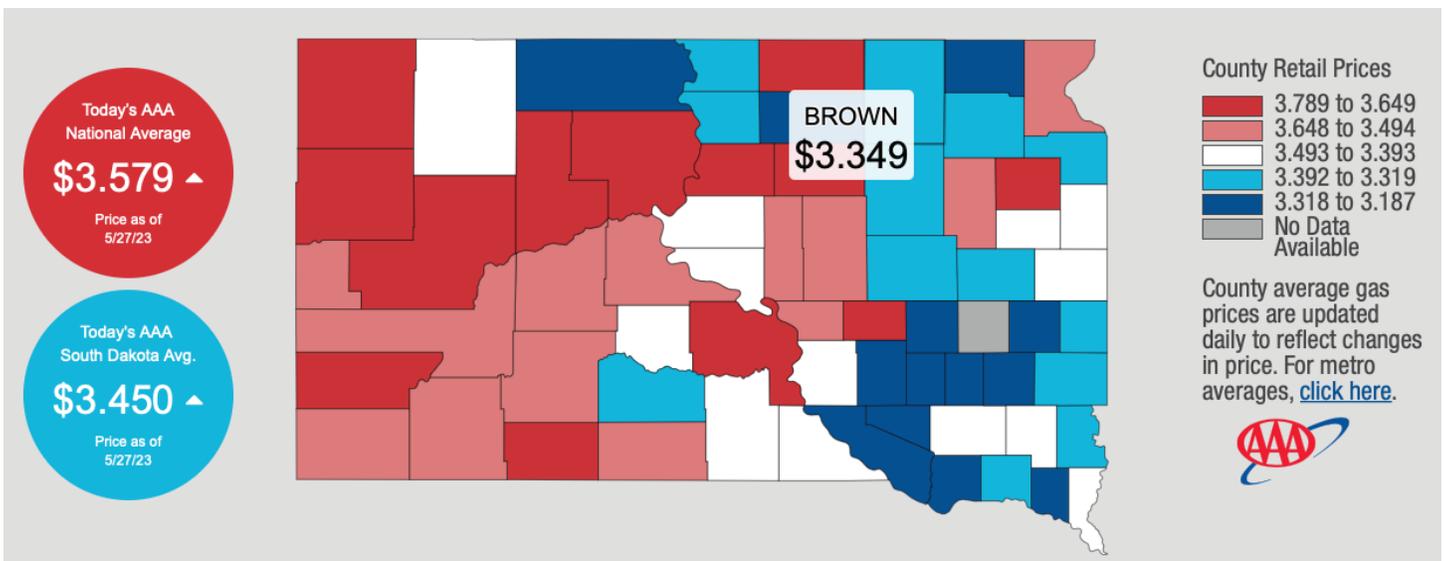
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.471	\$3.594	\$4.059	\$3.748
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.463	\$3.609	\$4.069	\$3.749
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.450	\$3.604	\$4.069	\$3.777
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.504	\$3.664	\$4.111	\$3.913
Year Ago Avg.	\$4.436	\$4.532	\$4.921	\$5.204

This Week



Two Weeks Ago



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Lake Norden Runs Away With Early Lead in Victory

Groton Legion Post 39 fell behind early and couldn't come back in an 8-5 loss to Lake Norden on Friday. Lake Norden scored on a walk by Ryker Warrington in the first inning, a sacrifice fly by Carson Stormo in the first inning, a single by Turner Stevenson in the first inning, a single by Cristian Rodriguez in the second inning, and a single by Stevenson in the second inning.

Groton Legion Post 39 lost despite out-hitting Lake Norden eight to four.

Lake Norden got things started in the first inning. Warrington drew a walk, scoring one run.

Warrington earned the victory on the pitcher's mound for Lake Norden. The pitcher allowed eight hits and five runs over six and two-thirds innings, striking out seven. Stormo threw one-third of an inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Tate Larson took the loss for Groton Legion Post 39. The pitcher allowed four hits and eight runs over four and two-thirds innings, striking out five.

Bradin Althoff went 2-for-4 at the plate to lead Groton Legion Post 39 in hits.

Lake Norden racked up four hits on the day. Stevenson and Rodriguez each collected multiple hits for Lake Norden.

Groton Jr. Legion Clinches Lead in Sixth Inning for Win Over Lake Norden

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion stole the lead late and defeated Lake Norden 8-5 on Saturday. The game was tied at five with Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion batting in the bottom of the sixth when Korbin Kucker singled on a 2-2 count, scoring one run.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion got on the board in the second inning when Karsten Fliehs drew a walk, scoring one run.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion tallied four runs in the fifth inning. Gavin Englund, Fliehs, and Carter Simon all moved runners across the plate with RBIs in the inning.

Kucker got the start for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. Kucker surrendered zero runs on zero hits over two innings, striking out four and walking one.

Stevenson was on the hill for Lake Norden. The hurler allowed four hits and five runs over five innings, striking out eight. Stevenson threw one inning in relief.

Nicholas Morris led Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion with three hits in three at bats.

Jensen went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Lake Norden in hits.

Groton Jr. Teeners Drops Game to Post 100 14U After Late Score

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U stayed in it until the end, but Post 100 14U pulled away late in a 15-9 victory on Thursday. The game was tied at nine with Post 100 14U batting in the bottom of the sixth when an error scored one run for Post 100 14U.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U collected five hits and Post 100 14U had 18 in the high-scoring affair.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U took an early lead in the second inning. Lincoln Krause drew a walk, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U put up four runs in the fourth inning. The big inning was thanks to walks by Ryder Schelle and Nick Groeblichhoff and a single by Ethan Kroll.

Xavier Ritter toed the rubber for Post 100 14U. The righty lasted three innings, allowing three hits and three runs while striking out five.

Schelle was on the hill for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The righthander lasted five innings, allowing 14 hits and ten runs while striking out three and walking one. Kroll threw one inning in relief out of the bullpen.

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

Post 100 14U scattered 18 hits in the game. Xavier Hobert, Luke Fiedler, Keegan Russell, Thatcher Kihne, and Jonah Pribyl all managed multiple hits for Post 100 14U. Hobert went 5-for-5 at the plate to lead Post 100 14U in hits.

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Despite Fewer Hits, Post 100 14U Beats Groton Jr. Teeners 14U

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U out-hit Post 100 14U seven to six, but it wasn't enough in a 12-9 loss on Friday. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U lost despite out-hitting Post 100 14U seven to six.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U got things started in the first inning. Ethan Kroll drove in two when Kroll singled. Post 100 14U pulled away for good with seven runs in the second inning. In the second Luke Fiedler singled on a 0-1 count, scoring two runs, Keegan Russell singled on a 0-1 count, scoring one run, Kaden Russell grounded out, scoring two runs, and Xavier Ritter grounded out, scoring one run.

Keaton Fiedler got the start for Post 100 14U. The pitcher lasted one inning, allowing five hits and nine runs.

Quinn Cogley was on the pitcher's mound for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The pitcher lasted one inning, allowing four hits and ten runs while striking out one. Easton Weber threw two innings in relief.

Kroll led Groton Jr. Teeners 14U with two hits in three at bats.

Post 100 14U collected six hits on the day. Houston Hauge, Russell, and Fiedler all collected multiple hits for Post 100 14U.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Noem plans to use emergency and disaster money to pay for border troop deployment

Legislator criticizes move and questions legality

BY: SETH TUPPER - JUNE 2, 2023 10:15 AM

Gov. Kristi Noem's funding source for a troop deployment to the U.S.-Mexico border is the state's Emergency and Disaster Fund, a revelation that caused a top-ranking legislator to criticize the plan and question its legality.

Noem announced the impending troop deployment Thursday in a news release, saying she plans to send at least 50 National Guard soldiers to help secure the nation's southern border this summer. She and 12 fellow Republican governors are responding to a request for assistance from the governor of Texas, the news release said.

Noem's spokesman, Ian Fury, did not provide a cost estimate for the deployment, but told South Dakota Searchlight via text message Thursday evening, "All costs will be paid out of the Emergency & Disaster Fund."

Lee Schoenbeck, a Watertown Republican and president pro tempore of the state Senate, said securing the border is a federal responsibility. He said Noem is acting on a "political agenda unrelated to South Dakota issues" and violating the trust placed in the executive branch to spend the state's money as intended.

"She cannot use those funds for that," Schoenbeck said Thursday night. "She needs to follow the law."

A fund for in-state expenses

A Searchlight review of budget documents, public testimony, legislation and state laws pertaining to the fund revealed a common thread: references to the fund being intended for expenses within the state's borders.

According to the recommended budget Noem sent to legislators in December, the fund is for emergencies and disasters "in South Dakota." Noem asked legislators to put \$2,524,560 into the fund.

The House Committee on Appropriations filed a bill to appropriate precisely that amount in January. Angela Lemieux, of the Department of Public Safety, testified during the bill's first public hearing later that month.

"The fund covers costs for emergencies and disasters that occur in the state," Lemieux told the Legislature's Joint Committee on Appropriations.

She said the money is used to help communities recover from natural disasters, and for grants that help communities prepare for future disasters.

After the Joint Appropriations Committee, the bill's next stop was the House of Representatives, where Republican Lance Koth of Mitchell delivered the only comments.

"It's a special appropriation for the Emergency and Disaster Fund to cover costs of emergencies and disasters that have already occurred in our state," Koth said.

In the Senate, the only remarks came from Dean Wink, R-Howes, who offered a detailed example to illustrate the fund's purpose.

"We've had a very dry two years out in the Black Hills, and so we've had some wildfires that the locals, it got too big for them," Wink said. "We have a reciprocal agreement with neighboring states that if we need help, they send their crews and their equipment, and vice versa. And next year, they may need our help. So they send us a bill after going back home, the Department of Public Safety pays it, and now they request us to refill their fund to bring it back up to zero."

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The bill received unanimous support at each level of the Legislature, and Noem signed it into law on Feb. 9. None of the testimony, nor any of the language in the bill, mentioned out-of-state National Guard deployments.

The bill's text said the money is for costs related to an "emergency or disaster" and pointed to a pre-existing state law that defines those terms. That law says emergencies and disasters include any natural, nuclear, man-made, war-related, or other catastrophe "in any part of the state."

Legislators react

Thursday night, Schoenbeck declined to say what, if anything, the Legislature could do to stop Noem from spending the money as she plans. But he said budget requests from Noem and her staff could face opposition during the next legislative session.

"The appropriations process involves a lot of trust," Schoenbeck said. "If they come back with less trust, that translates into what's appropriated the next year."

Sen. Jean Hunhoff, R-Yankton, the chair of the Joint Appropriations Committee, said Noem's plan to use the Emergency and Disaster Fund for a troop deployment "looks like a new use of those dollars."

Hunhoff wasn't prepared to offer further comments, she said, because she hadn't received any communication about the matter from the Governor's Office.

"I wish we would've had notice or information, but apparently we all got the information the same time the news release went out," Hunhoff said.

Noem has sent National Guard troops to the nation's southern border before. In 2021, she ignited controversy with her acceptance of a \$1 million donation from Tennessee billionaire Willis Johnson to pay most of the cost for deploying 48 troops. The deployment cost a total of \$1.45 million, according to records obtained by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit.

Friday, Fury seemed to disregard the \$1 million donation while tweeting that the state's Emergency and Disaster Fund "is how these type of activations are ALWAYS paid for. In fact, it's precisely how the deployment to the border 2 years ago was paid for." South Dakota Searchlight sent Fury a message asking for clarification on whether the fund covered the portion of the deployment not covered by the donation, or whether the donation was never paid. Fury has not yet responded.

Also in 2021, Noem approved the sending of additional National Guard soldiers to the border at the request of the federal government. She said those additional troops were on "federal pay status."

The new deployments announced by Noem and other Republican governors come during a period of heightened political rhetoric about the border, in connection with the end of a pandemic policy that temporarily turned away asylum seekers to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The number of migrants crossing the border — predicted by some to surge after the policy ended — has plummeted recently.

Fury's Friday tweet said, "The border is an EMERGENCY. It's a warzone."

— South Dakota Searchlight's Joshua Haiar contributed to this report.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Congressional Roundup: SD delegation unanimous in support for debt limit deal

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - JUNE 2, 2023 10:14 AM

South Dakota's three members of Congress expressed varying levels of enthusiasm for the deal to avert a default on the national debt, which all three voted for this week.

Rep. Dusty Johnson was featured in an NPR story Thursday that credited "low-key lawmakers" like him for getting the bill through the House of Representatives. Johnson has made frequent appearances in local and national media to promote the bill, including one on CNN where he called the legislation "a remarkable conservative accomplishment."

"When you're reducing spending, when you're peeling back the regulatory state, when you're unlocking

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American energy and getting people back to work, this is a big deal," Johnson said.

The legislation includes new work requirements for some recipients of government aid, an idea Johnson helped inject into the debate in March with a bill proposing work requirements for food-aid recipients.

Johnson is a Republican, as are Sens. Sen. John Thune and Mike Rounds. Thune went on Fox News just before the debt limit deal passed the House and gave the legislation a mixed review.

"This isn't a perfect deal. You know, it's less for defense than I would have liked and not enough [cuts] on the non-defense discretionary," Thune said. "But if you look at the permitting reforms, you look at the work requirements, you look at the clawback of COVID funds and IRS funds from the Democrats' big spending spree from last summer, there are a lot of good things in here that bend the curve in the right direction, and that's what this is really all about."

On the Senate floor, Rounds bemoaned the limits on defense spending.

"Why, as a part of the negotiation, should we be required to look at a reduction in the amount of dollars necessary for our young men and women to be able to defend our country?" Rounds said.

Efforts to amend the bill in the Senate failed, and the Senate passed it 63-36 on Thursday night after the House passed it 314-117 on Wednesday night.

Besides suspending the nation's borrowing limit through Jan. 2, 2025, the legislation will:

Limit the federal government to spending \$886 billion for defense and \$704 billion for nondefense during the fiscal year that's set to begin Oct. 1; the next year, fiscal 2025, the bill sets the ceiling at \$895 billion for defense and \$711 billion for nondefense.

Rescind \$28 billion in COVID-19 funding that hasn't yet been spent and about \$2 billion in funding for the Internal Revenue Service that Democrats approved in August.

Impose new work requirements for some people participating in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Amend the National Environmental Policy Act by limiting requirements for some projects and requiring environmental reviews to be completed in a one-to-two-year time frame.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates the legislation will lower the deficit by \$1.5 trillion during the next decade.

Veterans' health care choice bill

Rounds and fellow Republican Marsha Blackburn, of Tennessee, reintroduced the Veterans Health Care Freedom Act this week. It would allow veterans enrolled in the Veterans Affairs health system to receive care outside that system.

Currently, veterans have to meet eligibility criteria and get approval from the VA to seek care in non-VA facilities. The legislation would remove the VA from the referral process and allow veterans to seek care where it's most convenient.

"Our veterans deserve the freedom to choose where they receive care, whether it's at the VA Clinic in Wagner or through a local community provider in Moberly," Rounds said in a news release.

PTSD training

Rounds and a Democratic colleague, Amy Klobuchar, of Minnesota, reintroduced legislation this week to improve training for Veterans Affairs personnel who handle post-traumatic stress disorder claims.

The bill would require the VA to implement recommendations in a 2020 report by the Office of the Inspector General. For that report, the office reviewed 150 claims from veterans who were trying to gain VA-covered treatment by establishing that their PTSD was connected to their military service. The office found 24 of the 150 claims – 16 percent – were inaccurately processed.

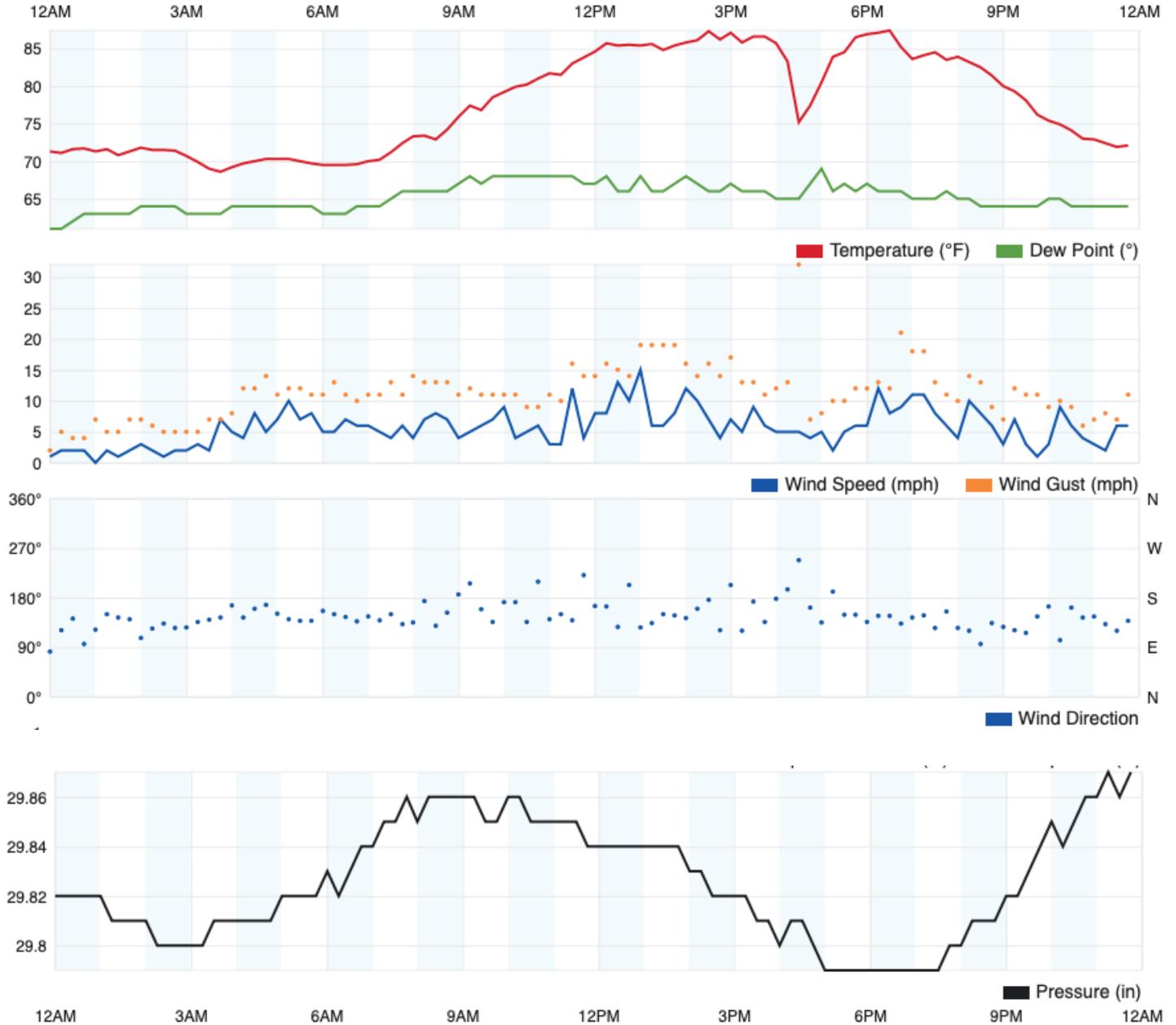
"This kind of error rate is unacceptable," Rounds said in a news release.

— States Newsroom's D.C. Bureau contributed to this report.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Sunny then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms then Partly Cloudy	Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms then Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance T-storms	Partly Cloudy then Slight Chance T-storms	Mostly Sunny then Chance T-storms
High: 91 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 89 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 89 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 88 °F



Isolated To Scattered Afternoon Storms

June 3, 2023
2:39 AM



Probability of Thunder Forecast

	6/3 Sat						6/4 Sun								
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am
Aberdeen	0	5	15	35	30	20	10	5	10	15	30	30	20	10	10
Britton	5	5	20	35	30	15	10	5	5	15	35	35	25	15	15
Brookings	10	20	35	35	20	15	0	0	15	15	40	40	40	0	0
Chamberlain	0	0	20	25	25	20	15	0	0	0	20	20	20	0	0
Clark	0	5	20	35	25	15	10	5	15	20	35	40	20	10	10
Eagle Butte	0	5	10	15	30	20	20	5	5	10	20	25	20	15	15
Ellendale	5	5	15	35	30	20	15	5	10	20	40	40	30	15	15
Eureka	5	5	10	35	25	20	20	5	5	15	35	45	30	15	15
Gettysburg	0	5	10	25	25	20	15	5	5	15	30	30	20	15	15
Huron	0	0	20	25	20	20	10	0	10	10	25	25	25	0	0
Kennebec	0	5	15	25	25	20	15	5	5	10	25	25	20	10	10
McIntosh	0	5	10	15	20	20	15	5	5	10	25	25	20	15	15
Milbank	5	5	20	30	25	15	10	5	15	15	25	30	20	10	10
Miller	0	0	15	30	25	15	15	10	10	15	35	35	25	15	15
Mobridge	0	5	10	20	20	20	15	5	5	15	30	35	25	10	10
Murdo	5	5	15	20	30	20	15	5	5	5	20	20	15	10	10
Pierre	0	5	15	20	25	20	15	5	5	10	25	25	20	10	10
Redfield	0	0	20	35	30	20	15	10	15	15	30	35	20	10	10
Sisseton	5	5	15	30	25	15	10	5	10	15	30	30	20	10	10
Watertown	5	5	20	30	25	15	10	5	15	20	35	40	20	10	10
Webster	5	5	20	35	30	15	10	5	10	20	30	35	20	15	15
Wheaton	5	5	15	25	25	10	10	5	5	15	25	30	20	10	10

We will continue with very little change to the forecast through the weekend. Expect highs in the upper 80s to low 90s with isolated to scattered weak thunderstorm coverage this afternoon.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 88 °F at 2:57 PM

Low Temp: 69 °F at 3:37 AM

Wind: 32 mph at 4:23 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 32 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1933

Record Low: 34 in 1964

Average High: 77

Average Low: 52

Average Precip in June.: 0.32

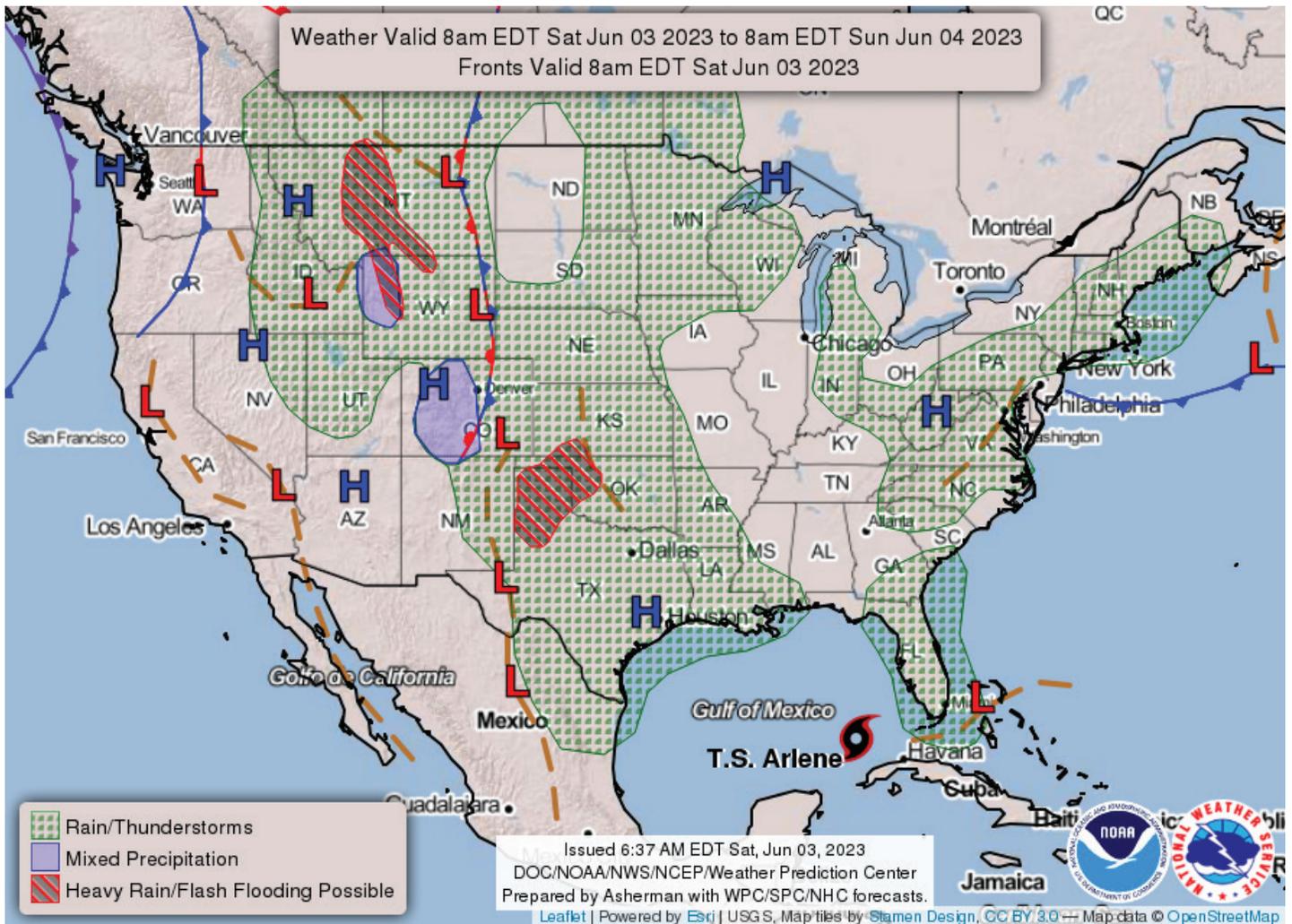
Precip to date in June.: 0.04

Average Precip to date: 7.57

Precip Year to Date: 7.95

Sunset Tonight: 9:16:47 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:43:53 AM



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Today in Weather History

June 3, 1898: A violent windstorm passed over Aberdeen between 1 AM and 2 AM. Damage was confined to awnings, roofs of buildings, and plate glass windows.

June 3, 1933: This estimated F2 tornado moved ENE from 6 miles southwest of Wilmot, passing 3 miles south of town and dissipating at Big Stone Lake. A child was killed in a barn. Roof, barn, and church debris was scattered for miles, and over a dozen farms were heavily damaged. This tornado was estimated to be on the ground for about 15 miles.

June 3, 1975: Severe thunderstorms erupted across central sections of South Dakota. During the evening hours, the storms stretched from the southern border to the North Dakota state line and were packing high winds and large hail. In several areas, including Mobridge, hail as large as baseballs did damage to crops, homes, and vehicles and in some regions piled up to two feet deep. Strong thunderstorm winds also uprooted trees and damaged numerous farm buildings. Multiple funnels and small tornadoes were observed, including three in Charles Mix County.

June 3, 1997: Heavy rains of 2 to 4 inches through the early morning hours resulted in the flooding of some roads, fields, and creeks across parts of Jones and Lyman counties. In particular, the KOA campgrounds near Presho were heavily flooded. The KOA office and home had three and a half feet of water in them. Also, several homes near or in Presho received water and were heavily damaged. The Medicine and Stoney Butte creeks set record highs.

1860: Iowa's infamous Camanche Tornado, likely an F5 storm, kills 92 and injures 200. Every home and business were destroyed. It was one of the most damaging families of tornadoes ever to strike the US and resulted in more farm fatalities than any other tornado except for the Tri-State tornado.

1921 - A cloudburst near Pikes Peak CO killed 120 people. Pueblo CO was flooded by a twenty-five foot crest of the Arkansas River, killing 70 persons. Fourteen inches of rain was reported at Boggs Flat, where a hard surface road through nearly level country was washed out to a depth of seven feet. (The Weather Channel)

1959 - Thunderstorms in northwestern Kansas produced up to eighteen inches of hail near Salden during the early evening. Crops were completely destroyed, and total damage from the storm was about half a million dollars. Hail fell for a record eighty-five minutes. The temperature dropped from near 80 degrees prior to the storm to 38 degrees at the height of the storm. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Six days of flooding in South Texas culminated with five to six inch rains from Bexar County to Bandera County, and five to nine inches rains in Gonzalez and Wilson Counties. Total crop damage was estimated at 500 million dollars. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Early morning thunderstorms in southern Texas produced wind gusts to 86 mph at Port Isabel, and wind gusts to 83 mph at South Padre Island. Unseasonably hot weather prevailed from the Southern Plateau Region to the Northern High Plains. Fourteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing over the Southern Plains Region during the afternoon hours produced severe weather into the night. Thunderstorms spawned eleven tornadoes, and there were 169 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 80 mph at Newcastle, OK, and Wilson, OK. Softball size hail was reported at Monahans, Childress and Groesbeck TX. Monahans TX reported six million dollars damage. Five inches of rain deluged Geronimo OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1993: Early morning severe thunderstorms dumped huge hailstones across northern Oklahoma. Hail, up to 6 inches in diameter in Enid, went through roofs of homes, damaged three jets at Vance Air Force Base, and did \$500,000 in damage at a car dealership. Winds gusts reached 70 mph at Vance Air Force Base as well. Hail damage to the wheat crop was estimated at 70 million dollars.

1997: It was a chilly day in the East. The high temperature at Philadelphia International Airport was only 59 degrees, tying a record-low maximum for the date set back in 1881. The temperature at Middletown, Pennsylvania rose to 58 degrees, breaking the record-low maximum for the date of 59 degrees set back in 1915. Washington, DC only reached 58 degrees, breaking the old record-low maximum of 59 set back in 1915. Central Park in New York City only reached 61 degrees.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

MONEY MATTERS

One day Winston Churchill was informed that he was to address the United Kingdom in one hour. He called a taxi and said to the driver, "Drive me to the British Broadcasting Corporation just as fast as you can."

"Sorry, sir," he responded, "I can't do that. Sir Winston is to broadcast at six o'clock. I want to get home to hear him, and if I drive you to the BBC, I'll miss him. I cannot do that!"

The answer thrilled Churchill so much that he reached in his pocket and gave him a large sum of money.

"The devil with Churchill," said the driver. "Hop in!" and off they rode.

There is nothing wrong with having money or enjoying the things that money can buy. But there is something wrong if wanting money causes us to do the wrong things, do things poorly, or if we compromise our values, to get money.

Jesus said that if power or possessions, position or priorities have first place in our lives they will become worthless and ultimately destroy us. What we have in this world will be left in this world - we cannot take anything from this world into the next. Everything we have now is temporary and cannot be exchanged for anything eternal. The "things" of this world cannot purchase salvation or eternal life. As Christians, we are obligated to make the pursuit of God and building His Kingdom on earth the most important goals of our lives.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to live lives that demonstrate to others that You are Lord of our lives. May we seek first Your righteousness and then Your Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But Jesus said, "You feed them." Mark 6:36-37



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:
06.02.23

3 16 19 36 60 25

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$218,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.31.23

4 15 27 28 49 5

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$3,420,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 1 Mins 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.02.23

17 22 26 31 48 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 31 Mins 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.31.23

5 14 23 28 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$80,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 1 Mins 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.31.23

15 36 61 66 68 23

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.31.23

2 4 54 61 62 14

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$262,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Debt deal imposes new work requirements for food aid and that frustrates many Democrats

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats are deeply conflicted about the food aid requirements that President Joe Biden negotiated as part of the debt ceiling deal, fearing damage has been done to safety net programs that will be difficult to unravel in the years ahead as Republicans demand further cuts.

Bargaining over toughening work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, commonly known as food stamps, became the focal point for the White House and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., up until the end. Negotiators from both sides made clear, publicly and privately, that it was the biggest area of disagreement and almost led to the talks breaking down several times.

In the end, Democrats warily accepted new requirements for some able-bodied recipients in exchange for food aid. Republicans agreed to drop some work requirements for veterans, homeless people and others.

The result of the tense back-and-forth was a deal that played to both sides, but one that many Democrats agonized over as they weighed whether to vote for the package this past week. Many struggled to square cutting access to food for marginalized communities with an outcome that allowed the United States to avoid defaulting on its debt.

"In order for this country to not default on its bills, we then turned and made our most vulnerable communities default," said Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo. Years before she came to Congress, Bush lived in a car with her then-husband and two young children after the family had been evicted from their rental home.

The federal aid program provides monthly funds — sometimes as little as \$6 a day — to allow low-income individuals and families to buy groceries. It is the largest program in the country focused on fighting hunger, with 41 million people using benefits last year alone to purchase food, according to the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the program.

By 2025, new requirements will apply to able-bodied adults from age 49 to 54 without dependents — an increase of five years. Those individuals will be required to work or attend training programs for at least 80 hours a month if they want to receive more than three months of SNAP benefits within a three-year period.

Republicans have tried for decades to expand work requirements for these government assistance programs, arguing they result in more people returning to the workforce, despite several studies that have found they have little impact on employment.

"We're going to return these programs to being a life vest, not a lifestyle. A hand up, not a handout and that has always been the American way," Rep. Mike Johnson of Louisiana, the vice chair of the House Republican conference, told reporters.

The White House countered that Republican proposition by getting GOP lawmakers to waive the work requirements for new groups — veterans, individuals who are homeless or facing housing instability and youth aging out of foster care — to balance out the number of people who would now be facing these new restrictions.

The end result could be more people receiving SNAP benefits overall. An estimate from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released Tuesday said that the changes in the debt ceiling package would add almost 80,000 people to the rolls of SNAP in an average month.

But the trade-off of seemingly helping some groups while hurting others still left the left flank of the Democratic Party — lawmakers who have supported Biden and helped pass his agenda for the first two years of his term — frustrated by the outcome. That was especially the case as advocates, including the nonpartisan National Alliance to End Homelessness, warned of a disturbing trend across the country of an increase in the number of older adults who are becoming homeless, some for the first time.

"What we should not be playing is oppression Olympics," Bush said. "Like which one gets to hurt today? Which one gets to get to that finish line to hurt today? That's not where we should be as a society."

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Bush, a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, voted "no" on the debt limit deal on Wednesday night after she spent days hearing from advocate groups and constituents on the issue.

"I think it's important that (Biden) understands that it's good for us to have a strong, no vote because this isn't a deal that he would have made if we hadn't been held hostage," Democratic Rep. Pramila Jayapal of Washington state, chair of the Progressive Caucus, told The Associated Press this past week.

They weren't alone. Several dozen Democrats in the House and a handful in the Senate voted against the compromise, arguing that the bill allowed for Republican hostage-taking and could open the door for future cuts to these government programs in the next several months.

"I did not agree to these SNAP restrictions, and I won't give Republicans an opening to try and take food from more food insecure Americans in Farm Bill negotiations later this year," Sen. John Fetterman, D-Pa., said in a statement.

The White House and Democrats who ended up supporting the negotiated deal said they believe the issue of work requirements and risk posed by Republicans have been put to bed.

"The most important thing to me is the fact that this closes the door on that debate," said Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, who leads the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee and has been a longtime champion and defender of the SNAP program. "We are not going to bring it up again in the farm bill. This is not something that's going to be renegotiated. It's done."

But advocates warn that could change because the debt limit bill was the most substantial change of the work rules for food aid and other government assistance programs since they were put into place in the 1996 welfare overhaul.

Some of the most conservative Republicans in Congress — part of the right flank whom McCarthy had to pacify to become speaker — have criticized the plan for being "weak" and are itching to go even further to clamp down on these programs.

"In this bill, we have temporary work requirements, but we've added permanent new exceptions," said Texas Rep. Keith Self, a member of the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus that overwhelmingly rejected the bill. "That, ladies and gentlemen, is a sleight of hand."

Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

India train crash kills over 280, injures 900 in one of nation's worst rail disasters

By RAFIQ MAQBOOL, ASHOK SHARMA and KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

BALASORE, India (AP) — Rescuers found no more survivors in the overturned and mangled wreckage of two passenger trains that derailed in eastern India, killing more than 280 people and injuring hundreds in one of the country's deadliest rail crashes in decades, officials said Saturday.

Chaotic scenes erupted after the derailment on Friday night about 220 kilometers (137 miles) southwest of Kolkata, as rescuers climbed atop the wrecked trains to break open doors and windows using cutting torches.

The death toll rose steadily throughout the night. Scores of bodies, covered by white sheets, lay on the ground near the tracks while locals and rescuers raced to free the hundreds of people trapped in the rail cars under the twisted metal and broken glass. Army soldiers and air force helicopters joined the effort.

An Associated Press photographer saw bodies still entangled in a badly mangled coach, as rescuers struggled to retrieve them working under the oppressive heat with temperatures reaching up to 35 degree Celsius (96 degrees Fahrenheit).

"By 10 p.m. (on Friday) we were able to rescue the survivors. After that it was about picking up dead bodies," Sudhanshu Sarangi, director of Odisha state's fire and emergency department, told The Associated Press. "This is very, very tragic. I have never seen anything like this in my career."

At least 280 bodies were recovered overnight and into Saturday morning, he said. About 900 people were injured and the cause was under investigation.

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The accident occurred at a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is focussing on the modernization of the British colonial-era railroad network in India, which has become the world's most populous country with 1.42 billion. Despite government efforts to improve rail safety, several hundred accidents occur every year on India's railways, the largest train network under one management in the world.

Modi flew to the crash site and spent half an hour examining the relief effort and talking to rescue officials. He was seen giving instructions on the phone to officials in New Delhi.

He later visited a hospital where he walked around inquiring from doctors about the treatment being given to the injured, and spoke to some of them, moving from bed to bed in a ward.

Modi told reporters that it was a sad moment and he was feeling the pain of those who have suffered in the accident. He said the government would do its utmost to help them and strictly punish those found responsible.

Modi on Saturday was supposed to inaugurate a high-speed train connecting Goa and Mumbai that is equipped with a collision avoidance system. The event was canceled after Friday's accident. The trains that derailed did not have that system.

Amitabh Sharma, a Railroad Ministry spokesperson, said the rescue work was near completion. Rail authorities will start removing the wreckage to repair the track and resume train operations, he said.

About 200 of the severely injured people were transferred to specialty hospitals in other cities in Odisha, said P.K. Jena, the state's top administrative official. Another 200 were discharged after receiving medical care and the rest were being treated in local hospitals, he added. Scores of people also showed up to donate blood.

"The challenge now is identifying the bodies. Wherever the relatives are able to provide evidence, the bodies are handed over after autopsies. If not identified, maybe we have to go for a DNA test and other protocols," he said.

Ten to 12 coaches of one train derailed, and debris from some of the mangled coaches fell onto a nearby track, according to Sharma. The debris was hit by another passenger train coming from the opposite direction, causing up to three coaches of the second train to also derail, he added.

A third train carrying freight was also involved, the Press Trust of India reported, but there was no immediate confirmation of that from railroad authorities. PTI said some of the derailed passenger coaches hit cars from the freight train.

The rescue operation was slowed because two train cars were pressed together by the impact of the accident, Jena said.

Officials said 1,200 rescuers worked with 115 ambulances, 50 buses and 45 mobile health units through the night. Saturday was declared as a day of mourning in Odisha.

Villagers said they rushed to the site to evacuate people after hearing a loud sound created by the train coaches going off the tracks.

"The local people really went out on a limb to help us. They not only helped in pulling out people, but retrieved our luggage and got us water," PTI cited Rupam Banerjee, a survivor, as saying.

Passenger Vandana Kaleda said that people were falling on each other as her coach shook violently and veered off the tracks.

"As I stepped out of the washroom, suddenly the train tilted. I lost my balance. ... Everything went topsy turvy. People started falling on each other and I was shocked and could not understand what happened. My mind stopped working," she said.

Another survivor who did not give his name said he was sleeping when the impact woke him up. He said he saw other passengers with broken limbs and disfigured faces.

The collision involved two trains, the Coromandel Express traveling from Howrah in West Bengal state to Chennai in Tamil Nadu state and the Howrah Superfast Express traveling from Bengaluru in Karnataka to Howrah, officials said. It was not immediately clear which derailed first.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, India's railway minister, said a high-level probe would be carried out. The political opposition criticized the government and called for Vaishnaw to resign.

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In August 1995, two trains collided near New Delhi, killing 358 people in one of the worst train accidents in India.

In 2016, a passenger train slid off the tracks between the cities of Indore and Patna, killing 146 people.

Most train accidents are blamed on human error or outdated signaling equipment.

More than 12 million people ride 14,000 trains across India every day, traveling on 64,000 kilometers (40,000 miles) of track.

Sharma and Pathi reported from New Delhi. Associated Press journalist Chonchui Ngashangva in New Delhi contributed to this report.

Biden set to sign debt ceiling bill that averts prospect of unprecedented federal default

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is expected to sign legislation on Saturday to raise the debt ceiling, dodging Monday's deadline when the Treasury warned that the United States would start running short of cash to pay all its bills.

The bipartisan measure, passed by the House on Wednesday and the Senate on Thursday, averts the potential of an unprecedented government default that would have rocked the U.S. and global economies. Raising the nation's debt limit, now at \$31.4 trillion, will ensure that the government can borrow to pay debts already incurred.

"Passing this budget agreement was critical. The stakes could not have been higher," Biden said from the Oval Office on Friday evening. "Nothing would have been more catastrophic," he said, than defaulting on the country's debt.

The agreement was hashed out by Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, giving Republicans some of their demanded federal spending cuts but holding the line on major Democratic priorities. It raises the debt limit until 2025 — after the 2024 presidential election — and gives legislators budget targets for the next two years in hopes of assuring fiscal stability as the political season heats up.

"No one got everything they wanted but the American people got what they needed," Biden said, highlighting the "compromise and consensus" in the deal. "We averted an economic crisis and an economic collapse."

Biden used the opportunity to itemize the achievements of his first term as he runs for reelection, including support for high-tech manufacturing, infrastructure investments and financial incentives for fighting climate change. He also highlighted ways he blunted Republican efforts to roll back his agenda and achieve deeper cuts.

"We're cutting spending and bringing deficits down at the same time," Biden said. "We're protecting important priorities from Social Security to Medicare to Medicaid to veterans to our transformational investments in infrastructure and clean energy."

Even as he pledged to continue working with Republicans, Biden also drew contrasts with the opposing party, particularly when it comes to raising taxes on the wealthy, something the Democratic president has sought.

It's something he suggested may need to wait until a second term.

"I'm going to be coming back," he said. "With your help, I'm going to win."

Biden's remarks were the most detailed comments from the Democratic president on the compromise he and his staff negotiated. He largely remained quiet publicly during the high-stakes talks, a decision that frustrated some members of his party but was intended to give space for both sides to reach a deal and for lawmakers to vote it to his desk.

Biden praised McCarthy and his negotiators for operating in good faith, and all congressional leaders for ensuring swift passage of the legislation. "They acted responsibly, and put the good of the country ahead of politics," he said.

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Overall, the 99-page bill restricts spending for the next two years and changes some policies, including imposing new work requirements for older Americans receiving food aid and greenlighting an Appalachian natural gas pipeline that many Democrats oppose. Some environmental rules were modified to help streamline approvals for infrastructure and energy projects — a move long sought by moderates in Congress.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates it could actually expand total eligibility for federal food assistance, with the elimination of work requirements for veterans, homeless people and young people leaving foster care.

The legislation also bolsters funds for defense and veterans, cuts back some new money for the Internal Revenue Service and rejects Biden's call to roll back Trump-era tax breaks on corporations and the wealthy to help cover the nation's deficits. But the White House said the IRS' plans to step up enforcement of tax laws for high-income earners and corporations would continue.

The agreement imposes an automatic overall 1% cut to spending programs if Congress fails to approve its annual spending bills — a measure designed to pressure lawmakers of both parties to reach consensus before the end of the fiscal year in September.

In both chambers, more Democrats backed the legislation than Republicans, but both parties were critical to its passage. In the Senate the tally was 63-36 including 46 Democrats and independents and 17 Republicans in favor, 31 Republicans along with four Democrats and one independent who caucuses with the Democrats opposed.

The vote in the House was 314-117.

AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

Delegates working to end global plastics pollution agree to craft a draft treaty

By ANGELA CHARLTON and JENNIFER MCDERMOTT Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Global negotiators have agreed to craft a draft treaty to end plastic pollution, a preliminary but crucial step toward tackling one of the most lasting sources of human waste.

Environmental advocates cautiously welcomed the outcome of five days of U.N. talks in Paris on plastic pollution, but expressed concern that the petroleum industry and some governments would water down the eventual treaty. Most plastic is made from fossil fuels.

Delegates at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for Plastics agreed Friday evening to produce an initial draft before their next meeting in Kenya in November, participants said. The committee is charged with developing the first international, legally binding treaty on plastic pollution, on land and at sea.

A coalition of "high-ambition" governments led by Norway and Rwanda, along with environmental groups, want to end plastic pollution altogether by 2040 by slashing production and limiting some chemicals used in making plastics.

"Projections suggest that a child born today will see plastic production double by the time they turn 18, but we know that the consequences of increasing plastic production will be disastrous for our health, the planet, and the climate," said Dr. Tadesse Amera, who led the International Pollutants Elimination Network's delegation at the talks. "The stakes are high, but we are optimistic by the growing awareness among delegates of the need for global controls."

Countries with big petroleum industries like the U.S., China and Saudi Arabia are focusing instead on plastic recycling, and want country-by-country rules instead of across-the-board limits.

Stew Harris, senior director for global plastics policy at the American Chemistry Council, argued for allowing each government to "use the right tools based on their unique circumstances." In a statement to The Associated Press as the talks wrapped up, he said that circularity — or reusing plastics — was "at the forefront of the negotiations as a means to tackle pollution and be more sustainable in producing and consuming plastics. We agree that's the best path."

Humanity produces more than 430 million tons of plastic annually, two-thirds of which are short-lived products that soon become waste, filling the ocean and, often, working their way into the human food chain, the U.N. Environment Program said in an April report. Plastic waste produced globally is set to almost triple by 2060, with about half ending up in landfill and under a fifth recycled, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Over 2,000 participants from nearly 200 countries, including governments and observers, took part in this week's talks. Waste pickers and some advocacy groups said they were initially denied access to the talks. Then debates about rules of procedure — including whether decisions would require consensus or just two-thirds approval — dragged out the proceedings, participants said.

But they ultimately agreed to produce a draft treaty by November, which keeps things on track to produce a final version by the target deadline of late 2024. This week's talks were the second of five rounds of meetings due to take place to complete the negotiations.

"Time is running out and it is clear from this week's negotiations that oil-producing countries and the fossil fuel industry will do everything in their power to weaken the treaty and delay the process," said Graham Forbes of Greenpeace USA global plastics campaign. "While some substantive discussions have taken place, there is still a huge amount of work ahead of us."

McDermott reported from Providence, Rhode Island.

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

Buzzworthy: Honeybee health blooming at federal facilities across the country

By MARK PRATT Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — While judges, lawyers and support staff at the federal courthouse in Concord, New Hampshire, keep the American justice system buzzing, thousands of humble honeybees on the building's roof are playing their part in a more important task — feeding the world.

The Warren B. Rudman courthouse is one of several federal facilities around the country participating in the General Services Administration's Pollinator Initiative, a government program aimed at assessing and promoting the health of bees and other pollinators, which are critical to life on Earth.

"Anybody who eats food, needs bees," said Noah Wilson-Rich, co-founder, CEO and chief scientific officer of the Boston-based Best Bees company, which contracts with the government to take care of the honeybee hives at the New Hampshire courthouse and at some other federal buildings.

Bees help pollinate the fruits and vegetables that sustain humans, he said. They pollinate hay and alfalfa, which feed cattle that provide the meat we eat. And they promote the health of plants that, through photosynthesis, give us clean air to breathe.

Yet the busy insects that contribute an estimated \$25 billion to the U.S. economy annually are under threat from diseases, agricultural chemicals and habitat loss that kill about half of all honeybee hives annually. Without human intervention, including beekeepers creating new hives, the world could experience a bee extinction that would lead to global hunger and economic collapse, Wilson-Rich said.

The pollinator program is part of the federal government's commitment to promoting sustainability, which includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting climate resilient infrastructure, said David Johnson, the General Services Administration's sustainability program manager for New England.

The GSA's program started last year with hives at 11 sites.

Some of those sites are no longer in the program. Hives placed at the National Archives building in Waltham, Massachusetts, last year did not survive the winter.

Since then, other sites were added. Two hives, each home to thousands of bees, were placed on the roof of the Rudman building in March.

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The program is collecting data to find out whether the honeybees, which can fly 3 to 5 miles from the roof in their quest for pollen, can help the health of not just the plants on the roof, but also of the flora in the entire area, Johnson said.

"Honeybees are actually very opportunistic," he said. "They will feed on a lot of different types of plants."

The program can help identify the plants and landscapes beneficial to pollinators and help the government make more informed decisions about what trees and flowers to plant on building grounds.

Best Bees tests the plant DNA in the honey to get an idea of the plant diversity and health in the area, Wilson-Rich said, and they have found that bees that forage on a more diverse diet seem to have better survival and productivity outcomes.

Other federal facilities with hives include the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services headquarters in Baltimore; the federal courthouse in Hammond, Indiana; the Federal Archives Records Center in Chicago; and the Denver Federal Center.

The federal government isn't alone in its efforts to save the bees. The hives placed at federal sites are part of a wider network of about 1,000 hives at home gardens, businesses and institutions nationwide that combined can help determine what's helping the bees, what's hurting them and why.

The GSA's Pollinator Initiative is also looking to identify ways to keep the bee population healthy and vibrant and model those lessons at other properties — both government and private sector — said Amber Levofsky, the senior program advisor for the GSA's Center for Urban Development.

"The goal of this initiative was really aimed at gathering location-based data at facilities to help update directives and policies to help facilities managers to really target pollinator protection and habitat management regionally," she said.

And there is one other benefit to the government honeybee program that's already come to fruition: the excess honey that's produced is donated to area food banks.

US defense secretary says Washington won't stand for 'coercion and bullying' from China

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin vowed Saturday that Washington would not stand for any "coercion and bullying" of its allies and partners by China, while assuring Beijing that the United States remains committed to maintaining the status quo on Taiwan and would prefer dialogue over conflict.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue, an annual forum bringing together top defense officials, diplomats and leaders in Singapore, Austin lobbied for support for Washington's vision of a "free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific within a world of rules and rights" as the best course to counter increasing Chinese assertiveness in the region.

The U.S. has been expanding its own activities around the Indo-Pacific to counter sweeping territorial claims from China, including regularly sailing through and flying over the Taiwan Strait and in the South China Sea.

"We are committed to ensuring that every country can fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows," he said at the forum hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies think tank. "And every country, large or small, must remain free to conduct lawful maritime activities."

Austin noted that the U.S. had provided millions of doses of the COVID-19 vaccine during the height of the pandemic and is regularly involved in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance efforts in the region. He said it is working to combat climate change, illegal fishing and ensure that supply chains do not suffer disruptions — ticking off many issues of importance to Asian-Pacific nations.

"We're doubling down on our alliances and partnerships," he said.

He said the U.S. is also committed to deterring North Korea's missile threat and China's claims on Taiwan, a self-governing island democracy that Beijing says is its territory, and said Washington has been stepping up defense planning, coordination and training with partner nations in the region.

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"To be clear, we do not seek conflict or confrontation," he said. "But we will not flinch in the face of bullying or coercion."

Underscoring Austin's words, a U.S. guided-missile destroyer and a Canadian frigate sailed Saturday through the Taiwan Strait, "waters where high-seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law," the U.S. 7th Fleet said. There was no immediate word of a Chinese response.

In Singapore, Chinese Lt. Gen. Jing Jianfeng, a senior member of the delegation accompanying Defense Minister Gen. Li Shangfu, accused Austin of "overtly or covertly making false accusations against China" in his address.

Speaking with reporters after Austin spoke, Jing alleged the U.S. has been "deceiving and exploiting" Asia-Pacific nations to advance its own self-interests to preserve "its dominant position" in the region.

He suggested that Washington has been holding on to alliances that are "remnants of the Cold War" and establishing new pacts, like the AUKUS agreement with Britain and Australia and the "Quad" grouping with Australia, India and Japan "to divide the world into ideologically-driven camps and provoke confrontation."

Jing, who took no questions, said that by contrast, "China is committed to the region's development and prosperity."

Austin sought to assure China that the U.S. remained "deeply committed" to the longstanding one-China policy, which recognizes Beijing as the government of China but allows informal relations with Taiwan, and continues to "categorically oppose unilateral changes to the status quo from either side."

He added that Russia's invasion of Ukraine had served to underline how dangerous the world would be if big countries were able to "just invade their peaceful neighbors with impunity."

"Conflict is neither imminent nor inevitable," Austin said. "Deterrence is strong today — and it's our job to keep it that way. The whole world has a stake in maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait."

But Jing accused the U.S. of hollowing out the one-China policy, accusing Washington of supporting Taiwanese separatists without citing any evidence, and reiterating Beijing's claim that "Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's sovereign territory."

"There's no room for us to concede or compromise," he said.

He added that "China has indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea islands and the adjacent waters."

Li, who became China's defense minister in March, declined Austin's invitation to talk on the sidelines of the conference, though the two did shake hands before sitting down at opposite sides of the same table together as the forum opened Friday.

Austin said this was not enough.

"A cordial handshake over dinner is no substitute for a substantive engagement," he said.

Li, who was named defense minister in March, is under American sanctions that are part of a broad package of measures against Russia — but predate its invasion of Ukraine — that were imposed in 2018 over Li's involvement in China's purchase of combat aircraft and anti-aircraft missiles from Moscow.

The sanctions, which broadly prevent Li from doing business in the United States, do not prevent him from holding official talks, American defense officials have said.

It was not clear whether Li, who is to address the forum Sunday morning, was in the room while Austin talked. He did join the American defense secretary and others later for a ministerial roundtable.

Austin reiterated calls that Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese made in his opening address at the forum for China to engage in regular, direct communications to help prevent any possible conflict.

"For responsible defense leaders, the right time to talk is anytime," Austin said. "The right time to talk is every time. And the right time to talk is now."

Jing said, however, that lines of communication needed to be based upon "mutual respect."

"But the U.S. has been calling for communications on one hand and undermining China's interests and concerns on the other," he said.

The U.S. has noted that since 2021 — well before Li became defense minister — China has declined or failed to respond to more than a dozen requests from the U.S. Defense Department to talk with senior leaders, as well as multiple requests for standing dialogues and working-level engagements.

Pope warns of risk of corruption in missionary fundraising after AP investigation

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis warned the Vatican's missionary fundraisers on Saturday not to allow financial corruption to creep into their work, insisting that spirituality and spreading the Gospel must drive their operations, not mere entrepreneurship.

Francis made the comments in a speech to the national directors of the Vatican's Pontifical Mission Societies, which raise money for the Catholic Church's missionary work in the developing world, building churches and funding training programs for priests and nuns. Deviating from his prepared remarks, Francis appeared to refer to a recent Associated Press investigation into financial transfers at the U.S. branch of the Pontifical Mission Societies: The former head oversaw the transfer of at least \$17 million from a quasi endowment fund and donations into a nonprofit and private equity fund that he created and now heads that invests in church-run agribusinesses in Africa.

"Please don't reduce POM to money," Francis said, referring to the Italian acronym of the Pontifical Mission Societies. "This is a medium, a means. Does it take money? Yes, but don't reduce it, it is bigger than money."

He said if spirituality isn't driving the Catholic Church's missionary efforts, there is a risk of corruption.

"Because if spirituality is lacking and it's only a matter of entrepreneurship, corruption comes in immediately," Francis said. "And we have seen that even today: In the newspapers, you see so many stories of alleged corruption in the name of the missionary nature of the church."

The Vatican has said it is seeking clarity on the transfers at the U.S. branch, which appear to be fully legal since the previous board approved them. The new administration of the U.S. branch commissioned a legal review into them which determined they were approved in ways consistent with the board's powers at the time. The new administration, however, has replaced the staff and board of directors who approved them, and overhauled its bylaws and statutes, to make sure nothing like it ever happens again.

In emailed comments to AP, the former head of The Pontifical Mission Societies in the U.S., the Rev. Andrew Small, strongly defended the transfers as fully approved and consistent with the mission of the church and the organization. Small is now the No. 2 at the Vatican's child protection advisory board, which Francis created to provide a response to the clergy sexual abuse scandal.

As anti-gay sentiment grows, more LGBTQ+ people seek to flee Uganda

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI and BRIAN INGANGA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Pretty Peter flicked through frantic messages from friends at home in Uganda.

The transgender woman is relatively safe in neighboring Kenya. Her friends feel threatened by the latest anti-gay legislation in Uganda prescribing the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality."

Frightened Ugandans are searching for a way to get out like Pretty Peter did. Some have stayed indoors since the law was signed on Monday, fearing that they'll be targeted, she said.

"Right now, homophobes have received a validation from the government to attack people," the 26-year-old said, standing in a room decorated with somber portraits from a global project called "Where Love is Illegal."

"My friends have already seen a change of attitude among their neighbors and are working on obtaining papers and transport money to seek refuge in Kenya," she said.

That's challenging: One message to Pretty Peter read, "Me and the girls we want to come but things a(re) too hard." Another said that just one person had transport, and some didn't have passports.

Homosexuality has long been illegal in Uganda under a colonial-era law criminalizing sexual activity

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"against the order of nature." The punishment for that offense is life imprisonment. Pretty Peter, who wished to be identified by her chosen name out of concern for her safety, fled the country in 2019 after police arrested 150 people at a gay club and paraded them in front of the media before charging them with public nuisance.

The new law signed by President Yoweri Museveni had been widely condemned by rights activists and others abroad. The version signed did not criminalize those who identify as LGBTQ+, following an outcry over an earlier draft. Museveni had returned the bill to the national assembly in April asking for changes that would differentiate between identifying as LGBTQ+ and engaging in homosexual acts.

Still, the new law prescribes the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality," which is defined as cases of sexual relations involving people infected with HIV, as well as with minors and other categories of vulnerable people. A suspect convicted of "attempted aggravated homosexuality" can be imprisoned for up to 14 years. And there's a 20-year prison term for a suspect convicted of "promoting" homosexuality, a broad category affecting everyone from journalists to rights activists and campaigners.

After the law's signing, U.S. President Joe Biden called the new law "a tragic violation of universal human rights." The United Nations human rights office said it was "appalled." A joint statement by the leaders of the U.N. AIDS program, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the Global Fund said Uganda's progress on its HIV response "is now in grave jeopardy," as the law can obstruct health education and outreach.

While a legal challenge to the new law is mounted by activists and academics seeking to stop its enforcement, LGBTQ+ people in Uganda have been chilled by the growing anti-gay sentiment there.

The new law is the result of years of efforts by lawmakers, church leaders and others. Scores of university students on Wednesday marched to the parliamentary chambers in the capital, Kampala, to thank lawmakers for enacting the bill, underscoring the fervency of the bill's supporters.

The new bill was introduced in the national assembly in February, days after the Church of England announced its decision to bless civil marriages of same-sex couples, outraging religious leaders in many African countries. Homosexuality is criminalized in more than 30 of Africa's 54 countries. Some Africans see it as behavior imported from abroad and not a sexual orientation.

The top Anglican cleric in Uganda, Archbishop Stephen Kaziimba, has publicly said he no longer recognizes the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury as spiritual leader of the Anglican communion. In a statement issued after the bill was signed, Kaziimba spoke of "the diligent work" of lawmakers and the president in enacting the law.

However, he added that life imprisonment is preferable to death for the most serious homosexual offenses.

There were signs a new anti-gay bill was coming in late 2022. There had been widespread concern over reports of alleged sodomy in boarding schools. One mother at a prominent school accused a male teacher of sexually abusing her son.

Even some signs of solidarity or support with LGBTQ+ people have been seen as a threat.

In January, a tower in a children's park in the city of Entebbe that had been painted in rainbow colors had to be reworked after residents said they were offended by what they saw as an LGBTQ+ connection. Mayor Fabrice Rulinda agreed, saying in a statement that authorities "need to curb any vices that would corrupt the minds of our children."

In Kenya, Pretty Peter has watched the events closely.

"Ugandans have in recent days been fed with a lot of negativities towards the LGBT, and the government is trying to flex its muscles," she said of the administration of the 78-year-old Museveni, who has held office since 1986 as one of Africa's longest-serving leaders.

Pretty Peter said Kenya, a relative haven in the region despite its criminalization of same-sex relationships, is not as safe as she and fellow LGBTQ+ exiles would like it to be. Still, Kenya hosts an estimated 1,000 LGBTQ+ refugees and is the only country in the region offering asylum based on sexual orientation, according to the United Nations refugee agency.

In a secluded safe house on the outskirts of Nairobi, a sense of threat remains.

"We've been evicted twice before because neighbors got uncomfortable and accused us of bringing

bad values around their children. We also got attacked once at a club in Nairobi so one must really watch their backs," Pretty Peter said.

Inside the penal colonies: A glimpse at life for political prisoners swept up in Russia's crackdowns

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — When Alexei Navalny turns 47 on Sunday, he'll wake up in a bare concrete cell with hardly any natural light.

He won't be able to see or talk to any of his loved ones. Phone calls and visits are banned for those in "punishment isolation" cells, a 2-by-3-meter (6 1/2-by-10-foot) space. Guards usually blast patriotic songs and speeches by President Vladimir Putin at him.

"Guess who is the champion of listening to Putin's speeches? Who listens to them for hours and falls asleep to them?" Navalny said recently in a typically sardonic social media post via his attorneys from Penal Colony No. 6 in the Vladimir region east of Moscow.

He is serving a nine-year term due to end in 2030 on charges widely seen as trumped up, and is facing another trial on new charges that could keep him locked up for another two decades. Rallies have been called for Sunday in Russia to support him.

Navalny has become Russia's most famous political prisoner — and not just because of his prominence as Putin's fiercest political foe, his poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin, and his being the subject of an Oscar-winning documentary.

He has chronicled his arbitrary placement in isolation, where he has spent almost six months. He's on a meager prison diet, restricted on how much time he can spend writing letters and forced at times to live with a cellmate with poor personal hygiene, making life even more miserable.

Most of the attention goes to Navalny and other high-profile figures like Vladimir Kara-Murza, who was sentenced last month to 25 years on treason charges. But there's a growing number of less-famous prisoners who are serving time in similarly harsh conditions.

Memorial, Russia's oldest and most prominent human rights organization and a 2022 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, counted 558 political prisoners in the country as of April — more than three times the figure than in 2018, when it listed 183.

The Soviet Union's far-flung gulag system of prison camps provided inmate labor to develop industries such as mining and logging. While conditions vary among modern-day penal colonies, Russian law still permits prisoners to work on jobs like sewing uniforms for soldiers.

In a 2021 report, the U.S. State Department said conditions in Russian prisons and detention centers "were often harsh and life threatening. Overcrowding, abuse by guards and inmates, limited access to health care, food shortages and inadequate sanitation were common in prisons, penal colonies, and other detention facilities."

Andrei Pivovarov, an opposition figure sentenced last year to four years in prison, has been in isolation at Penal Colony No. 7 in northern Russia's Karelia region since January and is likely to stay there the rest of this year, said his partner, Tatyana Usmanova. The institution is notorious for its harsh conditions and reports of torture.

The 41-year-old former head of the pro-democracy group Open Russia spends his days alone in a small cell in a "strict detention" unit, and is not allowed any calls or visits from anyone but his lawyers, Usmanova told The Associated Press. He can get one book from the prison library, can write letters for several hours a day and is permitted 90 minutes outdoors, she said.

Other inmates are prohibited from making eye contact with Pivovarov in the corridors, contributing to his "maximum isolation," she said.

"It wasn't enough to sentence him to a real prison term. They are also trying to ruin his life there," Usmanova added.

for over six years — waking up with them, falling asleep with them — then not being able to see them for a year,” she said. “I was nervous when I went to visit her. I didn’t know what I would say to Sasha, but in the end, it went really well.”

Still, Subbotina said a year behind bars has been hard on Skochilenko. The trial is moving slowly, unlike usually swift proceedings for high-profile political activists, with guilty verdicts almost a certainty. Skochilenko faces up to 10 years if convicted.

Emirati hosts want UN climate talks to deliver ‘game-changing results,’ with big oil at the table

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A senior United Arab Emirates official says the Gulf nation wants the U.N. climate summit it’s hosting later this year to deliver “game-changing results” for international efforts to curb global warming, but doing so will require having the fossil fuel industry at the table.

Environmental campaigners have slammed the presence of oil and gas lobbyists at previous rounds of talks, warning that their interests are opposed to the goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions — caused to a large degree by the burning of fossil fuels. Last month scores of U.S. and European lawmakers called for the summit’s designated chair, Sultan al-Jaber, to be replaced over his links to the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

The issue complicates already-delicate negotiations ahead of the Nov. 30 - Dec. 12 meeting in Dubai, known as COP28. Preliminary talks starting next week in Bonn, Germany, will show whether the incoming UAE presidency can overcome skepticism among parties and civil society groups about its ability to shepherd almost 200 nations toward a landmark deal.

“Our leadership have been very clear to me and our team and our president that they don’t want just another COP that’s incremental,” said Majid al-Suwaidi, who as director-general of the summit plays a key role in the diplomatic negotiations. “They want a COP that is going to deliver real, big, game-changing results because they see, just like all of us, that we’re not on track to achieve the goals of Paris.”

Governments agreed eight years ago in the French capital to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) — ideally no more than 1.5C (2.7F). With average global temperatures already about 1.2C (2.2F) above pre-industrial levels, experts say the window to meet the more ambitious target is closing fast and even the less stringent goal would be missed if emissions aren’t slashed sharply soon.

“We need to have everybody at the table discussing with us about how to deliver that,” al-Suwaidi told The Associated Press in an interview Friday.

“We need to have oil and gas, we need to have industry, we need to have aviation, we need to have shipping, we need to have all the hard to abate sectors,” he said, adding: “We need all those who can to deliver what they can, regardless of who they are.”

Al-Suwaidi pushed back against the idea that the fossil fuel industry would undermine meaningful talks on emissions cuts the way they have done in the past through disinformation campaigns and keeping quiet their own knowledge about climate change.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that the position of the sector has completely changed and that they are engaging with us in an active conversation,” he said.

Asked whether the talks might consider a phaseout of fossil fuels, proposed last year by nations most vulnerable to climate change, al-Suwaidi said the presidency wouldn’t preclude such conversations.

“We welcome any kind of discussion,” the UAE’s former ambassador to Spain said. “But the parties are the ones who will decide what that discussion is and where we land.”

So far, the summit’s designated chair al-Jaber has emphasized the need to cut emissions, rather than end fossil fuel use itself. It’s prompted fears that he might seek loopholes for untested carbon-capture technologies and so-called offsets — both aimed at reducing current levels of carbon dioxide in the air — that experts say distract from the need to end the release of greenhouse gases.

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A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change earlier this year called for a nearly two-thirds cut in carbon emissions by 2035, warning that failure to do so greatly increases the risk of droughts, flooding, sea-level rise and other short- and long-term disasters.

Al-Suwaidi, who also has a background in the oil and gas sector, said the UAE leadership is acutely aware of the existential threat global warming poses — including to their own sun-rich but water-poor nation — and is committed to shifting from fossil fuels toward renewable energy such as wind and solar.

"We want to be part of this new economy," he said. "We're a country that's running head first into this future."

Al-Suwaidi said agreeing a global goal for ramping up renewable energy in Dubai could send a positive message to those anxious about the transformation required to stop climate change.

"Rather than talking about what we're stopping people from doing, let's talk about how we're helping them to take up solutions ... that are going to help us to address the emissions problem we have," he said.

The talks in Dubai will also see countries conduct the first 'global stocktake' of efforts to tackle climate change since Paris in 2015. The results are meant to inform a new round of commitments by nations to cut emissions and address the impacts of global warming.

Poor nations are also demanding rich countries make good on pledges for vast financial support, an issue that has often caused major disagreements at past meetings.

"We need the developing world to leapfrog into this new climate system and we need to support that transition for them," said al-Suwaidi. "Finance is going to be really fundamental at COP28."

This will require rich countries, including the Group of Seven major economies, who are historically responsible for a large chunk of global emissions, to step up, he said.

"They have the technology. They have the know-how. They have the financial ability. We need them to take that leadership role and show us seriousness about addressing this challenge."

Betts hits 2 HRs, Kershaw beats Yankees for 1st time in Dodgers' 8-4 win

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Although Clayton Kershaw has accomplished just about everything it's possible to do on a baseball mound during his 16-year career, he had never beaten the New York Yankees until Friday night.

The feat got a whole lot less daunting after the Los Angeles Dodgers staked him to a six-run lead in the first inning, and Kershaw sat on that cushion all the way to another milestone victory.

Kershaw racked up nine strikeouts over seven innings of four-hit ball, and Mookie Betts hit two more homers in the Dodgers' resounding 8-4 win to open this high-profile interleague series.

Betts hit his second straight leadoff homer and an RBI single during Los Angeles' eight-hit first inning against Luis Severino, and Kershaw (7-4) didn't falter despite allowing early homers by Giancarlo Stanton and Josh Donaldson, who both returned from lengthy injury absences.

"Feels good to pitch good — definitely better than the last few," Kershaw said. "And when we score six in the first inning, that's a great way to pitch. It's just trying to get our guys back in the dugout as quick as possible."

Despite the homers, Kershaw showed marked improvement after three uncharacteristically wild starts last month. He finished by retiring his final seven New York batters, earning a standing ovation from Dodger Stadium after recording his final out.

He has now beaten every team in the majors except Baltimore. He has never faced the Orioles, but the Dodgers are headed to Camden Yards next month.

"That's why he's a first-ballot Hall of Famer," Betts said of Kershaw. "He gives us a chance to win every single night. I'm happy I'm a part of it."

Betts finished 4 for 4 with a walk and three RBIs in his second straight two-homer game for the NL-leading Dodgers.

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A season-high 52,534 fans turned out for the latest meeting between major-market powerhouses and former New York rivals that have met in 11 World Series. The Yankees are making just their fifth trip to Chavez Ravine in the regular season and their first since August 2019.

"The energy was a little different tonight," said Betts, who hit the 41st leadoff homer of his career. "I think the schedule, bringing in teams like that, letting everybody see (Aaron) Judge, Stanton, their whole lineup, is super-cool. It's fun to play in games like this."

Donaldson hit two homers in his first game since April 5 for the Yankees, who have lost two straight after a four-game winning streak. Stanton and Donaldson, who hit a 446-foot shot in the second and a two-run homer in the ninth, had both been sidelined since April with hamstring injuries, but their power wasn't nearly enough.

"Felt nice to have some pretty quality ABs today," Donaldson said. "Obviously, it's been frustrating not being able to play, but I can't really do too much about that anymore. Hopefully I'll put my best foot forward moving forward."

Max Muncy added a two-run homer in the first, while J.D. Martinez homered and singled to extend his hitting streak to 16 games for the Dodgers. Betts hit his second homer in the sixth, and his eighth-inning single provided one last chance for Freddie Freeman to extend his 20-game hit streak — but the NL's Player of the Month for May hit a 99-mph lineout to shortstop and finished 0 for 5.

Severino (0-1) needed 34 pitches to get out of the first inning while allowing eight batted balls faster than 94 mph. He recovered and got through four innings, but his fastball averaged just 95 mph, down significantly from his season average.

"Just some leaking over the heart of the plate," manager Aaron Boone said. "They had some hard contact in that inning, but just some fastballs that leaked back over a little bit, and Muncy put a good swing on a changeup away. He settled in to give us something there, which is good, but obviously a tough one in the first."

UNFAMILIAR PLACE

Los Angeles' Jason Heyward had two hits while playing in left field for the first time in his 1,623-game major league career, which he has spent predominantly in right field. Heyward said he hadn't played an inning in left field since spring training in 2009.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Yankees: CF Greg Allen left in the eighth with hip flexor pain, Boone said. He could be headed to the injured list. ... Carlos Rodón had a 30-pitch bullpen session. He has been out since spring training due to a sore left forearm and a back injury, but the \$162 million left-hander should be ready to face live hitters soon.

Dodgers: Struggling Noah Syndergaard will stay in the Dodgers' rotation for his next start Wednesday, manager Dave Roberts said. Syndergaard has a 6.54 ERA, but says he is healthy.

UP NEXT

Gerrit Cole (6-0, 2.93 ERA) takes the mound in his native Southern California against the Dodgers' Michael Grove (0-1, 8.44 ERA), who will make his first appearance since April due to a groin strain.

AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Oath Keepers convicted in Jan. 6 Capitol riot get prison in latest extremist sentencing

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two Florida men who stormed the U.S. Capitol with other members of the far-right Oath Keepers group were sentenced Friday to three years in prison for seditious conspiracy and other charges — the latest in a historic string of sentences in the Jan. 6, 2021 attack.

David Moerschel, 45, a neurophysiologist from Punta Gorda, and Joseph Hackett, a 52-year-old chiroprac-

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tor from Sarasota, were convicted in January alongside other members of the antigovernment extremist group for their roles in what prosecutors described as a violent plot to stop the transfer power from former President Donald Trump to President Joe Biden after the 2020 election.

Both men were among the lower-level members charged with seditious conspiracy. Moerschel was sentenced to three years in prison and Hackett got three and a half years.

All told, nine people associated with the Oath Keepers have been tried for seditious conspiracy and six were convicted of the rarely used Civil War-era charge in two separate trials, including the group's founder Stewart Rhodes. Rhodes was sentenced last week to 18 years in prison — a record for a Jan. 6 defendant. Three defendants were cleared of the sedition charge but found guilty of other Jan. 6 crimes.

Moerschel and Hackett helped amass guns and ammunition to stash in a Virginia hotel for a so-called "quick reaction force" that could be quickly shuttled to Washington, prosecutors said. The weapons were never deployed. Moerschel provided an AR-15 and a Glock semi-automatic handgun and Hackett helped transport weapons, prosecutors said.

On Jan. 6, both men dressed in paramilitary gear and marched into the Capitol with fellow Oath Keepers in a military-style line formation, charging documents stated.

"The security of our country and the safety of democracy should not hinge on the impulses of madmen," Justice Department prosecutor Troy Edwards said.

Moerschel told the judge he was deeply ashamed of forcing his way into the Capitol and joining the riot that seriously injured police officers and sent staffers running in fear.

"When I was on the stairs, your honor, I felt like God said to me, 'Get out here.' And I didn't," he said in court, his voice cracking with emotion. "I disobeyed God and I broke laws."

Moerschel was a neurophysiologist who monitored surgical patients under anesthesia before his arrest, though he's since been fired and now works in construction and landscaping. A former missionary, he is married with three children.

Hackett similarly said he remembered feeling horrified as stepped foot in the Capitol that day: "I truly am sorry for my part in causing so much misery," he said.

He originally joined the group after seeing vandalism at a commercial area near his house during the summer of 2020, when protests against police brutality were common, his attorney Angela Halim said. "He did not join this organization because he shared any beliefs of Stewart Rhodes," she said.

Still, he later attended an "unconventional warfare" training, and in the leadup to Jan. 6 he repeatedly warned other Oath Keepers about "leaks" and the need to secure their communications, and later changed his online screen names, authorities have said.

"Taken together, his messages show he perceived the election as an existential threat," said prosecutor Alexandra Hughes.

How the chiropractor and father ended up storming the Capitol, though, is "hard to wrap one's head around," said U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta. The group's increasingly heated online conversations and false claims of a stolen election "can suck you in like a vortex make and make it very difficult to get out."

Neither man was a top leader in the group, and both left shortly after Jan. 6. Both sentences were far lower than the 12 years prosecutors sought for Hackett and 10 for Moreschel.

Moreschel was in the Capitol for about 12 minutes, and didn't do anything violent or scream at police officers, Mehta noted. He also handed his guns over to police.

"Sentencing shouldn't be vengeful, it shouldn't be such that it is unduly harsh simply for the sake of being harsh," said the judge, who also imposed a three-year term of supervised release for both men.

Moerschel's attorneys had asked for home confinement, arguing that he joined the Oath Keepers chats shortly before the riot and was not a leader.

"He was just in the back following the crowd," attorney Scott Weinberg told the judge.

Defense attorneys have long said there was never a plan to attack the Capitol and prosecutors' case was largely built on online messages cherry-picked out of context.

The charges against leaders of the Oath Keepers and another far-right extremist group, the Proud Boys,

are among the most serious brought in the Justice Department's sprawling riot investigation. Prosecutors have also won seditious conspiracy convictions in the case against former Proud Boys national chairman Enrique Tarrío and three other group leaders in what prosecutors said was a separate plot to keep Trump in the White House.

EXPLAINER: Panama launches operation against smugglers in Darien Gap

By JUAN ZAMORANO and CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

NICANOR, Panama (AP) — Panama unveiled a new effort to control illegal migration through the treacherous Darien Gap that spans its eastern border with Colombia on Friday.

Hundreds of thousands of migrants have risked the dangerous trek through the jungle in recent years and the flow this year is on a record pace. Most of those who cross are trying to reach the United States.

So in April, as the U.S. government prepared to lift pandemic-related restrictions that had allowed authorities to turn back asylum seekers at the border, it announced together with Panama and Colombia increased efforts in the largely lawless Darien Gap.

Panama's "Shield" campaign announced Friday is the first public display of those new efforts.

WHAT IS THE DARIEN GAP?

The Darien Gap earned its name because it is the break in the Pan-American Highway connecting South and North America. Darien is also the name of Panama's easternmost province, which abuts Colombia.

It is composed of dense, roadless jungle, mountains and fast flowing rivers. Migrants who have made the crossing regularly report being robbed, sexually assaulted and of seeing bodies of others who did not survive along the way. Earlier this week, three suspected bandits died in a shootout with border police in Darien.

The crossing from Colombia can take anywhere from a few days to more than a week.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE CROSSING?

Last year, nearly 250,000 people crossed the Darien Gap, nearly double the 133,000 who crossed in 2021, and a new record. That increase was driven largely by Venezuelans, who accounted for some 60% of the migrants crossing there last year.

In April, the United Nations warned that the unprecedented number of crossings to start the year suggested that some 400,000 migrants could cross this year. According to government data, nearly 170,000 migrants crossed the Darien in the first four months of the year, five times the number from the same period last year.

In early May before the U.S. lifted the pandemic era asylum restrictions, Panamanian officials at the edge of the jungle registered the arrival of some 2,000 migrants in one day. Venezuelans continue to be the largest group crossing, but there are also Haitians, Chinese and Ecuadorians among others.

This week, Panamanian authorities reported that with the arrival of the rainy season and swollen rivers, on one day about 790 migrants were registered. Expanded legal pathways offered by the United States and more punitive policies who try to enter the U.S. illegally also factor in migrants' decision-making.

WHAT IS PANAMA'S "SHIELD" CAMPAIGN?

On Friday, Panamanian security authorities announced it will dedicate some 1,200 immigration agents, border police and members of the naval air service to what they said will be a air, land and sea effort to take on organized criminal groups smuggling migrants, drugs and guns through the Darien jungle.

There will be more aerial patrols with U.S.-donated helicopters and more specialized border police units to root out gangs operating along the shared border with Colombia. It is the first public sign of the coordinated efforts promised by Panama, Colombia and the United States in April.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas met then with the foreign ministers of Panama and Colombia in Panama City.

"Recognizing our shared interest and responsibility to prevent the risk to human life, disrupt transnational criminal organizations, and preserve the vital rainforest, the governments of Panamá, Colombia, and the

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Pivovarov was pulled off a Warsaw-bound flight just before takeoff from St. Petersburg in May 2021 and taken to the southern city of Krasnodar. Authorities accused him of engaging with an “undesirable” organization — a crime since 2015.

Several days before his arrest, Open Russia had disbanded after getting the “undesirable” label.

After his trial in Krasnodar, the St. Petersburg native was convicted and sentenced in July, when Russia’s war in Ukraine and Putin’s sweeping crackdown on dissent were in full swing.

He told AP in a letter from Krasnodar in December that authorities moved him there “to hide me farther away” from his hometown and Moscow. That interview was one of the last Pivovarov was able to give, describing prison life there as “boring and depressing,” with his only diversion being an hour-long walk in a small yard. “Lucky” inmates with cash in their accounts can shop at a prison store once a week for 10 minutes but otherwise must stay in their cells, he wrote.

Letters from supporters lift his spirits, he said. Many people wrote that they used to be uninterested in Russian politics, according to Pivovarov, and “only now are starting to see clearly.”

Now, any letters take weeks to arrive, Usmanova said.

Conditions are easier for some less-famous political prisoners like Alexei Gorinov, a former member of a Moscow municipal council. He was convicted of “spreading false information” about the army in July over antiwar remarks he made at a council session.

Criticism of the invasion was criminalized a few months earlier, and Gorinov, 61, became the first Russian sent to prison for it, receiving seven years.

He is housed in barracks with about 50 others in his unit at Penal Colony No. 2 in the Vladimir region, Gorinov said in written answers passed to AP in March.

The long sentence for a low-profile activist shocked many, and Gorinov said “authorities needed an example they could showcase to others (of) an ordinary person, rather than a public figure.”

Inmates in his unit can watch TV, and play chess, backgammon or table tennis. There’s a small kitchen to brew tea or coffee between meals, and they can have food from personal supplies.

But Gorinov said prison officials still carry out “enhanced control” of the unit, and he and two other inmates get special checks every two hours, since they’ve been labeled “prone to escape.”

There is little medical help, he said.

“Right now, I’m not feeling all that well, as I can’t recover from bronchitis,” he said, adding that he needed treatment for pneumonia last winter at another prison’s hospital ward, because at Penal Colony No. 2, the most they can do is “break a fever.”

Also suffering health problems is artist and musician Sasha Skochilenko, who is detained amid her ongoing trial following her April 2022 arrest in St. Petersburg, also on charges of spreading false information about the army. Her crime was replacing supermarket price tags with antiwar slogans in protest.

Skochilenko has a congenital heart defect and celiac disease, requiring a gluten-free diet. She gets food parcels weekly, but there is a weight limit, and the 32-year-old can’t eat “half the things they give her there,” said her partner, Sophia Subbotina.

There’s a stark difference between detention facilities for women and men, and Skochilenko has it easier in some ways than male prisoners, Subbotina said.

“Oddly enough, the staff are mostly nice. Mostly they are women, they are quite friendly, they will give helpful tips and they have a very good attitude toward Sasha,” Subbotina told AP by phone.

“Often they support Sasha, they tell her: ‘You will definitely get out of here soon, this is so unfair here.’ They know about our relationship and they are fine with it. They’re very humane,” she said.

There’s no political propaganda in the jail and dance music blares from a radio. Cooking shows play on TV. Skochilenko “wouldn’t watch them in normal life, but in jail, it’s a distraction,” Subbotina said.

She recently arranged for an outside cardiologist to examine Skochilneko and since March has been allowed to visit her twice a month.

Subbotina gets emotional when she recalled their first visit.

“It is a complex and weird feeling when you’ve been living with a person. Sasha and I have been together

United States intend to carry out a two-month coordinated campaign to address the serious humanitarian situation in the Darien," the governments said in a joint statement.

Panama is framing the effort to gain control of its border as a national security issue targeting organized crime groups. For the migrants making the crossing it plans an informational campaign to combat the misinformation peddled by smugglers.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO AUTHORITIES FACE IN DARIEN?

It will not be easy. The migration route through the Darien has become well-established with enterprising locals, especially on the Colombian side selling outfitting services — tents, boots, food — and even porters. Additionally, for those with the resources, there are smugglers who offer a more personalized, guided crossing.

Some of Colombia's armed groups, principally the Gulf Clan are involved in migrant smuggling and run very sophisticated operations.

Oriel Ortega, director of Panama's border police, said Friday that its intelligence indicated that the Gulf Clan was the organization most involved in and profiting from smuggling migrants through the Darien.

Panama's Security Minister Juan Manuel Pino said that authorities have identified three main smuggling sea routes and two land routes between Colombia and Panama and will focus resources in those areas, though he recognized that criminal groups can be expected to then open new routes.

Sherman reported from Mexico City.

What to know about the case of the missing Missouri ER doctor found dead in Arkansas

By MARGARET STAFFORD and JOHN HANNA Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A doctor in the Missouri Ozarks went missing for over a week until his body was found in an Arkansas lake. But the case remains shrouded in mystery as investigators have released few details to his family or the public.

WHAT'S KNOWN SO FAR

Dr. John Forsyth, 49, was last seen alive on May 21, when security cameras in the parking lot of a public pool in Cassville show him getting into a vehicle, after leaving his own car unlocked with his wallet, two phones, a laptop and other items inside. That's according to his brother, Richard Forsyth, who said the doctor had texted his new fiancée that morning saying he would see her soon.

His car was found later that day. Investigators haven't said who was driving the other vehicle.

A search began after the emergency room physician didn't show up for his May 21 shift at Mercy Hospital in Cassville. There was no sign of Forsyth until a kayaker noticed his body in Arkansas on May 30, at a spot on Beaver Lake some 20 miles (32 kilometers) away from his last known location.

His body had an apparent gunshot wound, authorities in Arkansas say. Although Benton County Coroner Daniel Oxford said an autopsy was completed Thursday, the results won't be released until the investigation is over.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN HIS LIFE?

His brother, Richard Forsyth, and other family members say John Forsyth was a devoted father to his eight kids and seemed happier than he'd been in a long time. They say he never missed a day of work, and would often sleep in an RV outside the hospital when he was on call.

His family rejects any suggestion he took his own life.

Newly engaged, Forsyth was also recently divorced.

On May 10 of this year, a judge ordered Forsyth to pay his ex-wife \$3,999 in child support a month, plus another \$15,000 a month.

Missouri court records show he was married and divorced twice to the same woman between 1995 and 2022. Both his brother and Ryan Ricketts, the ex-wife's divorce attorney, say the split was amicable.

The pair initially married in Clark County, Nevada. He filed for divorce in April 2019 but the couple remarried.

ried in July 2020 in Greene County, Missouri. Court records show that the woman filed a second divorce petition in April 2022, in Lawrence County, Missouri.

QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN

Authorities have not said whether they believe Forsyth was killed or took his own life. Initially, when Forsyth's empty car was found, investigators said there were no signs of foul play. But that was before the body was found.

Shannon Jenkins, spokesperson for the Benton County Sheriff's Department, said Friday that "there is no immediate threat to the public," but declined to provide more details. She said no further information would be released until the investigation is completed.

It's also unclear what Forsyth's connection might be to the second vehicle seen on pool surveillance video. Authorities have not confirmed any information about the video, including if it was taken before or after Forsyth may have texted his fiancée.

There's also no information on how Forsyth got from Cassville to Beaver Lake, when and where he died, or if investigators have found a weapon.

FORSYTH'S BACKGROUND

Forsyth was born in Idaho in 1974, according to online records. He was the third of seven children, his sister Gina Forsyth-Farlaino said. He was the father of eight children.

His former wife, who lives in Idaho, was given custody of the couple's minor children, but John Forsyth continued to have a strong relationship with them, his brother and the woman's divorce attorney said.

Forsyth's ex-wife did not wish to be interviewed, Ricketts said.

"She is just devastated and — I mean, just shocked," Ricketts said. "She never saw any of this kind of thing coming."

FORSYTH'S MEDICAL BACKGROUND

Online records for the state of Missouri show that Forsyth was licensed as a doctor and surgeon in the state since July 1, 2005 and that his license was active.

He'd been an emergency physician at Mercy Hospital in Cassville for nearly 15 years.

He received his medical degree from Ross University, which is headquartered in Barbados.

Online court records show Forsyth settled a wrongful death lawsuit against him Lawrence County, Missouri, in March 2022, but the settlement terms were confidential.

He was initially named as a defendant in a wrongful death case, also in Lawrence County, in 2006. But he and another doctor were dismissed from the case before a local hospital settled the case for \$100,000.

Records show that in August 2015, he agreed to a public reprimand from the state Board of Registration for the Medical Arts for not adequately and completely maintaining records for two patients.

Hanna reported from Topeka, Kansas. Associated Press writer Jim Salter contributed from St. Louis, Missouri.

French Open 2023: Gauff, 19, plays Andreeva, 16, in all-teen showdown; Nadal has hip surgery

PARIS (AP) — Much of this French Open can best be viewed through the prism of Rafael Nadal's absence. For so many years, the goings on at Roland Garros were defined by Nadal and his unprecedented success at the place: 14 championships, a 112-3 record. And this year, what happens in Paris is significantly altered because he is not in the field — something that last happened in 2004.

Nadal has not competed anywhere since injuring his left hip flexor at the Australian Open in January, and he had arthroscopic surgery on Friday night in Barcelona. Saturday, as it happens, is his 37th birthday.

Nadal announced on May 18 he wouldn't be able to return to competition at the French Open because his body wouldn't let him. He said he needed to stop practicing and wasn't sure when he could be back in action; he figures 2024 will be the final season of his superlative career.

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WHAT HAPPENED ON COURT FRIDAY?

No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz and No. 3 Novak Djokovic picked up straight-set victories that weren't always that straightforward to reach the fourth round and stay on course for a showdown in the semifinals. Alcaraz is the reigning U.S. Open champion; Djokovic owns 22 Grand Slam titles, tied with Nadal for the most by a man. Yet another highly seeded woman, No. 3 Jessica Pegula, bowed out, as did the No. 7 man, Andrey Rublev.

WHAT HAPPENED AWAY FROM THE COURT?

No. 2 seed Aryna Sabalenka, the Australian Open champion, was allowed to avoid the traditional post-match news conference open to all accredited journalists and instead speak with what was described as a "pool" of selected questioners. After each of her previous two wins this week, Sabalenka was asked about her stance on the war in Ukraine, which began in February 2022, when Russia invaded that country with help from Belarus. Sabalenka said she "did not feel safe" at her news conference Wednesday and wanted to protect her "mental health and well-being" on Friday.

WHO PLAYS SATURDAY?

The most intriguing third-round match involves two teenagers who have practiced with each other: American Coco Gauff, who is 19, and Russian Mirra Andreeva, who is 16. There's no doubt Gauff has a significant advantage in experience: She's been participating in majors since 2019, was the runner-up at Roland Garros in 2022 and is seeded No. 6 this time. Andreeva is ranked 143rd and is making her debut at a Grand Slam tournament. They'll play in Court Suzanne Lenglen. Across the way, Court Philippe Chatrier will host matches featuring two of the top women: No. 1 Iga Swiatek, the defending champion, and No. 4 Elena Rybakina, last year's winner at Wimbledon. Both face unseeded opponents. Men in action include No. 6 Holger Rune, No. 9 Taylor Fritz and No. 12 Frances Tiafoe.

WHEN ARE SATURDAY'S MATCHES?

Play begins at 11 a.m. local time in Paris, which is 5 a.m. EDT, everywhere except the main stadium, Court Philippe Chatrier, where the first match — No. 4 Elena Rybakina vs. Sara Sorribes Tormo — is scheduled to start at 11:45 a.m. local time, which is 5:45 a.m. EDT. Coco Gauff vs. Mirra Andreeva is second on Court Suzanne Lenglen so it might begin at around 3 p.m. local time, which is 9 a.m. EDT. Frances Tiafoe goes up against 2021 U.S. Open finalist Alexander Zverev in the night session, which starts at 8:15 p.m. local time, 2:15 p.m. EDT.

GET CAUGHT UP

What you need to know about the year's second Grand Slam tennis tournament:

- Rafael Nadal is not here
- Can AI help prevent cyberbullying of tennis players?
- French players bid a quick adieu to French Open
- Novak Djokovic can break a tie with Nadal by winning Slam No. 23
- Iga Swiatek, Aryna Sabalenka, Elena Rybakina split past four major titles
- Facts and figures about the French Open, including a look back at 2022

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Try your hand at the AP's latest tennis quiz here.

BETTING GUIDE

Gauff is listed at minus-126 to beat Andreeva, who is at plus-106, according to FanDuel Sportsbook. Just as she has been since before the tournament began, Swiatek is an overwhelming pick for the women's title at minus-120. Alcaraz remains the favorite to win the men's championship at plus-130, followed by Djokovic at plus-175. They could meet in the semifinals.

THE NUMBER TO KNOW

3 hours, 36 minutes — The time it took for Novak Djokovic's 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5), 6-2 victory over Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, the longest three-set Grand Slam match of Djokovic's career.

THE QUOTE TO KNOW

"The results are not good." — Nicolas Escudé, the French Tennis Federation's technical director, after all

29 singles players from the host country were eliminated by the end of the second round.

HOW TO WATCH

- In the U.S.: Tennis Channel, NBC, Peacock.
- In France: France TV, Amazon Prime.
- Other countries listed here.

UPCOMING SINGLES SCHEDULE

- Friday-Saturday: Third Round (Women and Men)
- Sunday-Monday: Fourth Round (Women and Men)
- June 6-7: Quarterfinals (Women and Men)
- June 8: Women's Semifinals
- June 9: Men's Semifinals
- June 10: Women's Final
- June 11: Men's Final

AP tennis: <https://apnews.com/hub/tennis> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Tragedy that left 5 dead or missing puts spotlight on safety in Alaska charter fishing industry

By BECKY BOHRER, JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Morgan Robidou posed next to the bright aluminum hull of his prized new vessel, a 30-foot (9-meter) fishing boat that he could use to take friends, family or tourists out after salmon or halibut in the bountiful waters of southeast Alaska.

"Official boat owner," he wrote when he posted the photo on social media last October, to congratulatory responses from friends.

Seven months later, the boat he named Awakin — "like a boat waking someone" — was found partially submerged off an island west of Sitka in a tragedy that left Robidou and four customers dead or lost at sea and put a spotlight on the safety of the region's vibrant charter fishing industry.

"I can't remember when we had any kind of fatality in our industry, so this is shocking for us," said Richard Yamada, who sits on various industry boards, including the Alaska Charter Association and the Southeast Alaska Guides Organization. "We're really curious to see what happened."

Robidou, 32, was working with Kingfisher Charters, which operates a lodge in Sitka, a small port city on Baranof Island with a backdrop of a stunning volcanic mountain. The region is a legendary fishing destination, with myriad inlets, islands, bays and passages that can offer shelter from wind and waves when the open sea is too rough.

"Sitka is nestled right along the Alaska coast, with the ocean on one side, and the Inside Passage on the other," Kingfisher says on its website. "On days where the weather cooperates we generally head offshore into the ocean, but on days where the winds and waves make the journey less desirable we go fishing in the protected bays and passageways of the inside waters."

Over Memorial Day weekend, eight members of the Tyau family, from Los Angeles and Hawaii, traveled to Sitka for a three-day trip with Kingfisher, where rates typically run \$3,295 per person, according to prices listed on the company's website.

The Tyau clan chartered two boats — the Awakin, captained by Robidou, and another called the Pockets — and set out Friday amid rough conditions. Michael Tyau said his sisters and wife spent the day's voyage seasick in the two boats' cabins and skipped Saturday's trip to recover on land.

When Sunday dawned, their last vacation day before Monday flights home, the women rejoined the boats, which headed to different fishing spots. Aboard the Awakin were Tyau's sisters, Brandi Tyau, 56, and Danielle Agcaoili, 53, along with Brandi's partner, Robert Solis, 61, and Danielle's husband, Maury Agcaoili, 57.

Michael Tyau, who was aboard the Pockets, said the conditions where that boat fished that day did not

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concern him. He "in no way felt in jeopardy, like this wasn't safe for us to fish in," he said.

It's unclear where the Awakin went or what might have happened to it, but it was last seen near Sitka on Sunday afternoon and was found partially submerged around 7 p.m. Sunday off Low Island, about 10 miles (16 kilometers) west of Sitka, the Coast Guard has said.

Efforts to recover the vessel have been hampered by strong winds and rough seas, including significant tidal currents that hindered the work of divers, but a salvage company was expected to try again Saturday, conditions permitting.

The sisters were found inside the cabin, and Maury Agcaoili's body was discovered near the boat. Solis and Robidou have not been found, and the Coast Guard called off its search late Monday after covering 825 square miles (2,100 square kilometers) in more than 20 hours.

There was a small craft advisory in the area where the boat was found Sunday, warning mariners of roughly 17 mph (27 kph) winds and 10-foot (3-meter) seas with rain during the day and slightly stronger winds and similarly high seas later in the day, said Pete Boyd, a National Weather Service meteorologist.

In addition to potentially rough seas and high winds, the area features rocks that can seemingly rise even from deep water, posing hazards to boats.

Yamada speculated that Robidou apparently did not have time to make a mayday call, suggesting that a rogue wave could have suddenly flipped the boat.

Kingfisher owner Seth Bone has been in the business for at least 40 years and is well-known and reputable, Yamada said.

Kingfisher Charters has declined to respond to questions outside a statement released Wednesday saying the company is "devastated by the loss of the guests and captain of the Awakin" and is fully cooperating with an investigation it hopes "furnishes answers to the questions as to how it occurred."

Yamada owns a lodge in Juneau, Alaska. Some businesses, like his, own all their fishing vessels, while others, like Kingfisher, contract with independent boat owners.

It takes serious effort to get a captain's license, Yamada said, and the process involves an exam covering navigation and safety as well as 360 days of experience on the water. Because you can't be on the water year-round in Alaska, it usually takes three summers, he said.

"It's not as if you just come off the street and get a license," Yamada said. "It takes some time."

A license has to be renewed every five years.

Given the vast numbers of people who go out on charter boats in southeast Alaska every late spring to fall, the lack of prior accidents in the industry indicates it has a good safety record, said Michael Schneider, an Anchorage, Alaska, personal injury attorney who litigates fishing accidents.

That said, he added: "People need to know going in that it's the real deal up here. The water is deep and cold and bad things can happen. And when they do, they typically happen very, very quickly."

Robidou had been fishing for several years, according to posts and comments on his social media pages. One said he had previously captained a different boat for Kingfisher Charters. Robidou's family did not respond to messages seeking comment.

Robidou was "the nicest, quietest, friendliest young fellow you've ever seen," said Thad Poulson, editor of the Daily Sitka Sentinel newspaper, where Robidou once worked as a press operator.

Kelleher reported from Honolulu. Stefanie Dazio in Los Angeles contributed.

Acclaimed composer Kaija Saariaho dies at age 70 of brain tumor

By RONALD BLUM Associated Press

Kaija Saariaho, who wrote acclaimed works that made her the among the most prominent composers of the 21st century, died Friday. She was 70.

Saariaho died at her apartment in Paris, her family said in a statement posted on her Facebook page. She had been diagnosed in February 2021 with glioblastoma, an aggressive and incurable brain tumor.

"The multiplying tumors did not affect her cognitive facilities until the terminal phase of her illness,"

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the statement said. Her family said Saariaho had undergone experimental treatment at Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris.

"Kaija's appearance in a wheelchair or walking with a cane have prompted many questions, to which she answered elusively," the family said. "Following her physician's advice, she kept her illness a private matter, in order to maintain a positive mindset and keep the focus of her work."

Her "L'Amour de Loin (Love from Afar)" premiered at the Salzburg Festival in 2000 and made its U.S. debut at the Santa Fe Opera two years later. In 2016, it became the first staged work by a female composer at the Metropolitan Opera since Ethel M. Smyth's "Der Wald" in 1903.

"She was one of the most original voices and enjoyed enormous success," Met general manager Peter Gelb said. "It had impact on one's intellect as well as one's emotions. It was music that really moves people's hearts. She was truly one of the great, great artists."

Saariaho did not like to be thought of as a female composer, rather a woman who was a composer.

"I would not even like to speak about it," she said during an interview with The Associated Press after a piano rehearsal at the Met. "It should be a shame."

Born in Helsinki on Oct. 14, 1952, Saariaho studied at the Sibelius Academy and the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg. She helped found a Finnish group "Korvat auki (Ears Open) in the 1970s.

"The problem in Finland in the 1970s and '80s was that it was very closed," she told NPR last year. "My generation felt that there was no place for us and no interest in our music — and more generally, modern music was heard much less."

Saariaho started work in 1982 at Paris' Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music (IR-CAM), a center of contemporary music founded in the 1970s by Pierre Boulez. She incorporated electronics in her composition.

"I am interested in spatialization, but under the condition that it's not applied gratuitously," she said in a 2014 conversation posted on her website. "It has to be necessary — in the same way that material and form must be linked together organically.

Inspired by viewing Messiaen's "St. Francois d'Assise" at the 1992 Salzburg Festival, she wrote "L'Amour de Loin." She went on to compose "Adriana Mater," which premiered at the Opéra Bastille in 2006 and "Émilie," which debuted at the Lyon Opéra in 2010.

Her latest opera, "Innocence," was first seen at the 2021 Aix-en-Provence Festival. Putting a spotlight on gun violence, the work was staged in London this spring and is scheduled for the Met's 2025-26 season.

"This is undoubtedly the work of a mature master, in such full command of her resources that she can focus simply on telling a story and illuminating characters," Zachary Woolfe wrote in The New York Times.

Saariaho received the University of Louisville's Grawemeyer Award in 2003 and was selected Musical America's Musician of the Year in 2008. Kent Nagano's recording of "L'Amour de Loin" won a 2011 Grammy Award.

Saariaho's final work, a trumpet concerto titled "HUSH," is to premiere in Helsinki in Aug. 24 with Susanna Mälkki leading the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

The announcement of Saariaho's death was posted by her husband, composer Jean-Baptiste Barrière; son Aleksis Barrière, a writer; and daughter Aliisa Neige Barrière, a conductor and violinist.

India train crash death toll rises above 230 with 900 injured as rescuers comb through debris

By ASHOK SHARMA and KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Rescuers waded through piles of debris and wreckage to pull out bodies and free people after two passenger trains derailed Friday night in India, killing more than 230 people and leaving hundreds of others trapped inside more than a dozen mangled rail cars, in one of the country's deadliest train crashes in decades.

The accident, which happened about 220 kilometers (137 miles) southwest of Kolkata, led to a chaotic scene as rescuers climbed atop the wrecked trains to break open doors and windows using cutting torches

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to free survivors.

About 900 people were injured in the accident in Balasore district in the eastern state of Odisha, said P.K. Jena, the state's top administrative official. The cause was under investigation.

Ten to 12 coaches of one train derailed, and debris from some of the mangled coaches fell onto a nearby track, said Amitabh Sharma, a railroad ministry spokesperson.

The debris was hit by another passenger train coming from the opposite direction, causing up to three coaches of the second train to also derail, Sharma said.

A third train carrying freight was also involved, the Press Trust of India reported, but there was no immediate confirmation from railroad authorities. PTI said some of the derailed passenger coaches hit cars from the freight train.

The death toll rose steadily throughout the night. As dawn approached on Saturday, Jena said that at least 233 people were dead. In the aftermath, scores of dead bodies lay on the ground near the train tracks covered by white sheets, as locals and rescuers raced to help survivors.

Television footage on Saturday morning showed teams of rescuers and police sifting through the ruins as the search operation carried on. Scores of people also showed up at a local hospital to donate blood.

Officials said 1,200 rescuers worked with 115 ambulances, 50 buses and 45 mobile health units through the night at the accident site. Saturday was declared as a day of mourning in the state.

Villagers said they rushed to the site to evacuate people after hearing a loud sound created by the train coaches going off the tracks.

"The local people really went out on a limb to help us. They not only helped in pulling out people, but retrieved our luggage and got us water," PTI cited Rupam Banerjee, a survivor, as saying.

Passenger Vandana Kaleda said that inside the train during the derailment people were "falling on each other" as her coach shook violently and veered off the tracks.

"As I stepped out of the washroom, suddenly the train tilted. I lost my balance. ... Everything went topsy turvy. People started falling on each other and I was shocked and could not understand what happened. My mind stopped working," she said, adding she felt lucky to survive.

Another survivor who did not give his name said he was sleeping when the impact woke him up. He said he saw other passengers with broken limbs and disfigured faces.

The derailed Coromandel Express was traveling from Howrah in West Bengal state to Chennai, the capital of southern Tamil Nadu state, PTI said.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his thoughts were with the bereaved families.

"May the injured recover soon," tweeted Modi, who said he had spoken to the railway minister and that "all possible assistance" was being offered.

Despite government efforts to improve rail safety, several hundred accidents occur every year on India's railways, the largest train network under one management in the world.

In August 1995, two trains collided near New Delhi, killing 358 people in one of the worst train accidents in India in decades.

In 2016, a passenger train slid off the tracks between the cities of Indore and Patna, killing 146 people.

Most train accidents are blamed on human error or outdated signaling equipment.

More than 12 million people ride 14,000 trains across India every day, traveling on 64,000 kilometers (40,000 miles) of track.

AP journalist Chonchui Ngashangva contributed to this report.

US, allies clash with Russia, China over North Korea's failed military spy satellite launch

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States and its allies clashed with Russia and China on Friday over North Korea's failed launch of a military spy satellite this week in violation of multiple U.N. Security Council

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resolutions, which Moscow and Beijing refused to condemn.

The confrontation was the latest over the North's escalating nuclear, ballistic missile and military programs, which U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood warned are threatening international peace and security. The failed launch "not only disrupted maritime and air traffic in the region, but it also caused alarm for its neighbors in Japan and the Republic of Korea," he said.

Pyongyang is threatening another launch soon.

The Security Council imposed sanctions after North Korea's first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and tightened them over the years in a total of 10 resolutions seeking — so far unsuccessfully — to rein in its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and cut off funding. In the last sanctions resolution adopted by the council in December 2017, members committed to further restricting petroleum exports to North Korea if it conducted a ballistic missile launch capable of reaching intercontinental ranges.

China and Russia vetoed a U.S.-sponsored resolution in May 2022 that would have imposed new sanctions, including on petroleum exports, over a spate of intercontinental ballistic missile launches. Since then, they have blocked any council action including press statements.

U.N. political chief Rosemary DiCarlo told the council the last time North Korea conducted a similar satellite launch to Wednesday's failed attempt was on Feb. 7, 2016 and it was condemned by the Security Council.

"The lack of unity and action in the Security Council does little to slow the negative trajectory on the Korean Peninsula," she said, and North Korea "is unconstrained, and other parties are compelled to focus on military deterrence."

But North Korea's neighbor and ally China and Russia, which has drawn closer to Pyongyang since the war in Ukraine, blamed the West and especially the United States for the current tensions.

China's deputy U.N. ambassador Geng Shuang said the situation on the Korean Peninsula is a remnant of the Cold War. He accused the United States of failing to respond to North Korea's attempts at dialogue over the years and instead resorting to sanctions and pressure on Pyongyang, missing an opportunity to resolve the nuclear issue.

"By incorporating the (Korean) Peninsula into its Indo-Pacific strategy, the U.S. has continued its military activities and significantly increased its military presence both on the peninsula and in its surrounding areas, seriously undermining the strategic security interests of the peninsula and its neighboring countries," Geng said

He also pointed to the recent U.S.-South Korea Washington Declaration, including plans to send strategic nuclear submarines to the peninsula.

Geng claimed U.S. policies are "driven by geopolitical self-interest" and told the council that blaming one party "will only exacerbate conflicts, provocations and inject new uncertainties into the already tense situation on the peninsula."

He urged the council to adopt a resolution circulated by China and Russia in November 2021 that would end a host of sanctions on the North, saying this would be a starting point "to promote de-escalation, mutual trust and unity" among the 15 members.

Russia's deputy ambassador Anna Evstigneeva blamed increased pressure on North Korea by the U.S. and its allies for "the spiral of tension we're witnessing now." And she criticized growing military activity by the U.S., Japan and South Korea, especially recent large-scale U.S.-South Korean military exercises, saying they are destabilizing not only for northeast Asia but for the Asia-Pacific region as a whole.

Russia is against "the dead end and inhumane policy of increasing sanctions pressure," Evstigneeva said, stressing that U.N. resolutions that imposed sanctions also back efforts to resolve the situation on the Korean Peninsula by political and diplomatic means.

Russia calls on the United States to take steps to lower tensions and resume dialogue, instead of trying to shift responsibility "to other countries," she said, also backing council action on the China-Russia resolution.

Wood, the U.S. envoy, countered that the Washington Declaration was a response to North Korea's destabilizing nuclear and ballistic missile activities.

"It's hard to imagine we would ease sanctions" as called for in the China-Russia draft resolution and reward Pyongyang while it continues to violate Security Council resolutions, he said.

As for diplomacy, Wood said the United States on many occasions has stated it is prepared to have an unconditional dialogue, but North Korea "has rejected our interventions on many occasions."

He stressed that U.S.-South Korean military exercises are lawful efforts to defend against Pyongyang's escalating activities that are allowing the country to advance its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs – and to "continue to choose ammunition over nutrition" for its people.

Biden celebrates a 'crisis averted' in Oval Office address on bipartisan debt ceiling deal

By ZEKE MILLER and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden celebrated a "crisis averted" in his first speech to the nation from the Oval Office Friday evening, ready to sign a budget agreement that eliminates the potential for an unprecedented government default that he said would have been catastrophic for the U.S. and global economies.

The bipartisan measure was approved by the Senate late Thursday night after passing the House in yet another late session the night before. Biden is set to sign it at the White House on Saturday with just two days to spare until the Treasury Department has warned the U.S. wouldn't be able to meet its obligations.

"Passing this budget agreement was critical. The stakes could not have been higher," Biden said. "Nothing would have been more catastrophic," he said, than defaulting on the country's debt.

The agreement was hashed out by Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, giving Republicans some of their demanded federal spending cuts but holding the line on major Democratic priorities. It raises the debt limit until 2025 — after the 2024 presidential election — and gives legislators budget targets for the next two years, in hopes of assuring fiscal stability as the political season heats up.

"No one got everything they wanted but the American people got what they needed," Biden said, highlighting the "compromise and consensus" in the deal. "We averted an economic crisis and an economic collapse."

Biden used the opportunity to itemize the achievements of his first term as he runs for reelection, including support for high-tech manufacturing, infrastructure investments and financial incentives for fighting climate change — while at the same time highlighting how he forestalled steeper spending cuts pushed by the GOP that he said would have rolled back his agenda.

"We're cutting spending and bringing deficits down at the same time," Biden said. "We're protecting important priorities from Social Security to Medicare to Medicaid to veterans to our transformational investments in infrastructure and clean energy."

Even as he pledged to continue working with Republicans, Biden also drew contrasts with the opposing party, particularly when it comes to raising taxes on the wealthy, something the Democratic president has sought.

It's something he suggested may need to wait until a second term.

"I'm going to be coming back," he said. "With your help, I'm going to win."

Biden's remarks were the most detailed comments from the Democratic president on the compromise he and his staff negotiated. He largely remained quiet publicly during the high-stakes talks, a decision that frustrated some members of his party but was intended to give space for both sides to reach a deal and for lawmakers to vote it to his desk.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Friday that Biden was using the occasion to deliver his first address to the nation from behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office because "he just wanted to make sure that the American people understood how important it was to get this done, how important it was to do this in a bipartisan way."

Biden praised McCarthy and his negotiators for operating in good faith, and all congressional leaders for ensuring swift passage of the legislation. "They acted responsibly, and put the good of the country ahead of politics," he said.

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And he made a renewed pitch for his governing style, which he described as less shouting and lower temperatures after four years of President Donald Trump.

"I know bipartisanship is hard," he said. "And unity is hard. But we can never stop trying."

Overall, the 99-page bill restricts spending for the next two years and changes some policies, including imposing new work requirements for older Americans receiving food aid and greenlighting an Appalachian natural gas pipeline that many Democrats oppose. Some environmental rules were modified to help streamline approvals for infrastructure and energy projects — a move long sought by moderates in Congress.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates it could actually expand total eligibility for federal food assistance, with the elimination of work requirements for veterans, homeless people and young people leaving foster care.

The legislation also bolsters funds for defense and veterans, cuts back some new money for Internal Revenue Service and rejects Biden's call to roll back Trump-era tax breaks on corporations and the wealthy to help cover the nation's deficits. But the White House said the IRS' plans to step up enforcement of tax laws for high-income earners and corporations would continue.

The agreement also imposes an automatic overall 1% cut to spending programs if Congress fails approve its annual spending bills — a measure designed to pressure lawmakers of both parties to reach consensus before the end of the fiscal year in September.

In both chambers, more Democrats backed the legislation than Republicans, but both parties were critical to its passage. In the Senate the tally was 63-36 including 46 Democrats and independents and 17 Republicans in favor, 31 Republicans along with four Democrats and one independent who caucuses with the Democrats opposed.

The vote in the House was 314-117.

AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

Community mourns teenager's death after gas station owner charged with murder

By JAMES POLLARD Associated Press/Report for America

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Elected officials met a South Carolina community mourning the death of a 14-year-old boy who authorities say was fatally shot in the back by a gas station owner with calls to channel their righteous anger into collective support and political action.

Over 60 people gathered Friday evening for a prayer vigil across the street from the Xpress Mart Shell station in Columbia less than one week after authorities say owner Rick Chow killed Cyrus Carmack-Belton after chasing down the Black teenager, whom he wrongly suspected of stealing four water bottles.

"I am angry," Richland County Councilwoman Yvonne McBride said. "I'm angry about what happened. I'm angry because a young innocent baby was taken brutally from us."

Chow, 58, was charged with murder after an autopsy showed that Carmack-Belton was shot in the back when off the store's property running away, Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said. While Chow thought the youth had shoplifted, investigators said store videos showed Carmack-Belton returned the four water bottles to the cooler. Chow's son told his father that the teen was armed, according to Lott, but there is no evidence that the gun found near Carmack-Belton's body was ever directed at them.

Authorities said Chow, who has a concealed weapon's permit, had previously fired at people he suspected of shoplifting on two other occasions in the past eight years and never faced charges.

Richland County Coroner Naida Rutherford stressed to vigil attendees that Carmack-Belton did not have the gun out.

"There was a young boy killed right across the street, and he didn't deserve to die," Rutherford said.

She also urged peace at the Friday evening service capping a week that has seen nonviolent protests and vandalism outside the store, and coming one day before Carmack-Belton will be laid to rest at a funeral.

Leaders endorsed a swift justice process and the minimization of the easy flow of firearms in society.

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McBride reiterated her opposition to recently approved tax breaks for a gun manufacturer's expansion in a county where the sheriff has warned in recent years of a gun violence crisis.

State Rep. Leon Howard said that both Chow and his son, who officials say participated in the chase, should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Howard also asked that constituents push state senators to pass a hate crimes bill. South Carolina is one of two states without a law enhancing the punishment for crimes determined to be motivated by hatred over the victim's race, among other parts of their identity.

The proposal cleared the South Carolina House only to stop in the Senate again this session. The fatal Sunday night shooting provides additional impetus to make it law, Howard said.

"It was just hate," Howard told The Associated Press. "What else would cause him to evoke such violence to a young teenager, shoot him in the back, other than just pure hate?"

An impromptu memorial arose, with a growing number of balloons and flowers, in a grassy patch where Carmack-Belton had been slain. One sign read "He Was Just A KID!" while another shirt had the words "CYRUS SHOULD BE HERE."

In a Facebook post, Carmack-Belton's middle school remembered him as an intelligent and quick-witted student with an "infectious smile" who dreamed of owning a tattoo shop.

Counselors and spiritual leaders reminded vigil attendees to seek help processing the range of emotional responses that such an event brings. Lashonda McFadden, a member of the local school district's board of trustees, asked the community to support young students who had to see that "somebody that looks like me passed away."

"It's a normal, human reaction to be shocked and outraged and angry and frustrated that a senseless murder happened, essentially. This child was killed and shot down," said Reese Palmer, a counselor who hosted the vigil, told the AP. "We need to be able to have a safe space to process all the emotions."

Residents of Richland County, where nearly half the population is Black, have been mourning a loss that state Rep. Todd Rutherford, the family's attorney, said earlier this week was no accident. He said the experience of "being racially profiled, then shot down in the street like a dog" is one that the Black community has known for generations.

"One beacon of hope is seeing the resilience of the Black community as they wrap their arms around this family that has joined the club that no Black family ever wants to be a part of," he said in a statement Wednesday.

James Pollard 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 undercovered issues.

How the most 'incompetent talk show host of all time' keeps getting guests

By KRISTA FAURIA Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "The Eric Andre Show" is ostensibly not a series that lends itself to longevity. Its titular star, who plays a version of himself and satirizes talk shows by putting unsuspecting celebrity guests through hellish interviews, has become considerably more famous since the series first aired over a decade ago.

But through a combination of disguises and an artfully deceptive booking team, Andre is gearing up for the premiere of the sixth season this Sunday on Adult Swim, boasting a star-studded list of guests in the episodes to come, including Lil Nas X, Natasha Lyonne and Jon Hamm.

"We used to worry about, like, 'Oh, am I going to be more recognizable?'" Andre said of his increasing fame, eventually realizing it doesn't take much to fool people. "I disguised myself a lot this season. I rocked the ponytail and the glasses, and I would wear COVID masks sometimes."

There is a kind of poetic, albeit sadistic, justice that comes from watching the cult show make the most

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envied in society the butt of its joke, including high-profile names over the years like Seth Rogen, Demi Lovato, Dennis Rodman and Judy Greer.

A few — including Lauren Conrad and T.I. — have walked off in disgust or indignation. But that number is surprisingly low given that Andre often keeps guests in emotional and physical discomfort for an hour or more, only to edit interviews down to mere minutes.

"I'm in character," Andre explained. "I'm trying to just be the most absurd and incompetent talk show host of all time."

Once celebrities are brought on the "talk show," their egos are subjected to all kinds of abasements, both through Andre's absurd line of questioning and through physical pranks — some unbeknownst to viewers and only revealed later by former guests.

"It's a break from the kind of fictitious propaganda of traditional press, I think," he theorized, mocking actors and the stories they share on actual late-night talk shows. "They're like, 'Hey, you know, on set, George Clooney played a prank on me,' or whatever. They have some anecdote from set. It feels — people can smell it's a little inauthentic."

Part of what makes the pranks so impressive is Andre's ability to pull them off, even when guests become visibly angry and sometimes threatening toward him.

"I'm calculating every next step," the comedian said of what goes through his mind during the interviews. "I don't want to laugh. I've done so much work and so much prep has gone into bringing that prank into production that I don't want to be the one that blows it."

Despite the fact that even he is not particularly comfortable with it, Andre's antics often at some point involve nudity — either by him or the show's infamous "naked PA" — a move that frequently pushes guests over the edge.

"You gotta do what it takes," Andre, ever the showman, explained. "There's not a lot of things that are like completely jaw-dropping shocking. So, nudity is just kind of like a guaranteed reaction."

Although he denies outright lying to get people on the show, he concedes he and the bookers frequently "bend the truth," and then come up with elaborate schemes to prevent publicists from seeing the torturous pranks they unknowingly walked their clients into.

"We don't let publicists into where the stage is and we'll show them like fake monitor feeds and stuff," he explained, adding they are sometimes sent on a "wild goose chase" when they get an inkling of what is going on.

He recalled having actor Robin Givens on the show last season, saying her publicist at one point demanded the interview be stopped. In an effort to buy Andre more time, the show's assistant director allegedly led the publicist down a series of wrong turns throughout the building.

"Outside, back in, pretending he didn't know where we were," Andre said, bursting into laughter.

His stunts might lead some to believe that Andre is a simple clown. But the comedian, who studied upright bass at the Berklee College of Music, will often give glimpses into the more learned corners of his brain, inexplicably dropping commentary on things like capitalism or militarism amid the chaos of his interviews.

"What can I say, man? Patriotism is the conviction that your country is superior to all others because you were born in it," he says abruptly in one interview with NBA player Blake Griffin last season.

The fact that Andre keeps coming back for more has been of late a pleasant surprise for fans, given that he at times seems ready to move on from the show, as well as his recent involvement in other projects.

He fittingly stars in a sort of spoof on reality competition shows called "The Prank Panel" alongside his "Jackass Forever" co-star Johnny Knoxville and Gabourey Sidibe.

And in 2021, after years of delays and back and forth with different studios, Netflix finally released "Bad Trip," a narrative film with pranks on real people that stars Andre, Tiffany Haddish and Lil Rel Howery.

"I was going to end the show after five seasons and then I didn't make any money on 'Bad Trip,'" he laughed, though he acknowledged his motivations for coming back to "The Eric Andre Show" were not just financial.

"Why permanently close the door on a show where I have full creative freedom?" he said, hinting that

door is still open for more after this season.

Despite Andre's claim that "Bad Trip" didn't make him any money, the film's success once it hit Netflix seems to have engendered future opportunities for the comedian, though he is reluctant to say more about what those projects are.

"It's not even my corporate overlords. It's superstition. So, I'll tell you when the time is right," he teased.

Detroit Pistons announce deal with new coach Monty Williams

By LARRY LAGE AP Sports Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Monty Williams is taking over the Detroit Pistons.

The team said Friday it reached an agreement with Williams to fill its coaching vacancy. Terms of the deal were not announced, but a person familiar with the situation told the AP on Wednesday night it was a six-year contract.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the move had not been announced at the time.

"After spending some time with Monty, it's clear that he's found a unique balance between achieving victory at the highest level while at the same time nurturing a culture of growth, development and inspiration," Pistons owner Tom Gores said. "I'm beyond excited. This is a huge win for us."

The 51-year-old Williams was fired by Phoenix on May 13, two years after reaching the NBA Finals and a year after he won the league's coach of the year honors.

Williams won 63% of his games over four regular seasons with the Suns, but they were eliminated in the Western Conference semifinals two years in a row after losing to Milwaukee in the 2021 NBA Finals.

Williams will be formally introduced at a news conference in Detroit next week. He said he made the decision to sign on with the Pistons after a series of conversations with Gores, general manager Troy Weaver and other Pistons executives.

"A week ago, I was not sure what the future would hold," Williams said in the team's release. "But, after talking with Tom and Troy, I was excited hearing their vision for the Pistons going forward. They had a thoughtful plan and I am so appreciative of the emphasis they placed on the personal side of this business. They showed tremendous consideration for me and my family throughout this process."

Detroit won an NBA-low 17 games last season, and Dwane Casey stepped down as coach with one year left on his contract to take a role in the front office.

The Pistons did not have good fortune in the draft lottery, landing the No. 5 pick overall for the second straight year and missing out on an opportunity to draft 7-foot-3 French pro Victor Wembanyama, 19, who is expected to be the first overall pick of the San Antonio Spurs.

Detroit, a three-time NBA champion, has earned a spot in the playoffs just twice in 14 years. The Pistons have not won a postseason game since 2008, when they advanced to the Eastern Conference finals for the sixth straight time during a remarkable run that included winning the 2004 NBA title and falling a game short of repeating as champions.

Jaden Ivey and Jalen Duren, the No. 5 and No. 13 pick overall last summer, did provide hope for the future with their play last season. Cade Cunningham, the No. 1 pick overall in 2021, had his second season cut short by shin surgery.

Williams is 367-336 in nine seasons as an NBA head coach with a 29-27 postseason record. He had a five-year stint with the New Orleans Pelicans, who fired him in 2015 with a 173-221 record and two playoff appearances.

"Monty represented the ideal prototype for our young team, but we didn't expect him to be available," Weaver said in the release. "When he suddenly became available, we jumped at the opportunity to speak with him. That doesn't mean the others in our process were not strong candidates. They were. But Monty is the prototype."

'Do I have regrets? ... Hell yeah,' says Davenport mayor after partial collapse of Iowa building

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE, HANNAH FINGERHUT and RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press
DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A structural engineer's report issued last week indicated a wall of a century-old apartment building in Iowa was at imminent risk of crumbling, yet neither the owner nor city officials warned residents of the danger days before the building partially collapsed, leaving three people missing and feared dead.

The revelation is the latest flashpoint after Sunday's partial collapse of the building in Davenport, where residents have lashed out at city leaders over what they see as an inept response.

"Do I have regrets about this tragedy and about people potentially losing their lives? Hell yeah. Do I think about this every moment? Hell yeah." Mayor Mike Matson said Thursday. "I have regrets about a lot of things. Believe me, we're going to look at that."

City officials said Thursday that they did not order an evacuation because they relied on the engineer's assurances that the building remained safe.

The state's search and rescue team, search dogs and cameras were used Thursday to continue combing the building for missing people. Matson said crews were also consulting with experts about how to safely bring down the structure, which remains extremely unstable, while being respectful of bodies that could be buried in the debris.

The six-story building collapsed shortly before 5 p.m. Sunday. Rescue crews pulled seven people from the building in their initial response and escorted out 12 others who could walk on their own. Later, two more people were rescued, including a woman who was removed from the fourth floor hours after authorities said they were going to begin setting up for demolition.

Earlier this week, authorities said five people were missing, but Davenport Police Chief Jeff Bladel said during a media briefing Thursday that two of them have since been accounted for and are safe.

City officials named those unaccounted for as Branden Colvin, Ryan Hitchcock and Daniel Prien. The city said all three "have high probability of being home at the time of the collapse and their apartments were located in the collapse zone."

Bladel said transient people also often enter the building but there is no indication anyone else was inside and missing.

People living in the building will be eligible for \$6,000 payments from the city and those meeting certain income requirements could get state payments of \$5,000. Businesses near the collapsed building will also be eligible to receive payments.

City Administrator Corri Spiegel said the building likely is "filled with asbestos" given its age and the city will develop a plan to protect workers and others when the structure is demolished.

The city on Wednesday night released documents, including structural engineering reports, that show city officials and the building's owner were warned that parts of the building were unstable.

A report dated May 24, just four days before the collapse, suggested patches in the west side of the building's brick façade "appear ready to fall imminently" and could be a safety hazard.

The report also detailed that window openings, some filled and some unfilled, were insecure. In one case, the openings were "bulging outward" and looked "poised to fall." Inside the first floor, unsupported window openings help "explain why the façade is currently about to topple outward."

Despite the warnings, city officials did not order some 50 tenants to leave the building.

Rich Oswald, the city's director of development and neighborhood services, confirmed Thursday that the city's chief building official, Trishna Pradhan, resigned earlier this week in the aftermath of the collapse.

Pradhan had visited the building on May 25, and erroneously reported it had "passed" an inspection in notes in the city's online permitting system, Oswald said.

Pradhan attempted to change the inspection result to "incomplete" on Tuesday — after the collapse — but a technical glitch instead listed the outcome as "failed," he said. Oswald said the "incomplete" status is the correct status since the repair work was unfinished.

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Though the error was administrative, Oswald said the "magnitude of the situation and the error that was made" led to Pradhan's resignation.

Calls and text messages to Pradhan were not immediately returned.

The city clarified later in the day that Pradhan had resigned voluntarily and not in lieu of termination. Under Iowa law, it is a confidential personnel matter and the city is not required to explain the departure. Matson promised to improve inspections and to investigate what happened.

Andrew Wold, the building's owner, released a statement dated Tuesday saying "our thoughts and prayers are with our tenants." County records show his company, Davenport Hotel, L.L.C., acquired the building in a 2021 deal worth \$4.2 million.

As the building deteriorated, tenants repeatedly complained about a host of other problems they say were ignored by property managers, including no heat or hot water for weeks or months at a time, mold and water leakage from ceilings and toilets. City officials gave orders to vacate some individual apartments and tried to address other complaints, but a broader building evacuation was never ordered, records show.

City officials ordered repairs after they found seven fire code violations on Feb. 6. They were told three weeks later by building maintenance officials that "none of the work was completed," records show.

Assistant City Attorney Brian Heyer said he's unaware whether earlier civil enforcement actions to protect residents were considered. Only after the collapse did the city file a civil infraction seeking a \$300 fine against Wold for failing to maintain the structure in a safe manner. He will be required to pay for the cost of demolition, Heyer said.

Heyer said an enforcement action the city filed that resulted in a \$4,500 fine in March for repeated trash overflows came in response to complaints from downtown residents and businesses about the debris.

Emails sent to an attorney believed to be representing Wold have not been returned.

The documents released Wednesday outline numerous other concerns raised by engineers, a utility company and city officials. Among them, MidAmerican Energy, an electric and gas utility, complained to the city in early February about an unsafe brick wall at the west corner of the building. A city notice dated Feb. 2 said the wall was gradually failing and cited "visible crumbling of this exterior load bearing wall under the support beam." The notice also said the exterior brick veneer had separated and allowed rain and ice to cause damage.

The notice ordered Davenport Hotel to provide an engineer's letter "stating this is not an imminent danger" and to take immediate steps to repair the problems.

A Feb. 8 letter to the city from engineering company Select Structural said an engineer conducted an emergency site visit Feb. 2 and determined the crumbling wall "is not an imminent threat to the building or its residents, but structural repairs will be necessary."

City inspectors monitored progress at the site and learned Feb. 28 that "the west wall has collapsed into the scaffolding."

This story has been updated to correct the the name of one of the men still missing. His name is spelled Branden Colvin, not Brandon Colvin.

Foley reported from Iowa City, Iowa. Associated Press reporter Summer Ballentine contributed from Jefferson City, Missouri.

3 women who say Cuba Gooding Jr. sexually abused them can testify at sex assault trial, judge rules

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Three women who claim Cuba Gooding Jr. sexually abused them — including one upset she never got her day in court when Gooding resolved criminal charges without trial or jail — can testify at a federal civil trial next week to support a woman's claim that the actor raped her in 2013, a judge ruled Friday.

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Judge Paul A. Crotty said the allegations by the women were relevant for a jury deciding if the Oscar-winning "Jerry Maguire" star raped a woman in a Manhattan hotel room after they met at a bar. He also ruled in a separate order that the plaintiff, identified only as Jane Doe in the lawsuit seeking \$6 million in damages, must reveal her name at trial.

He said the claims by the three women who can testify "are sufficiently similar" to the claims at stake in the trial because "all involve sudden sexual assaults or attempted sexual assaults" connected to Gooding and stemmed from the presence of the women and Gooding in social settings such as festivals, bars, nightclubs and restaurants.

Lawyers for Gooding, a #MeToo defendant in multiple courts, have said Gooding had consensual sex with the woman who accused him of rape after they met in the VIP lounge of a Greenwich Village restaurant and she joined him at a nearby hotel bar, agreeing to proceed to his hotel room so the actor could change his clothing. The lawyers did not respond to an email request for comment Friday.

The three women include Kelsey Harbert, who said in tears after Gooding pleaded guilty last year that never getting her day in court was "more disappointing than words can say."

Harbert told police Gooding fondled her without her consent at Magic Hour Rooftop Bar & Lounge near Times Square in 2019.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they grant permission, as Harbert has done.

The judge disallowed the testimony of a fourth woman on the grounds that her proposed testimony that Gooding groped her breast without her consent in 2011 was so similar to Harbert's expected testimony that it would be "needlessly cumulative" and would increase the chance of improper bias. The trial is scheduled to start Tuesday.

Gooding, a star in films including "Boyz n the Hood" and "Radio," was permitted to plead guilty in April 2022 to a misdemeanor, admitting that he forcibly kissed a worker at a New York nightclub in 2018.

After staying out of trouble and completing six months of alcohol and behavioral counseling, Gooding was permitted to withdraw his guilty plea and instead pleaded guilty to a non-criminal harassment violation, eliminating his criminal record and preventing further penalties.

The deal was criticized by some of at least 30 women who prosecutors say have made sexual misconduct allegations against him, many citing encounters at New York City nightspots that resulted in groping, unwanted kissing and other inappropriate behavior.

Attorney Gloria Allred, who represents the plaintiff, declined to comment except to say that her client will be going forward with the trial on Tuesday.

Prospects for a settlement, which sometimes occur in civil cases on the eve of trial, seemed dim at a pretrial conference Thursday as trial attorneys were in such sharp disagreement that the judge warned in ruling Friday that "counsel will act with the utmost courtesy and professionalism towards one another and the Court going forward."

Churchill Downs moves meet to Ellis Park to examine protocols following 12 horse deaths

By GARY B. GRAVES AP Sports Writer

Churchill Downs will suspend racing operations on Wednesday and move the remainder of its spring meet to Ellis Park in order to conduct a "top-to-bottom" review of safety and surface protocols in the wake of 12 horse fatalities the past month at the home of the Kentucky Derby.

No single factor has been identified as a potential cause for the fatalities or pattern detected, according to a release, but the decision was made to relocate the meet "in an abundance of caution."

"What has happened at our track is deeply upsetting and absolutely unacceptable," Churchill Downs Inc. CEO Bill Carstanjen said in Friday's release. "We need to take more time to conduct a top-to-bottom review of all of the details and circumstances so that we can further strengthen our surface, safety and integrity protocols."

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Racing will continue at Churchill Downs through Sunday before shifting to the CDI-owned racing and gaming facility in Henderson, Kentucky. Ellis Park's meet was scheduled to start July 7, four days after the scheduled close at Churchill Downs, and run through Aug. 27 but will now expand with Friday's announcement.

Ellis Park will resume racing on June 10.

The move comes a day after track superintendent Dennis Moore conducted a second independent analysis of Churchill Downs' racing and training surfaces as part of an emergency summit called this week by the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA) with the track and the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission. Meetings took place in Lexington, Kentucky, and at the Louisville track.

Also on Friday, the KHRC said Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund purses will be limited to the top five finishers. It also granted HISA oversight of racetrack safety.

The head of the federally created oversight agency suggested ahead of the summit that it could recommend pausing the meet and that Churchill Downs would accept that recommendation.

Churchill Downs' release stated that expert testing raised no concerns and concluded that the surface was consistent with the track's prior measurements. Even so, it chose to relocate "in alignment" with HISA's recommendation to suspend the meet to allow more time for additional investigation.

"We appreciate their thoughtfulness and cooperation through these challenging moments," HISA CEO Lisa Lazarus said in a statement. "We will continue to seek answers and work with everyone involved to ensure that horses are running safely at Churchill Downs again in the near future."

Carstanjen insisted that relocating the remainder of the spring meet to Ellis Park would maintain the industry ecosystem with minor disruption. He also said he was grateful to Kentucky horsemen for their support as they work to find answers.

Rick Hiles, the president of Kentucky Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, questioned the move, especially since there's no conclusive evidence that Churchill Downs' surface is the problem.

"We all want to find solutions that will improve safety for horses," Hiles said in a statement. "However, we need to discuss allowing trainers and veterinarians to use therapeutic medications that greatly lessen the risk of breakdowns.

"Drastic steps, such as relocating an active race meet, should only be considered when it is certain to make a difference."

The latest development comes a day after Churchill Downs and HISA each implemented safety and performance standards to address the spate of deaths.

HISA will conduct additional post-entry screening of horses to identify those at increased risk for injury. Its Integrity and Welfare Unit also will collect blood and hair samples for all fatalities for use while investigating a cause.

Churchill Downs announced it would immediately limit horses to four starts during a rolling eight-week period and impose ineligibility standards for poor performers. The track is also pausing incentives, such as trainer start bonuses and limiting purse payouts to the top five finishers instead of every finisher.

AP sports: <https://apnews.com/hub/sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Utah district bans Bible in elementary and middle schools 'due to vulgarity or violence'

By SAM METZ Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The Good Book is being treated like a bad book in Utah after a parent frustrated by efforts to ban materials from schools convinced a suburban district that some Bible verses were too vulgar or violent for younger children.

And the Book of Mormon could be next.

The 72,000-student Davis School District north of Salt Lake City removed the Bible from its elementary and middle schools while keeping it in high schools after a committee reviewed the scripture in response

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to a parental complaint. The district has removed other titles, including Sherman Alexie's "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian" and John Green's "Looking for Alaska," following a 2022 state law requiring districts to include parents in decisions over what constitutes "sensitive material."

On Friday, a complaint was submitted about the signature scripture of the predominant faith in Utah, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, widely known as the Mormon church. District spokesperson Chris Williams confirmed that someone filed a review request for the Book of Mormon but would not say what reasons were listed. Citing a school board privacy policy, he also would not say whether it was from the same person who complained about the Bible.

Representatives for the church declined to comment on the challenge. Members of the faith also read the Bible.

Williams said the district doesn't differentiate between requests to review books and doesn't consider whether complaints may be submitted as satire. The reviews are handled by a committee made up of teachers, parents and administrators in the largely conservative community.

The committee published its decision about the Bible in an online database of review requests and did not elaborate on its reasoning or which passages it found overly violent or vulgar.

The decision comes as conservative parent activists, including state-based chapters of the group Parents United, descend on school boards and statehouses throughout the United States, sowing alarm about how sex and violence are talked about in schools.

Because of the district's privacy policy, it's unknown who made the request for the Bible to be banned from Davis schools or if they are affiliated with any larger group.

A copy of the complaint obtained by The Salt Lake Tribune through a public records request shows that the parent noted the Bible contains instances of incest, prostitution and rape. The complaint derided a "bad faith process" and said the district was "ceding our children's education, First Amendment Rights, and library access" to Parents United.

"Utah Parents United left off one of the most sex-ridden books around: The Bible," the parent's complaint, dated Dec. 11, said. It later went on to add, "You'll no doubt find that the Bible (under state law) has 'no serious values for minors' because it's pornographic by our new definition."

The review committee determined the Bible didn't qualify under Utah's definition of what's pornographic or indecent, which is why it remains in high schools, Williams said. The committee can make its own decisions under the new 2022 state law and has applied different standards based on students' ages in response to multiple challenges, he said.

An unnamed party filed an appeal on Wednesday.

The Bible has long found itself on the American Library Association's list of most challenged books and was temporarily pulled off shelves last year in school districts in Texas and Missouri.

Concerns about new policies potentially ensnaring the Bible have routinely arisen in statehouses during debates over efforts to expand book banning procedures. That includes Arkansas — one of the states that enacted a law this year that would subject librarians to criminal penalties for providing "harmful" materials to minors, and creates a new process for the public to request materials be relocated in libraries.

"I don't want people to be able to say, 'I don't want the Bible in the library,'" Arkansas Democratic state Sen. Linda Chesterfield said during a hearing.

Parents who have pushed for more say in their children's education and the curriculum and materials available in schools have argued that they should control how their children are taught about matters like gender, sexuality and race.

EveryLibrary, a national political action committee, told The Associated Press last month it was tracking at least 121 different proposals introduced in legislatures this year targeting libraries, librarians, educators and access to materials. The number of attempts to ban or restrict books across the U.S. in 2022 was the highest in the 20 years, according to the American Library Association.

"If folks are outraged about the Bible being banned, they should be outraged about all the books that are being censored in our public schools," said Kasey Meehan, who directs the Freedom to Read program

at the writers' organization PEN America.

___ Associated Press reporter Andrew DeMillo contributed from Little Rock, Ark.

Silver says Morant not being charged with a crime won't prevent NBA penalties

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

DENVER (AP) — Memphis guard Ja Morant not being charged with a crime for twice displaying a gun on social media will not prevent the NBA from handing down more discipline, Commissioner Adam Silver said Friday.

Silver is preparing to announce whatever penalty is coming Morant's way for the second gun incident shortly after the end of the NBA Finals. He suspended Morant for eight games in March after the Grizzlies star held a gun in a suburban Denver nightclub while streaming himself live on Instagram. Another live stream in May, this time while sharing the front seat of a car with one of his friends, saw Morant displaying a weapon again.

"Waving them around, displaying them in a certain context, is not consistent with gun safety and is not the proper message that an NBA player, particularly one at Ja's level, should be sending to the tens of millions of followers he has — and particularly when it's an incident once again, where it's been streamed live on social media," Silver said. "So yes, I think given the similarity of this incident to the first one, I was alarmed, I was disheartened."

Police in Colorado looked into the March incident and did not file charges. Morant has also not been charged with doing anything illegal related to the May incident.

But the collective bargaining agreement between the league and its players also says players agree "not to do anything that is materially detrimental or materially prejudicial to the best interests" of their team or the NBA. That's why Morant's eight-game suspension in March was for conduct detrimental to the league, and it's reasonable to assume that will be part of the sanctioning that Morant will face this time.

"When we have a standard for conduct detrimental, at the end of the day, it's one based on what we see as the values of this league and what our expectations from our players in terms of the image we're portraying to our fans," Silver said. "So, it's not a legal standard. It's a private organization standard."

Silver announced Thursday that the league and the National Basketball Players Association agree that the latest Morant penalty should not be announced during the finals. Morant has been suspended by the Grizzlies indefinitely, and with the team obviously off until camp this fall there's no urgency for the NBA to announce its decision.

Silver also insisted that his decision is not going to be a political one, even in a time where the topic of gun control only seems to be widening the political divide across the country.

There have been 557 mass killings in the United States since 2006, and at least 2,896 people have died, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University. Those include killings where four or more died, not including the assailant, within a 24-hour period. So far in 2023, the nation has witnessed the highest number on record of mass killings and deaths to this point in a single year.

"This, to me, is an issue of gun safety," Silver said.

This is the third known NBA investigation surrounding Morant and the possible involvement of firearms so far in 2023.

Morant's actions were investigated after a Jan. 29 incident in Memphis that he said led to Davonte Pack — someone Morant calls "my brother" and the person who live-streamed the May incident — banned from Grizzlies home games for a year.

That incident followed a game against the Indiana Pacers; citing unnamed sources, The Indianapolis Star and USA Today reported that multiple members of the Pacers saw a red dot pointed at them while they were near the loading dock where their bus was located, and The Athletic reported that a Pacers security guard believed the laser was attached to a gun.

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The NBA confirmed that individuals it didn't identify were banned from the arena but said its investigation into the January event found no evidence that anyone was threatened with a weapon.

Morant and Pack also are involved in a civil lawsuit brought after an incident at Morant's home last summer, in which a then-17-year-old alleged that they assaulted him. Morant filed a countersuit on April 12, accusing the teen of slander, battery and assault.

AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/hub/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Retired Phoenix police officer in landmark Miranda rights case dies at 87

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Retired Phoenix Police Capt. Carroll Cooley, the arresting officer in the landmark case partially responsible for the Supreme Court's Miranda rights ruling that requires suspects be read their rights, has died, the department confirmed Friday. He was 87.

Phoenix police said in a brief statement that Cooley died on May 29 after an unspecified illness. The location and exact cause of his death were not immediately available, nor was information about services or survivors.

Cooley joined the Phoenix department in 1958 and retired two decades later.

On March 13, 1963, Cooley arrested Ernesto Miranda in the kidnap and rape of an 18-year-old Phoenix woman. Miranda was eventually convicted based on his handwritten confession and sentenced to 20-30 years in prison.

Miranda appealed, and the case eventually went up to the U.S. Supreme Court, which issued a 1966 ruling overturning the conviction, saying that suspects should be advised of their constitutional rights against self-incrimination and to an attorney before questioning.

That decision, along with three other similar cases that were bundled together, led to the so-called "Miranda rights" or "Miranda warning," which is familiar to anyone who has watched a police procedural drama on television.

"You have the right to remain silent," it begins. "Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.

"You have the right to speak to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you," it continues.

After the Supreme Court overturned his conviction, Miranda remained in jail on another conviction and was convicted again of raping and kidnapping the 18-year-old. Prosecutors at the second trial didn't use the confession and instead relied on testimony from a woman who was close to Miranda.

After he was paroled, Miranda was fatally stabbed in February 1976 in a dispute during a card game at a downtown Phoenix bar.

During his career with Phoenix police, Cooley worked in the city's Maryvale precinct, the general investigations bureau, and the police academy. He rose to become captain, a rank the department said is equivalent to commander today.

After retiring from the police department in December 1978, Cooley went on to work for the Arizona Motor Vehicle Division and the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

He also volunteered at the Phoenix Police Museum, where in 2013 he recounted his story before a 50th anniversary display about the Miranda arrest.

Lies, complaints and Larry Nassar: Takeaways from the records detailing Jeffrey Epstein's final days

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Nearly four years after Jeffrey Epstein's death, thousands of pages of records obtained by The Associated Press are shedding new light on the financier's time behind bars and a frantic

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response by federal corrections officials to his death.

The documents, including emails between jail officials and psychological evaluations, offer a fuller picture of Epstein as he awaited trial on sex trafficking charges at the now-shuttered Metropolitan Correctional-nassar Center.

Epstein killed himself at the federal jail in 2019. In the days and weeks that followed, corrections officials struggled to explain how such a high-profile detainee had managed to take his own life.

The records show how he was moved from the jail's general population to specialized housing and how he was briefly on suicide watch before being downgraded to psychiatric observation — his status when he killed himself.

Here are takeaways from the more than 4,000 pages of documents:

AN AGITATED INMATE

Epstein was anxious and despondent during much of his time in jail, prompting concern from jail guards and psychological experts about his mental state. He complained often about jail life, including poor sleep, constipation, the color of his uniform and his treatment by other detainees. The noise from a broken toilet in his cell left him sitting in the corner with his hands over his ears, according to one psychologist.

But despite his litany of complaints, Epstein insisted that he wouldn't take his own life. Even after he was discovered on his cell's floor with a strip of bedsheet around his neck and placed on suicide watch for 31 hours, he denied that he was contemplating suicide, which he said was against his Jewish religion. Plus, he added, he was a "coward" who didn't like pain.

"He described having a 'wonderful life,'" a psychological evaluation stated. "He said 'it would be crazy' to take his life. He furthered, 'I would not do that to myself.'"

A LETTER TO ANOTHER SEX OFFENDER

Among the new revelations was an attempt by Epstein to reach out to another notorious pedophile: Larry Nassar, the USA Gymnastics team doctor convicted of sexually abusing scores of young athletes.

A letter sent by Epstein to Nassar was found returned to sender in the jail's mail room weeks after Epstein's death. "It appeared he mailed it out and it was returned back to him," the investigator who found the letter told a corrections official by email. "I am not sure if I should open it or should we hand it over to anyone?"

The letter itself wasn't included among the documents turned over to the AP, which also don't indicate what became of the letter.

FINAL PHONE CALL

Epstein was found dead on the morning of Aug. 10, 2019. He had hanged himself with a bedsheet, according to the medical examiner. Hours earlier, he appears to have successfully deceived jail guards one last time by telling them he wanted to talk on the phone to his mother, who had been dead for 15 years.

A correctional officer escorted Epstein to a shower area at around 7 p.m., where he was permitted to make a 15 minute "social call." Reports later indicated that he had phoned his 30-year-old girlfriend.

Weeks after his death, a jail warden questioned why an employee had failed to follow policy by allowing Epstein to make an unmonitored call.

MUDDLED RESPONSE

The documents shed light on the lurching response by the Bureau of Prisons in the critical hours of Epstein's death.

In one email, a prosecutor involved in Epstein's criminal case complained to an agency lawyer that it was "frankly unbelievable" that the agency was issuing public news releases "before telling us basic information so that we can relay it to his attorneys who can relay it to his family."

In another email, the prosecutor wrote of getting "increasingly frantic calls" from Epstein's lawyers.

"We need to know as soon as possible the very basic facts, such as time and cause of death at the absolute minimum," wrote the prosecutor, whose name was redacted. "It has now been hours since this was reported publicly," the prosecutor wrote, adding that it was "extraordinary frustrating to have to tell them that we have less information than the press."

As news outlets began reporting details of the agency's failings, a high-ranking federal prison official made the apparently baseless suggestion to the agency's director that reporters must have been paying jail employees for information.

THE AFTERMATH

Epstein's death touched off a wave of anger toward the Bureau of Prisons and questions about the operation of the Metropolitan Correctional Center. In an internal memo, officials blamed "seriously reduced staffing levels, improper or lack of training, and follow up and oversight" for the death.

Two guards who were supposed to be watching Epstein on the night of his death were found to have falsified records, admitting to napping and browsing the internet instead of monitoring the high-profile inmate.

The documents show other efforts to implement reforms, such as requiring jail captains to review footage ensuring that guards are completing their rounds every 30 minutes. Jail officials said they would allow psychological experts to play a larger role in determining how housing decisions are made.

In some respects, the officials may have overcorrected. A memo sent to the Bureau of Prisons director shortly after Epstein's death warned that wardens were "defaulting to leaving inmates on suicide watch longer than the psychologists have advised."

By 2021, the Metropolitan Correctional Center had closed down. An investigation by the Justice Department's inspector general is still ongoing.

For more AP coverage of Jeffrey Epstein: <https://apnews.com/hub/jeffrey-epstein>

Republicans schedule 1st presidential debate for Aug. 23, but there's no guarantee Trump will attend

By SARA BURNETT Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The first 2024 Republican presidential debate will be held Aug. 23, the Republican National Committee announced Friday, with a second debate the following night should it be needed.

The RNC also detailed the criteria that will be used for candidates to qualify for the debate stage, including a pledge to support the eventual Republican presidential nominee. That requirement could keep some candidates off the stage, including former President Donald Trump, who hasn't committed to supporting the nominee if he doesn't emerge from the primary. Trump also has questioned why he would participate since he holds a commanding lead in GOP primary polls.

The debate will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which also will be the site of the party's nominating convention next year. It's a nod to the importance of the battleground state, which is likely to be key to a presidential victory again in 2024.

"The RNC is committed to putting on a fair, neutral, and transparent primary process and the qualifying criteria set forth will put our party and eventual nominee in the best position to take back the White House come November 2024," RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel said.

The list of candidates vying to face President Joe Biden next year has been growing. In addition to Trump, the field includes Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson and businessman Vivek Ramaswamy. Other candidates expected to get into the contest soon include former Vice President Mike Pence, ex-New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum.

The debate stage can provide the largest audience yet for many presidential hopefuls, but it also can trip up candidates. Already, there have been questions about which candidates will take part and what rules the RNC would impose in order to participate.

Trump has said so far that he wouldn't promise to support the nominee if someone else wins the nomination, telling radio host Hugh Hewitt, "It would have to depend on who the nominee was."

Christie, who plans to launch his campaign in New Hampshire next week, has said he would never sup-

port Trump as the party's 2024 nominee, as he did in 2016. "No way," he told Axios in March. Advisers did not immediately respond to questions about how Christie would handle the pledge, given his opposition to Trump.

Hutchinson, also a Trump critic, said Friday he plans to be on the debate stage. But he criticized the RNC for requiring the "loyalty oath," saying the pledge should be only that a participant won't run as a third-party candidate.

"The RNC should have minimal criteria for the debates in the early stages of this campaign," Hutchinson said. "More choices are better."

To participate in the Aug. 23 debate in Milwaukee, candidates must have received campaign contributions from 40,000 unique donors — a relatively high number aimed at winnowing the field. Hutchinson was critical, saying it "benefits candidates who generate online donations through extreme rhetoric and scare tactics."

Among other debate criteria, participants also must receive at least 1% support in three national polls or 1% in two national polls and 1% in early state polls from two separate states. Those states are Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina. The polls must meet certain requirements to be recognized by the RNC.

Candidates also must sign a pledge agreeing not to participate in any non-RNC-sanctioned debate during the election cycle.

The RNC said criteria for future debates may include higher thresholds for polling and fundraising. Future dates have not been set.

Associated Press reporter Jill Colvin contributed.

Novak Djokovic laments fans who 'boo every single thing' after lengthy French Open win

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

PARIS (AP) — Novak Djokovic makes no secret of the way he loves to feed off negativity during a tennis match. Doesn't really matter whether he's ahead or behind on the scoreboard. The guy simply finds motivation and inspiration from all manner of slights, real and perceived.

Maybe it's how a chair umpire is officiating that particular day ... or the way Djokovic's entourage is sitting in place in the stands instead of rising to encourage him ... or the criticism he receives for wading into a political issue — all of which already have happened during this French Open.

Or maybe it's how he's treated by the spectators who, as they did on Friday during Djokovic's 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5), 6-2 victory over 29th-seeded Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in the third round at Roland Garros, get on his case and jeer him for seemingly no good reason at all.

Which is what happened at Court Philippe Chatrier during the longest three-set Grand Slam match of the 22-time major champion Djokovic's long and distinguished career, clocking in at 3 hours, 36 minutes. He wasn't thrilled at how difficult things had been in the match, didn't love double-faulting three times in a single game, and really didn't like the feedback coming from a portion of the fans.

"A majority of the people comes to enjoy tennis or support one or the other player. But they are individuals. There are people — there are groups or whatever — that love to boo every single thing you do. That's something that I find disrespectful and I frankly don't understand that," Djokovic said later at his news conference. "But it's their right. They paid the ticket. They can do whatever they want."

After being two points from dropping the second set, trailing 5-4 in that tiebreaker, Djokovic grabbed control. He took the next three points, each of which ended with an error by Davidovich Fokina, then, the set his, Djokovic took a couple of steps toward the sideline, before reacting by punching the air, spinning around, throwing an uppercut, holding his right fist aloft and roaring.

That drew some unfriendly noise from some in the crowd. More displeasure with him was expressed a moment later, when the chair umpire announced that Djokovic was taking a medical timeout while a

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trainer massaged his upper left leg.

Sitting in his chair with his shirt off and a white towel around his shoulders, Djokovic heard the negativity and responded with gestures. He waved a hand, as if to say, "Give me more!" He gave a sarcastic thumbs-up and nodded. He applauded. He shook his head and chuckled.

"At times, you know, I will stay quiet. Not 'at times' — actually, 99% of the time, I will stay quiet," said Djokovic, who won the French Open in 2016 and 2021 and, in addition to seeking a 23rd major championship to break his tie with Rafael Nadal, can become the first man with at least three trophies at each Slam site. "Sometimes I will oppose that, because I feel when somebody is disrespectful, he or she deserves to have an answer to that. That's what it is all about."

In addition to the No. 3 Djokovic, other seeded men advancing included No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz, No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas, the runner-up to Djokovic in Paris two years ago and at the Australian Open this year, No. 11 Karen Khachanov and No. 17 Lorenzo Musetti, who eliminated No. 14 Cam Norrie. Lorenzo Sonego defeated No. 7 Andrey Rublev, while Juan Pablo Varillas took out No. 13 Hubert Hurkacz 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (3), 4-6, 6-2 in Friday night's last contest.

Alcaraz was a 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 winner over No. 26 Denis Shapovalov in the night session. After trailing 4-1 in the second set — "I was in trouble," Alcaraz said — the reigning U.S. Open champion grabbed seven consecutive games to take control for good.

He'll next play Musetti, who won their only previous matchup, while Djokovic meets Varillas, a 27-year-old from Peru who is ranked 94th and had never won a Grand Slam match until this week.

No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka and No. 9 Daria Kasatkina moved into the women's fourth round, along with Sloane Stephens, Elina Svitolina and 2021 runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, but No. 3 Jessica Pegula was sent packing.

Pegula quickly gathered her belongings and marched out of the main stadium after a 6-1, 6-3 loss to Elise Mertens, a far earlier exit than the American has been used to at Grand Slam tournaments lately.

Pegula was a quarterfinalist at four of the five most recent majors, including a year ago at Roland Garros. She's never gone further than that stage at a Slam and never really got into this match against the 28th-seeded Mertens on a day with a breeze at about 10 mph (15 kph) and a chill in the low 60s Fahrenheit (low teens Celsius).

"I feel like I was still playing good points. Elise was just being really tough, not making a lot of errors and making me play every single ball," said Pegula, whose parents own the NFL's Buffalo Bills and NHL's Buffalo Sabres. "And with the windy conditions, I felt like it definitely played into her game."

With Pegula joining No. 5 Caroline Garcia, No. 8 Maria Sakkari and No. 10 Petra Kvitova on the sideline, four of the top 10 women's seeds already are gone. That's part of a pattern this year at Roland Garros: Only 12 seeds made it through two rounds, the fewest in Paris since the field expanded to 32 seeds in 2002.

AP tennis: <https://apnews.com/hub/tennis> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

YouTube changes policy to allow false claims about past US presidential elections

By The Associated Press undefined

YouTube will stop removing content that falsely claims the 2020 election or other past U.S. presidential elections were marred by "widespread fraud, errors or glitches," the platform announced Friday.

The change is a reversal for the Google-owned video service, which said a month after the 2020 election that it would start removing new posts that falsely claimed widespread voter fraud or errors changed the outcome.

YouTube said in a blog post that the updated policy was an attempt to protect the ability to "openly debate political ideas, even those that are controversial or based on disproven assumptions."

"In the current environment, we find that while removing this content does curb some misinformation, it

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could also have the unintended effect of curtailing political speech without meaningfully reducing the risk of violence or other real-world harm," the blog post said.

The updated policy, which goes into effect immediately, won't stop YouTube from taking down content that tries to deceive voters in the upcoming 2024 election, or other future races in the U.S. and abroad. The company said its other existing rules against election misinformation remain unchanged.

This could prove difficult to enforce, said John Wihbey, an associate professor at Northeastern University who studies social media and misinformation.

"It doesn't take a genius if you're on the disinformation 'we were wronged in 2020' side to say, 'wait a minute, let's just claim that voting just generally is not worth it. And 2020 is our example,'" he said. "I don't know how you disentangle rhetoric that both refers to past wrongs and to forward possibilities. The content moderation team, which is going to try to do this, is going to tie themselves in knots trying to figure out exactly where that line is."

The announcement comes after YouTube and other major social media companies, including Twitter and the Meta-owned Facebook and Instagram, have come under fire in recent years for not doing more to combat the firehose of election misinformation and disinformation that spreads on their platforms.

The left-leaning media watchdog group Media Matters said the policy change is not a surprise, as it was one of the "last major social media platforms" to keep the policy in place.

"YouTube and the other platforms that preceded it in weakening their election misinformation policies, like Facebook, have made it clear that one attempted insurrection wasn't enough. They're setting the stage for an encore," said its vice president Julie Millican in a statement.

US hiring jumped last month. So did unemployment. Here's what that says about the economy

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's employers stepped up their hiring in May, adding a robust 339,000 jobs, well above expectations and evidence of enduring strength in an economy that the Federal Reserve is desperately trying to cool.

Friday's report from the government reflected the job market's resilience after more than a year of aggressive interest rate increases by the Fed. Many industries, from construction to restaurants to health care, are still adding jobs to keep up with consumer demand and restore their workforces to pre-pandemic levels.

Overall, the report painted a mostly encouraging picture of the job market. Yet there were some mixed messages in the May figures. Notably, the unemployment rate rose to 3.7%, from a five-decade low of 3.4% in April. It's the highest unemployment rate since October. (The government compiles the unemployment data using a different survey than the one used to calculate job gains, and the two surveys sometimes conflict.)

IS THE LABOR MARKET AS STRONG AS THE GAIN OF 339,000 JOBS SUGGESTS?

Probably not. In May, employers added the most jobs since January. So the overall picture is an encouraging one. Yet there are signs that hiring is cooling from the super-heated levels of the past two years.

For one thing, the length of the average work week declined, to 34.3 hours from 34.4 in April. That is a seemingly small drop, but economists said it's equivalent to cutting several hundred thousand jobs. It means that, on average, weekly paychecks will be slightly smaller. The average work week is down from 34.6 hours a year ago.

Hourly wage growth also dipped in May, evidence that many businesses feel less pressure to dangle higher pay to find and keep workers. Average hourly pay increased 4.3% from a year earlier. That's down from gangbusters gains of nearly 6% a year ago.

And the rise in the unemployment rate partly reflected higher layoffs. This suggested that not everyone who lost jobs in recent high-profile layoffs by banks, tech firms and media companies has found new work.

IS THE ECONOMY HEADED FOR A RECESSION?

Not likely anytime soon. The strong, steady job growth of the past several months shows that the economy

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remains in solid shape despite the Fed's interest rate hikes, which have made borrowing much costlier for businesses and consumers. A recession, if one occurs, is likely further away than many economists had previously thought.

"As long as the economy continues to produce above 200,000 jobs per month, this economy simply is not going to slip into recession," said Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at consulting firm RSM.

More hiring translates into more Americans earning paychecks, a trend that suggests that consumer spending — the principal driver of U.S. economic growth — will keep growing.

DOES THAT MEAN THE ECONOMY IS IN THE CLEAR?

Not necessarily. Some cracks in the economy's foundations have emerged. Home sales have tumbled. A measure of factory activity showed that manufacturing has contracted for seven straight months.

And consumers are showing signs of straining to keep up with higher prices. The proportion of Americans who are struggling to stay current on their credit card and auto loan debt rose in the first three months of this year, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Sales at several retail companies, including discount chain Dollar General and department store Macy's, have weakened. That indicates that lower-income consumers, in particular, are feeling squeezed by high inflation.

And the threat of further interest rate hikes by the Fed, in its continuing drive to fight inflation, always looms. The Fed's rate increases have elevated the costs of mortgages, auto loans, credit card use and business borrowing.

The Fed has projected that its rate hikes will weaken the economy and raise unemployment, as well as lower inflation. Still, Chair Jerome Powell has held out hope that the central bank can significantly slow price growth without causing a deep recession.

"The continued strength in employment pushes back the start of a prospective recession but does not eliminate that likelihood," said Kathy Bostjancic, chief economist at Nationwide. "If the economy remains too hot to meaningfully slow inflation, the Fed will simply raise rates higher, still a path towards a downturn."

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR THE FED'S APPROACH TO INTEREST RATES?

Top Fed officials signaled earlier this week that they plan to forgo a rate increase at their June 13-14 meeting. This would allow them time to assess how their previous rate hikes have affected the inflation pressures underlying the economy.

The Fed has increased its key rate by a substantial 5 percentage points since March 2022, to about 5.1%, the highest level in 16 years. Higher rates typically take time to affect job growth and inflation.

Some Fed officials might be unnerved by the burst of hiring in May and push for another rate hike this month. But many economists say last month's rise in unemployment and slight decline in wage growth will likely be sufficient signs of a slowdown for the Fed to leave rates alone.

WHY DID THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE RISE?

The government's jobs report is derived from two separate surveys that are conducted each month. One survey covers businesses, the other households. The survey of businesses is used to calculate the job gain (or loss). The household survey, which asks people if they've done work for pay in the past month, determines the unemployment rate.

In May, the surveys diverged: Households reported an actual loss of jobs, while the survey of businesses found a sharp gain. Though the two surveys can diverge as they did for May, over time they generally produce similar results. The survey of businesses is larger and is generally regarded as more reliable, though the household survey often does a better job of capturing turning points in the economy.

One key reason for the divergence is that, according to the household survey, the number of self-employed people fell by 369,000 from April to May. Self-employed workers are counted in the survey of households but not in the survey of businesses.

Drew Matus, chief economist at MetLife Investment Management, cautioned that the higher unemployment rate for May could signal weakness ahead. It suggests that companies are becoming more cautious about hiring.

Joblessness rose last month for teenagers, the disabled and people with less education, Matus noted.

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That was a sign that companies were cutting workers with fewer skills and less experience, a move that often precedes recessions.

"Before it was a rising tide lifts all boats, and now it seems like the boats have gotten smaller and firms are deciding who gets to sit in them," Matus said.

WHO IS DOING THE HIRING?

The job gains in May were widespread across the economy. Companies in construction, shipping and warehousing, restaurants and hotels, government, health care and in such professions as engineering and architecture all added workers.

Many of those sectors have been struggling to restore their staffing to pre-pandemic levels. Restaurants, for example, are seeing strong demand yet still have fewer workers overall than they did before the pandemic.

One new worker, Mikala Slotnick, was hired as a barista last week by Red Bay Coffee and by Wednesday was working in their Berkeley, California, location. Slotnick, 21, has previously worked at large coffee chains but preferred Red Bay because it focuses on working directly with coffee growers overseas.

"It seems like they care more about what they're producing, versus the money," she said. "I think that's just way better."

AP video journalist Haven Daley in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Blinken warns Ukraine cease-fire now would result in 'Potemkin peace,' legitimizing Russian invasion

By SUSIE BLANN and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday that the United States and its allies should not support a cease-fire or peace talks to end the war in Ukraine until Kyiv gains strength and can negotiate on its own terms.

As an anticipated Ukrainian counteroffensive appeared to be taking shape, Blinken said heeding calls from Russia and others, including China, for negotiations now would result in a false "Potemkin peace" that wouldn't secure Ukraine's sovereignty or enhance European security.

"We believe the prerequisite for meaningful diplomacy and real peace is a stronger Ukraine, capable of deterring and defending against any future aggression," Blinken said in a speech in Finland, which recently became NATO's newest member and shares a long border with Russia.

His use of the term "Potemkin" referred to the brightly painted village fronts that 18th century Russian government minister Grigory Potemkin reportedly used to have built to create an illusion of prosperity for Russia's empress.

Blinken repeated the U.S. view that "a cease-fire that simply freezes current lines in place" and allows Russian President Vladimir Putin "to consolidate control over the territory he has seized, and rest, rearm, and re-attack — that is not a just and lasting peace."

Allowing Moscow to keep the one-fifth of Ukrainian territory it's occupied would send the wrong message to Russia and to "other would-be aggressors around the world," according to Blinken, implying that a cease-fire shouldn't be arranged until either Ukraine pushes Russia back or Russia withdraws its troops.

Blinken's position is similar to that of Ukrainian officials, including his statement that Russia must pay for a share of Ukraine's reconstruction and be held accountable for the full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022.

After months of battlefield stalemate across a 685-mile (1100-km) front line, Ukrainian officials have given confusing signals about whether a counteroffensive, relying heavily on recently deployed advanced Western weapons and training, is coming or already underway.

Some have suggested the campaign will not be a barrage of simultaneous attacks across the entire front but rather a series of more targeted, limited strikes, first to weaken Russia's supply lines and infrastructure, then expanded to broader targets with greater intensity.

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy weighed in again on Friday.

"This is not a movie," he told reporters in Kyiv. "It is hard to say how you'll see the counteroffensive. The main point here is for Russia to see it. And not just see but feel it. Especially, we speak about the troops that have occupied our territories. De-occupation of our territories – this is the result of our counteroffensive. When you see this, you'll understand that it has started."

Zelenskyy has said his goal is to drive Russian troops out of the four territories it partially occupies and illegally annexed last fall, as well as from the Crimean Peninsula the Kremlin illegally seized in 2014.

Putin has said two of his goals in invading Ukraine were to improve Russia's security and prevent Ukraine from joining NATO but the Kyiv government has applied to join the alliance, and Sweden is hoping to be accepted as a member in July. That would surround Russia with NATO countries in the Baltic Sea.

Blinken described the Russian invasion of Ukraine as a catastrophic strategic failure for Moscow that had strengthened NATO, the European Union and Ukraine. Russia has become more isolated, he said, shackled to China as a junior partner in a relationship that Beijing has increasingly come to resent, and no longer able to use energy as a political tool in countries it once counted as its own or satellites.

For its part, Russia wants any talks to address Ukraine's request to join NATO.

"Naturally, this (issue) will be one of the main irritants and potential problems for many, many years to come," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday.

Blinken said Washington was ready to support peace efforts by other countries, including those by China and Brazil but that any peace agreement must uphold the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

China, which says it is neutral and wants to serve as a mediator but has supported Moscow politically, on Friday urged countries to stop sending weapons to Ukraine. The United States is a leading Western ally and supplier of arms to Kyiv.

In Kyiv, in the sixth air attack in as many days, Ukrainian air defenses late Thursday and early Friday intercepted all 15 incoming cruise missiles and 21 attack drones, Ukraine's chief of staff, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, said.

The Ukrainian capital was simultaneously attacked from different directions by Iranian-made Shahed drones and cruise missiles from the Caspian Sea region, senior Kyiv official Serhii Popko wrote on Telegram.

A 68-year-old man and an 11-year-old child were wounded in the attack, in which falling debris damaged private houses, outbuildings and cars, according to Ukraine's Prosecutor General's Office.

Elsewhere, several explosions occurred Friday in the Azov Sea port of Berdyansk in the Russian-occupied part of Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, one of the four provinces Russia illegally annexed. Russian-appointed officials blamed Ukrainian rocket attacks and said nine people were wounded. Videos posted on social media appear to show smoke rising in the port area. Ukrainian officials acknowledged their forces were responsible and claimed Russian ships were evacuating the port.

The Moscow-appointed governor of Ukraine's occupied Donetsk province, Denis Pushilin, claimed Friday that Ukrainian strikes had killed three people and wounded four, including a 3-year-old-girl.

In other developments Friday, border regions of Russia again came under fire. One of the most frequently hit targets of cross-border shelling, Russia's Belgorod region, was bombarded by artillery shells and drone strikes in multiple villages, Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said. At least two women died in a car, multiple people were injured, and apartment buildings, cars, power transmission lines and farm equipment were damaged, he said on Telegram.

The Freedom of Russia Legion, one of the groups that has claimed responsibility for prior attacks on Belgorod, blamed the Russian military for the deaths. The group alleged the Russian army had mistakenly believed the car belonged to the paramilitary group. Thousands of people have been evacuated from the region, and many roads have been closed.

Air defense systems shot down several Ukrainian drones in Russia's southern Kursk region, Gov. Roman Starovoit reported. In Russia's Bryansk region, Gov. Alexander Bogomaz said Ukrainian forces shelled two villages, with no reported casualties.

Two drones also attacked energy facilities in Russia's western Smolensk region, which borders Belarus,

officials said.

The U.K. Ministry of Defense said the incursions could be a Ukrainian strategy to disperse Russian forces before a counteroffensive.

"Russian commanders now face an acute dilemma of whether to (strengthen) defenses in Russia's border regions or reinforce their lines in occupied Ukraine," the ministry said.

Matthew Lee reported from Oslo, Norway. Karl Ritter contributed from Stockholm and Andrew Katell from New York.

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

In gun law push, Tennessee governor's office memo says NRA prefers to 'round up mentally ill people'

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI and JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee's administration accused the National Rifle Association of wanting to use involuntary commitment laws "to round up mentally ill people and deprive them of other liberties," according to documents drafted by the Republican's staffers as part of their initial attempt to pass a gun control proposal earlier this year.

The memos, provided by Lee's office as part of a public records request, reveal a rare criticism of the powerful gun lobby made by the Republican governor. Lee has previously praised the NRA's efforts to protect the Second Amendment. But he has since faced opposition from the group as he works to pass gun control legislation in response to a deadly Nashville school shooting that took place in late March.

So far, Lee has proposed keeping firearms away from people who could harm themselves or others. He is currently facing pushback from both the GOP-dominant General Assembly and firearms rights advocacy groups, including the NRA, that are wary of increasing gun restrictions in ruby red Tennessee. The NRA's opposition is particularly notable because the group was a crucial player in Lee's successful push in 2021 to pass a law that allows people 21 and older to carry handguns without a permit in Tennessee.

That means Lee has been forced to go on the defensive, arguing that what he has proposed is not, in fact, a so-called red flag law like those adopted by other states in the wake of tragedies. Instead, the talking points show he is attempting to sell his proposal as "the most conservative in the nation" and the best plan for "Second Amendment advocates." He also is taking aim at advocates who want to focus on Tennessee laws that allow committing people without their permission if they pose "a substantial likelihood of serious harm" due to a "mental illness or serious emotional disturbance."

"Not only is the NRA's proposal impractical — it would drastically expand the scope of government," one of the memos reads.

In announcing his plan publicly in April, Lee acknowledged the proponents of involuntary commitment, but did not name the NRA.

"Some advocates of the Second Amendment say something called 'involuntary commitment' is the answer, but that would restrict all kinds of constitutional rights, including the Second Amendment," Lee said at the time. "It's not the best way."

Speaking with reporters on Wednesday, House Speaker Cameron Sexton further lowered expectations that Lee's proposal has a chance to pass, saying he doesn't think he and fellow Republican lawmakers support red-flag-esque laws. He said some other areas of policy could be considered: involuntary commitment, more mental health in-patient beds, better database updating for background checks, a new state-level offense beyond the federal law prohibiting felons from having a certain amount of ammunition, and broadening state law so more types of violent threats could be considered a crime.

"When you look at what the NRA is saying, is you currently have laws on the books — emergency, involuntary commitment," Sexton told The Associated Press on Wednesday. "And so, use what you have."

The governor initially unveiled his legislation just weeks after six people — including three young children

— were killed in a Nashville school shooting. Lee's wife, Maria, was friends with the head of the school and a substitute teacher who were among those killed.

Despite Lee's urging for lawmakers to pass his proposal, GOP leaders have resisted. The Legislature adjourned without taking up the issue in April, but Lee has since called them to come back to address the matter in late August.

The documents reviewed by AP show that Lee's administration drafted the talking points in April. They tout the governor's proposal as "more targeted and more limited" than what the NRA currently supports. It's unclear where the memos were circulated or how many people outside Lee's office received them.

In the memo, Lee's office wrote that the NRA's plan "does not get at the heart of the problem, as it fails to address unstable individuals who suffer from mental health issues but do not qualify for involuntary commitment to a facility."

"Gov. Lee believes the best path forward is practical, thoughtful solutions to keep communities safe and protect constitutional rights," his spokesperson, Jade Byers, said in an emailed statement. "He looks forward to speaking with key stakeholders, including the NRA, and working with legislators on proposals in the months ahead."

In an April memo, the NRA's lobbying arm urged its supporters to oppose Lee's plan. The group noted that "Tennessee already has broad civil commitment laws" and added that the state could improve access to emergency mental health services.

Asked about the governor's office talking points about their group, NRA spokesperson Amy Hunter didn't address the claims, saying in a statement that the group is focused on "preserving and advancing the rights of law-abiding gun owners in Tennessee."

Disney lawsuit judge removes himself from case but not for reasons cited by DeSantis

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A federal judge overseeing the First Amendment lawsuit that Walt Disney Parks filed against Gov. Ron DeSantis and others is disqualifying himself, but not because of bias claims made by the Florida governor.

Chief U.S. District Judge Mark Walker said in a court filing Thursday that it was because a relative owns 30 shares of Disney stock. Walker described the person as "a third-degree relative," which typically means a cousin, a great-aunt or great-uncle, or a great-niece or great-nephew.

The governor's lawyers had filed a motion to disqualify Walker last month because he had referenced the ongoing dispute between the DeSantis administration and Disney during hearings in two unrelated lawsuits before him dealing with free speech issues and fear of retaliation for violating new laws championed by the governor and Republican lawmakers.

Disney had opposed the governor's motion, saying the judge had shown no bias.

The judge on Thursday called DeSantis' arguments "without merit." DeSantis declared his candidacy for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination last week.

Under the code of conduct for federal judges, Walker wasn't required to look into the financial interests of third-degree relatives but did so and decided that "disqualification from this proceeding is required under the circumstances," he said.

Disney's share price was in the \$90 range on Friday, so the value of the relative's holdings would be around \$2,700. In his decision, the judge said that the value of the holdings didn't matter but rather any impact he could have on the investment because of a ruling.

"Even though I believe it is highly unlikely that these proceedings will have a substantial effect on The Walt Disney Company, I choose to err on the side of caution — which, here, is also the side of judicial integrity — and disqualify myself," said Walker, who was nominated to the federal bench in 2012 by President Barack Obama.

The feud between DeSantis and Disney started last year after the company, in the face of significant

pressure, publicly opposed legislation concerning lessons on sexual orientation and gender identity in early grades that critics called "Don't Say Gay."

As punishment, DeSantis took over Disney World's governing district through legislation passed by lawmakers and appointed a new board of supervisors. Before the new board came in, the company signed agreements with the old board made up of Disney supporters that stripped the new supervisors of design and construction authority.

In response, the Republican-controlled Florida Legislature passed legislation allowing the DeSantis-appointed board to repeal those agreements and made the theme park resort's monorail system subject to state inspection, when it previously had been done in-house.

Disney filed the First Amendment lawsuit against the Florida governor and the DeSantis-appointed board in April, claiming violations of free speech and the contracts clause. The DeSantis-appointed board, known as the Central Florida Tourism Oversight District, sued Disney in state court in Orlando seeking to void the deals the company made with the previous board.

DeSantis on Thursday named Tampa attorney Charbel Barakat to the oversight board to replace Michael Sasso, who resigned last month around the same time the governor appointed Sasso's wife, Meredith, to the Florida Supreme Court.

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at @MikeSchneiderAP

Fort Bragg becomes Fort Liberty in Army's most prominent move to erase Confederate names from bases

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press/Report for America

FORT LIBERTY, N.C. (AP) — Fort Bragg shed its Confederate namesake Friday to become Fort Liberty in a ceremony some veterans said was a small but important step in making the U.S. Army more welcoming to current and prospective Black service members.

The change was the most prominent in a broad Department of Defense initiative, motivated by the 2020 George Floyd protests, to rename military installations that had been named after confederate soldiers.

The Black Lives Matter demonstrations that erupted nationwide after Floyd's killing by a white police officer, coupled with ongoing efforts to remove Confederate monuments, turned the spotlight on the Army installations. A naming commission created by Congress visited the bases and met with members of the surrounding communities for input.

"We were given a mission, we accomplished that mission and we made ourselves better," Lt. Gen. Christopher Donahue, the commanding general of the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Liberty, told reporters after the ceremony that made the name change official.

The North Carolina base was originally named in 1918 for Gen. Braxton Bragg, a Confederate general from Warrenton, North Carolina, who was known for owning slaves and losing key Civil War battles that contributed to the Confederacy's downfall.

While other bases are being renamed for Black soldiers, U.S. presidents and trailblazing women, the North Carolina military installation is the only one not renamed after a person. Retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Ty Seidule said at a naming commission meeting last year that the new name was chosen because "liberty remains the greatest American value."

"Fayetteville in 1775 signed one of the first accords declaring our willingness to fight for liberty and freedom from Great Britain," said Donahue, referring to the city adjacent to the base. "Liberty has always been ingrained in this area."

The cost to rename Fort Bragg — one of the largest military installations in the world by population — will total about \$8 million, Col. John Wilcox said Friday. Most front-facing signage has been changed but the process is ongoing.

"The name changes, the mission does not change," base spokesperson Cheryle Rivas said Friday.

Fort Polk in Louisiana will be the next installation to change its name June 13 to Fort Johnson, in honor of

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Sgt. William Henry Johnson. The naming commission's proposed changes must be implemented by Jan. 1.

Several military bases were named after Confederate soldiers during World War I and World War II as part of a "demonstration of reconciliation" with white southerners amid a broader effort to rally the nation to fight as one, said Nina Silber, a historian at Boston University.

"It was kind of a gesture of, 'Yes, we acknowledge your patriotism,' which is kind of absurd to acknowledge the patriotism of people who rebelled against a country," she said.

The original naming process involved members of local communities, although Black residents were left out of the conversations. Bases were named after soldiers born or raised nearby, no matter how effectively they performed their duties. Gen. Bragg is widely regarded among historians as a poor leader who did not have the respect of his troops, Silber said.

For Isiah James, senior policy officer at the Black Veterans Project, the base renamings are a "long overdue" change he hopes will lead to more substantial improvements for Black service members.

"America should not have vestiges of slavery and secessionism and celebrate them," he said. "We should not laud them and hold them up and venerate them to where every time a Black soldier goes onto the base, they get the message that this base Bragg is named after someone who wanted to keep you as human property."

Other Black veterans such as George Postell Jr., 56, who served at the base for more than four years with the 27th Engineers Combat Airborne Division before he was injured in a parachute jump, were hesitant to embrace the change.

"I shared my blood, and I know a lot of my other brothers that did the same for the namesake of Fort Bragg," Postell said. "To me, it will always be Fort Bragg, no matter what they call it."

James Buxton Jr., a U.S. Army veteran and president of the Fayetteville chapter of the NAACP, supports the base renaming. Buxton said he has seen the effects of racism associated with the base over the years — including the killing of a Black couple in the 1990s by soldiers in the 82nd Airborne who were neo-Nazis.

But Buxton also called the new choice of name Fort Liberty "off the wall." He said he would have preferred the base retain the name Bragg but be redesignated to honor Edward S. Bragg, an accomplished U.S. lawmaker and Union general in the U.S. Civil War.

At last week's "All American Week," a celebration of the 82nd Airborne Division and one of the last major events under the Fort Bragg name, several veterans expressed mixed feelings about the name change.

Gregory Patterson, 64, a former member of the 82nd Airborne, who served in the Army from 1977 to 1999, joined scores of veterans for the celebration. Patterson, who is Black, said he understood why they changed the name, but in his mind, the name is associated with the place, not the person — and specifically as the home of the 82nd Airborne.

"I'm still gonna call it Bragg, even though the person that they named it after wasn't a good person," he said.

Mark Melancon, 63, who served from 1983 to 1990, wore a t-shirt that read "Born at Benning, Raised at Bragg." Fort Benning, in Georgia, was renamed Fort Moore last month.

Asked about the change to Fort Liberty, Melancon replied: "We're not thrilled about that. It's always gonna be Bragg, the way we look at it."

The Bragg name, Melancon said, conjured up strong feelings and memories. "Home. The camaraderie that we had. The brotherhood."

Hannah Schoenbaum 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 undercovered issues.

Associated Press writers Jason Dearen and Michelle Smith contributed to this report.

French Open lets Belarus' Sabalenka skip standard news

conference after questions about Ukraine war

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

PARIS (AP) — Two years after Naomi Osaka withdrew from the French Open when she was fined, then threatened with disqualification, for skipping news conferences, another top tennis player — No. 2 seed Aryna Sabalenka, the Australian Open champion — was allowed to avoid the traditional postmatch session open to all accredited journalists and instead speak Friday with what was described as a “pool” of selected questioners.

Sabalenka, who is from Belarus, didn’t appear at a news conference Friday after reaching the fourth round at Roland Garros for the first time with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Kamilla Rakhimova. After each of her previous two wins this week, Sabalenka was asked about her stance on the war in Ukraine, which began in February 2022, when Russia invaded that country with help from Belarus.

Sabalenka said she “did not feel safe” at her news conference Wednesday and wanted to protect her “mental health and well-being.” Sabalenka’s desire to bypass the standard Q-and-A was supported by the tournament and the WTA. She will not be fined.

The topic of the war was raised at both earlier news conferences by Daria Meshcheriakova, a part-time journalist from the Ukraine for a sports outlet she said gets 7 million views per month. Meshcheriakova, who said she used to be an employee of the German embassy in Kyiv, left Ukraine 10 days after the war began and moved to the Netherlands.

Sabalenka’s first match at this French Open was against a player from Ukraine, Marta Kostyuk, who refused to shake hands at the net afterward — as she’s done against all opponents from Russia or Belarus since the attacks began. Kostyuk was booed by fans apparently unaware of why she declined the usual gesture.

Two spokespeople for the French Tennis Federation wouldn’t say who was allowed to talk with Sabalenka on Friday, but a transcript was distributed to the media. The first “question” was: “Before we start, I know there was a tense situation in your second-round press conference, and if you wanted to address it at all.”

The response, according to the transcript: “After my match, I spoke with the media like I normally do. I know they still expect some questions that are more about the politics and not so much about my tennis. For many months now I have answered these questions at tournaments and been very clear in my feelings and my thoughts. These questions do not bother me after my matches. I know that I have to provide answers to the media on things not related to my tennis or my matches, but on Wednesday I did not feel safe in (the) press conference. I should be able to feel safe when I do interviews with the journalists after my matches. For my own mental health and well-being, I have decided to take myself out of this situation today, and the tournament has supported me in this decision. It hasn’t been an easy few days, and now my focus is (to) continue to play well here in Paris.”

What followed were topics such as how Sabalenka played Friday, her previous track record at Roland Garros, her fitness training and what types of movies she has been watching.

At the 2021 French Open, Osaka — a four-time major champion and former No. 1 — shined a light on the issue of athletes’ mental health by saying she did not want to speak to the media during the tournament. She was docked \$15,000 for skipping the news conference after her first-round victory in Paris, then was threatened by all four Grand Slam tournaments with possible additional punishment, including disqualification or suspension, if she continued to sit out those availabilities.

Osaka then pulled out of the competition, saying she experiences “huge waves of anxiety” before speaking to the media and revealed she has “suffered long bouts of depression.”

Jailed Kremlin critic Navalny pokes fun at prison officials with demands of moonshine and a kangaroo

MOSCOW (AP) — Imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny released excerpts of his correspondence with prison administrators Friday, detailing his sarcastic demands for things like a bottle of moonshine, a balalaika and even a kangaroo. His requests were denied.

Responses from prison officials, posted on his social media account apparently by his team, came after he has spent almost 180 days in solitary confinement since last summer at Penal Colony No. 6 in the Vladimir region east of Moscow.

Navalny, 46, is serving a nine-year sentence after being convicted of fraud and contempt of court — charges he says were trumped up for his efforts to expose official corruption and organize anti-Kremlin protests. He was arrested in January 2021 upon returning to Moscow after recuperating in Germany from nerve-agent poisoning that he blamed on the Kremlin.

“When you are sitting in a punishment isolation cell and have little entertainment, you can have fun with correspondence with the administration,” wrote Navalny.

Among his denied requests: a megaphone to be given to the prisoner in a nearby cell “so he can yell even louder,” and to award another inmate who “killed a man with his bare hands” with the highest rank in karate.

He also was turned down for his requests of moonshine, tobacco for rolling cigarettes and the balalaika. But Navalny expressed particular mock outrage at the administrators’ refusal to allow him to keep a kangaroo in his cell. The politician said inmates can have a pet if the prison administration allows it.

“I will continue to fight for my inalienable right to own a kangaroo,” Navalny wrote sarcastically in his social media post.

Navalny will mark his 47th birthday on Sunday, and there have been calls by his team for protests to support him.

A Moscow court has set a June 6 date for a hearing for a new trial for Navalny on a charge of extremism, which could keep him in prison for 30 years. He also said an investigator told him that he also would face a separate military court trial on terrorism charges that potentially carry a life sentence.

The new charges come as Russian authorities are conducting an intensified crackdown on dissent amid the fighting in Ukraine, which Navalny has harshly criticized.

Associated Press writer Elise Morton in London contributed.

Some trans people turn to crowdfunding to leave Florida after anti-LGBTQ+ laws

By THALIA BEATY Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Dozens of transgender people in Florida have turned to crowdfunding appeals to help them leave the state after the passage of new legislation that targets the LGBTQ+ community, including a law that curtails access to gender-affirming care for adults and bans it for minors.

For Sage Chelf, the decision to leave hardly felt like a choice, but she didn’t have the funds to cover a move. The 30-year-old trans woman, who lives in the Orlando area, was nearly out of one medication when she found out the clinic that had been prescribing her hormone therapy was ending all treatment for trans patients.

“I don’t want to go back to the person that I was forced to be at the time,” Chelf said, of the years before she transitioned in 2021. “It was a very dark time in my life. I would rather just not be alive, I guess, than have to go back to living not trans.”

Chelf was among dozens who made an appeal for donations online, saying they needed help to leave Florida in anticipation of or in reaction to a law that took effect May 17. In addition to banning gender-affirming care for transgender minors, the law places new restrictions on adults seeking treatment.

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The number of people seeking help online is a fraction of the 94,900 transgender adults estimated to live in Florida by the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law, which looked at state-level, population-based surveys. Many, if not most, will stay.

Not all trans people seek medical interventions. But for those who do, losing access to hormone therapy, or interrupting other care, can be devastating for their mental health. Over time, they can lose some of the sex characteristics generated by the hormones.

Chelf, who works as a leasing agent in Orlando, figured she would need \$2,500 to cover the cost of moving and finding a new job. She was stunned to raise more than \$3,000 online in less than two weeks.

"I was under the impression that no one's going to actually donate, people are going to think I'm just trying to like, get free money," she said.

People have given more than \$200,000 since January to fundraisers on GoFundMe started by trans people seeking to leave Florida, according to data from the platform. Jalen Drummond, GoFundMe's director of public affairs, said the online fundraising platform saw a 39% increase from April to May in the number of fundraisers created to help trans people leave the state because of the changing laws.

That's still a pittance in terms of overall charitable giving, but it has a big impact for people like Chelf. Such mutual aid helps make up for the overall underfunding of nonprofits that serve the LGBTQ+ community.

A recent study found that those organizations received 0.13% of the \$426 billion in overall charitable giving in 2019, the most recent year that IRS data on donations to tax-exempt organizations was available.

One reason for that low figure is that many nonprofits that primarily serve the LGBTQ+ community are small, grassroots organizations that don't have a lot of fundraising capacity, said Una Osili, associate director for research and international programs at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. She's hopeful that the school's research can be a resource for both donors and nonprofits seeking additional funding.

The report does not look at funds exchanged directly between individuals. However, Elise Colomer-Cheadle, development director for Outright International, said it's likely that the most vulnerable in the LGBTQ+ community — older people, rural residents, immigrants and trans people — do not have their needs met.

"While their movement is the largest it's ever been historically in the last 55 years, it's still not big enough to serve all of the needs of this population against the backdrop of a very well-funded and very hateful opposition," said Colomer-Cheadle, whose organization advocates for the human rights of LGBTQ+ people and populations around the world.

"There's a sense of: The opposition is out for blood and our lives are at stake," she said. "And if we don't step up for ourselves, it's possible that nobody else will. It's a very, very scary time."

The Campaign for Southern Equality, which advocates for the LGBTQ+ community, is providing direct grants of \$500 to the families of transgender minors across the South and to transgender adults in Florida. It is close to reaching its goal of raising \$250,000 in additional funds to distribute this year, said Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, the organization's executive director.

"We are having folks reach out out-of-the-blue, multiple times a week saying, 'Hey, never connected with your organization before. I'm hosting a fundraiser for you tomorrow night thousands of miles from here. I'll send you the money.' That's pretty incredible." Beach-Ferrara said.

Chelf hopes to move to Illinois and move in with her girlfriend. The donations to her GoFundMe have restored her faith in humanity.

"I think everyone's aware of how dire the situation actually is," she said.

Associated Press coverage of philanthropy and nonprofits receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content. For all of AP's philanthropy coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/hub/philanthropy>.

British teen reported to anti-terror police by mother gets life sentence with minimum 6-year term

LONDON (AP) — A teenage man who was reported to British anti-terror authorities by his mother was jailed for life on Friday. Matthew King, 19, will serve a minimum term of six years for plotting a terror attack on police officers or soldiers.

In what was the first terror sentencing in England and Wales to be televised, the judge praised King's mother for taking her suspicions to the Prevent counter-terror program.

"She took the very bold step of alerting Prevent when she had concerns for her son," Judge Mark Lucraft said during sentencing at the Old Bailey, the central criminal court in central London. "That cannot have been an easy thing to do in the first place, and in my view she absolutely did the right thing."

In January, King pleaded guilty to the preparation of terror acts between Dec. 22, 2021 and May 17, 2022.

King, who was radicalized online during the coronavirus pandemic, had expressed a desire to kill military personnel as he prepared to stake out a British Army barracks in east London. He also expressed a desire to travel to Syria to join so-called Islamic State.

His desires were thwarted when his mother reported him. Authorities were also tipped off through an anti-terror hotline after he posted a video on a WhatsApp group in April, 2022.

The judge found that King was a dangerous offender who carried a risk of future harm to the public, despite claims by his lawyer that the defendant was on the path to deradicalization.

"It is clear that you are someone who developed an entrenched Islamist extremist mindset, extreme anti-Western views and that you intended to commit terrorist acts both in the U.K. and overseas," the judge said.

King could be out in five years. He has already spent 367 days in prison, which will be taken into account and deducted from the length of time he has to serve.

Justice Department says it won't charge Pence over handling of classified documents

By JILL COLVIN and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Justice has informed former Vice President Mike Pence's legal team that it will not pursue criminal charges related to the discovery of classified documents at his Indiana home.

The department sent a letter to Pence's attorney Thursday informing his team that, after an investigation into the potential mishandling of classified information, no criminal charges will be sought. A Justice Department official confirmed the authenticity of the letter, which was obtained by The Associated Press.

The news comes days before Pence is set to launch his campaign for the Republican nomination for president in Iowa Wednesday — a race that will put him in direct competition with his old boss, former President Donald Trump.

No evidence has ever emerged to suggest that Pence intentionally hid documents from the government or even knew they were in his home, so there was never an expectation that he would face charges. But that decision and timing were nonetheless welcome news for the former vice president and his political team as he prepares to enter the crowded GOP primary field and contrast himself with Trump.

Attorney General Merrick Garland had named a special counsel to oversee the Justice Department's investigation into the discovery of hundreds of documents with classified markings at Trump's Mar-a-Lago home just three days after the former president formally launched his 2024 campaign — an acknowledgment of the high political stakes. A special counsel was also put in place to investigate classified documents found at President Joe Biden's home in Delaware and at an unsecured office in Washington dating from his time as vice president.

About a dozen documents with classified markings were discovered at Pence's home in January after he asked his lawyers to perform a search of his vice presidential belongings "out of an abundance of caution"

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after the Biden discovery. The items had been "inadvertently boxed and transported" to Pence's home at the end of the last administration, Pence's lawyer, Greg Jacob, wrote in a letter to the National Archives.

The FBI then discovered an additional document with classified markings at the Indiana house during its own search the following month.

Pence has said repeatedly that he was unaware of the documents' existence, but that "mistakes were made" in his handling of classified material.

Beyond Pence, the two Justice Department special counsels are continuing to investigate the handling of classified documents by both Trump and Biden.

The status of the Biden documents investigation is unclear, but the Trump investigation has shown signs of winding down. Prosecutors appear close to a decision on whether to bring criminal charges against the ex-president or anyone else.

The team led by special counsel Jack Smith has brought a broad cross-section of witnesses before a federal grand jury investigating Trump, including former and close aides to Trump. The investigation has centered on not only whether Trump illegally possessed roughly 300 documents marked as classified but also on whether he obstructed government efforts to secure their return.

The Biden and Pence matters have always stood apart, factually and legally, from the Trump investigation because in both of those cases, aides proactively disclosed the discovery of classified documents to the Justice Department and facilitated their return.

Trump resisted months of demands to return classified documents taken with him from the White House to his Florida residence after the end of his term. After coming to suspect that more classified documents remained at the property, despite a subpoena and a visit by investigators, the FBI returned last August with a search warrant and recovered about 100 additional documents marked as classified, including at the top-secret level.

Trump insists he did nothing wrong.

El Salvador president wants to cut the number of municipalities from 262 to 44

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — El Salvador President Nayib Bukele says he wants to cut the number of municipalities in the country from 262 to 44 to reduce the tax burden.

The proposal would require the approval of the country's Legislative Assembly, in which Bukele's party and its allies hold a majority. The president also proposed reducing the number of lawmakers in that body from 84 to 60.

"How is it possible that in a territory of 8,100 square miles (21,000 square kilometers) we have 262 municipalities?" Bukele said in a speech Thursday marking his fourth year in office. The president's New Ideas party controls the majority of the current municipalities.

The president said the names of municipalities would not be lost because they would be converted into districts by the same name.

The conservative National Republican Alliance (Arena) party said it saw clear electoral motivation behind the move just one year before Bukele plans to seek re-election despite a widespread interpretation of the constitution that forbids consecutive re-election.

In 2021, the Supreme Court's Constitutional Chamber, recently overhauled by Bukele's party, told electoral authorities to allow re-election. Constitutional scholars considered the court's decision unconstitutional. Bukele announced his intention to seek re-election last September.

"The president changes the country's political distribution with electoral ends," the party's congressional delegation said via Twitter.

Bukele's supporters shouted "re-election, re-election, re-election" during the president's speech.

Bukele also said authorities were carrying out searches of all of the properties of former President Alfredo Cristiani who governed El Salvador from 1989 to 1994. It was not clear what the objective of the

searches was.

In March of last year, a court ordered Cristiani's capture, though he had already left the country. Prosecutors allege that Cristiani knew of the military's plan to eliminate six Jesuit priests and two others in 1989 and did nothing to stop them.

Last year, his daughter released a statement from Cristiani denying that he knew the military's plans.

On Nov. 16, 1989, an elite commando unit killed the six priests — five Spaniards and one Salvadoran — along with their housekeeper and the housekeeper's daughter in the priests' residence. The killers tried to make the massacre appear as though it had been carried out by leftist guerrillas.

Border Patrol wouldn't review the medical file of a girl with a heart condition before she died

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

HARLINGEN, Texas (AP) — Border Patrol medical staff declined to review the file of an 8-year-old girl with a chronic heart condition and rare blood disorder before she appeared to have a seizure and died on her ninth day in custody, an internal investigation found.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has said the child's parents shared the medical history with authorities on May 10, a day after the family was taken into custody.

But a nurse practitioner declined to review documents about the girl the day she died, CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility said in its initial statement Thursday on the May 17 death. The nurse practitioner reported denying three or four requests from the girl's mother for an ambulance.

Anadith Tanay Reyes Alvarez, whose parents are Honduran, was born in Panama with congenital heart disease. She received surgery three years ago that her mother, Mabel Alvarez Benedicks, characterized as successful during a May 19 interview with The Associated Press.

A day before she died, Anadith showed a fever of 104.9 degrees Fahrenheit (40.5 degrees Celsius), the CBP report said.

A surveillance video system at the Harlingen, Texas, station was out of service since April 13, a violation of federal law that prevented evidence collection, according to the Office of Professional Responsibility, akin to a police department's office of internal affairs. The system was flagged for repair but wasn't fixed until May 23, six days after the girl died.

Still, the report relied on interviews with Border Patrol agents and contracted medical personnel to raise a host of new and troubling questions about what went wrong during the girl's nine days in custody, which far exceeded the agency's own limit of 72 hours.

Investigators gave no explanation for decisions that medical staff made and appeared to be at a loss for words.

"Despite the girl's condition, her mother's concerns, and the series of treatments required to manage her condition, contracted medical personnel did not transfer her to a hospital for higher-level care," the Office of Professional Responsibility said.

Troy Miller, CBP's acting commissioner, said the initial investigation "provides important new information on this tragic death" and he reaffirmed recent measures including a review of all "medically fragile" cases in custody to ensure they are out of custody as soon as possible. Average time in custody has dropped by more than half for families in two weeks, he said.

"(This death) was a deeply upsetting and unacceptable tragedy. We can — and we will — do better to ensure this never happens again," Miller said.

Anadith entered Brownsville, Texas, with her parents and two older siblings May 9 when daily illegal crossings topped 10,000 as migrants rushed to beat the end of pandemic-related restrictions on seeking asylum.

She was diagnosed with the flu May 14 at a temporary holding facility in Donna, Texas, and was moved with her family to Harlingen. Staff had about nine encounters with Anadith and her mother over the next four days at the Harlingen station until her death over concerns including high fever, flu symptoms, nausea

and breathing difficulties. She was given medications, a cold pack and a cold shower, according to the Office of Professional Responsibility.

A court-appointed monitor expressed concern in January about chronic conditions of medically fragile children not getting through to Border Patrol staff.

Dr. Paul H. Wise, a Stanford University pediatrics professor who was in South Texas last week to look into the circumstances around what he said was a "preventable" death, said there should be little hesitation about sending ill children to the hospital, especially those with chronic conditions.

Anadith's mother told the AP that she informed staff of her child's conditions, which included sickle-cell anemia, and repeatedly asked for medical assistance and an ambulance to take her daughter to a hospital but the requests were denied until her child fell unconscious.

Karla Marisol Vargas, an attorney for the Texas Civil Rights Project who is representing the family, said Border Patrol agents rejected her pleas for medicine until the day she died.

"They refused to review documents showing the illnesses that her daughter had," Vargas said.

The family is living with relatives in New York City while funeral arrangements are made.

Associated Press writer Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this story.

Some 'Diablo IV' players report invalid license error message after early access launch

WASHINGTON (AP) — Early access for "Diablo IV" began Thursday night — but the rollout of the highly anticipated action role-playing video game didn't come without speedbumps, notably for PlayStation users.

While the early access launch of Blizzard Entertainment's "Diablo IV" appeared to go smoothly for many players who pre-purchased eligible editions of the game, some PS5 users reported receiving an invalid licensing error message. Blizzard acknowledged the issue, and later said a server-side balance hotfix was rolled out.

A hotfix is a software upgrade that targets a very specific issue and typically does not interrupt usage. "Diablo IV" marks the latest installment of Blizzard's "Diablo" series, which began in 1996, and arrives more than a decade after "Diablo III" was released in May 2012. While early access kicked off Thursday, the game's official launch is slated for next week.

Rod Fergusson, general manager of Diablo, has described "Diablo IV" as "our most brutal vision of Sanctuary," the fictional world where Diablo is set. It brings "the darkness of the original game" and builds on key aspects of previous installments of the series, he added.

In April, Blizzard Entertainment parent company Activision Blizzard reported a net revenue of \$2.38 billion for the first quarter of 2023 — up from \$1.77 billion for the first three months of 2022. At the time, Activision noted that presales for "Diablo IV" were strong, pointing to successful public testing of the game.

Here's what you need to know about Thursday's early access launch and the coming official release of "Diablo IV."

WHAT TIME DOES DIABLO IV RELEASE?

"Diablo IV" will be officially released on Tuesday or Wednesday of next week, depending on the time zone of where you live. In the U.S., the game will launch at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT) on Tuesday.

While the official release of "Diablo IV" is scheduled for next week, early access began a few days earlier — kicking off on Thursday or Friday, also depending on time zones. Early access was set to be available for players who pre-purchased the digital deluxe or ultimate edition of the game.

Players who have already purchased "Diablo IV" can also pre-load the game on some devices ahead of the launch. Pre-loading any edition is currently available for Windows PC, Xbox and PlayStation, according to Blizzard.

'UNABLE TO FIND LICENSE' FOR DIABLO IV?

Again, while early access appeared to launch smoothly for many players, some PS5 users reported

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receiving an error message — which read “unable to find a valid license for Diablo IV,” according to social media and posts on Blizzard’s community forums. The error seemed to impact PS5 players the most, but some other users reported getting the message on additional devices, including Xbox.

Blizzard acknowledged the PlayStation users’ reports in a forum post Thursday night. Global community development director Adam Fletcher later said that a server-side balance hotfix for “Diablo IV” was rolled out on all platforms.

It’s unclear how many early access players have been impacted by the error. As of Friday morning, some frustrated users on Blizzard’s forum said they were still having trouble accessing the game.

The Associated Press reached out to Blizzard and PlayStation Friday morning for statements.

WHAT ARE THE DIABLO IV CHARACTER CLASSES?

According to Blizzard, “Diablo IV” is set decades after the events of “Diablo III: Reaper of Souls.” The demon Lilith and the angel Inarius have become enemies and launched a war against one another.

Upon the launch of “Diablo IV,” players will be able to enter one of five classes: the Druids, Rogues, Sorceresses, Barbarians or Necromancers.

“Diablo IV” offers cross-platform play and progression on Windows PC, Xbox Series X/S, Xbox One, PlayStation 5 and PlayStation 4, as well as couch co-op, upon its launch, Blizzard said.

ACTIVISION FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR 2022, MICROSOFT DEAL

Activision — which is also the maker of “Call of Duty,” “Candy Crush” and “World of Warcraft” — reported a net revenue of \$7.53 billion for 2022, down from \$8.8 billion for 2021.

In January 2022, Microsoft announced plans to acquire Activision — but, more than a year later, the blockbuster deal is still in jeopardy. While the European Union approved the \$69 billion purchase last month, British regulators blocked the deal over competition concerns. U.S. authorities are also trying to thwart the merger.

The deal has been scrutinized by regulators around the world over fears that it would give Microsoft and its Xbox console control of Activision’s hit franchises. Fierce opposition has been driven by rival Sony, which makes PlayStation.

Activision and Microsoft are appealing the U.K. decision to a tribunal. If the appeal fails, Microsoft would be forced to either scrap the deal or carve out the U.K. as a separate market, which appeared to be an unfeasible option, Liam Deane, a game industry analyst for tech research and advisory firm Omdia, previously told The Associated Press.

Meet the 14-year-old who won the Scripps National Spelling Bee with ‘psammophile’

By BEN NUCKOLS Associated Press

OXON HILL, Md. (AP) — Fifteen months ago, Dev Shah spent a miserable five hours spelling outdoors in chilly, windy, damp conditions at a supersize regional competition in Orlando, Florida, only to fall short of his dream of returning to the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

“Despondent is the right word,” Dev said. “I just didn’t know if I wanted to keep continuing.”

Look at him now.

Soft-spoken but brimming with confidence, Dev asked precise questions about obscure Greek roots, rushed through his second-to-last word and rolled to the National Spelling Bee title Thursday night.

Dev, a 14-year-old from Largo, Florida, in the Tampa Bay area, first competed at the national bee in 2019, then had his spelling career interrupted. The 2020 bee was canceled because of COVID-19, and in the mostly virtual 2021 bee, he didn’t make it to the in-person finals, held in his home state on ESPN’s campus at Walt Disney World.

Then came the disaster of last year, when he was forced to compete in the Orlando region because his previous regional sponsor didn’t come back after the pandemic.

“It took me four months to get him back on track because he was quite a bit disturbed and he didn’t

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want to do it," said Dev's mother, Nilam Shah.

When he decided to try again, he added an exercise routine to help sharpen his focus and lost about 15 pounds, she said.

Dev got through his region. He flexed his knowledge in Wednesday's early rounds by asking questions that proved he knew every relevant detail the bee's pronouncers and judges had on their computer screens. And when it was all over, he held the trophy over his head as confetti fell.

"He appreciated that this is a journey, which sounds very trite but is really quite true," said Dev's coach, Scott Remer, a former speller and study guide author. "I think the thing that distinguishes the very best spellers from the ones that end up not really leaving their mark is actually just grit."

Dev's winning word was "psammophile," a layup for a speller of his caliber.

"Psammo meaning sand, Greek?" he asked. "Phile, meaning love, Greek?"

Dev soaked up the moment by asking for the word to be used in a sentence, something he described a day earlier as a stalling tactic. Then he put his hands over his face as he was declared the winner.

"I would say I was confident on the outside but inside I was nervous, especially for my winning word — well, like, before. Not during," he said.

Runner-up Charlotte Walsh gave Dev a congratulatory hug.

"I'm so happy for him," said Charlotte, a 14-year-old from Arlington, Virginia. "I've known Dev for many years and I know how much work he's put into this and I'm so, so glad he won."

The winner's haul is more than \$50,000 in cash and prizes. When Charlotte returned to the stage later to congratulate Dev again, he reminded her that the runner-up gets \$25,000.

"Twenty-five thousand! What? I didn't know that," Charlotte said.

Earlier, when the bee was down to Dev and Charlotte, Scripps brought out the buzzer used for its "spell-off" tiebreaker, and Dev was momentarily confused when he stepped to the microphone.

"This is not the spell-off, right?" Dev asked. Told it was not, he spelled "bathypitotmeter" so quickly that it might as well have been.

"I practiced for the spell-off every day, I guess. I knew it might happen and I prepared for everything, so I kind of went into spell-off mode," he said. "But I also was scared for the spell-off."

Dev is the 22nd champion in the past 24 years with South Asian heritage. His father, Deval, a software engineer, immigrated to the United States from India 29 years ago to get his master's degree in electrical engineering. Dev's older brother, Neil, is a rising junior at Yale.

Deval said his son showed an incredible recall with words starting at age 3, and Dev spent many years in participating in academic competitions staged by the North South Foundation, a nonprofit that provides scholarships to children in India.

The bee began in 1925 and is open to students through the eighth grade. There were 229 kids onstage as it began — and each was a champion many times over, considering that 11 million participated at the school level.

The finalists demonstrated an impressive depth of knowledge as they worked their way through a sometimes diabolical word list chosen by Scripps' 21-person word panel, which includes five past champions.

This year's bee proved that the competition can remain entertaining while delving more deeply into the dictionary — especially early in the finals, when Scripps peppered contestants with short but tough words like "traik" (to fall ill, used in Scotland), "carey" (a small to medium-size sea turtle) and "katuka" (a venomous snake of southeastern Asia).

"There are a lot of hard words in the dictionary," Dev said. "There are realms of the dictionary that the word panelists need to dive into and I think they did a great job of that today."

With the field down to four, Shradha Rachamreddy was eliminated on "orle," a heraldry term that means a number of small charges arranged to form a border within the edge of a field (she went with "orel"). And "kelep" — a Central American stinging ant — ousted Surya Kapu (he said "quelep").

While sometimes Scripps' use of trademarks and geographical names can anger spelling traditionalists who want to see kids demonstrate their mastery of roots and language patterns — and even the exceptions to those patterns — Scripps has made clear that with the exception of words designated as archaic

or obsolete, any entry in Merriam-Webster's Unabridged dictionary is fair game.

Dev is happy to be closing that book for now.

"My main priority is sleep. I need to sleep. There have been a lot of sleepless nights these last six months," he said. "I need to sleep well tonight, too. There's a lot more sleep debt."

Ben Nuckols has covered the Scripps National Spelling Bee since 2012. Follow him at <https://twitter.com/APBenNuckols>

How Biden and McCarthy struck a debt limit deal and staved off a catastrophe

By SEUNG MIN KIM, STEPHEN GROVES and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was advice that Mitch McConnell had offered to Joe Biden once already: To resolve the debt limit standoff, he needed to strike a deal with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy — and McCarthy alone. But after the first meeting of the top four congressional leaders with the president in early May, the Senate minority leader felt the need to reemphasize his counsel.

After returning from the White House that day, McConnell called the president to privately urge him to "shrink the room" — meaning no direct involvement in the talks for himself, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries.

That, McConnell stressed to Biden, was the only way to avert a potentially economy-rattling default.

A week later, Biden and McCarthy essentially adopted that path, tapping a handful of trusted emissaries to negotiate a deal that would lift the debt limit. It was a turning point in an impasse that, until then, seemed intractable.

Having lived through the debacle of a 2011 debt limit fight, Biden would not entertain any concessions for a task that he viewed as Congress' fundamental responsibility. But McCarthy, prodded by conservatives insisting on sweeping changes to federal spending, was intent on using the nation's borrowing authority as leverage even if it edged the U.S. closer to default.

The scramble that ensued showed how two of the most powerful figures in Washington — who share a belief in the power of personal relationships, despite not having much of one between themselves — jointly staved off an unprecedented default that could have ravaged the economy and held unknown political consequences. It's a tale of an underestimated House speaker determined to defy expectations that he couldn't address a complex debt limit fight, and a president who tuned out the noise from his own party to ensure a default would not happen on his watch.

But it was also a standoff largely instigated by Republicans who argued they needed to use the debt limit threat as a cudgel to rein in federal spending. And even with a resounding 314-117 House vote — followed by a 63-36 Senate vote — the episode is testing the durability of McCarthy's speakership and his ability to tame a restive hard-right flank.

'HOW YOU FINISH'

McCarthy, now emboldened, is unfazed.

He reflected back on his election as speaker after the House passed the debt limit package, referring to his long battle to claim the gavel in January. "Every question you gave me (was), what could we survive, what could we even do? I told you then, it's not how you start, it's how you finish."

This account of the weeks-long saga of how Washington defused the debt limit crisis is based on interviews with lawmakers, senior White House officials and top congressional aides, some who requested anonymity to discuss details of private negotiations.

Perhaps most critical to clearing the blockades were Biden and McCarthy's five negotiators who came to the discussions armed with policy gravitas and empowered by their principals. Particularly comforting to Republicans was the presence of presidential counselor Steve Ricchetti, who speaks on behalf of Biden like no one else, and Shalanda Young, now the director of the Office and Management and Budget, who cut her teeth as a beloved senior congressional aide managing the complex annual appropriations process.

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Young and Rep. Patrick McHenry of North Carolina, one of McCarthy's negotiators, grew so close that they checked in each morning by phone as they did their respective day care drop-offs. Meanwhile, she and the other GOP negotiator, Rep. Garret Graves, who represents the south central part of Louisiana where Young hails from, ribbed each other over who had the better gumbo recipe and squeezed in debt limit talks during a White House celebration for the national champion Louisiana State University women's basketball team.

The five negotiators — Graves, McHenry, Ricchetti, Young and legislative affairs director Louisa Terrell — met daily in a stately office on the first floor of the Capitol, under frescoes painted by the 19th century muralist Constantino Brumidi. Inside, they would home in with seriousness on priorities and red lines to figure out how they could reach a deal.

THE PAUSE BUTTON AND A 'REGRESSIVE' OFFER

By May 19, the negotiations were getting shaky.

Republicans were losing patience as the White House didn't appear to be budging on curbing federal spending. For the GOP, anything short of that was a nonstarter.

During a morning meeting that Friday, White House officials pushed McHenry and Graves to put a formal offer on the table, but by that point, the frustrated Republicans decided to take it all public.

Republicans told reporters the talks had momentarily stopped. Graves, in a ball cap and blue button-up shirt that looked more apt for a fishing trip than high-stakes deal-making, said as he walked briskly through the Capitol: "We decided to press pause because it's just not productive,"

"We were not going to play games here," Graves recounted later of his and McHenry's frustrations.

The friction wasn't about to ease. When the negotiations reconvened that night, McHenry and Graves put forward a fresh proposal to administration officials: It not only revived more of the rejected provisions in the GOP's debt limit bill, but also included the House Republicans' border-security bill for good measure.

One White House official called the offer "regressive."

The White House went public with its own frustrations as the negotiations seemed to be going awry, first with a lengthy statement from communications director Ben LaBolt and then from Biden himself at a news conference in Hiroshima, Japan, where he was attending a summit of the world's leading democracies.

"Now it's time for the other side to move their extreme positions," the president said. "Because much of what they've already proposed is simply, quite frankly, unacceptable."

OPTIMISM, LATE NIGHTS AND GUMMY WORMS

Even as the public rhetoric sharpened, there were signs that the talks were starting to take a better turn.

As Biden left Japan, he called McCarthy from Air Force One, and the speaker emerged appearing more optimistic than he had in days. Sustained by coffee, gummy worms and burritos, the negotiators worked grueling hours, mostly at the Capitol but once at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, where they noshed on Call Your Mother bagel sandwiches sent over by Jeff Zients, the White House chief of staff.

One session lasted until 2:30 a.m. Graves, at another time, showed reporters an app on his phone that tracked his sleep, which showed he was averaging three hours a night during the final stretch.

Still, McCarthy sent lawmakers home over the Memorial Day weekend, which McHenry said helped.

"The tone of the White House negotiators became much more serious and much more grounded in the realities they were going to have to accept," McHenry said.

SELLING THE DEAL

By May 27, Biden and McCarthy announced a deal in principle, and now had to sell the agreement in earnest.

The night before the vote, McCarthy gathered House Republicans in the basement of the Capitol, wheeled in pizza and walked lawmakers through the bill, while daring the Freedom Caucus members to use the same confrontational language they used at a news conference earlier in the day. By the time the meeting ended, it was clear McCarthy had subdued the revolt.

Meanwhile, the White House had work of its own to mollify rank-and-file Democrats.

Biden and McCarthy were a study in contrasting styles. The speaker chatted about the debt limit talks

at every turn throughout the negotiations to frame the debate on his terms; the president stayed silent by design, leery of fouling anything up before the deal was finalized.

Even as the deal was coming together, Biden had been privately trying to assuage his party's concerns. After the Congressional Progressive Caucus publicly eviscerated the few details that they knew of, particularly about toughening requirements for federal safety-net programs, Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., got a call that night.

It was Biden. He assured her that his negotiators were working hard to minimize Republican-drafted changes to programs that offer food stamps and cash assistance.

"I do believe that had we not done that, this would have been much worse than what I heard," Jayapal said.

After the deal was finalized, through phone calls and virtual briefings, White House officials answered questions, explained the agreement's intricacies and fielded complaints from lawmakers about their communications strategy. As of Thursday, senior White House officials had called more than 130 lawmakers personally.

Biden himself got on the phone. On one call, he spoke with Rep. Annie Kuster, D-N.H., the leader of the center-left New Democrats Coalition, and thanked her for the group's efforts to ensure the deal would pass.

"I appreciate that he knows this institution so well, and that he understands what it takes to deliver these votes to get us across the line and to uphold the full faith and credit of the United States of America," Kuster said. "We all took an oath."

Late Wednesday night, as the House voted its approval with significant bipartisan support, Biden watched from the Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs, where he had traveled to for a commencement address at the Air Force Academy. On the phone with Biden throughout were Ricchetti and Terrell, who were listening in from the West Wing with other legislative aides, munching on more pizza.

In a statement after the vote, Biden sounded thankful — and relieved.

"Tonight, the House took a critical step forward to prevent a first-ever default and protect our country's hard-earned and historic economic recovery," he said. "This budget agreement is a bipartisan compromise. Neither side got everything it wanted. That's the responsibility of governing."

Then the Senate labored toward its own vote. It passed the bill Thursday night.

AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro and AP White House Correspondent Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

America's religious leaders sharply divided over abortion, a year after Roe v Wade's reversal

BY DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

In the year since the Supreme Court struck down the nationwide right to abortion, America's religious leaders and denominations have responded in strikingly diverse ways — some celebrating the state-level bans that have ensued, others angered that a conservative Christian cause has changed the law of the land in ways they consider oppressive.

The divisions are epitomized in the country's largest denomination — the Catholic Church. National polls repeatedly show that a majority of U.S. Catholics believe abortion should be legal in most or all cases, yet the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops supports sweeping bans.

Among Protestants, a solid majority of white evangelicals favor outlawing abortion. But most mainline Protestants support the right to abortion, and several of their top leaders have decried the year-old Supreme Court ruling that undermined that right by reversing the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973.

For example, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Michael Curry, said he was "deeply grieved" by that ruling.

The decision "institutionalizes inequality because women with access to resources will be able to exercise

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their moral judgment in ways that women without the same resources will not," Curry said.

Some religious Americans have gone beyond expressions of dismay, filing lawsuits contending that new abortion bans infringed on their own religious beliefs. Jewish women played roles in such lawsuits in Indiana and Kentucky; in Florida, a synagogue in Boynton Beach — Congregation L'Dor Va-Dor — contended in a lawsuit that a state abortion ban violated Jewish teachings.

Dr. Sara Imershein, who performs first-trimester abortions in northern Virginia, said her Reform Judaism beliefs informed her decision to choose that path.

"I looked more at the liturgy of Judaism and found that it really supported my work," she said. "I studied with my local rabbi."

Imershein was in college when abortion was legalized nationwide. Now, at 69, she has seen Roe's demise.

"Laws that restrict abortion ... ignore our Jewish teachings that are very old, and they stomp on our religious freedom," she said.

In Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism, there also is widespread acceptance of abortion in some circumstances. Most U.S. Hindus are "very much in support of choice," said Dheepa Sundaram, assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Denver; she cited the concept of karma which holds that each person has the liberty to act and face the consequences of their actions — good or bad.

Randall Balmer, a professor of American religious history at Dartmouth College, says the abortion debate is so intractable in part because believers in the opposing camps view the Bible — which doesn't include the word "abortion" — as supporting their side.

"It shows the pliability of Scripture — the way that each group tries to marshal arguments on its behalf," he said. "The Bible can be manipulated."

"What strikes me about both sides is there's no humility in their position," Balmer added. "They stake out what they believe is God's will, and everybody else is a heretic."

Even within individual churches, divisions over abortion can flare. Bishop Timothy Clarke, pastor of First Church of God in Columbus, Ohio, frequently exhorts his predominantly African American congregation to respect those with opposing views.

Clarke describes himself as "biblically pro-life," yet he criticizes the stringent abortion bans enacted in numerous Republican-led states as "excessive and extreme."

Referring to laws that would criminalize abortion-providing doctors and deny abortion to victims of rape, he said many people in his church "are saying this is going too far. It's beyond the pale."

There is similar sentiment among some U.S. Catholics, says Kathleen Sprows Cummings, a professor of American studies and history at the University of Notre Dame and director of its Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism.

"There are some horrific stories coming out of pregnant women with severe issues who are being denied health care," she said, referring to the consequences of some state abortion bans.

"We have to have a more human approach," she said. "I think we'll see more Catholics saying, 'I'm not pro-abortion. But I want mercy. I want health care.'"

As a group, Catholic bishops are unwavering, as conveyed in a statement earlier this year from their conference's president, Archbishop Timothy Broglio.

"The Catholic bishops of the United States are united in our commitment to life and will continue to work as one body in Christ to make abortion unthinkable," he said.

A poll last year from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed a clear gap between the prevalent views of U.S. Catholics, and the anti-abortion positions of the bishops. According to the poll, 63% of Catholic adults said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, and 68% opposed Roe v. Wade's reversal.

"On every issue having to do with sexuality or reproductive health, there's a huge gap between the way lay Catholics think and what the hierarchy is teaching," said Jamie Manson, president of Catholics for Choice.

"What's challenging," she said, "is that even though most Catholics believe abortion should be legal, they don't speak about it publicly because of the taboo ... the fear of being ostracized by their community."

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Manson noted that a 2014 survey by the Guttmacher Institute, a research organization that supports abortion rights, found that nearly one-fourth of U.S. abortion patients identify as Catholic.

"There's an all-male hierarchy telling them they're complicit in murder," Manson said. "I wish what bishops and priests would do is listen to these women, listen to their stories of why they choose abortion."

Among mainline Protestant denominations, there have been official statements acknowledging that abortion is a complex issue, but prevailing sentiment is that last year's Supreme Court ruling was an injustice to women, particularly those already facing economic hardships and racial discrimination.

"This decision further complicates the struggle and creates division, anger, and chaos in an already divided and conflicted country," wrote Bishop Thomas Bickerton, president of the United Methodist Church's Council of Bishops.

Some Protestant pastors have emerged as outspoken advocates of abortion rights; among them is Jacqui Lewis, the first African American and first woman to serve as a senior minister in New York City's historic Middle Collegiate Church.

She evoked the fear and heartache felt by many of the women affected by the new abortion bans.

"These are the poorest of us, the most disenfranchised and they're struggling more because some portion of Christianity feels they have the right to decide for other people what is moral," Lewis said. "It breaks my soul to see religion weaponized this way ... it's the opposite of what religion should be."

Among the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention, by far the largest evangelical denomination, there's unified opposition to abortion. However, there has been sharp disagreement over whether to impose criminal penalties on women who get abortions.

The SBC's president, Bart Barber, opposes criminalization of women in such cases and has sparred verbally with Baptist pastors who argue that such women, in some instances, should be considered murderers.

"I think it is unjust, unnecessary, and unwise to include in abortion laws the prosecution of women who seek or obtain an abortion," Barber writes in a lengthy article. "The abortionist is the murderer, and any law banning abortion should identify the abortionist uniquely as such."

AP reporters Tiffany Stanley in Washington and Deepa Bharath in Southern California contributed.

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Today in History: June 3, Barack Obama wins nomination

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, June 3, the 154th day of 2023. There are 211 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 3, 1989, Chinese army troops began their sweep of Beijing to crush student-led pro-democracy demonstrations.

On this date:

In 1621, the Dutch West India Co. received its charter for a trade monopoly in parts of the Americas and Africa.

In 1888, the poem "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Lawrence Thayer was first published in the San Francisco Daily Examiner.

In 1935, the French liner Normandie set a record on its maiden voyage, arriving in New York after crossing the Atlantic in just four days.

In 1937, Edward, The Duke of Windsor, who had abdicated the British throne, married Wallis Simpson in a private ceremony in Monts, France.

In 1962, Air France Flight 007, a U.S.-bound Boeing 707, crashed while attempting to take off from Orly Airport near Paris; all but two of the 132 people aboard were killed.

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In 1965, astronaut Edward H. White became the first American to "walk" in space during the flight of Gemini 4.

In 1977, the United States and Cuba agreed to set up diplomatic interests sections in each other's countries; Cuba also announced the immediate release of 10 Americans jailed on drug charges.

In 1989, Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, died.

In 2008, Barack Obama claimed the Democratic presidential nomination, speaking in the same St. Paul, Minnesota, arena where Republicans would be holding their national convention in September 2008.

In 2011, physician-assisted suicide advocate Dr. Jack Kevorkian died at a Michigan hospital at 83. Actor James Arness (TV: "Gunsmoke"), 88, died in Brentwood, California.

In 2016, heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali died at a hospital in Scottsdale, Arizona, at age 74.

In 2020, prosecutors charged three more police officers in the death of George Floyd and filed a new, tougher charge of second-degree murder against Derek Chauvin, the officer who was caught on video pressing his knee to Floyd's neck. (Chauvin would be convicted on all charges.) Defense Secretary Mark Esper took issue with President Donald Trump's threats to use the full force of the military to quell street protests.

Ten years ago: The prosecution and defense presented opening statements in the court-martial of U.S. Army Pfc. Bradley (now Chelsea) Manning over the biggest leak of classified material in American history. (Manning was found guilty at Fort Meade, Maryland, of espionage and theft and was sentenced to up to 35 years in prison; her sentence was commuted after seven years by President Barack Obama.) A sharply divided Supreme Court cleared the way for police to take a DNA swab from anyone they arrested for a serious crime. A suicide bomber targeting U.S. troops outside an Afghanistan government office killed 9 children and two of the Americans. Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., died at a New York hospital at age 89. Football Hall of Fame defensive end Deacon Jones died in Anaheim Hills, California, at age 74.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump's attorney, Rudy Giuliani, stressed that Trump's legal team would fight any effort to force Trump to testify in front of a grand jury during the special counsel's Russia probe; Giuliani also downplayed the idea that Trump could pardon himself. Graduating seniors at the Florida high school where a gunman killed 17 people in February received diplomas and heard from a surprise commencement speaker, "Tonight Show" host Jimmy Fallon, who urged them to move forward and "don't let anything stop you;" four families received diplomas on behalf of loved ones slain in the attack. Guatemala's Volcano of Fire, one of the most active volcanos in Central America, erupted in fiery explosions of ash and molten rock, killing more than 100 people and leaving scores of others missing.

One year ago: Russia's invasion of Ukraine reached its 100th day. President Vladimir Putin said when he launched the invasion that his forces would not occupy the country, but Moscow seemed increasingly unlikely to relinquish the territory it had taken in the war, and the Kremlin-installed administrations in both regions talked about plans to become part of Russia. A train accident in the Alps in southern Germany left at least four people dead and many more injured. Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, joined other members of Britain's royal family for a church service honoring Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years on the throne. It was their first public appearance in the U.K. since stepping back from royal duties two years earlier.

Today's Birthdays: The former president of Cuba, Raul Castro, is 92. Actor Irma P. Hall is 88. Rock singer Ian Hunter (Mott The Hoople) is 84. World Golf Hall of Famer Hale Irwin is 78. Actor Penelope Wilton is 77. Singer Eddie Holman is 77. Actor Tristan Rogers is 77. Musician Too Slim (Riders in the Sky) is 75. Singer Suzi Quatro is 73. Singer Deneice Williams is 73. Singer Dan Hill is 69. Actor Suzie Plakson is 65. Actor Scott Valentine is 65. Rock musician Kerry King (Slayer) is 59. Actor James Purefoy is 59. Rock singer-musician Mike Gordon is 58. TV host Anderson Cooper is 56. Country singer Jamie O'Neal is 55. Writer-director Tate Taylor is 44. Singers Gabriel and Ariel Hernandez (No Mercy) are 52. Actor Vik Sahay is 52. R&B singer Lyfe Jennings is 50. Actor Arianne Zucker is 49. Actor Nikki M. James is 42. Tennis player Rafael Nadal is 37. Actor Josh Segarra is 37. Actor-singer Lalaine is 36. Actor Sean Berdy is 30. Actor Anne Winters is 29.