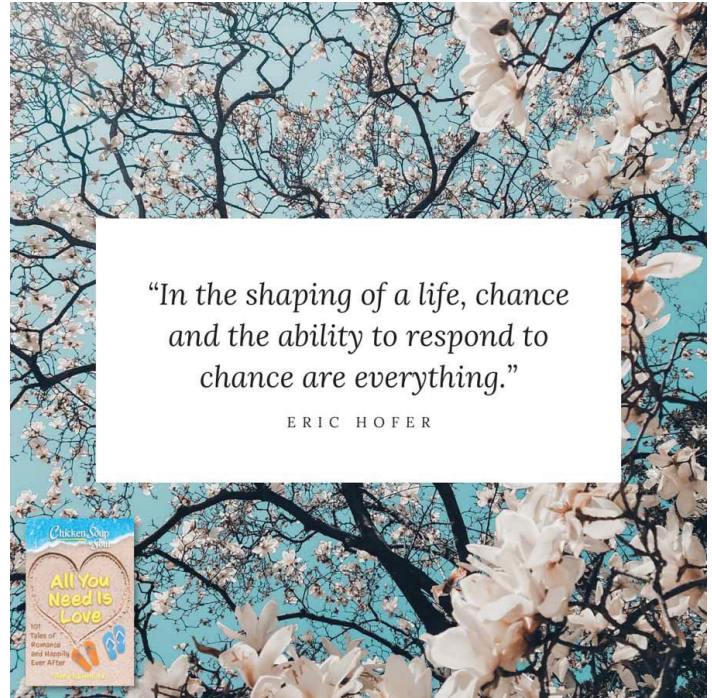


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*"In the shaping of a life, chance and the ability to respond to chance are everything."*

ERIC HOFER

## Groton Community Calendar

### Saturday, June 17

- 10 a.m.: Groton Jr. Teeners host Britton
- Noon: Groton Jr. Legion hosts Britton
- Groton Triathlon
- Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. ago 1 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.

### Sunday, June 18

- United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.
- Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 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.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Worship at Avantara, 3 p.m.
- St. John's Lutheran with communion at 9 a.m.; Zion worship with communion, 11 a.m.
- Amateurs host Northville, 5 p.m.
- Legion at Milbank, 2 p.m. (2)

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

**CLOSED:** **Recycling Trailer in Groton**  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.  
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## The Bulletin by Newsweek

JUNE 12, 2023

### World in Brief

A U.S. woman who died after allegedly being pushed from a cliff near a castle in Germany has been named as 21-year-old Eva Liu. Liu had travelled to the country with Kelsey Chang, 22, following their May graduation from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

A federal judge is blocking most of Indiana's new ban on gender-affirming care, which was to take effect on July 1. The ruling allows the law's ban on gender-affirming surgeries for minors to proceed as scheduled.

The special counsel investigating former President Donald Trump for allegedly mishandling classified documents is request-

ing a protective order to prevent Trump and his attorneys from publicly releasing sensitive material.

Iowa's Supreme Court voted 3-3 to keep abortion legal in the state, upholding an earlier 2019 ruling that had blocked a law banning most abortions.

The Minneapolis Police Department has "systematic problems" that enabled George Floyd's death in 2020, according to a U.S. Department of Justice report that identifies patterns of excessive force and discrimination.

President Joe Biden plans to appoint Dr. Mandy Cohen as the new director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Cohen previously led North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services.

The Food and Drug Administration is recommending that vaccine manufacturers creating COVID-19 booster shots target Omicron variant strain XBB.1.5 for the next round of boosters this fall.

Daniel Ellsberg, the man who leaked the Pentagon Papers in 1971, has died at 92. His death comes months after he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin said his country has begun sending nuclear weapons to Belarus, where they are expected to remain as a deterrent for actions that may be taken against Russia..

### WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

The 2023 Special Olympics World Games Opening Ceremony kicks off Saturday at Olympic Stadium in Berlin, Germany.

President Joe Biden is scheduled to attend his first campaign rally of the 2024 election cycle Saturday in Philadelphia.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is a guest speaker at this year's Morning in Nevada PAC Basque Fry, a GOP event on Saturday in Gardnerville.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa is leading a delegation of African leaders to Kyiv to "find a peaceful solution" to the Russia-Ukraine war. The delegation will travel to Russia on Saturday to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visits China on Sunday, a trip aimed to ease tensions between the two superpowers.

The U.S. Open continues at the Los Angeles Country Club through Sunday.

Don't forget to call your dad! Father's Day is on Sunday.

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## Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

June 20, 2023 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

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

- Approval of Agenda
- Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
- Airport Discussion – Darrell Hillestad
- Park Bathrooms – Dean Marske from HKG Architects
- Park Soundsystem – Enrich Groton SoDak
- Establish Deposit Amount for Use of Park Soundsystem
- Second Reading of Ordinance No. 768 – Amending Sewer Penalty Timeframe
- Change Order #2 – Dahme Construction
- Pay Request #4 – Dahme Construction
- Minutes
- Bills
- May Finance Report
- City Offices Closed on July 3rd and July 4th, 2023 for Independence Day
- Reschedule Next Council Meeting on July 4, 2023 to July 6, 2023
- Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
- Adjournment

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## BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA

### REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY

June 20, 2023, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

- Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
- Approval of Agenda
- Opportunity for Public Comment
- Kelly Weaver & Mark Nelson – GROW, SD Update
- Public Hearing for Special Liquor License Permit
- Lynn Bren, SD Public Assurance Alliance Member Services – Overview of SDPAA
- Brad Wilson, SDML – Overview of SDML
- Discuss Bid for Surplus Property – 2914 Industrial Ave.
- Rachel Kippley, Fair Manager – Fair Contracts
- Consent Calendar
- Approval of General Meeting Minutes from June 13, 2023
- Claims/Payroll
- HR Report
- Claim Assignments
- Lease Agreement
- Other Business
- Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
- Adjourn

#### Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1 (872) 240-3311

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission - Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board)

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

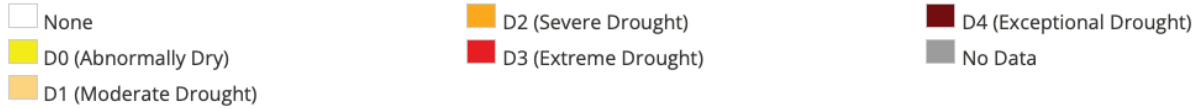
Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at <https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>

2024 Budget Work Session following the Commission Meeting

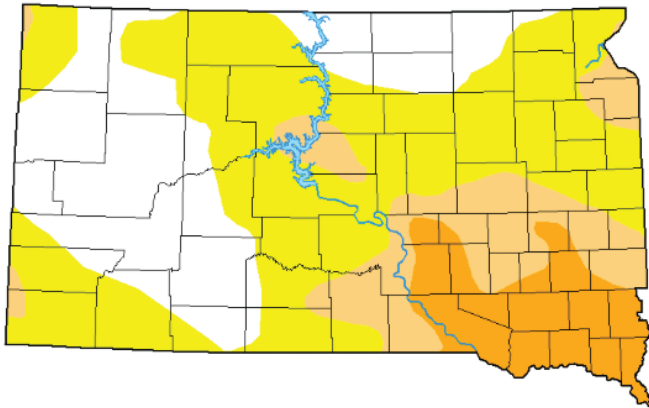
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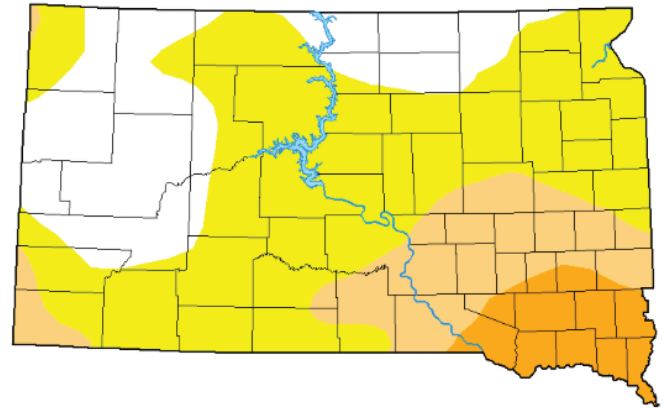
## Drought Classification



## Drought Monitor



June 13



June 6

Although much of the High Plains region received above-normal precipitation this week, the region as a whole is a tale of 2 halves. Improvement to the drought depiction is warranted across western portions of the Central and Northern Plains, where 7-day precipitation totals exceeded 200 percent of average across most areas, adding to precipitation surpluses in recent weeks and improving long-term drought indicators. Conversely, deteriorating conditions are warranted across eastern parts of the High Plains region where heavy, convective rainfall was not enough to overcome predominantly near and above normal temperatures and high rates of evaporation from the soils and vegetation (known as evapotranspiration). For example, parts of South Dakota reported evapotranspiration rates from crops averaging around 0.25 inches per day, which varied slightly depending on the type of crop, essentially eliminating the effects of beneficial rainfall for several locations.

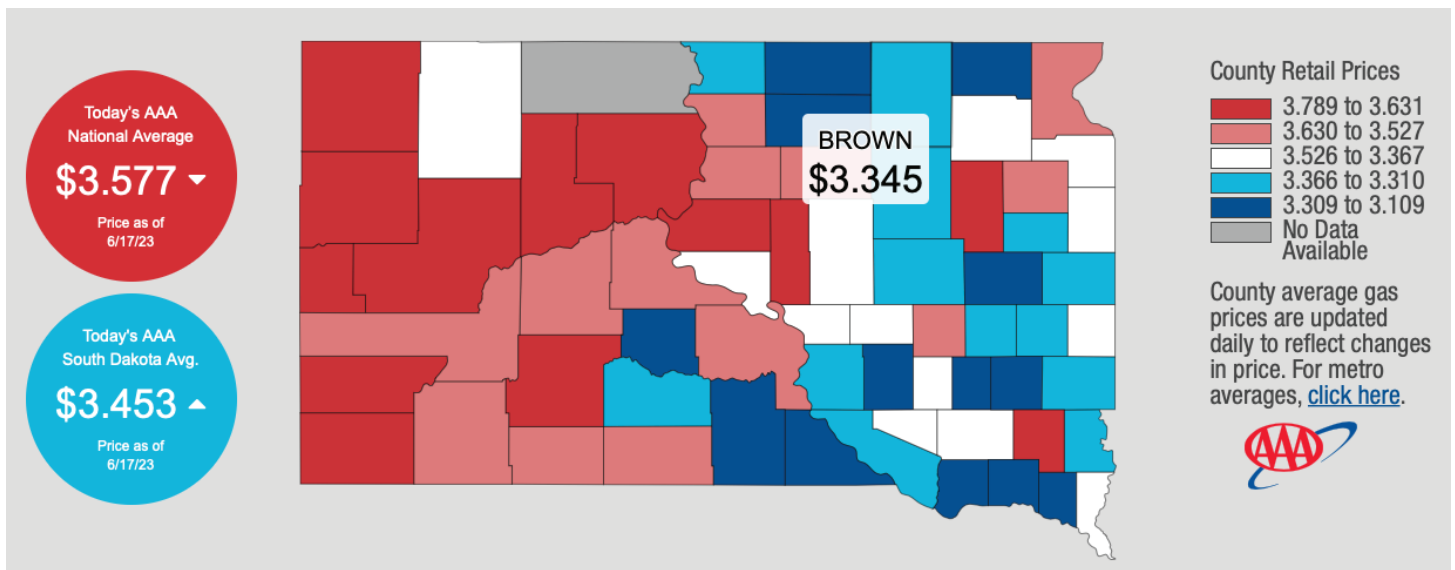
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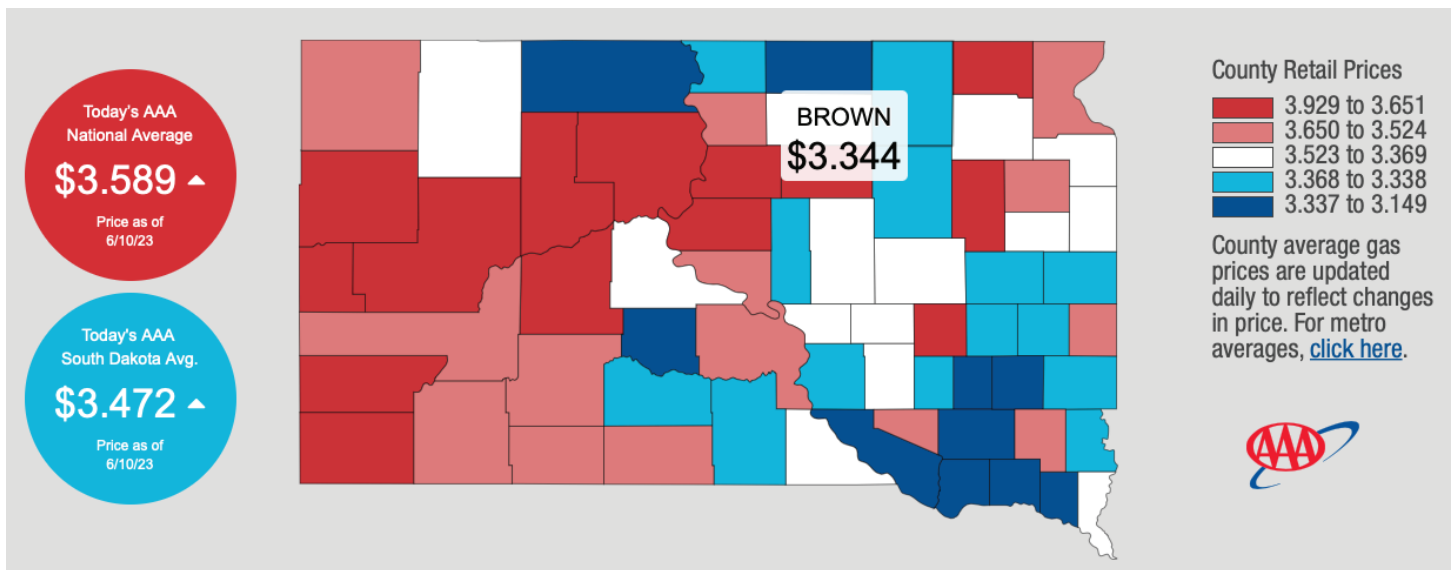
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.453	\$3.603	\$4.069	\$3.721
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.451	\$3.626	\$4.072	\$3.727
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.472	\$3.623	\$4.109	\$3.752
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.443	\$3.581	\$4.037	\$3.814
Year Ago Avg.	\$4.789	\$4.909	\$5.346	\$5.377

### This Week



### Two Weeks Ago



## **South Dakota Department of Health Expands Rural Healthcare Facility Recruitment Assistance Program to Include Dental Hygienists**

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Department of Health is pleased to announce the expansion of the Rural Healthcare Facility Recruitment Assistance Program (RHFRAP) to now include Dental Hygienists as eligible participants. In addition, dental offices will be added as eligible facilities under this program. The decision to include dental hygienists and dental offices is aimed at addressing the growing need for oral health services in rural communities across the state.

RHFRAP offers a \$10,000 payment to eligible health professionals who complete a three-year, full-time service commitment and have become new employees within the last 9 months. Health professionals must contract with the employing facility and the state to qualify for the program. Furthermore, eligible facilities must be situated in communities with a population of 10,000 or less.

"The inclusion of Dental Hygienists and dental offices in the Rural Healthcare Facility Recruitment Assistance Program is a significant step forward in expanding access to oral health services in rural areas of South Dakota," said Secretary Melissa Magstadt. "Dental care for South Dakotans is foundational to health care and we are excited to support the critical dentist hygienist profession in our state."

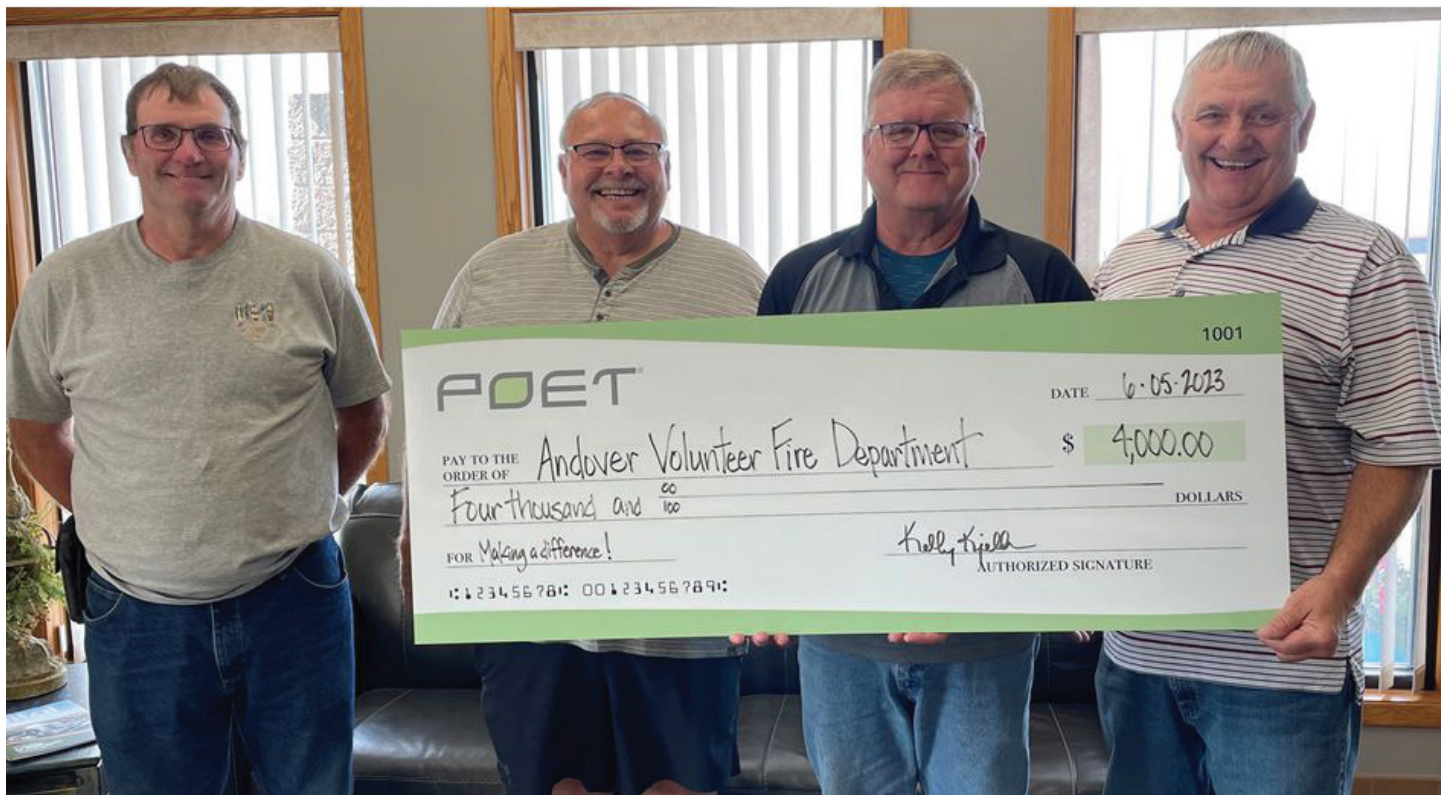
Applications for dental hygienists interested in participating in RHFRAP can be submitted starting from July 5, 2023. Employing facilities are required to submit the applications on behalf of the participants, with a limit of 3 participants per facility. To access the application and learn more about the program, interested parties are encouraged to visit the South Dakota Office of Rural Health website at <https://doh.sd.gov/providers/ruralhealth/recruitment/Facility/>.

Applications are open for all other eligible professions under the program right now through December 31st, 2023.

For additional information or inquiries, please contact the South Dakota Office of Rural Health at 600 E Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501, or call 1-800-738-2301.

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## Andover Volunteer Fire Department receives POET's Gives Back Grant

POET's Gives Back grant program has given the Andover Volunteer Fire Department \$4,000 to help update 20-year-old bunker gear. The department has 24 volunteers and the bunker gear runs about \$2,500 per person. Kelly Kjelden, general manager of POET Bioprocessing - Groton, said, "POET's grant program is about giving back to the communities we call home. We are proud to support the Andover Volunteer Fire Department and help provide them with the resources they need to protect and serve our communities.

Pictured are Bill Lamee, Barry Smith, Kelly Kjelden and Torre Raap. (Courtesy Photo from POET)



## South Dakota State Fair Trash To Treasure Contest

HURON, S.D – The South Dakota State Fair is introducing a new contest inviting people to share their creative talents and help decorate the South Dakota State Fair. Now through August 11, participants can pick up trash cans from the South Dakota State Fair office to paint with themes related to the fair, 4-H, FFA, or agriculture. Cash prizes will be awarded to first, second, and third place finishers.

“This is a fun way to brighten up the fairgrounds and keep our trash cans looking great,” says State Fair Manager Peggy Besch. “We look forward to seeing the trash can treasures participants create.”

The trash cans will be judged at on September 1, based on visual appeal and creativity. The first-place winner will receive \$100, second place will receive \$50, and third place will receive \$25.

Entries can be made as a group or as an individual. All entries must be entirely paint based. No paper or 3D art will be allowed. The trash cans must be returned to the South Dakota State Fair by August 18.

Official rules and the registration form can be found on the state fair website.

The 2023 South Dakota State Fair will run from Thursday, August 31, through Monday, September 4. Channel Seeds preview night will be Wednesday, August 30. For more information on State Fair events, contact the Fair office at 800.529.0900, visit [www.sdstatefair.com](http://www.sdstatefair.com) or find them on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### 'Stand your ground' law alters criminal justice landscape Some say 2021, 2022 changes have little impact on outcomes, others see roadblocks to justice

BY: JOHN HULT - FRIDAY JUNE 16, 2023 1:55 PM

*This story is one of two exploring the impact of South Dakota's "stand your ground" laws. The companion article explores specific examples of how defendants are using the laws to make self-defense claims.*

South Dakota lawmakers talked of home invasions and mass shootings when they strengthened self-defense protections in recent years, but the new laws are being used in scenarios that bear little resemblance to those hypotheticals.

Some situations don't involve firearms, as with the Rapid City man accused of simple assault for taking down a 12-year-old boy on a playground, or the Mobridge man who'd been rude to a female server and knocked out the bar owner who confronted him about it. In both instances, the defendants claimed self-defense and exercised their right to an "immunity hearing" — a new kind of proceeding, created by the updated "stand your ground" laws, that allows those making self-defense claims to ask a judge to drop the charges before a trial commences.

The South Dakota Unified Judicial System has no way to track the number of immunity hearing requests filed in the state since the law creating them took effect on July 1, 2022. Such requests would only appear on court dockets under a generic term like "motions hearing" or "evidentiary hearing."

Inquiries from South Dakota Searchlight to more than a dozen local state's attorney's offices revealed



**The Brown County jail is located in Aberdeen and connected to the Brown County Sheriff's Office and courthouse.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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**Rep. Kevin Jensen, R-Sioux Falls, turns to ask a question during a meeting of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Feb. 27, 2023, at the Capitol in Pierre.** (John Hult/

South Dakota Searchlight)

several cases in which defendants invoked their right to an immunity hearing. Of six cases explored in detail, five saw charges sustained.

Some prosecutors believe the law has done little more than open the door to time-consuming hearings for defendants with no business asking for one. Others see more nuance, and defense lawyers see value in another opportunity to prove a client's innocence.

Beadle County State's Attorney Michael Moore is currently pursuing attempted murder charges against a man who allegedly fired on another man through the window of a drug house. The alleged shooter has asked for an immunity hearing, arguing that his target fired first.

Moore called the stand your ground laws "political hogwash."

"In my cases, it's drug dealers who are using this law," Moore said. "Did they want to pass this law to make it harder for me to prosecute drug dealers for shooting at each other?"

The prime sponsor of the first stand your ground bill

from 2021 was Rep. Kevin Jensen, R-Canton.

Lawmakers passed a statute that protects "reasonable" acts of self preservation, Jensen said. He hadn't heard much about its use in courtrooms, but "I think defense lawyers are twisting the meaning," Jensen said.

The law is meant to exclude people who might defend a house or vehicle where felony crimes – such as drug distribution – are taking place, Jensen said.

In 2021, legislators passed Jensen's stand your ground law to clear up when, where and under what circumstances someone can defend themselves from real or perceived threats within the state's borders. The following year, they created pretrial immunity hearings.

In debates on the issue both years, supporters said older state law had been vague and outdated, leaving open the question of when people can use force for protection. Rep. Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, was the prime House sponsor of the 2022 bill that created the immunity hearing. He framed it as a way to block jury trials for those who save the lives of themselves and others.

"Maybe you're sitting at church in your pew and somebody comes in with a gun, or you're at your house and somebody breaks in with a gun, and you're forced to defend yourself," Hansen said. "It's unjust for you then, after that situation, to have to go defend yourself in court."

## **Self-defense laws strong before change**

Self-defense laws have been a complicating factor for the family of 30-year-old Acey Morrison of Rapid City.

More than nine months have passed since she was shot to death, but prosecutors in Rapid City have yet to decide if they'll charge the shooter with a crime.

The primary complication, according to Pennington County State's Attorney Lara Roetzel, is the man's self-defense claim. Morrison is not alive to offer her side of the story, and there were no other witnesses to the homicide.

South Dakota's laws on self-defense play a significant role in such cases, Roetzel said, and did so for years before tighter verbiage was added in 2021.

Simply put, any person who feels threatened by a person who isn't a police officer on duty and reacts to protect themselves is generally immune from prosecution. The 2021 change didn't affect that.

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Since the creation of the immunity hearing last year, however, prosecutors may now need to prove criminal allegations twice – first to a judge at the immunity hearing, then to a jury.

The immunity hearings needn't relate to deadly force. The question of who started a bar fight, for example, is now ripe for discussion at an immunity hearing.

Lake County State's Attorney Wendy Kloppner has yet to take part in an immunity hearing, but said the victim in a bar fight case stopped cooperating with her when the alleged assailant filed a motion asking for one.

That's not necessarily a bad thing, according to defense lawyer Paul Andrews, who represents the Moberg man who punched the owner of a Glenham bar.

Andrews declined to talk about the specifics of that case, but said it's not uncommon for the person who does the most damage in a fight to face criminal charges, regardless of who threw the first punch.

"I always tell my clients, 'If you're in a bar fight, for God's sake don't win, because you're the one who'll get arrested,'" Andrews said.

Campbell County State's Attorney Mark Kroontje of Herreid is acting as Walworth County state's attorney in the Glenham bar fight case. The county's prosecutor at the time of the crime had a conflict of interest and passed the case along to Kroontje. The defendant says several pokes to his shoulder from the bar's owner justified a punch that knocked the owner out.

Kroontje, like many rural county prosecutors, is a part-time state's attorney. When he's not prosecuting cases, he works as a defense attorney.

As a prosecutor, he saw the immunity hearing as little more than a waste of taxpayer resources. As a defense lawyer, "I'll take any tool I can use," Kroontje said. "This is really giving me another chance."

## Extra chance to make a case

Minnehaha County State's Attorney Daniel Haggar said his office has handled around 10 immunity hearings. They've lost one.

Defense lawyers have asked for far more, he said. From Haggar's perspective, the request for a hearing is often a negotiation tactic.

"They might file that motion and say, hey, you know, 'Here's our claim of self defense,'" Haggar said. "We could look at that and say that 'Maybe there's merit to that, here's a plea bargain.'"

In the one case for which an immunity hearing led to a dismissal, he said, there was enough gray area that his office chose to drop all the charges.

"A prosecutor's job is to get things right," Haggar said. "It's not to win."

The practical impact of stand your ground is still being worked out by the courts, so there are open questions on the extent of its use.

The South Dakota Supreme Court was recently asked to decide if a defendant charged with and convicted of murder by a jury should have been entitled to an immunity hearing. That man, Ramon Deron Smith, was tried shortly after the initial 2021 update became law for a crime that took place before the laws changed. The Supreme Court has yet to rule on that case.

To prevail at an immunity hearing, a prosecutor must show by "clear and convincing evidence" that the defendant's behavior was illegal. One judge in Pennington County, who sided with prosecutors, wrote at



**Minnehaha County State's Attorney Daniel Haggar talks about 2022 crime trends at a March 7, 2023, press conference at the Public Safety Center in Sioux Falls.** (John Hult/

South Dakota Searchlight)

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**State Sen. John Wiik, R-Big Stone City, during the 2023 legislative session at the Capitol in Pierre.**

(Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

length on what such a standard might mean in the context of an immunity hearing.

In Beadle County, Moore disputes that the new law even requires an immunity hearing before a trial. The longtime Huron prosecutor said defense lawyers regularly move to dismiss charges after the prosecution rests its case but before the defense begins to present its case.

Defense lawyers could make their immunity claim at that point, Moore said.

"It's my position that a judge can consider these things at the trial. Why do we have to consider these things first?" Moore said. "I don't think the Legislature did a very good job laying out the procedure."

Most prosecutors and judges have thus far taken the position that an immunity hearing can't be denied in the face of a credible self-defense claim, though.

Pennington County Deputy State's Attorney Roxanne Hammond, who is not involved in the Acey Morrison case, has argued in several immunity hearings.

At her most recent hearing, she presented witnesses who saw a man pursue and fire on a neighbor who'd wanted the man to stop playing his drums so loudly. The man was hurling insults at the victim's girlfriend before firing his weapon, Hammond said. The victim survived.

"What essentially it has caused for us is that we have to have a little mini trial before the actual case even gets rolling," Hammond said. "We have to put our witnesses, our victims on the stand. So basically, it's giving defense attorneys another opportunity to cross examine a victim of a violent crime."

The immunity hearing isn't the only way the new laws come into play, according to Minnehaha County Public Defender Traci Smith. The new statutory language can have an impact with juries, she said, making them more apt to condone the use of force.

"We have seen it in their not guilty verdicts when finding that a person's act of self-defense was justified," Smith said.

## Lawmaker reaction

Rep. Hansen, the prime sponsor of the bill creating the immunity hearing, did not return repeated calls from South Dakota Searchlight, and did not answer questions sent over email about the cases in which the right to an immunity hearing has been invoked.

The primary goal of the 2021 law, Rep. Jensen said, was to offer clarity in firearms cases. A person threatened by several people ought to be able to display a firearm to stop a potential attack without fear of a felony assault charge, he said.

"When you get into a situation, if it's a life-and-death situation, do you have to wait until you're almost dead to defend yourself?" said Jensen, who pulled most of the language for the law from a Florida stand your ground law passed in 2006. "A lot of it is designed so that you don't have to use deadly force."

At least some of the ripple effects of the new laws go beyond what lawmakers intended.

Another backer of the measures, Sen. John Wiik, R-Big Stone City, said that bar fights were not top of mind when he spoke in support of the stand your ground bills. His aim was to make it simpler for people

to understand their right to defend themselves and their property.

"I think anybody who's on their own property and defends themselves gets the benefit of the doubt, no matter who they are," Wiik said.

That doesn't mean a bar fight situation ought not come under scrutiny, Jensen said. The Canton lawmaker said that common sense on reasonable force should come into play in court, but "if you're truly defending yourself, if you weren't the initial aggressor, you should not be prosecuted."

Wiik, like Jensen, is not surprised that defense lawyers have used the law in situations that fall outside the bounds of the legislative imagination.

"Gray areas are being created more by attorneys than they are by legislators," Wiik said. "The idea of a bar fight, I don't think that ever entered our minds. It's just being able to defend yourself and your property, wherever you are. And now we're having people finding more creative ways to implement laws than we were creative writing them, I guess."

Sen. David Wheeler, R-Huron, didn't support the 2021 stand your ground law. Wheeler and other legislators who practice law said that the state's pre-existing self-defense laws were enough to protect anyone who'd shoot at a home invader or an active shooter.

The following year, he supported the creation of the immunity hearing in the interest of clarifying how the courts apply the law.

With both pieces of the law in place, Wheeler, like Kroontje, said he's ethically obligated to pursue an immunity hearing for his clients when they claim self defense.

"I can't speculate that anyone was wanting to turn every bar fight into an immunity hearing. But that's absolutely what the law did," Wheeler said.

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

## Bar fights, neighbor disputes, playground justice: How 'stand your ground' plays out in court

**South Dakota laws allow hearings for self-defense in wide range of situations**

**BY: JOHN HULT - FRIDAY JUNE 16, 2023 1:55 PM**

*This story is one of two exploring the impact of South Dakota's "stand your ground" laws. The companion article explores the ways prosecutors, politicians and defense lawyers view the laws.*

—  
James Bialota Jr. believes he was defending himself when he took down a 12-year-old boy on a Rapid City playground.



**The Pennington County Courthouse and jail complex in Rapid City, in June 2023.** (Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)

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Thanks to two recent updates of South Dakota's "stand your ground" laws, the 45-year-old was granted a pretrial "immunity hearing" to make his case. The hearings amount to a "trial before the trial" for those who make a self-defense claim.

If defendants convince a judge they acted in self-defense by "clear and convincing" evidence – a step below the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard used by a jury – they walk free. If they fail, the prosecution proceeds, and the defendant can still claim self-defense at trial.

Bialota lost his immunity hearing and faces a simple assault charge. His case and others illustrate the circumstances under which accused assailants across the state have been granted such immunity hearings since their creation by the Legislature in 2022.

Bialota contends that the 12-year-old Native American victim and the boy's friends had threatened Bialota on the day of the incident, July 24, 2021.

That Bialota's case has dragged on for well over a year is in part tied to his self-defense claim. The Legislature had passed its 2021 "stand your ground" law by the time he was charged with simple assault. The Legislature set up a framework for self-defense immunity hearings in 2022.

At his immunity hearing, Bialota told police that the boy threatened to "kick his ass" when Bialota confronted him about a scuffle involving Bialota's 7-year-old son.

"He said he was worried that his son was knocked out," court documents say.

The father allegedly asked the boys if they'd dare to throw things at him, as he said they'd done to his son. He testified that they said "maybe," and that the 12-year-old raised his hands and boasted about being a black belt in karate.

Bialota told police he "nudged" the boy's hands down, swept his legs and stood over him. Some witnesses took a video of the incident and posted it to TikTok, capturing the profanity laced period between the takedown and police's arrival.

The video reportedly captured the father saying, in response to an inaudible statement from a witness, "I'd love to see that. I'm a combat veteran and I've killed."

Bialota said he feared that, because of an injury to his left hand and wrist, he couldn't "take a kid from in front and a kid from behind me, not a chance."

Last October, Judge Scott Bogue ruled that Bialota's response was unreasonably harsh. The defendant was agitated, Bogue wrote, and had exaggerated the extent of his son's distress. Bialota told responding officers, for example, that the boys had been "beating the sh\*t" out of his son for 20 minutes, and that his son had bruises "from his neck to his feet" – none of which was supported by the evidence, according to the judge.

The 12-year-old's assertion that he hadn't issued a verbal threat to Bialota wasn't credible, Bogue ruled, but the judge also concluded that such an utterance did not justify the grown man's actions.

"The disparity in age and size weighs against such justification and in favor of an inference that the boy was merely displaying bluster and assuming a defensive stance against a significantly larger adult who



**The Rapid City playground where an altercation involving children and an adult male resulted in assault charges against the man, who claimed self-defense utilizing South Dakota's "stand your ground" laws.** (Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)



**The Banquet in Sioux Falls. Christopher Mousseaux was beaten and left for dead near the Banquet in October of 2021. One of his assailants attempted to claim self-defense utilizing South Dakota's "stand your ground" laws but failed to convince a judge, then later a jury, that his actions were justified.** (John Hult/

South Dakota Searchlight)

is also a Walworth County commissioner, emerged from the bar's kitchen and struck up a conversation with Zeller. When the topic turned to the server, Holgard grew agitated, demanding that Zeller apologize. He said he tried, but Holgard said "no, you didn't."

Holgard then poked Zeller in the shoulder, saying "How do you like it?"

Zeller punched Holgard in the face and knocked him out.

Zeller and witnesses testified that he helped Holgard to his feet and offered him a ride home. Zeller is a volunteer firefighter in Mobridge, and said he was ready to render aid if necessary.

Holgard declined the help. He didn't call law enforcement, either. Instead, he went home.

His family and friends encouraged him to go to the hospital, where he learned he had a concussion and a fractured bone in his face. By then, "someone else" had contacted law enforcement, Holgard said.

The injury had a long tail. Holgard was foggy and had blurred vision. In November of 2021, he closed his bar for more than a week to recover.

He told the judge he has no memory of the altercation. He only remembers waking up the next day.

"I had headaches for six weeks," Holgard said in court.

At Zeller's immunity hearing, his lawyer, Paul Andrews of Rapid City, argued that Holgard's pokes to Zeller's shoulder and his proximity to Zeller put his client in fear of imminent harm.

Judge Gregg Magera rejected that argument and wrote that "striking Kevin Holgard in the face with a closed fist in response to being poked was not a reasonable or appropriate response," Magera wrote.

Zeller is charged with alternate counts of aggravated assault and simple assault. A jury could find him guilty of the felony, the misdemeanor or both. A jury could also hear his self-defense claim and find him not guilty.

Andrews declined to comment on the details of the case for South Dakota Searchlight, citing the upcoming October trial.

was yelling and cursing back at him," Bogue wrote.

The date for Bialota's trial on two counts of simple assault has yet to be set.

Bialota maintains that a group of middle school children had been assaulting his son when he intervened. He contends that the assault on his son was a felony. He also said there were 17-year-olds on the playground that day who could have attacked him, and that the children had told his family to "go back to Europe."

"I stopped a felony hate crime," Bialota said. "No one should have to defend their son, call the cops and get charged with a crime."

### **Pokes and a punch**

By his own admission in court, Christopher Zeller acted "inappropriately" toward a server at Hogie's Bar in Glenham on Oct. 13, 2021.

He harassed her with explicit sexual comments and questions about who she'd slept with, she said during court hearings. At one point, he poked her in the stomach and shoulder with his finger, she said. She ended her shift early, with Zeller allegedly calling her a "skank" as she walked out the door.

She and Zeller each testified that he tried to speak to her in the parking lot, but she drove off.

Shortly afterward, bar owner Kevin Holgard, who



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## Noise complaint turns violent

According to prosecutors, James Wendell Peterson Jr. followed and shot his neighbor in the leg after that neighbor and the neighbor's girlfriend confronted Peterson at home about how loudly he'd been playing his drums.

According to Peterson, who now faces aggravated assault charges, he was defending himself from a man who'd allegedly later admit that he'd been willing to fight over the situation.

The incident began on Oct. 19, 2022, when the man Peterson would later shoot and others arrived at Peterson's door in north Rapid City.

A legal brief filed by Peterson's Pennington County public defender says that "the female involved in the altercation was in the doorway of the trailer, yelling at the occupant."

The victim was involved in, "at the very least," a verbal altercation with Peterson.

"(The victim) did not dispute that he was willing and able to engage in a physical altercation," the brief says.

The victims were trespassing, the defense lawyer wrote.

"Mr. Peterson was within his rights under the circumstances to stand his ground and defend his home and father."

Peterson's immunity hearing request was granted, and the hearing took place last month. Pennington County Deputy State's Attorney Roxanne Hammond told South Dakota Searchlight that the hearing included testimony on Peterson following the victim as they walked away, hurling insults at the victim's girlfriend before firing.

The judge has yet to rule on Peterson's self-defense claim.

## Shots fired, shots returned

A 21-year-old Huron man named Abidas Miranda Colon is locked up in the Beadle County Jail on attempted murder charges and has been since early February.

His lawyer says he shouldn't be there.

According to a Huron Police Department report in Colon's criminal case file, the arrest stemmed from an incident on Feb. 1. That day, a 33-year-old man came looking for his wife at the home where Colon had been staying.

The man allegedly pounded on the door. He suspected his wife was inside of what he described as a known drug house, the report says. He left for a while, one witness said, but soon returned and fired two rounds from a handgun at the apartment.

Colon fired back from the window with an AR-15, according to the witness, who was the apartment's legal resident.

Police found one slug from a handgun outside, the court record says, and a total of 14 shells from the AR-15. A search warrant later turned up 19.7 grams of methamphetamine, plastic baggies and a scale.

Colon was charged with attempted murder and aggravated assault, either of which could draw prison time for a conviction.

Colon's lawyer has requested an immunity hearing. Colon was entitled to be in the home, they argued, had no duty to flee and had the right to return fire to defend himself.

Beadle County State's Attorney Michael Moore told South Dakota Searchlight that he does not believe Colon – or any defendant – is legally entitled to such a hearing, but said in an email to the judge that "it is for the court to decide."

Moore has filed a brief arguing that Colon has not made a case for self-defense worthy of a hearing. The brief also argues that the state's stand your ground law has not established how to evaluate a self-defense claim to determine if a defendant deserves one.

"It would be impractical to require the State to have an immunity hearing by a simple notice filed by the Defendant," Moore wrote in a June 9 court filing.

## Left for dead after taking swings

At least one person in South Dakota lost at both his self-defense immunity hearing and his jury trial.

That man, 28-year-old Steven Tuopeh, is now serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole at

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the South Dakota State Penitentiary for the murder of 32-year-old Christopher Mousseaux.

Tuopeh and a co-defendant, 30-year-old Jeff Pour, had a run-in with Mousseaux on Oct. 10, 2021, outside a bar near a soup kitchen just east of downtown Sioux Falls.

Security footage showed Mousseaux taking at least one swing at the two men, though Judge James Power would later write that it was unclear if the swing, aimed at Pour, actually connected with Tuopeh.

Mousseaux then hopped toward the street, and was followed by Tuopeh and Mousseaux. Before long, Mousseaux fell down, and the co-defendants attacked with "a flurry of punches and kicks," captured by the soup kitchen's security cameras.

The video didn't show that Mousseaux had any weapon, Power wrote, and it "also does not show Chris fighting back against the assault from the two men."

Tuopeh's defense lawyer argued that Mousseaux had adopted a fighting stance when pursued. Power granted a self-defense immunity hearing based on that, as well as the swings he took at the bar and in the street.

The judge did not, however, find that those actions were met by a level of force a reasonable person would see as necessary to neutralize the threat.

Had Tuopeh feared for his safety, Power wrote, he could have stayed behind as Mousseaux hopped away. Power noted that Tuopeh could have easily found "safety in numbers as he was with several individuals outside the pub that night."

Particularly after Mousseaux fell down, Power wrote, "the danger to Tuopeh has ceased; but it is then, when he first uses force."

Mousseaux, found bloodied and unconscious outside the soup kitchen, never regained consciousness. He died in the hospital three days after the incident.

Tuopeh was convicted of second-degree murder. His life sentence on that conviction, finalized on April 25, was mandatory under South Dakota law.

Pour pleaded guilty to manslaughter in March. He's scheduled to be sentenced on July 21.

## **Domestic violence charges dropped**

At least one person has walked free as a result of the updated stand your ground laws.

The female defendant was charged with aggravated assault, simple assault and interference with 911 communications after a Dec. 27, 2021, domestic dispute. South Dakota Searchlight is not using her name because the charges were ultimately dismissed.

According to court documents, the woman hit the alleged victim with a beer mug. The court record contains few details beyond that. Sam Clemens of the Sioux Falls Police Department said that the male victim was struck in the back of the head, and that he wasn't armed at the time. Clemens could not share what the woman might have told officers about self-defense because, he said, because such statements are for the courts to weigh.

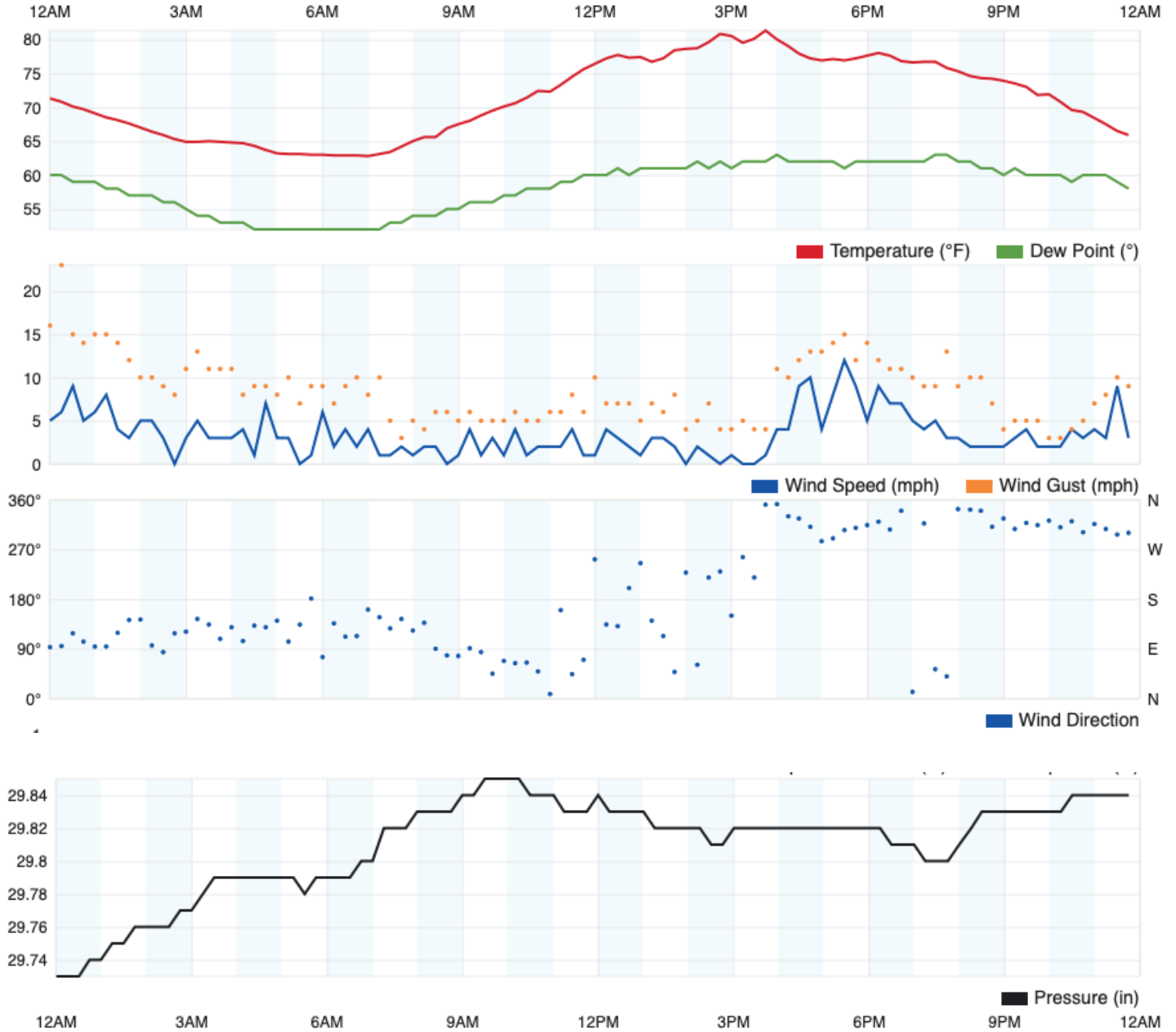
The woman's defense lawyer filed a notice in April 2022 arguing that her actions were in self-defense. Both sides appeared before Judge Jennifer Mammenga to discuss immunity on July 1 – the day the state's law officially sanctioning self-defense immunity hearings took effect. Mammenga ruled in favor of the defense from the bench, and the assault charges were dismissed. Minnehaha County Deputy State's Attorney Mark Joyce dismissed the remaining 911 interference charge seven days later.

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

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



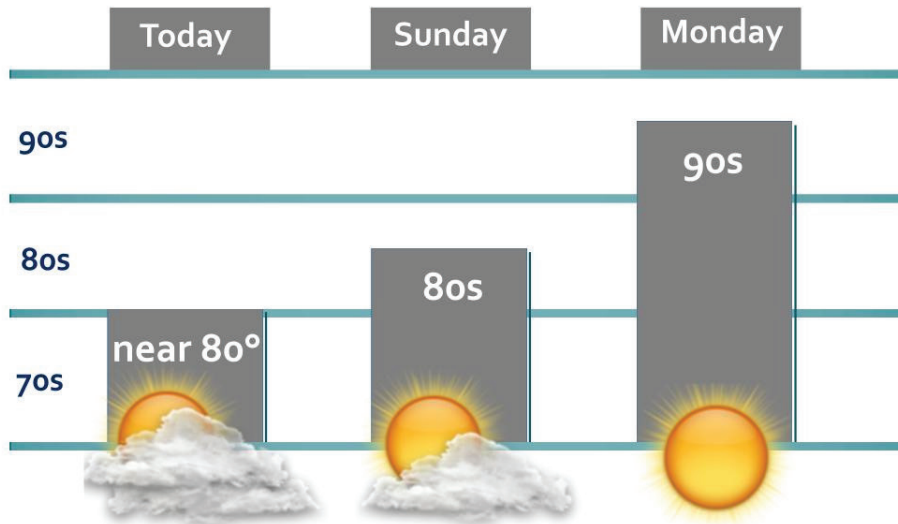
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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	June 18th	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear then Mostly Clear and Breezy	Hot and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Windy	Hot and Breezy
High: 79 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 87 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 97 °F	Low: 72 °F	High: 96 °F



## Warming up for the Start of the Work Week



### Timing of Showers & Storms Today



30% chance of showers & thunderstorms over far eastern South Dakota & western Minnesota through this afternoon.

Dry Sunday through Monday



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

High temperatures near 80 degrees today will rise into the 80s Sunday, and into the 90s Monday. While dry weather can be expected for most of the area through Monday, there is a 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms over far eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota through this afternoon.

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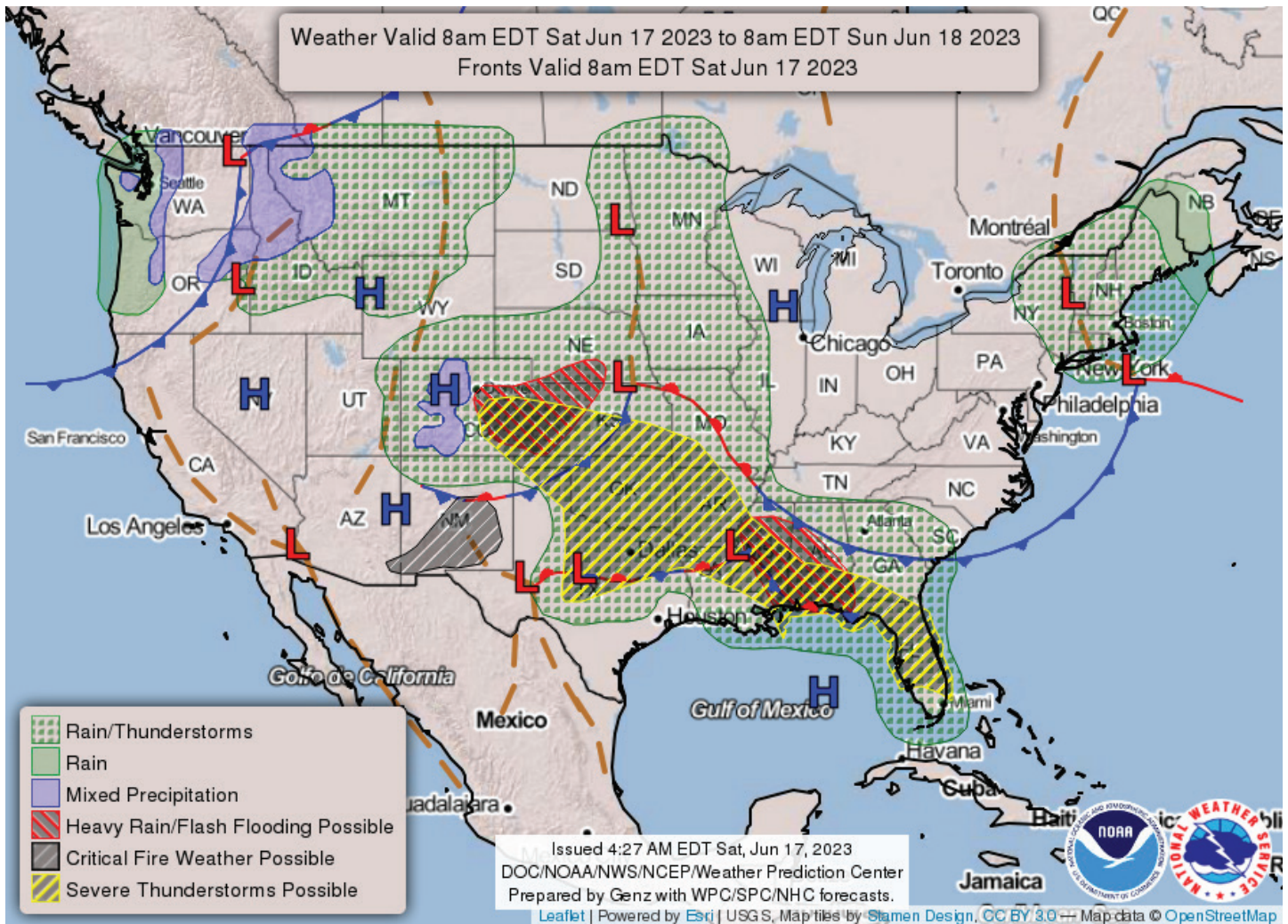
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 81 °F at 3:36 PM**  
**Low Temp: 63 °F at 7:01 AM**  
**Wind: 23 mph at 12:12 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 43 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1933  
Record Low: 40 in 1915  
Average High: 81  
Average Low: 56  
Average Precip in June.: 2.03  
Precip to date in June.: 0.51  
Average Precip to date: 9.28  
Precip Year to Date: 8.42  
Sunset Tonight: 9:25:12 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:34 AM



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## Today in Weather History

June 17, 1944: On this date, six estimated F2 or greater tornadoes were tracked across Faulk, Codington, Brown, Day, Grant, and Roberts County in South Dakota as well as Big Stone in Minnesota. The first tornado touched down at approximately 3:30 pm CST in Faulk County. This estimated F2 tornado destroyed all buildings except the house on a farm 7 miles northeast of Faulkton. The next tornado occurred at 4:00 pm CST in Codington County, where barns were destroyed. Cattle and a truck were thrown into Grass Lake, near Wallace. About the same time, in Brown County, a tornado moved northeast from just northeast of Warner and crossed the town of Bath. This storm killed two people and injured another twelve. A couple was killed in the destruction of their home. Twenty homes in Bath were damaged. A brick school had its upper story torn off. Another tornado moved through Codington County at 4:45 pm CST, killing three and injuring twenty-five. This F4 strength tornado moved northeast from two miles northeast of Henry, passing over Long Lake and ending 2 miles northwest of Florence. The funnel was described as snake-like over Long Lake and massive as it swept through five farms southwest of Florence. Over 100 head of cattle were killed, and about a dozen homes were destroyed. In Day County an estimated F2 moved due north from 4 miles south of Webster, ending 2 miles northeast of Roslyn. This storm passed two miles east of Webster where barns were destroyed, and livestock was killed on a half dozen farms. At 5:15 pm CST a monster of a storm moved northeast from 5 miles south of Summit, passing 3 miles south of Wilmot and ending about 3 miles east of Beardsley, Minnesota. This massive tornado had an estimated width of 1500 yards and traveled 30 miles. Along the path, eight people were killed, and another forty-three were injured. Farm devastation southwest and south of Wilmot was as complete as it could be with some farms reportedly left without even debris on the property. About 15 farms in South Dakota reported F3-F5 damage. From this day, the Red Cross counted 13 dead and 560 people injured across the state.

June 17, 2010: This day will go down as the day with the greatest single-day tornado total in Minnesota history. The 3 EF4 tornadoes in Minnesota were the first tornadoes EF4 or stronger in this state since the Granite Falls tornado on July 25, 2000. This outbreak produced the highest number of tornadoes rated EF4 or greater in one day in Minnesota since the Black Sunday tornado outbreak on April 30, 1967. This was the first EF4 tornado in Freeborn County since the Black Sunday outbreak. The four total EF4 tornadoes across the Upper Midwest on June 17, 2010 (3 in MN, and 1 in ND) were the most in an outbreak in the U.S. since the "Super Tuesday Outbreak" on February 5-6, 2008. The number of tornado fatalities (4) on this day was the highest in Minnesota since July 5, 1978. Click [HERE](#) for an NWS summary.

1859 - Hot Santa Ana winds in southern California roasted fruit on one side at Santa Barbara. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1882 - A tornado traveled more than 200 miles across the state of Iowa killing 130 persons. The tornado touched down about ninety miles west of Grinnell, and struck the town and college around sunset, killing sixty persons, and causing more than half a million dollars damage. Traveling at nearly 60 mph, the tornado hit Mount Pleasant about 11 PM causing another half a million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1946: The third deadliest tornado in Canadian history struck southwestern Ontario from Windsor to Tecumseh. 17 people were killed and hundreds injured. Damage was conservatively estimated at \$1.5 million.

1965 - Holly, CO, was deluged with 11.08 inches of rain to establish a state 24 hour rainfall record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the south central U.S. Thunderstorms in Kansas produced wind gusts to 76 mph at Lyons, and baseball size hail at Garden City. The Edwards Aquifer, which supplies water to San Antonio, TX, reached a record level of 699.2 feet following a record 18.43 inches of rain in thirty days. Torrential rains between the mid May and mid June sent 8.8 million acre feet of water down the rivers of southern Texas, the largest volume in 100 years of records. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2009: A tornado leveled a house knocks down power poles and overturns about a dozen railroad cars in Aurora, Nebraska. The tornado is rated EF2, with winds between 111 and 135 mph.

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### WHO'S ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

Years ago when Italy went to war, there was a shortage of soldiers. To find recruits, one captain went through the villages calling men to fight with him. Many joined him bringing their own weapons into combat.

One elderly lady was so moved by the sight that she got her broom, placed it on her shoulder, and began to march with the men into combat.

Many of the soldiers laughed at her. One looked at her and asked, "What good are you, old lady?"

"Not much," she replied, "but I want everyone to know whose side I'm on!"

Life requires many choices. But there is no more important choice for each of us than to let the world know whose side we are on. Joshua said, "So, honor the Lord and serve Him wholeheartedly." He challenged the people to declare their allegiance to God because He had proven His trustworthiness to them.

From the simple to the significant, we make many choices every day, each with an opportunity to show the world whose side we are on. Often we are willing to compromise our beliefs and values rather than to declare our allegiance to the Lord as one of His disciples. Rather than taking a clear position to honor God, we waffle and waiver because we fear being ridiculed and rebuked. If we love the Lord and want His peace and protection, His goodness and grace, we must be willing to "take our brooms" and declare our faith. We must listen to the Lord as He speaks to us through His Word and make the right choices.

Prayer: Lord, may we live our lives letting those around us see the depth of our commitment to You. Empower us with courage to prove to others that You are our Lord! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15-15



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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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.16.23

4 24 34 45 57 19

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$300,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.14.23

2 15 26 29 30 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$4,090,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 29 Mins 9 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.16.23

2 6 34 38 46 2

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 44 Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.14.23

3 7 19 24 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$101,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 44 Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.14.23

6 10 14 16 50 1

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 13 Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.14.23

3 20 36 42 64 4

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$366,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 13 Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### Noem seeks investigation after calls to tip hotline about liberal policies

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A “whistleblower” hotline designed to report liberal practices at South Dakota universities has received calls about schools encouraging “transgender ideologies,” promoting race-based teaching and pushing mask mandates, Gov. Kristi Noem said.

In a letter sent Friday, Noem asked the South Dakota Board of Regents to investigate the complaints and advise her office what actions would be taken to address them.

When she announced the hotline on May 26, the Republican governor said it was a response to states allowing “liberal ideologies to poison their colleges and universities.”

Shuree Mortenson, a spokeswoman for the Board of Regents, said in a statement the board’s goal is to address issues as quickly as possible, as it does with any concerns that students provide through its reporting processes.

“While anonymous complaints can be challenging to verify, we strive to make every student feel welcome at our universities,” Mortenson said. “We are looking into these concerns and will work with the board to determine any necessary action.”

Many of the reports referenced by Noem in Friday’s letter involved Black Hills State University, which is based in Spearfish.

She said callers reported that during orientation, the school encouraged new students to use prescription anti-depressants to cope with homesickness.

Other allegations included requiring students to choose non-white authors for their freshman literature classes; pushing students to wear Ukrainian flag pins; and paying students to take COVID tests.

The public relations office of Black Hills State did not immediately return a message seeking reaction.

Noem also said before the hotline when live, her office received allegations of students being required to provide preferred pronouns during course introductions at the University of South Dakota.

Another caller claimed the regents did not provide timely notification of a Ph.D program closing, causing some students to not receive their degrees while international students were allowed to complete the program. The letter didn’t identify the program or which university was involved.

### Missouri River Basin Landowners Secure Appellate Victory for Flooding Claims

KANSAS CITY, Mo.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun 16, 2023--

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled today that the United States bears responsibility for causing atypical recurrent flooding along the Missouri River that has injured farms and property in the Missouri River Basin since 2007. In its opinion, the Federal Circuit confirmed that the United States violated the Fifth Amendment prohibition on the taking of private property without just compensation by implementing the Missouri River Recovery Program (MRRP), a program described by the court as required by the Endangered Species Act but “antithetical” to the 1944 Flood Control Act.

Plaintiffs in the case, Ideker Farms, Inc., et al. v. United States of America, have been led by Am Law 100 firm Polsinelli and its shareholders Seth C. Wright and David K. Schultz, in partnership with co-counsel Cohen Milstein and its partner Benjamin D. Brown, and lead appellate counsel Donald B. Verrilli, Jr. from Munger, Tolles & Olson and Elaine J. Goldenberg and Benjamin J. Horwich from Munger, Tolles & Olson.

The mass action, on behalf of over 370 landowners from Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, and North and South Dakota, sought just compensation from the Federal Government for the actions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which was tasked with implementing the MRRP.

The Federal Circuit ruled in favor of the plaintiffs on the issues of causation and the date of accrual that

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the government had raised in its appeal. The Federal Circuit affirmed the trial court's findings that the government actions caused the flooding to occur on the plaintiffs' properties. Furthermore, the Federal Circuit ruled in favor of the plaintiffs on their cross-appeal relating to recoverability of crop damages and 2011 flooding. The case was remanded to the trial court for further proceedings. The plaintiffs have won at every stage of the proceedings from the trial court's rulings on causation and damages, as well as now on appeal.

"Today's decision is an important step in securing just compensation for our clients," said lead appellate lawyer Don Verrilli. "We are very pleased that the Federal Circuit affirmed the merits of our Takings Clause arguments."

Seth Wright, Shareholder at Polsinelli and lead trial counsel, said: "We are pleased with today's action by the Federal Circuit that confirms the previous decisions by the U.S. Court of Federal Claims. It is time for the government to do the right thing and pay the just compensation owed to these landowners who have been waiting for over a decade to receive as a result of the government's actions."

Benjamin Brown of Cohen Milstein added, "Over fifty years ago, the Supreme Court stated, 'The Takings Clause exists to bar the government from forcing some people alone to bear public burdens which, in all fairness and justice, should be borne by the public as a whole.' Today's decision again vindicates this critically important principle."

Lead plaintiff Roger Ideker of Ideker Farms, Inc. in Holt County, Missouri, was pleased with the decision: "We continue to see the courts recognize the substantial losses we have encountered, and that the government should take responsibility. We are bolstered to continue the fight for justice."

## Doctors advise people over 60 to stay indoors as India's northern state swelters in extreme heat

By BISWAJEET BANERJEE Associated Press

LUCKNOW, India (AP) — At least 34 people have died in the past two days as a large swath of the north Indian state Uttar Pradesh swelters under severe heat, officials said Saturday, prompting doctors to advise residents over 60 to stay indoors during the daytime.

The dead were all over 60 years old and had preexisting health conditions that may have been exacerbated by the intense heat. The fatalities occurred in Ballia district, some 300 kilometers (200 miles) southeast of Lucknow, the state capital of Uttar Pradesh.

Twenty-three deaths were reported Thursday and another 11 died Friday, Ballia's Chief Medical Officer Jayant Kumar said.

"All the individuals were suffering from some ailments and their conditions worsened due to the extreme heat," Kumar told The Associated Press on Saturday. He said most of the deaths were because of heart attack, brain stroke and diarrhea.

Diwakar Singh, another medical officer, said these people were admitted to Ballia's main hospital in critical condition. "Elderly people are vulnerable to extreme heat too," he said.

India Meteorological Department data shows Ballia reported a maximum temperature of 42.2 degrees Celsius (108 degrees Fahrenheit) on Friday, which is 4.7 C (8 F) above normal.

The scorching summer has sparked power outages across the state, leaving people with no running water, fans, or air conditioners. Many have staged protests.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath assured the public that the government was taking all necessary measures to ensure an uninterrupted power supply in the state. He urged citizens to cooperate with the government and use electricity judiciously.

"Every village and every city should receive adequate power supply during this scorching heat. If any faults occur, they should be promptly addressed," he said Friday night in a statement.

The main summer months — April, May and June — are generally hot in most parts of India before monsoon rains bring cooler temperatures. But temperatures have become more intense in the past decade. During heat waves, the country usually also suffers severe water shortages, with tens of millions of its 1.4

billion people lacking running water.

A study by World Weather Attribution, an academic group that examines the source of extreme heat, found that a searing heat wave in April that struck parts of South Asia was made at least 30 times more likely by climate change.

In April, the heat caused 13 people to die at a government event in India's financial capital of Mumbai and prompted some states to close all schools for a week.

## At least 41 killed in rebel attack on Ugandan school near Congo border

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — Ugandan authorities recovered the bodies of 41 people, including 38 students, following an attack by suspected rebels on secondary school near the border with Congo, the local mayor said Saturday.

The victims included the students, one guard and two members of the local community who were killed outside the school, Mpondwe-Lhubiriha Mayor Selevest Mapoze told The Associated Press. An unknown number of people were abducted by the rebels, who fled across the porous border into Congo after the raid on Friday night.

Mapoze said that while some of the students suffered fatal burns when the rebels set fire to a dormitory, others were shot or hacked with machetes.

Police said that rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces, who have been launching attacks for years from their bases in volatile eastern Congo, carried out the raid on Lhubiriha Secondary School in the border town of Mpondwe.

The school, co-ed and privately owned, is located in the Ugandan district of Kasese, about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from the Congo border.

"A dormitory was set on fire and a food store looted. So far 25 bodies have been recovered from the school and transferred to Bwera Hospital," police said in a statement, adding that eight others were in critical condition.

Police said Ugandan troops tracked the attackers into Congo's Virunga National Park. The military confirmed in a statement that Ugandan troops inside Congo "are pursuing the enemy to rescue those abducted."

Joe Walusimbi, an official representing Uganda's president in Kasese, told The Associated Press over the phone that some of the victims "were burnt beyond recognition."

Winnie Kiiza, an influential political leader and a former lawmaker from the region, condemned the "cowardly attack" on Twitter. She said "attacks on schools are unacceptable and are a grave violation of children's rights," adding that schools should always be "a safe place for every student."

The ADF has been accused of launching many attacks in recent years, targeting civilians, in remote parts of eastern Congo.

The ADF has long opposed the rule of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, a U.S. security ally who has been in power since 1986.

The group was established in the early 1990s by some Ugandan Muslims, who said they had been sidelined by Museveni's policies. At the time, the rebels staged deadly attacks in Ugandan villages as well as in the capital, including a 1998 attack in which 80 students were massacred in a town not from the scene of the latest attack.

A Ugandan military assault later forced the ADF into eastern Congo, where many rebel groups are able to operate because the central government has limited control there.

The group has since established ties with the Islamic State group.

In March, at least 19 people were killed in Congo by suspected ADF extremists.

Ugandan authorities for years have vowed to track down ADF militants even outside Ugandan territory. In 2021, Uganda launched joint air and artillery strikes in Congo against the group.

## Piecing together a deadly shipwreck, investigators face conflicting reports of Mediterranean journey

By RENATA BRITO Associated Press

This much is clear: On June 9, an old steel fishing trawler left eastern Libya for Italy, carrying far too many people.

As many as 750 men, women and children from Syria, Egypt, Palestine and Pakistan were on board, fleeing hopelessness in their home countries and trying to reach relatives in Europe.

Five days later, the trawler sank off the coast of Greece in one of the deepest parts of the Mediterranean Sea. Only 104 people, all men, survived. The remains of 78 people were recovered.

There are still more questions than answers about what led up to one of the worst shipwrecks in recent Mediterranean history.

Activists, migration experts and opposition politicians have criticized Greek authorities for not acting earlier to rescue the migrants, even though a coast guard vessel escorted the trawler for hours and watched helplessly as it sank.

Below is a timeline of events based on reports from Greek authorities, a commercial ship, and activists who said they were in touch with passengers. They describe sequences of events that at times converge, but also differ in key ways.

The Greek Coast Guard said that the overcrowded trawler was moving steadily toward Italy, refusing almost all assistance, until minutes before it sank. This is in part supported by the account of a merchant tanker that was nearby.

But activists said that people on board were in danger and made repeated pleas for help more than 15 hours before the vessel sank.

International maritime law and coast guard experts said that conditions on the trawler clearly showed it was at risk, and should have prompted an immediate rescue operation, regardless of what people on board may have said.

Much of these accounts could not immediately be independently verified.

Missing from this timeline is the testimony of survivors, who have been transferred to a closed camp and kept away from journalists.

All times are given in Greece's time zone.

### FIRST CONTACT

Around 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Italian authorities informed Greece that a fishing trawler packed with migrants was in international waters southwest of the Peloponnese. Greece said the Italian authorities were alerted by an activist.

Around the same time, human rights activist Nawal Soufi wrote on social media that she had been contacted by a woman on a boat that had left Libya four days earlier.

The migrants had run out of water, Soufi wrote, and shared GPS coordinates through a satellite phone showing they were approximately 100 km (62 miles) from Greece.

"Dramatic situation on board. They need immediate rescue," she wrote Tuesday morning.

Over the course of the day, Soufi described some 20 calls with people on the trawler in a series of social media posts and a later audio recording. The Associated Press could not reach Soufi.

A surveillance aircraft from the European Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex spotted the overcrowded trawler at 12:47 p.m. and notified Greek authorities. Frontex declined to share any more information.

### DIFFERING ACCOUNTS OF CONDITIONS ON BOARD

At 2 p.m., Greek authorities established contact with someone on the trawler. The vessel "did not request any assistance from the Coast Guard or from Greece," according to a statement.

But activists said that people on the boat were already in desperate need by Tuesday afternoon.

At 3:11 p.m., Soufi wrote, passengers told her that seven people were unconscious.

Around the same time, Alarm Phone, a network of activists with no connection to Soufi who run a hotline for migrants in need of rescue, said they received a call from a person on the trawler.

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"They say they cannot survive the night, that they are in heavy distress," Alarm Phone wrote.

At 3:35 p.m., a Greek Coast Guard helicopter located the trawler. An aerial photo released showed it packed, with people covering almost every inch of the deck.

From then until 9 p.m., Greek authorities said, they were in contact with people on the trawler via satellite phone, radio, and shouted conversations conducted by merchant vessels and a Coast Guard boat that arrived at night. They added that people on the trawler repeatedly said they wanted to continue to Italy and refused rescue.

## MERCHANT SHIPS BRING SUPPLIES

At 5:10 p.m., Greek authorities asked a Maltese-flagged tanker called the Lucky Sailor to bring the trawler food and water.

According to the company that manages the Lucky Sailor, people on the trawler "were very hesitant to receive any assistance," and shouted that "they want to go to Italy." Eventually, Eastern Mediterranean Maritime Limited wrote in a statement, the trawler was persuaded to accept supplies.

Around 6 p.m., a Greek Coast Guard helicopter reported that the trawler was "sailing on a steady course and heading."

But at 6:20 p.m., Alarm Phone said that people on board reported that they were not moving, and that the "captain" had abandoned the trawler in a small boat.

"Please any solution," someone on board told Alarm Phone.

The Greek authorities' account suggested the trawler stopped around that time to receive supplies from the Lucky Sailor.

At 6:55 p.m., Soufi wrote, migrants on board told her that six people had died and another two were very sick. No other account so far has mentioned deaths prior to the shipwreck, and the AP has not been able to verify this.

Around 9 p.m., Greek authorities asked a second, Greek-flagged, merchant vessel to deliver water, and allowed the Lucky Sailor to leave.

Then, at around 10:40 p.m., a Coast Guard boat from Crete reached the trawler, and remained nearby until it sank. According to the Coast Guard, the vessel "discreetly observed" the trawler from a distance. Once again, the Coast Guard said, the trawler did not appear to have any problems and was moving "at a steady course and speed."

## THE FINAL HOURS

According to Soufi's account, attempts to deliver supplies may have contributed to the trawler's troubles.

Shortly after 11 p.m., she wrote that the trawler began rocking as its passengers tried to catch water bottles from another vessel. According to people on board, ropes were tied to the ship, destabilizing it and causing a "state of panic," she said.

The report from the Lucky Sailor said no lines were tied to the trawler, and supplies were delivered in watertight barrels tied to a rope.

"Those on board the boat caught the line and pulled," the company managing the Lucky Sailor told the AP.

The other merchant vessel did not immediately reply to the AP's questions.

A spokesman for the Greek Coast Guard said late Friday that its vessel had briefly attached a light rope to the trawler at around 11 p.m. He stressed that none of the vessels had attempted to tow the trawler.

Commander Nikos Alexiou told Greek channel Ant1 TV that the Coast Guard wanted to check on the trawler's condition, but people on board again refused help and untied the rope before continuing course.

Soufi's last contact with the trawler was at 11 p.m. She said later in a voice memo that "they never expressed the will to continue sailing to Italy," or refused assistance from Greece. "They were in danger and needed help."

## THE WRECK

According to authorities, the trawler kept moving until 1:40 a.m. Wednesday, when its engine stopped. The Coast Guard vessel then got closer to "determine the problem."

A few minutes later, Alarm Phone had a final exchange with people on the trawler. The activists were

able to make out only: "Hello my friend ... The ship you send is ..." before the call cut off.

At 2:04 a.m., more than 15 hours after Greek authorities first heard of the case, the Coast Guard reported that the trawler began rocking violently from side to side, and then capsized.

People on deck were thrown into the sea, while others held onto the boat as it flipped. Many others, including women and children, were trapped below deck.

Fifteen minutes later, the trawler vanished underwater.

In the darkness of night, 104 people were rescued, and brought to shore on the Mayan Queen IV, a luxury yacht that was sailing in the vicinity of the shipwreck. Greek authorities retrieved 78 bodies. No other people have been found since Wednesday.

As many as 500 people are missing.

Brito reported from Barcelona, Spain. Derek Gatopoulos contributed to this story from Athens, Greece.

Follow AP stories on global migration at <https://apnews.com/hub/migration>

## US imposes visa restrictions for some Ugandans following adoption of anti-gay law

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — Washington on Friday announced it is imposing visa restrictions for Ugandans it accuses of "undermining the democratic process" in Uganda after the enactment of an anti-gay law in the East African country.

A statement from the State Department did not name any targeted individuals.

It said the U.S. will consider other possible actions "to promote accountability for Ugandan officials and other individuals responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic process in Uganda, abusing human rights, including those of LGBTQI+ persons, or engaging in corrupt practices."

Uganda's new law, adopted last month, punishes homosexuality, including with the death penalty in some cases. The legislation has been widely condemned by rights activists and others abroad, but it has wide support in Uganda, including among religious leaders and lawmakers.

LGBTQ rights campaigners note homosexuality already was illegal in Uganda under a colonial-era law criminalizing sexual activity "against the order of nature." The punishment for that offense is life imprisonment.

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.

## Rescuers are braving snipers and racing time to ferry Ukrainians out of Russian-occupied flood zones

By SAMYA KULLAB, EVGENIY MALOLETKA and SAM MCNEIL Associated Press

KHERSON, Ukraine (AP) — At last, help came for Vitalii Shpalin. From a distance, he spotted the small Ukrainian rescue boat traversing floodwaters that had submerged the 60-year-old's entire neighborhood after a catastrophic dam collapse in the country's embattled south.

He and others boarded with sighs of relief — interrupted suddenly by the crackle of bullets.

Shpalin ducked, and a bullet scraped his back. He felt one pierce his arm, then his leg. The boat's rescue worker cried into the radio for reinforcements. "Our boat is leaking," Shpalin heard him say. An elderly man died before his eyes, his lips turning blue.

Their vessel, taking civilians to safety in Kherson city across the river, had been shot by Russian soldiers positioned in a nearby house, according to Ukrainian officials and witnesses on the boat.

"They (Russians) let the boats through, those coming to rescue people," Shpalin said. "But when the boats were full of people, they started shooting."

Massive flooding from the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam on June 6 has devastated towns along the



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lower Dnieper River in the Kherson region, a front line in the war. Russia and Ukraine accuse each other of causing the breach.

In the chaotic early days of flooding, Ukrainian rescue workers in private boats provided a lifeline to desperate civilians trapped in flooded areas of the Russian-occupied eastern bank — that is, if the rescue missions could brave the drones and Russian snipers.

The boats have carried volunteers and plainclothes servicemen, shuttling across from Ukrainian-held areas on the western bank to evacuate people stuck on rooftops, in attics and elsewhere.

Now, that window is closing. As floodwaters recede, rescuers are increasingly cut off by putrid mud. And more Russian soldiers are returning, reasserting control.

Accounts of Russian assistance vary among survivors, but many evacuees and residents accuse Russian authorities of doing little or nothing to help displaced residents. Some civilians said evacuees were sometimes forced to present Russian passports if they wanted to leave.

Russia's Defense Ministry did not immediately respond to requests from The Associated Press for comment about actions by authorities in the Russian-occupied flood zone, or about the attack on the rescue boat.

The AP spoke with 10 families rescued from the eastern bank, as well as with rescue workers, officials and victims injured on the rescue missions.

"The Russian Federation provided nothing. No aid, no evacuation. They abandoned people alone to deal with the disaster," said Yulia Valhe, evacuated from the Russian-occupied town of Oleshky. "I have my friends who stayed there, people I know who need help. At the moment I can't do anything except to say to them, 'Hold on.'"

At least 150 people have been rescued by Ukraine from Russian-controlled areas in the risky evacuation operations, said government spokesperson Oleksandr Tolokonnikov. It is a small fraction compared to the nearly 2,750 people rescued from flooded regions controlled by Ukraine.

A local organization Helping to Leave, which helps Ukrainians living under Russian occupation to escape, said it received requests from 3,000 people in the occupied zone, said Dina Urich, who heads the organization's evacuation department.

"We will surely do everything we can, but we also cannot expose our people to danger," said Tolokonnikov.

"Russians keep threatening us and fulfilling their threats by shooting people in the back," he said.

Olha, another resident of Oleshky, said she had heard about the rescue missions but didn't know how to get on a list. "If we could, we would have done the same, but I didn't know how," she said, declining to give her last name for safety reasons.

Rescuers have often used information provided by relatives of those stranded. Military drone pilots have searched for people and plotted routes through the fast-moving waters laden with debris, while navigating around Russian troop positions.

They also have delivered water, food and cigarettes to people with a note "from Santa."

Valerii Lobitskyi, a volunteer rescuer, said shelling often derailed the missions. He has been shot at once, and on another occasion had to abort a mission to rescue an elderly woman after a close call with a Russian motor boat.

Every civilian evacuated from the eastern bank carried a harrowing tale of survival, of racing to relocate to higher ground. They described the initial scramble on the morning of June 6. Within hours, the water came gushing, reaching their ankles and then submerging entire floors.

In Oleshky, many residents moved from the outskirts of town to the center, which sits on an elevated plain.

Valhe, who was rescued with her family on June 12, said neighbors and friends tried to save people themselves in the absence of an official rescue effort.

"I saw soldiers, I saw FSB workers (Russia's Federal Security Service), but no rescue service," she said.

One elderly man tried to flee the deluge by climbing a tree. But the winds were too strong. Valhe heard his cries for help, but knew that if she tried to approach him she would perish in the current.

He told her, "My dear, stay put, don't follow me."

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She watched him drown.

Shpalin said he lied to Russian soldiers when they tried to evacuate him to another area. He had heard from others who accepted the Russian offer that they were taken only to a nearby village and told they could not go further unless they agreed to obtain Russian passports.

Shpalin told the soldiers he would not leave because he had lost his documents in the flood. In reality, they were on his person.

"I didn't believe them," he said.

When the Ukrainian rescuers found him, he was sheltering with other civilians on a sandy hill near a quarry in the village of Kardashynka.

The attack that wounded Shpalin on the evacuation boat on June 11 killed three civilians and injured 10. At least two police officers also were wounded. Kherson authorities and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff said Russian soldiers fired the shots.

Drone footage obtained by the AP shows gunshots being fired from a nearby summer home as the evacuation boat passes an estuary. The video's authenticity was confirmed by Tolokonnikov.

Serhii, 59, another evacuee on the boat, said he saw Russian soldiers on the balcony of the house. They shouted something — "Move on," or "Don't move" — then fired, he said. Serhii, who would only give his first name because his family still lives in occupied territory, threw his body over his wife's to protect her.

Some days later, in Kherson, the boom of artillery resounded in the background as 46-year-old Vitalii Holodniak, one of those killed in the boat attack, was laid to rest.

His sister Svitlana Nosik, 56, held up his death certificate. "Place of death: Dneiper River, evacuation boat," it read.

"That is not how I expected to greet my brother in Kherson," she said.

Another evacuee, Kateryna Krupych, said she looked out the window on June 7 to find mucky water surrounding her home on the island of Chaika, in the gray zone between front lines. Houses floated by. She packed up her family's supplies and they left in a boat, but got separated along the way. Eventually, they were all rescued by Ukrainians.

Krupych said the previous eight months under Russian occupation had been hard. Her family survived by relying on the kindness of neighbors who fled to Kherson city. They told her where to find the spare keys to their homes and leftover food supplies.

"It was mentally difficult when the (Russians) entered our island, when they terrorized us," she said. Russian soldiers frequently passed their home, she said, pressuring them to leave.

For Olha, still in Oleshky, the costs of the dam collapse continue to be revealed. Many houses are collapsing, she said, and she struggles to find drinking water and food. There is the risk of water-borne diseases.

Plus, "(Russians) can force-evacuate people — we are scared of this, we don't want to go to their territories," she said. "We don't want to be forgotten."

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Kullab reported from Kyiv. Maloletka and McNeil reported from Kherson.

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For more AP coverage of the war in Ukraine, go to <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>.

## Rising rents and diminishing aid are fueling a sharp increase in evictions in many US cities

By MICHAEL CASEY and R.J. RICO Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Entering court using a walker, a doctor's note clutched in his hand, 70-year-old Dana Williams, who suffers serious heart problems, hypertension and asthma, pleaded to delay eviction from his two-bedroom apartment in Atlanta.

Although sympathetic, the judge said state law required him to evict Williams and his 25-year-old daughter De'mai Williams in April because they owed \$8,348 in unpaid rent and fees on their \$940-a-month apartment.

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They have been living in limbo ever since.

They moved into a dilapidated Atlanta hotel room with water dripping through the bathroom ceiling, broken furniture and no refrigerator or microwave. But at \$275-a-week, it was all they could afford on Williams' \$900 monthly social security check and the \$800 his daughter gets biweekly from a state agency as her father's caretaker.

"I really don't want to be here by the time his birthday comes" in August, De'mai Williams said. "For his health, it's just not right."

The Williams family is among millions of tenants from New York state to Las Vegas who have been evicted or face imminent eviction.

After a lull during the pandemic, eviction filings by landlords have come roaring back, driven by rising rents and a long-running shortage of affordable housing. Most low-income tenants can no longer count on pandemic resources that had kept them housed, and many are finding it hard to recover because they haven't found steady work or their wages haven't kept pace with the rising cost of rent, food and other necessities.

Homelessness, as a result, is rising.

"Protections have ended, the federal moratorium is obviously over, and emergency rental assistance money has dried up in most places," said Daniel Grubbs-Donovan, a research specialist at Princeton University's Eviction Lab.

"Across the country, low-income renters are in an even worse situation than before the pandemic due to things like massive increases in rent during the pandemic, inflation and other pandemic-era related financial difficulties."

Eviction filings are more than 50% higher than the pre-pandemic average in some cities, according to the Eviction Lab, which tracks filings in nearly three dozen cities and 10 states. Landlords file around 3.6 million eviction cases every year.

Among the hardest-hit are Houston, where rates were 56% higher in April and 50% higher in May. In Minneapolis/St. Paul, rates rose 106% in March, 55% in April and 63% in May. Nashville was 35% higher and Phoenix 33% higher in May; Rhode Island was up 32% in May.

The latest data mirrors trends that started last year, with the Eviction Lab finding nearly 970,000 evictions filed in locations it tracks — a 78.6% increase compared to 2021, when much of the country was following an eviction moratorium. By December, eviction filings were nearly back to pre-pandemic levels.

At the same time, rent prices nationwide are up about 5% from a year ago and 30.5% above 2019, according to the real estate company Zillow. There are few places for displaced tenants to go, with the National Low Income Housing Coalition estimating a 7.3 million shortfall of affordable units nationwide.

Many vulnerable tenants would have been evicted long ago if not for a safety net created during the pandemic.

The federal government, as well as many states and localities, issued moratoriums during the pandemic that put evictions on hold; most have now ended. There was also \$46.5 billion in federal Emergency Rental Assistance that helped tenants pay rent and funded other tenant protections. Much of that has been spent or allocated, and calls for additional resources have failed to gain traction in Congress.

"The disturbing rise of evictions to pre-pandemic levels is an alarming reminder of the need for us to act — at every level of government — to keep folks safely housed," said Democratic U.S. Rep. Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts, urging Congress to pass a bill cracking down on illegal evictions, fund legal help for tenants and keep evictions off credit reports.

Housing courts are again filling up and ensnaring the likes of 79-year-old Maria Jackson.

Jackson worked for nearly two decades building a loyal clientele as a massage therapist in Las Vegas, which has seen one of the country's biggest jumps in eviction filings. That evaporated during the pandemic-triggered shutdown in March 2020. Her business fell apart; she sold her car and applied for food stamps.

She got behind on the \$1,083 monthly rent on her one-bedroom apartment, and owing \$12,489 in back rent was evicted in March. She moved in with a former client about an hour northeast of Las Vegas.

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"Who could imagine this happening to someone who has worked all their life?" Jackson asked.

Last month she found a room in Las Vegas for \$400 a month, paid for with her \$1,241 monthly social security check. It's not home, but "I'm one of the lucky ones," she said.

"I could be in a tent or at a shelter right now."

In upstate New York, evictions are rising after a moratorium lifted last year. Forty of the state's 62 counties had higher eviction filings in 2022 than before the pandemic, including two where eviction filings more than doubled compared to 2019.

"How do we care for the folks who are evicted ... when the capacity is not in place and ready to roll out in places that haven't experienced a lot of eviction recently?" said Russell Weaver, whose Cornell University lab tracks evictions statewide.

Housing advocates had hoped the Democrat-controlled state Legislature would pass a bill requiring landlords to provide justification for evicting tenants and limit rent increases to 3% or 1.5 times inflation. But it was excluded from the state budget and lawmakers failed to pass it before the legislative session ended this month.

"Our state Legislature should have fought harder," said Oscar Brewer, a tenant organizer facing eviction from the apartment he shares with his 6-year-old daughter in Rochester.

In Texas, evictions were kept down during the pandemic by federal assistance and the moratoriums. But as protections went away, housing prices skyrocketed in Austin, Dallas and elsewhere, leading to a record 270,000 eviction filings statewide in 2022.

Advocates were hoping the state Legislature might provide relief, directing some of the \$32 billion budget surplus into rental assistance. But that hasn't happened.

"It's a huge mistake to miss our shot here," said Ben Martin, a research director at nonprofit Texas Housers. "If we don't address it, now, the crisis is going to get worse."

Still, some pandemic protections are being made permanent, and having an impact on eviction rates. Nationwide, 200 measures have passed since January 2021, including legal representation for tenants, sealing eviction records and mediation to resolve cases before they reach court, said the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

These measures are credited with keeping eviction filings down in several cities, including New York City and Philadelphia — 41% below pre-pandemic levels in May for the former and 33% for the latter.

A right-to-counsel program and the fact that housing courts aren't prosecuting cases involving rent arrears are among the factors keeping New York City filings down.

In Philadelphia, 70% of the more than 5,000 tenants and landlords who took part in the eviction diversion program resolved their cases. The city also set aside \$30 million in assistance for those with less than \$3,000 in arrears, and started a right-to-counsel program, doubling representation rates for tenants.

The future is not so bright for Williams and his daughter, who remain stuck in their dimly-lit hotel room. Without even a microwave or nearby grocery stores, they rely on pizza deliveries and snacks from the hotel vending machine.

Williams used to love having his six grandchildren over for dinner at his old apartment, but those days are over for now.

"I just want to be able to host my grandchildren," he said, pausing to cough heavily. "I just want to live somewhere where they can come and sit down and hang out with me."

Casey reported from Boston. AP writer Rio Yamat in Las Vegas contributed.

## Trump's legal travails anger some GOP voters, but that doesn't guarantee that they'll vote for him

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

PELLA, Iowa (AP) — Kathleen Evenhouse took a break from her work in the corner of a small-town Iowa coffee shop to slam the federal criminal indictment of Donald Trump as patently political, the work of a

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U.S. Justice Department she says is awash in hypocrisy.

"I think we're playing a game as a country," the 72-year-old author from Pella, Iowa, said in an interview, expressing a sentiment widely shared among conservatives since the former president was charged. "I think that damages any sense of justice or any sense of — should I even bother to vote? Why should I listen to the news? Or why should I care?"

Evenhouse does plan to vote in Iowa's first-in-the-nation Republican presidential caucuses next year. And yet, despite her anger on Trump's behalf, he will not win her support.

As Trump mounts a full-throated political defense to the legal challenges he faces, many voters in early states who will play an outsize role in deciding his electoral fate agree that he is being treated unfairly. And while there is widespread distrust of the Justice Department and its pursuit of Trump on charges that he illegally stored classified documents and tried to hide them from federal officials, some voters in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina say Trump has become too damaged to be nominated by his party a third time.

"If you dig a hole and then you have to climb out, it's going to be harder to do," Evenhouse said. "And that's where I think he is."

Maintaining that Trump was unfairly targeted while others who were found to have classified documents in their possession were treated differently requires the dismissal of key differences. Most notably, President Joe Biden, former Vice President Mike Pence and others cooperated with federal officials once documents were discovered in their possession. Trump, according to the 37-count indictment filed in federal court in Miami, ignored a federal subpoena and tried to deceive the Justice Department about what he had.

Still, resentment over his treatment has been nurtured not just by Trump but by some conservative commentators, Republican members of Congress and GOP presidential candidates. Republicans who acknowledge the different circumstances have kept a lower profile.

While the double-standard theory may have taken hold among GOP voters in the early states, it's not clear that such outrage will translate into ballots cast for Trump when voting for president begins next year. It's not so much that they've lost affection for Trump, some say, but that the turmoil has become too heavy a burden for them to feel he can win.

"Right now I am a Trump supporter," said 76-year-old Karen Szelest of Indian Land, South Carolina. "However, I think they're doing everything they can to have him not run for president of the United States. And I think perhaps, for the betterment of the country, I may vote for somebody else because they keep going after Trump, going after Trump, going after Trump."

Last week marked a jarring point in the early 2024 Republican presidential campaign when the Justice Department moved forward with the indictment, a first for a former president, let alone one accused of mishandling top-secret information.

The indictment unsealed last week charged Trump with 37 felony counts — many under the Espionage Act — that accuse him of illegally storing classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, and trying to hide them from the Justice Department as investigators demanded them back.

After entering his not guilty plea on Tuesday, Trump immediately returned to portraying himself as a victim of a politically driven Justice Department aimed at keeping him from returning to the presidency he wrongly claims was stolen from him in 2020.

Some of the roughly 20 early-state voters interviewed this week, however, spent most of the time railing against what they see as the Justice Department's political agenda.

"It makes me sick that there seems to be completely different criteria for a conservative, and especially Donald Trump," said Sue VanEe, a 68-year old retired farmer who was waiting for a friend at the same Iowa coffee shop where Evenhouse was writing. "Completely different. Like opposite."

Biden has said he has communicated with neither the Justice Department nor the special prosecutor on any aspect of the investigation prior to last Friday's unsealing of the indictment in Miami.

Skepticism was pervasive among Republicans interviewed by The Associated Press after Trump appeared in federal court in Miami and, through his lawyers, entered not-guilty pleas to all charges.

## Supermajorities in state capitols push controversial policies to the edge

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Lawmakers in state capitols this year have been flexing their superpowers. In North Carolina, a new supermajority of Republicans enacted abortion restrictions. In Vermont, a new supermajority of Democrats imposed a climate-sensitive home heating law. And in Montana, a GOP supermajority booted a transgender lawmaker from the House floor.

In each case, the views of their political opponents ultimately were irrelevant.

By at least one measure, political power is at its highest mark in decades. That's because Republicans or Democrats hold majorities so large in 28 states that they could override gubernatorial vetoes without any help from the minority party.

"Supermajorities give one party a lot of power to do what they want to do," said Steven Rogers, a political scientist at Saint Louis University who focuses on elections and state legislatures.

There is no single standard for a supermajority, though the term generally is equated with whatever threshold is needed to override a gubernatorial veto. In many states, that's a two-thirds majority. In some, that's a three-fifths majority. In six states — Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia — it takes only a simple majority to override a veto. But those states all have Republican majorities around 70% or greater — easily exceeding any definition of a supermajority.

The number of states with supermajorities is at its highest level since at least 1982, with 19 Republican supermajorities and nine Democratic ones, according to research by Rogers.

This year began with supermajorities in 26 legislatures, including new Republican ones in Florida and Montana and a new Democratic one in Vermont. That total grew in March when Louisiana state Rep. Francis Thompson — who had served nearly 50 years as a Democrat — switched to the Republican Party to give the GOP a supermajority. Thompson cited his conservative voting record while asserting that Democratic leaders were pushing issues that didn't align with his Christian values.

In April, North Carolina state Rep. Tricia Cotham switched from Democrat to Republican to give the GOP another supermajority. Six weeks after Cotham's switch, she provided a pivotal vote as the new GOP supermajority overrode Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's veto of legislation banning most abortions after 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Some North Carolina Republicans already are eyeing other proposals they could pass with a supermajority, including an elections bill containing provisions that Cooper previously vetoed and an expansion of taxpayer-funded vouchers for students to attend private schools.

The supermajority creates an opportunity to "adjust the playbook" to ensure "that we are scoring more touchdowns, so to speak, than we might have previously," said North Carolina Republican state Rep. John Torbett, chair of an education committee.

The new Republican supermajority in Louisiana also could soon be put to the test.

Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards has said he intends to veto a package of bills that targets the LGBTQ+ community, including a ban on gender-affirming treatments for transgender minors. Louisiana lawmakers have convened for just two veto sessions since 1974. But Republicans now have the two-thirds majority necessary to override an Edwards veto.

Vermont's Democratic-led legislature is to return to the Capitol next week to consider overriding vetoes by Republican Gov. Phil Scott, including one of a bill expanding child care subsidies for some families. The Democratic supermajority already notched one victory in May — overriding Scott's veto of a clean-heating-standard bill that credits utilities for energy-efficient technologies and penalizes them for not meeting certain goals.

Scott vetoed a similar bill last year before Democrats obtained a supermajority, but an override failed by one vote in the House.

Republican-led legislatures in Kansas and Kentucky this year also overrode vetoes by Democratic governors, including on bills dealing with transgender issues, abortion and work requirements for food assistance.

Political scientists cite a couple of reasons for the rise of supermajorities.

Over the past decades, Americans have increasingly voted along party lines — picking state lawmakers and even local officials who align with their party choice for president or the top of the ticket, Rogers said. At the same time, politicians in power in many states have gerrymandered voting district boundaries to give their party's candidates an advantage in legislative elections.

As parties gain more seats in House and Senate chambers, the political ideology of their middle members often shifts further to the right or left, reducing the need to appeal to moderates and virtually eliminating the need to compromise with the opposing party.

"All that we have is our voice," said North Carolina state Rep. Marcia Morey, a Democratic whip. But now "there's no need for (Republicans) to have any dialogue."

Parties with supermajorities also can more easily silence their opponents. In Tennessee, where Republicans hold at least three-fourths of the seats, the GOP supermajority expelled two Black Democratic lawmakers who used a bullhorn on the House floor to protest for gun control after a deadly school shooting in Nashville. Democrats also were upset Republicans had limited debate on various topics.

Following Tennessee's expulsions, Montana's Republican supermajority banned transgender Rep. Zoey Zephyr from the House floor. Zephyr initially was silenced after telling lawmakers supporting a prohibition on gender-affirming treatments for minors that they would have blood on their hands; she was exiled for participating in a protest over her right to debate in the House.

When supermajorities run state capitals, some voters may be pleased by the sweeping policies that get enacted. Others may feel like their priorities are ignored.

"On behalf of the voters, it might be a good thing, because it helps clarify responsibility," said Carlos Algara, an assistant professor of government and politics at Claremont Graduate University in California.

"If you are a voter in California, you know explicitly which party owns policy — it's the Democratic Party," Algara said. "So if you don't like the direction of policy in California, you have a very easy choice."

Voters in Florida are in a similar situation with Republicans. GOP Gov. Ron DeSantis helped build a Republican supermajority by becoming more involved in legislative races, and the candidates he backed remained firmly loyal during this year's legislative session.

DeSantis had no problem passing a legislative agenda that included a six-week abortion ban, tougher immigration laws, more power for parents to remove books from public schools and an easier ability for prosecutors to win death sentences, among other things. He now is campaigning on that agenda as he runs for president.

House Democratic Leader Fentrice Driskell said DeSantis "changed the vibe" in the Capitol. She recalled that lawmakers last year had included limits on how the governor could use funds in an emergency management bill.

"That was when they did not have a supermajority," Driskell said. "This time, we didn't see anything that would be a check on his power."

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Associated Press writer Brendan Farrington, in Tallahassee, Florida, and Gary D. Robertson in Raleigh, North Carolina, contributed to this report.

## **Biden returns to Philadelphia to rally with union workers in first big event of his 2024 campaign**

By SEUNG MIN KIM and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will tout his pro-labor bona fides on Saturday at his first major political rally since he formalized his reelection campaign, appearing alongside union members to make his case that his economic agenda is boosting the middle class.

His campaign says Biden, who will appear at the Philadelphia Convention Center, will "lay out the core principles of his economic message" in his remarks. Biden also plans to talk about how a sweeping climate, tax and health care package he signed into law last year has cut the cost of prescription drugs and

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lowered insurance premiums, as his administration focuses on his achievements his first two years the centerpiece argument for his reelection.

Ahead of the event, several of the nation's most powerful unions — including the AFL-CIO, American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees — officially endorsed Biden's campaign. The first-of-its-kind joint endorsement among the unions and the backdrop of hundreds of workers are all part of a meticulously choreographed effort to show the support of labor behind what Biden himself calls the most pro-union president in history.

"Every major labor union in the country is endorsing me" on Saturday, Biden told reporters ahead of a fundraiser in Connecticut on Friday evening. "I'm saying that my philosophy about building from the middle out and the bottom up is working."

The campaign event also comes amid some encouraging economic news for Biden, with inflation cooling last month, continuing a steady decline in consumer prices primarily driven by lower gas prices, a smaller rise in grocery costs than in previous months and less expensive furniture, air fares and appliances.

Philadelphia and the state of Pennsylvania have long been at the heart of Biden's political efforts, as he headquartered his 2020 campaign in the city and the state was one of a handful that had voted for Donald Trump in 2016 but flipped back to Democrats four years later.

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said some union members supported Trump in the past because "there is a lot of grievance in this country and there is a lot of unhappiness. And what Trump was a master at was being able to exploit fear and exploit grievance."

She said part of the reason the AFT and other top unions endorsed Biden nearly 18 months before Election Day 2024 was to promote Biden's economic record against Republican-championed culture war issues.

Biden is "going to feel very, very comfortable when he's in Philadelphia. He's going to be among friends," added Lee Saunders, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. He pushed for a coordinated endorsement of Biden's reelection campaign from top unions early in the cycle.

Until now, Biden's primary campaign activity has been fundraising. He raised cash at a private home in Greenwich, Connecticut, on Friday and will head to fundraisers in California, Maryland, Illinois and New York ahead of the second quarter fundraising deadline on June 30.

## **A beginner's guide to Juneteenth: How can all Americans celebrate?**

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

For more than one-and-a-half centuries, the Juneteenth holiday has been sacred to many Black communities.

It marks the day in 1865 enslaved people in Galveston, Texas found out they had been freed — after the end of the Civil war, and two years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

Since it was designated a federal holiday in 2021, Juneteenth has become more universally recognized beyond Black America. Many people get the day off work or school, and there are a plethora of street festivals, fairs, concerts and other events.

People who never gave the holiday on June 19 more than a passing thought may be asking themselves, is there a "right" way to celebrate Juneteenth?

For beginners and those brushing up history, here are some answers:

**IS JUNETEENTH A SOLEMN DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OR MORE OF A PARTY?**

It just depends on what you want. Juneteenth festivities are rooted in cookouts and barbecues. In the beginnings of the holiday celebrated as Black Americans' true Independence Day, the outdoors allowed for large, raucous reunions among formerly enslaved family, many of whom had been separated. The gatherings were especially revolutionary because they were free of restrictive measures, known as "Black Codes," enforced in Confederate states, controlling whether liberated slaves could vote, buy property, gather for worship and other aspects of daily life.



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Alan Freeman, 60, grew up celebrating Juneteenth every year in Houston, 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of Galveston. A comedian who is producing Galveston's first ever Juneteenth Comedy Festival on Saturday, he has vivid memories of smoke permeating his entire neighborhood because so many people were using their barbecue pits for celebratory cookouts. You could go to anyone's house and be welcomed to join in the feast, which could include grilled chicken and beef and other regional cuisines — jerk meats, fried fish, Jamaican plantains.

"It's where I began to really see Black unity because I realized that that was the one day that African Americans considered ours," Freeman said. "The one holiday that was ours. We didn't have to share with anybody. And it was about freedom because what we understood is that we were emancipated from slavery. But, there was so many beautiful activities."

Others may choose to treat Juneteenth as a day of rest and remembrance. That can mean doing community service, attending an education panel or taking time off.

The important thing is to make people feel they have options on how to observe the occasion, said Dr. David Anderson, a Black pastor and CEO of Gracism Global, a consulting firm helping leaders navigate conversations bridging divides across race and culture.

"Just like the Martin Luther King holiday, we say it's a day of service and a lot of people will do things. There are a lot of other people who are just 'I appreciate Dr. King, I'll watch what's on the television, and I'm gonna rest,'" Anderson said. "I don't want to make people feel guilty about that. What I want to do is give everyday people a choice."

## WHAT IF YOU'VE NEVER CELEBRATED JUNETEENTH?

Anderson, 57, of Columbia, Maryland, never did anything on Juneteenth in his youth. He didn't learn about it until his 30s.

"I think many folks haven't known about it — who are even my color as an African American male. Even if you heard about it and knew about it, you didn't celebrate it," Anderson said. "It was like just a part of history. It wasn't a celebration of history."

For many African Americans, the farther away from Texas that they grew up increased the likelihood they didn't have big Juneteenth celebrations regularly. In the South, the day can vary based on when word of Emancipation reached each state.

Anderson has no special event planned other than giving his employees Friday and Monday off. If anything, Anderson is thinking about the fact it's Father's Day this weekend.

"If I can unite Father's Day and Juneteenth to be with my family and honor them, that would be wonderful," he said.

## WHAT KIND OF PUBLIC JUNETEENTH EVENTS ARE GOING ON AROUND THE COUNTRY?

Search online and you will find a smorgasbord of gatherings in major cities and suburbs all varying in scope and tone. Some are more carnival-esque festivals with food trucks, arts and crafts and parades. Within those festivals, you'll likely find access to professionals in health care, finance and community resources. There also are concerts and fashion shows to highlight Black excellence and creativity. For those who want to look back, plenty of organizations and universities host panels to remind people of Juneteenth's history.

## ARE THERE SPECIAL FOODS SERVED ON JUNETEENTH?

Aside from barbecue, the color red has been a through line for Juneteenth food for generations. Red symbolizes the bloodshed and sacrifice of enslaved ancestors. A Juneteenth menu might incorporate items like barbecued ribs or other red meat, watermelon and red velvet cake. Drinks like fruit punch and red Kool-Aid may make an appearance at the table.

## DOES HOW YOU CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH MATTER IF YOU AREN'T BLACK?

Dr. Karida Brown, a sociology professor at Emory University whose research focuses on race, said there's no reason to feel awkward about wanting to recognize Juneteenth because you have no personal ties or you're not Black. In fact, embrace it.

"I would reframe that and challenge my non-Black folks who want to lean into Juneteenth and celebrate," Brown said. "It absolutely is your history. It absolutely is a part of your experience. ... Isn't this all of our

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history? The good, the bad, the ugly, the story of emancipation and freedom for for your Black brothers and sisters under the Constitution of the law.”

If you want to bring some authenticity to your recognition of Juneteenth, educate yourself. Attending a street festival or patronizing a Black-owned business is a good start but it also would be good to “make your mind better,” Anderson said.

“That goes longer than a celebration,” Anderson said. “I think Black people need to do it too because it’s new for us as well, in America. But for non-Black people, if they could read on this topic and read on Black history beyond Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, that would show me that you’re really serious about growing in this area.”

If you’re struggling with how to “ethically” mark the day, Brown also suggested expanding your knowledge of why the holiday matters so much. That can be through reading, attending an event or going to an African American history museum if there’s one nearby.

“Have that full human experience of seeing yourself in and through the eyes of others, even if that’s not your own lived experience,” she said. “That is a radical human act that is awesome and should be encouraged and celebrated.”

WHAT ARE OTHER NAMES USED TO REFER TO JUNETEENTH?

Over the decades, Juneteenth has also been called Freedom Day, Emancipation Day, Black Fourth of July and second Independence Day among others.

“Because 1776, Fourth of July, where we’re celebrating freedom and liberty and all of that, that did not include my descendants,” Brown said. “Black people in America were still enslaved. So that that holiday always comes with a bittersweet tinge to it.”

IS THERE A PROPER JUNETEENTH GREETING?

It’s typical to wish people a “Happy Juneteenth” or “Happy Teenth,” said Freeman, the comedian.

“You know how at Christmas people will say ‘Merry Christmas’ to each other and not even know each other? You can get a ‘Merry Christmas’ from everybody. This is the same way,” Freeman said.

No matter what race you are, you will “absolutely” elicit a smile if you utter either greeting, he said.

“I believe that a non-Black person who celebrates Juneteenth ... it’s their one time to have a voice, to participate.”

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Tang, who reported from Phoenix, is a member of The Associated Press’ Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at @ttangAP.

## UN steps up criticism of IMF and World Bank, the other pillars of the post-World War II global order

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — From the ashes of World War II, three institutions were created as linchpins of a new global order. Now, in an unusual move, the top official in one — the secretary-general of the United Nations — is pressing for major changes in the other two.

Antonio Guterres says the International Monetary Fund has benefited rich countries instead of poor ones. And he describes the IMF and World Bank’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a “glaring failure” that left dozens of countries deeply indebted.

Guterres’ criticism, in a recent paper, isn’t the first time he’s called for overhauling global financial institutions. But it is his most in-depth analysis of their problems, cast in light of their response to the pandemic, which he called a “stress test” for the organizations.

His comments were issued ahead of meetings called by French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on Thursday and Friday to address reforms of the multilateral development banks and other issues.

Neither the IMF nor the World Bank would comment directly on the secretary-general’s criticisms and proposals. But Guterres’ comments echo those of outside critics, who see the IMF and World Bank’s leadership limited by the powerful nations that control them — a situation similar to that of the United Nations,

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That mirrors a persistent split across party lines in how the case is viewed. An ABC News/Ipsos poll conducted last weekend found that Americans were more likely to say Trump should be charged in the documents case than those who say he should not, 48% to 35%. At the same time, 47% of adults believe the charges are politically motivated, compared with 37% who say they are not.

Most Republicans, however, said he should not be charged, and 80% of them believe the charges are politically motivated, according to the ABC poll.

As for the election, polls conducted over the last few months have consistently found Trump as the early frontrunner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

Trump's challenge will be maintaining that advantage as the legal cases against him proceed. His hope that they will work in his favor is bolstered by Republican-leaning voters such as Kelly White of Indian Land.

"It kind of makes me want to support him more," she said.

Among the most common counter-arguments, there are those who at once play down the allegations Trump faces while also pointing to what they see as a double standard — one that has excused, for instance, the email server former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, a Democrat, kept in the basement of her private residence in New York.

Charges that she mishandled classified documents weren't pursued by the Justice Department, in part because relevant Espionage Act cases brought over the past century involved alleged efforts to obstruct justice and willful mishandling of classified information. Those factors were not at play in her case, investigators concluded.

At a farmer's market in Bedford, New Hampshire, Tom Zapora was chatting with friends and snacking on a "tornado potato," a spiraled, fried potato on a skewer, shortly after Trump's appearance in court in Miami.

"There's a lot of things going on there, and in my humble opinion, the current president, past presidents, have done as much if not more wrong than he has and they've kind of slid under the radar," said Zapora, a Republican who owns a moving company.

In the Iowa town of Pella, a Dutch-themed community of about 10,000 people in Republican-heavy Marion County where Trump received two-thirds of the vote in 2020, the investigation was hardly the most pressing issue on the minds of Republican voters attending a campaign event for Republican presidential candidate Tim Scott Wednesday. During a question-and-answer session with the South Carolina senator, it took 40 minutes for the subject of the indictment to come up.

When it did, the questioner ignored the charges against Trump, asking instead about the fairness of the Justice Department.

Standing in the audience of about 200, 58-year-old engineer Gina Singer, who has been a devoted Trump supporter, said the indictment had become a distraction from the serious business of choosing a presidential nominee who can beat Biden next year.

Though she's bothered by what she sees as a double standard, she is uncertain about whether Trump — in her opinion quite unfairly — will be saddled with so much suspicion that she thinks a next-generation candidate may be what's best for the party.

"I love everything he stands for and I want his policies to be enacted," Singer said. "But they'll just keep on going after him. So, I'm looking for someone else. Both things can be true."

Staff writer Holly Ramer contributed from Bedford, New Hampshire; Erik Verduzco reported from Indian Land, South Carolina.

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which has faced its own calls for reform.

Maurice Kugler, a professor of public policy at George Mason University, told The Associated Press that the institutions' failure to help the neediest countries "reflects the persistence of a top-down approach in which the World Bank president is a U.S. national appointed by the U.S. president and the IMF managing director is a European Union national appointed by the European Commission."

Richard Gowan, the International Crisis Group's U.N. director, said there is a lot of frustration with the U.S. and its European allies dominating decision-making, leaving African countries with only "a sliver of voting rights." Developing countries also complain that the bank's lending rules are weighted against them, he said.

"In fairness, the bank has been trying to update its funding procedures to address these concerns, but it has not gone far enough to satisfy countries in the Global South," Gowan said.

Guterres said it's time for the boards of the IMF and the World Bank to right what he called the historic wrongs and "bias and injustice built into the current international financial architecture."

That "architecture" was established when many developing countries were still under colonial rule.

The IMF and what is now known as the World Bank Group were created at a conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in July 1944 to be key institutions of a postwar international monetary system. The IMF was to monitor exchange rates and lend reserve currencies to countries with balance of payment deficits. The World Bank would provide financial assistance for postwar reconstruction and for building the economies of less developed countries.

Guterres said the institutions haven't kept pace with global growth. He said the World Bank has \$22 billion in paid capital, the money used for low-interest loans and grants for government development programs. As a percentage of global GDP, that's less than one-fifth of the 1960 funding level.

At the same time, many developing countries are in a deep financial crisis, exacerbated by inflation, rising interest rates and a standstill in debt relief.

"Some governments are being forced to choose between making debt repayments or defaulting in order to pay public sector workers — possibly ruining their credit rating for years to come," Guterres said, adding that "Africa now spends more on debt service costs than on health care."

The IMF's rules unfairly favor wealthy nations, he said. During the pandemic, the wealthy Group of Seven nations, with a population of 772 million, received the equivalent of \$280 billion from the IMF while the least developed countries, with a population of 1.1 billion, were allocated just over \$8 billion.

"This was done according to the rules," Guterres said. This is "morally wrong."

He called for major reforms that would strengthen the representation of developing countries on the boards of the IMF and World Bank, help countries restructure debts, change IMF quotas, and revamp the use of IMF funds. He also called for scaling up financing for economic development and tackling the impact of climate change.

IMF spokesperson Julie Kozack, asked about Guterres' proposals at a June 8 news conference, said "I'm not in a position to comment on any of the specifics."

She added that a review of IMF quotas is a priority and is expected to be completed by Dec. 15.

In a written response to a query from the AP, the IMF said it has mounted "an unprecedented" response to the largest-ever request from countries for help dealing with recent shocks.

After the pandemic hit, the IMF approved \$306 billion in financing for 96 countries, including below-market rate loans to 57 low-income countries. It also increased interest-free lending fourfold to \$24 billion and provided around \$964 million in grants to 31 of its most vulnerable nations between April 2020 and 2022 so they could service their debts.

The World Bank Group said in January that its shareholders have initiated a process "to better address the scale of development."

The bank's development committee said in a March report that the bank "must evolve in response to the unprecedented confluence of global crises that has upended development progress and threatens people and the planet."

Guterres' push for reforming the IMF and World Bank comes as the United Nations also faces demands for an overhaul of its structure, which still reflects the post-World War II global order.

Gowan said many U.N. ambassadors think it might be “marginally easier” and more helpful to developing countries to overhaul the IMF and World Bank than to reform the U.N. Security Council, which has been debated for more than 40 years.

While Guterres and U.N. ambassadors talk about reforming the financial institutions, any changes are up to their boards. Gowan noted that when the Obama administration engineered a reform of IMF voting rights in 2010, “Congress took five years to ratify the deal — and Congress is even more divided and dysfunctional now.”

“But Western governments are aware that China is an increasingly dominant lender in many developing countries,” Gowan said, “so they have an interest in reforming the IMF and World Bank in ways that keep poorer states from relying on Beijing for loans.”

Beyond the Paris meeting, the debate over IMF and World Bank reforms will continue in September at a summit of leaders of the Group of 20 in New Delhi, and at the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations.

U.S. climate chief John Kerry said in an Associated Press interview Wednesday that he will be attending the Paris summit along with IMF and World Bank officials.

“Hopefully, new avenues of finance will be more defined than they have been,” he said. “I think it’s really important.”

## **Balloons, tears and hugs as family of girl who died in Border Patrol custody holds New York funeral**

By VALERIE GONZALEZ and LISET CRUZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Balloons with rainbows and Minnie Mouse surrounded the casket of an 8-year-old girl who died in Border Patrol custody as dozens of people gathered Friday to remember Anadith Danay Reyes Alvarez in New York City.

Her family had been heading to the city last month before their journey across the southern U.S. border ended in tragedy. The child’s death has put the U.S. government under new scrutiny over the care given to thousands of detained migrants.

The girl’s mother, Mabel Alvarez Benedicks, hugged almost every guest at the R.G. Ortiz Funeral Home, thanking them for coming to honor their daughter. She grabbed a handful of tissues to wipe her eyes and nose.

Anadith had a history of heart problems and sickle cell anemia, her mother has said. An internal investigation found that Border Patrol medical personnel were informed about the girl’s medical history but declined to review the file before she had a seizure and died May 17, her family’s ninth day in custody.

“We are laying our baby to rest and may she rest in peace,” the Alvarez family said in a statement. “We want justice for her, and we do not want this to ever happen again. We will fight for justice.”

As the girl’s casket was closed, Benedicks began weeping. Pastor Arnold Ciego led the gathering in a song and commented that the family didn’t leave their countries because they wanted to simply leave, but because they were searching for a cure and medical help for Anadith.

“When are we going to rest from an unjust system?” Ciego said.

Pointing to poster boards with photos of Anadith, Rossel Reyes recalled memories of his daughter.

“Here, we were in Mexico. She was the one who never got off her bike,” he said, choking up. “Here, we were in Honduras on the beach walking. I always held her hand, carried her, always, always. She was always affectionate, kind and caring. And every day I will think of her. Every day.”

Anadith, who was born in Panama, died in a Border Patrol station in Harlingen, Texas. More than a week earlier, her family of five had surrendered to border agents after crossing the Rio Grande from Mexico.

Anadith tested positive for influenza while in custody. Her mother told The Associated Press that she had warned agents and staff about Anadith’s medical history. A preliminary report from CBP’s Office of Professional Responsibility found medical staff declined to review the file.

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Late Thursday, CBP announced it had reassigned its chief medical officer, Dr. David Tarantino, after Anadith's death, saying in a statement it was "bringing in additional senior leadership to drive action across the agency."

The family entered the U.S. at a time when daily illegal crossings topped 10,000 as migrants rushed to beat the end of pandemic-related restrictions on seeking asylum that were lifted May 11.

While the family was being held in Harlingen, the girl experienced stomachaches, nausea, difficulty breathing and a fever that reached 104.9 degrees Fahrenheit (40.5 degrees Celsius) a day before her death, the CBP report said.

The nurse practitioner also reported denying three or four requests from the girl's mother for an ambulance until the girl collapsed in her mother's arms and lost consciousness.

"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.

Dr. Paul H. Wise, a Stanford University pediatrics professor who visited South Texas 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.

Attorneys with the Texas Civil Rights Project and the Haitian Bridge Alliance, a nongovernmental organization working with the family, have requested an independent autopsy to determine the cause of the girl's death.

"When I heard of Anadith's death, my heart broke in a million different pieces," Guerline Jozef, founder of immigration advocacy nonprofit Haitian Bridge Alliance, said during the wake, which ended with a group of artists performing a song with maracas and drums.

The family said Anadith will be buried Saturday at a cemetery in New Jersey.

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Gonzalez reported from McAllen, Texas.

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This story has been updated to correct the girl's name to Anadith Danay, not Anadith Tanay.

## **Losing hope of finding kids in plane crash, Indigenous searchers turned to a ritual: Ayahuasca**

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — The weary Indigenous men gathered at their base camp, nestled among towering trees and dense vegetation that form a disorienting sea of green. They sensed that their ancestral land — Selva Madre, or Mother Jungle — was unwilling to let them find the four children who'd been missing since their charter plane crashed weeks earlier in a remote area in southern Colombia.

Indigenous volunteers and military crews had found signs of hope: a baby bottle, half-eaten fruit, dirty diapers strewn across a wide swath of rainforest. The men were convinced the children had survived. But punishing rains, harsh terrain and the passing of time had diminished their spirits and drained their stamina.

The weak of body, of mind, of faith do not make it out of this jungle. Day 39 was do or die — for the children and the search teams.

That night at camp, Manuel Ranoque, father of the two youngest children, reached for one of the most sacred rituals of Indigenous groups of the Amazon — yagé, a bitter tea made of plants native to the rainforest, more widely known as ayahuasca. For centuries, the hallucinogenic cocktail has been used as a cure for all ailments by people in Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Brazil.

Henry Guerrero, a volunteer who joined the search from the children's home village near Araracuara, told The Associated Press his aunt prepared the yagé for the group. They believed it would induce visions that could lead them to the children.

"I told them, 'There's nothing to do here. We will not find them with the naked eye. The last resource

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is to take yagé," Guerrero, 56, said. "The trip really takes place in very special moments. It is something very spiritual."

Ranoque sipped, and the men kept watch for a few hours. When the psychotropic effects passed, he told them it hadn't worked.

Some searchers were ready to leave. But the next morning, 40 days after the crash, an elder reached for what little was left of the yagé and drank it. Some people take it to connect with themselves, cure illnesses or heal a broken heart. Elder José Rubio was convinced it would eventually help find the kids, Guerrero said.

Rubio dreamed for some time. He vomited, a common side effect.

This time, he said, it had worked. In his visions, he saw them. He told Guerrero: "We'll find the children today."

The four children — Lesly, Soleiny, Tien and Cristin — grew up around Araracuara, a small Amazon village in Caquetá Department that can be reached only by boat or small plane. Ranoque said the siblings had happy but independent lives because he and his wife, Magdalena Mucutuy, were often away from home.

Lesly, 13, was the mature, quiet one. Soleiny, 9, was playful, and Tien, nearly 5 before the crash, restless. Cristin, 11 months then, was just learning to walk.

At home, Mucutuy grew onions and cassava, and used the latter to produce fariña, a type of flour, for the family to eat and sell. Lesly learned to cook at age 8; in the adults' absence, she often cared for her siblings.

The morning of May 1, the children, their mother and an uncle boarded a light plane. They were headed to the town of San José del Guaviare. Weeks earlier, Ranoque had fled his home village, an area where illegal drug cultivation, mining and logging have thrived for decades. He told AP he feared pressure from people connected to his industry, though he refused to provide details about the nature of his job or business dealings.

"The work there is not safe," Ranoque said. "And it is illegal. It has to do with other people ... in a sector that I can't mention because I put myself more at risk."

He said he left Mucutuy \$9 million Colombian pesos, about \$2,695 U.S. dollars, before leaving to pay for food, other necessities and the charter flight. He wanted the children out of the village because he feared they could be recruited by one of the rebel groups in the area.

They were on their way to meet Ranoque when the pilot of the Cessna single-engine propeller plane declared an emergency due to engine failure. The aircraft fell off the radar a short time later.

"Mayday, mayday, mayday. ... The engine failed me again. ... I'm going to look for a river. ... I have here a river to my right," pilot Hernando Murcia reported to air traffic control at 7:43 a.m., according to a preliminary report released by aviation authorities.

"103 miles out of San José ... I'm going to land."

The Colombian military launched a search for the plane when it failed to arrive at its destination. About 10 days later, with no plane and no signs of life found, the Indigenous volunteers joined the effort. They were much more familiar with the terrain and the families in the area. One man told them the plane was making an odd noise when it flew over his house. That helped them sketch out a search plan that followed the Apaporis River.

As they walked the unforgiving terrain and took breaks in groups, ants crawled on them and mosquitoes feasted on their blood. One searcher almost lost an eye to a tree branch, and others developed allergy- and flu-like symptoms.

They kept searching.

Historically, the military and indigenous groups have feuded, but deep in the jungle, after food supplies and optimism diminished, they shared water, meals, GPSs and satellite phones.

Sixteen days after the crash, with morale running low among all search parties, searchers found the wreckage. The plane appeared to have nosedived — it was found in a vertical, nose-down position.

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The group assumed the worst. The men had found the wreckage and seen human remains. Guerrero said he and others started packing up their camp.

But one of the men who'd walked up to the plane spoke up.

"Hey," he said, according to Guerrero. "I didn't see the kids." The man slowly realized that when they found the wreckage, they hadn't seen any children's bodies. He'd approached the plane and seen the children's bags outside. He noticed that some stuff appeared as if someone had moved it after the crash.

He was right. The bodies of three adults were recovered from inside the aircraft. But there was no sign of the children, nor any indications they were seriously injured, according to the preliminary report.

The military's special operations forces changed its strategy, based on the evidence that the children might be alive. No longer were they quietly moving through the jungle.

"We moved on, to a second phase," 1st Vice Sgt. Juan Carlos Rojas Sisa said. "We went from the stealth part to the noise part so that they could hear us."

They yelled Lesly's name and played a recorded message from the children's maternal grandmother asking them in Spanish and the language of the Huitoto people to stay in place. Helicopters dropped boxes with food and leaflets with messages. The armed forces also brought its trained dogs, including a Belgian Shepherd named Wilson who did not return to its handler and is missing.

On the ground, nearly 120 members of the military and more than 70 Indigenous people were searching for the children, day and night. They left whistles for the children to use if they found them, and marked about 6.8 miles (11 kilometers) with crime scene-like tape, hoping the children would take the markings as a sign to stay put.

They began to find clues to the children's location, including a footprint they believed to be Lesly's. But no one could find the kids.

Some searchers had already walked more than 930 miles (1,500 kilometers) — the distance between Lisbon and Paris, or Dallas and Chicago. Exhaustion was setting in, and the military implemented a plan to rotate soldiers.

Guerrero made a call and asked for the yagé. It arrived two days later.

On day 40, after Elder Rubio took the yagé, the searchers combed the rainforest again, starting from the site where they found the diapers. His vision had reignited hopes but provided no specifics on where the children might be. Groups fanned out in different directions. But as the day went on, they returned to base camp with no news.

Sadness set in at camp. Guerrero told Ranoque as teams returned: "Nothing. We couldn't ... there is nothing."

Then came the news. A soldier heard via radio that the four children had been found — 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the crash site, in a small clearing. Rescue teams had passed within 20 to 50 meters (66 to 164 feet) on several occasions but missed them.

The soldier told Guerrero, who ran to Ranoque. "They found the four," he said, through tears and hugs.

A helicopter lifted the kids out of the dense forest. They were first flown to San José del Guaviare and then to the capital, Bogota, each with a team of health care professionals. They were covered in foil blankets and hooked to IV lines due to dehydration. Their hands and feet showed scratches and insect bites.

Ranoque said Lesly reported that her mother died about four days after the crash. The children survived by collecting water in a soda bottle and eating cassava flour, fruit and seeds. They were found with two small bags holding clothes, a towel, a flashlight, two phones and a music box.

Tien and Cristin had birthdays while searchers looked for them.

All four remain in the hospital. A custody fight has broken out, with some relatives claiming Ranoque was violent against the children's mother. He has admitted to verbal and occasional physical fights, which he called "a private family matter." He's also said he's not been able to see the two oldest children.

Officials, medical professionals, special forces and others have praised Lesly's leadership. She and her siblings have become a symbol of resilience and survival across the globe. The Colombian government, meanwhile, has boasted of the cooperation among Indigenous communities and the military as it tries to



end national conflicts.

"The jungle saved them," President Gustavo Petro said. "They are children of the jungle, and now they are also children of Colombia."

That's true, Ranoque told AP, but the Indigenous culture and rituals saved them, too. He credits the yagé and the vision of the elder among their group.

"This is a spiritual world," he said, and the yagé "is of the utmost respect. It is the maximum concentration that is made in our spiritual world as an indigenous people."

That's why they drank the tea in the jungle, he said: "That was so that the goblin, that cursed devil, would release my children."

## North Korea opens key party meeting to tackle its struggling economy and talk defense strategies

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — With leader Kim Jong Un in attendance, North Korea opened a key political conference to discuss improving its struggling economy and reviewing defense strategies in the face of growing tensions with rivals, according to state media reports Saturday.

The enlarged plenary meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Committee came as the United States sent a nuclear-powered submarine to South Korea in the allies' latest show of force against the North, which has ramped up its testing of nuclear-capable missiles to a record pace in recent months.

During the first day of meetings Friday, North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said, party officials reviewed the country's economic campaigns for the first half of 2023, and discussed foreign policy and defense strategies to "cope with the changed international situation."

The agency didn't specify what was discussed or mention any comments made by Kim. It said the meeting will continue for at least another day.

The arrival Friday of the USS Michigan in the South Korean port of Busan came a day after North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into its eastern seas in response to U.S.-South Korean live-fire drills that took place near the inter-Korean border this week.

With the deployment of the USS Michigan, the U.S. and South Korean navies are planning to conduct exercises focused on sharpening their special operation and joint combat capabilities in the allies' latest combined training to cope with growing North Korean threats.

Pyongyang has condemned the allies' combined exercises as invasion rehearsals. North Korea has used the expanding U.S.-South Korean drills as a pretext to ramp up its own weapons demonstrations, including test-firing around 100 missiles since the start of 2022. Weapons tested by the North this year include a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile designed to reach the U.S. mainland, and various shorter-range weapons targeting South Korea and Japan.

Experts say Kim's aggressive weapons push has put further strain on North Korea's isolated economy, which was already damaged by decades of mismanagement, crippling U.S.-led sanctions over his nuclear weapons program, and pandemic-related border closures that reduced trade with China, its main ally and economic lifeline.

Thursday's missile firings were North Korea's first rocket activity since May 31, when a long-range rocket carrying the country's first spy satellite crashed off the Korean Peninsula's west coast.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said Friday that military search crews have salvaged what it believes is part of the crashed North Korean rocket. The debris was to be analyzed by the U.S. and South Korean militaries. The ministry released photos of the white, metal cylinder, which some experts said would have been the rocket's fuel tank.

## Hundreds flee drug cartel turf battles in rural western Mexico

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Gun battles between drug cartels forced about 700 people to flee their rural villages in the western Mexico state of Michoacan, activists and a local priest said Friday.

Rev. Jorge Armando Vázquez said dozens of people are sleeping in the nave of a parish church in the hamlet of El Rosario, on the outskirts of the city of Apatzingan. Hundreds of others are sheltering with local families, after hours-long gun battles chased them from their homes Tuesday.

Jolted awake in the pre-dawn hours by gunfire, they had to wait until daylight to flee to the town of El Rosario. Many are from towns 15 or 20 miles (25 to 35 kilometers) away.

"So many people came it surprised me," said Vázquez. "It's such a sad situation, because I think they need a lot of psychological help, but that help needs to reach them where they are."

Residents fled from several farm hamlets along Michoacan's Rio Grande, after bullets hit their homes.

"There have been a series of armed clashes in the area, and during the clashes, a lot of homes have been hit by rounds, with bullet holes in the walls," said Eduardo Pérez, an activist from Michoacan's Human Safety Observatory.

The civic group said about two-thirds of the displaced villagers are children or youths under 18.

The violence is the result of a long-running war between the Jalisco drug cartel and local gangs for control of the area. But the fighting had not previously reached so close to Apatzingan, a regional center for the area's limes, cattle and other products.

The Rio Grande river — not related to the border river — used to more or less mark the territorial divisions between the Jalisco cartel and rival local gangs variously known as the Viagras, United Cartels or Knights Templar.

But now the battles are reaching closer to Apatzingan.

Vázquez said that the evacuees had received food aid from local residents, but that what the displaced villagers want most is law enforcement, so they can return to their farms.

"It is a question of security. They say that until they put an army checkpoint or some authority there, they cannot return," he said.

The army has conducted some daylight patrols in the area but return to their bases at night, and villagers say that is not enough.

While there is a barracks of Mexico's National Guard in El Rosario, where the displaced villagers are sheltering, Vázquez said they have done little.

"They say that unless they have orders to go out (on patrol), some order, they won't," he said.

The drug cartel turf wars in Michoacan reached such a height in 2021 that Jalisco and its opponents resorted to bomb-dropping drones, sniper rifles, trenches, homemade armored cars and improvised explosive devices in their pitched battles.

The Mexican army had to send mine removal teams into an area west of Apatzingan to clear the primitive explosives.

## NCAA committee recommends dropping marijuana from banned drug list for athletes

By MICHAEL MAROT AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — An NCAA panel is calling for the removal of marijuana from the organization's list of banned drugs, suggesting that testing should be limited to performance-enhancing substances.

The proposal released Friday from the Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports would mark a big change for the NCAA, which has been conducting drug tests at championship events since 1986. Committee members recommended halting cannabis tests at such events until a final decision is made, likely this fall.

Legislation would still have to be introduced and approved by all three NCAA divisions to take effect. Administrators in Divisions II and III had asked the committee to study the issue.

The recommendation comes as the U.S. is seeing more and more states allowing medical or recreational marijuana use.

Earlier this year, the committee increased the THC threshold needed for a positive test and recommended revamped penalties for athletes. The threshold for THC — the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana — was raised from 35 to 150 nanograms per milliliter, matching that of the World Anti-Doping Agency.

The committee noted last December that marijuana and its byproducts are not considered performance-enhancing substances. Instead of focusing on penalties for cannabis use, the panel suggested stressing policies that focus on the potential threats from marijuana use and the need to reduce the harm and use of cannabis products.

It also recommended schools that test to use those results to help find “problematic” cannabis use. The committee also wants to provide schools with additional guidelines about cannabis.

Separately, the committee proposed setting a threshold of 0.1 nanograms per milliliter as a trace level for the hormone GW1516 in hopes of preventing athletes from becoming ineligible because of ingesting the substance unintentionally from contaminated supplements.

The substance was initially designed for diabetes treatment but was discontinued in 2007. It has been linked to positive doping tests in endurance-related sports.

## **Pittsburgh synagogue gunman is found guilty in the deadliest attack on Jewish people in US history**

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A truck driver who spewed hatred of Jews was convicted Friday of storming a Pittsburgh synagogue and shooting everyone he could find on a Sabbath morning, killing 11 congregants in an act of antisemitic terror for which he could be sentenced to die.

The guilty verdict was a foregone conclusion after Robert Bowers’ lawyers conceded at the trial’s outset that he attacked and killed worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue on Oct. 27, 2018, in the deadliest attack on Jews in U.S. history. Jurors must now decide whether the 50-year-old should be sent to death row or sentenced to life in prison without parole as the federal trial shifts to a penalty phase expected to last several weeks.

Bowers was convicted of all 63 criminal counts he faced, including hate crimes resulting in death and obstruction of the free exercise of religion resulting in death. His attorneys had offered a guilty plea in return for a life sentence, but prosecutors refused, opting instead to take the case to trial and pursue the death penalty. Most of the victims’ families supported that decision.

“I am grateful to God for getting us to this day,” Rabbi Jeffrey Myers of the Tree of Life Congregation, who survived the attack, said in a written statement. “And I am thankful for the law enforcement who ran into danger to rescue me, and the U.S. Attorney who stood up in court to defend my right to pray.”

The jury deliberated for about five hours over two days before reaching a verdict. Bowers, wearing a dark sweater and blue shirt, had little reaction. Several survivors and victims’ relatives were in the courtroom, bearing quiet witness. Sniffles could be heard in the gallery as the judge intoned “guilty” dozens of times.

Bowers, who had raged against Jews online and at the synagogue, turned a sacred house of worship into a “hunting ground,” targeting his victims because of their religion, a prosecutor said Thursday.

Reading each of the 11 victims’ names, prosecutor Mary Hahn asked the jury to “hold this defendant accountable ... and hold him accountable for those who cannot testify.”

All three congregations sharing the building — Dor Hadash, New Light and Tree of Life — lost members in the attack. The victims ranged in age from 54 to 97.

Congregational leaders said the trial opened new wounds but was also validating.

“We learned things that we did not know,” said Stephen Cohen, co-president of New Light. “... In that sense, it was traumatizing. But it’s also, in a sense, cathartic because you did hear what happened.”

Jo Recht, president of Dor Hadash, applauded the prosecutors’ solid case.

“They drew a picture that was even more horrific than we had imagined,” Recht said. “And the level of

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antisemitism, the level of hatred, the volume of the outrageous (social media) posts was really sobering and really frightening. So for the jury to come back so quickly with the verdict of guilty on all 63 counts was affirming, and it was a relief."

Prosecutors presented evidence of Bowers' deep-seated animosity toward Jews and immigrants. Over 11 days of testimony, jurors learned that he had extensively posted, shared or liked antisemitic and white supremacist content on Gab, a social media platform popular with the far right, and praised Hitler and the Holocaust. Bowers told police that "all these Jews need to die," Hahn said.

Jewish community members were bracing for the next stage of the trial, which would determine if Bowers is eligible for and should receive the death penalty. The penalty phase is scheduled to start June 26.

"It's just as traumatic," Cohen said. "Because now we get into learning about the shooter. In four and a half years, he has said nothing. We don't know who he is. ... There's no background, nothing other than the Gab posts. So we're going to be learning what kind of horrible human being he really is."

Bowers, who was armed with an AR-15 rifle and other weapons, also shot and wounded seven, including five responding police officers.

Survivors testified about their terror on that day, including a woman who recounted how she was shot in the arm and then realized her 97-year-old-mother had been shot and killed right next to her. Andrea Wedner, the trial's last witness, told jurors she touched her mother's lifeless body and cried out, "Mommy," before SWAT officers led her to safety.

Other survivors testified of hiding or fleeing for their lives, of making final prayers as they expected to die, of saying farewell to their slain fellow congregants. The slain were among the congregations' stalwarts, always on time for Sabbath activities, many of which they led.

Bowers' attorneys did not mount a defense at the guilt stage of the trial, signaling they will focus their efforts on trying to save his life. They plan to introduce evidence that Bowers has schizophrenia, epilepsy and brain impairments. Defense lawyer Judy Clarke had also sought to raise questions about Bowers' motive, suggesting to jurors that his rampage was not motivated by religious hatred but his delusional belief that Jews were committing genocide by helping refugees settle in the United States.

The congregations have spoken out against antisemitism and other bigotry since the attack. The Tree of Life congregation also is working on a plan to overhaul the synagogue building — which still stands but has been closed since the shootings — by creating a complex that would house a sanctuary, museum, memorial and center for fighting antisemitism.

President Joe Biden said during his 2020 campaign that he would work to end capital punishment at the federal level and in states that still use it, and Attorney General Merrick Garland has paused executions to review policies and procedures. But federal prosecutors continue to work to uphold already-issued death sentences and, in some cases, to pursue the death penalty at trial for crimes that are eligible, as in Bowers' case.

Killed were Joyce Fienberg, 75; Richard Gottfried, 65; Rose Mallinger, 97; Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, 66; brothers David Rosenthal, 54, and Cecil Rosenthal, 59; Bernice Simon, 84, and her husband, Sylvan Simon, 86; Dan Stein, 71; Melvin Wax, 87; Irving Younger, 69.

Ellen Surloff, who was Dor Hadash president at the time of the attack, said hearing the guilty verdicts was a relief.

"Fighting antisemitism was always important to my family," she said. "My mother passed away not long after the shooting. So from a personal matter, the first thought that went to my head was, I wish she could have been alive to hear the verdict, to hear this horrible, horrible monster convicted for what he did on Oct. 27."

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Associated Press reporter Michael Rubinkam in northeastern Pennsylvania contributed to this report.

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## Despite widespread protest, Reddit CEO says company is 'not negotiating' on 3rd-party app charges

BY WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — If you hopped on Reddit to scroll through your favorite forums this week, you may have encountered “private” or “restricted” messages. That’s because thousands of subreddits chose to go dark in an ongoing protest over the company’s plan to start charging certain third-party developers to access the site’s data.

But Reddit’s CEO Steve Huffman told The Associated Press he’s not backing off.

“Protest and dissent is important,” Huffman said. “The problem with this one is it’s not going to change anything because we made a business decision that we’re not negotiating on.”

Organizers of the protest say Reddit’s new policy threatens to end key ways of historically customizing the platform using an API, or application programming interface, which allows computer programs to communicate with each another. Third-party developers rely on API data to create their apps, which offer access to features that are unavailable in the official Reddit app, particularly for content moderation and accessibility aids.

But Reddit says that supporting these third-party developers is too expensive and that the new policy is necessary to become a self-sustaining business.

Reddit has more than 100,000 active subreddits, and nearly 9,000 of them went dark this week. While some returned to their public settings after 48 hours, others say they plan to stay private until Reddit meets their demands, which include lowering third-party developer charges — set to go into effect July 1 — so that popular apps don’t shut down.

As of Friday, more than 4,000 subreddits were still participating in the blackout — including communities with tens of millions of subscribers like r/music and r/videos — according to a tracker and live Twitch stream of the boycott.

Reddit notes that the vast majority of subreddit communities are still active. And while Huffman maintains that he respects users’ rights to protest, he also says that the subreddits currently participating in the blackout are “not going to stay offline indefinitely” — even if that means finding new moderators.

The company’s response to the blackout has fueled further outrage among protest organizers, who accuse Reddit of trying to remove moderators — or “mods” — of subreddits who are protesting this week. Subreddit “mods” are volunteers who often use tools outside of the official app to keep their forums free of spam and hateful content, for example, and many of them are angry with Reddit’s new fees.

“A lot of what’s going on here is ... (Reddit) burning goodwill with users. And that’s so much more expensive than trying to collaborate,” said Omar, a moderator of a subreddit participating in this week’s blackout who asked not to be identified by their full name due to safety concerns that have come up while moderating their subreddit.

Reddit denies that it is removing moderators for protesting, asserting that it is simply enforcing its code of conduct.

“If mods abandon a community, we find new mods. If mods keep private a large community with folks who want to engage, we find new mods who want to reinvigorate it,” the company said in an email. “The rules that allow us to do this are not new and were not developed to limit protests.”

Most people visiting Reddit probably don’t think about APIs but access to these third-party resources is critical for moderators to do their jobs, experts note.

“Reddit is built on volunteer moderation labor, including the creation and maintenance of many tools,” said Sarah Gilbert, postdoctoral associate at Cornell University and Citizens and Technology Lab research manager, in a statement. “Without Reddit’s volunteer moderators, the site could likely see less helpful content, and more spam, misinformation and hate.”

Reddit has pushed back on some of these concerns, saying that 93% of moderator actions are currently taken through desktop and native Reddit apps.

Huffman and Reddit management also note that the new fees will only apply to eligible third-party apps that require high usage limits. According to Thursday metrics published by the company, 98% of apps will continue to have free access to the Data API as long as they're not monetized and remain below Reddit's data-usage threshold.

The company has also promised that moderator tools and bots will continue to have free access to the Data API and has made agreements with some non-commercial, accessibility-focused apps to exempt them from new fees.

Still, some moderators say they rely on popular apps that are shutting down over the new costs. Apollo and Reddit Is Fun, for example, have already announced plans to shutter at the end of June. Apollo developer Christian Selig estimated fees would total about \$20 million a year.

Huffman has pushed back on that estimate and Reddit argues that the upcoming fees for high usage third-party apps — which stand at a rate of 24 cents for 1,000 API calls — is reasonable.

With more than 500 million active monthly users globally, Reddit is one of the internet's top sites. It's hard to anticipate the total amount of money Reddit will save — and earn — after implementing the new fees. But Huffman says the "pure infrastructure costs" of supporting these apps costs Reddit about \$10 million each year.

"We can't subsidize other people's businesses," Huffman said. "We didn't ban third-party apps — we said, 'You need to cover your costs.'"

Reddit's changes to its API coincide with the San Francisco-based company's reported plans to go public later this year. While Huffman couldn't directly address the rumored initial public offering, he underlined the need for Reddit to become self-sustaining.

"I think every business has a duty to become profitable eventually — for our employees shareholders, for our investors shareholders and, one day as a public company, hopefully our user shareholders as well," said Huffman, who co-founded the site in 2005.

Reddit first filed for an IPO in 2021, but paused its plans amid a plunge in tech stocks. With eyes on the possibility of a renewed IPO for the second half of 2023, finance experts speculate that the company may be trying to display increased revenue and profitability to investors.

"My guess is that they feel strong pressure in advance of the IPO to show that they can generate revenue from other sources," Luke Stein, a finance professor at Babson College, told The Associated Press, noting that monetizing API could create another avenue for revenue streams, rather than relying on advertising and new users as Reddit has done in the past.

Experts also pointed to the significance of Reddit showing a way to charge AI companies that have historically used Reddit data at no cost to develop large-scale and for-profit AI models.

Still, the IPO is uncertain and the API changes could have consequences as well.

"If they actually manage to make the changes stick, (they could) increase their revenue," said James Angel, an associated professor at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business. "On the other hand, if they alienate their best users, it could cause issues down the road, especially if those users decide to move to other platforms."

## Federal judge blocks much of Indiana's ban on gender-affirming care for minors

By TOM DAVIES Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A federal judge issued an order Friday stopping an Indiana ban on puberty blockers and hormones for transgender minors from taking effect as scheduled July 1.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana sought the temporary injunction in its legal challenge of the Republican-backed law, which was enacted this spring amid a national push by GOP-led legislatures to curb LGBTQ+ rights.

The order from U.S. District Court Judge James Patrick Hanlon will allow the law's prohibition on gender-affirming surgeries to take effect. Hanlon's order also blocks provisions that would prohibit Indiana doctors

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from communicating with out-of-state doctors about gender-affirming care for their patients younger than 18.

The ACLU filed the lawsuit within hours after Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb signed the bill April 5. The challenge, on behalf of four youths undergoing transgender treatments and an Indiana doctor who provides such care, argued the ban would violate the U.S. Constitution's equal protection guarantees and trampled upon the rights of parents to decide medical treatment for their children.

Indiana's Republican-dominated Legislature approved the ban after contentious hearings that primarily featured testimony from vocal opponents, with many arguing the gender-affirming care lessened the risk of depression and suicide among transgender youth.

Indiana's Republican-dominated Legislature approved the ban after contentious hearings that primarily featured testimony from vocal opponents, with many arguing the gender-affirming care lessened the risk of depression and suicide among young people diagnosed with "gender dysphoria," or distress caused when gender identity doesn't match a person's assigned sex.

Hanlon, who was appointed by former President Donald Trump, wrote that he was blocking the law from taking effect because its opponents had demonstrated potential irreparable harm to those undergoing treatment and shown "some likelihood of success" in arguments that it was unconstitutional.

The ACLU had provided "evidence of risks to minors' health and wellbeing from gender dysphoria if those treatments can no longer be provided to minors — prolonging of their dysphoria, and causing additional distress and health risks, such as depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and suicidality," Hanlon said. "While the State has identified legitimate reasons for regulation in this area, the designated evidence does not demonstrate, at least at this stage, that the extent of its regulation was closely tailored to uphold those interests."

ACLU leaders hailed the ruling as a victory in the fight "to defend the right of all trans people to be their authentic selves, free from discrimination."

"We won't rest until this unconstitutional law is struck down for good," Ken Falk, the ACLU of Indiana's legal director, said in a statement.

At least 20 GOP-led states have now enacted laws restricting or banning such medical treatments for transgender minors after Missouri's governor signed that state's bill into law last week. Lawsuits have been filed in several states against transgender treatment bans. Federal judges have also blocked enforcement of laws in Alabama and Arkansas, and Oklahoma has agreed to not enforce its ban while opponents seek a temporary court order blocking it.

Indiana bill sponsor Republican Rep. Joanna King of Middlebury said as the ban was debated that it would "protect our children from irreversible, harmful, life-altering procedures."

Republican state Attorney General Todd Rokita's office said in a statement it was disappointed in the decision but that "we will continue to fight for the children." The statement said the ruling "recognizes that the State has shown there are good reasons for regulating gender transition procedures for minors."

The office didn't say whether it would attempt to appeal the injunction before July 1. Provisions of the law that were blocked gave trans youth taking medication to transition until Dec. 31 to stop.

A top attorney for the state told Hanlon during a court hearing on Wednesday that risks from gender-affirming treatments during puberty such as future fertility, bone strength, brain development and possible reversibility had not been adequately studied by scientists.

Such factors make it within the Legislature's authority to decide "we don't want our children to be part of this grand experiment," Indiana Solicitor General Thomas Fisher said.

Though guidelines from leading authorities on gender-affirming medical care already say surgery generally should be reserved for adults, with exceptions for older teens who meet certain criteria, the Indiana law calls for an immediate ban gender-affirming surgeries.

The provisions of the law banning gender-affirming surgeries for minors in Indiana will have no immediate impact. Hanlon wrote in his ruling that no medical providers in the state perform those procedures on people younger than 18.

Representatives from Indiana University Health Riley Children's Hospital, the state's sole hospital-based gender health program, told legislators earlier this year that for patients who are minors, doctors do not perform genital surgeries or provide those surgery referrals. IU Health was not involved in the ACLU's lawsuit.

## George Floyd's killing capped years of violence, discrimination by Minneapolis police, DOJ says

By JIM SALTER and MARK VANCLEAVE Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Justice Department on Friday issued a withering critique of Minneapolis police, alleging that they systematically discriminated against racial minorities, violated constitutional rights and disregarded the safety of people in custody for years before George Floyd was killed.

The report was the result of a sweeping two-year probe, and it confirmed many of the citizen complaints about police conduct that emerged after Floyd's death. The investigation found that Minneapolis officers used excessive force, including "unjustified deadly force," and violated the rights of people engaged in constitutionally protected speech.

The inquiry also concluded that both police and the city discriminated against Black and Native American people and those with "behavioral health disabilities."

"We observed many MPD officers who did their difficult work with professionalism, courage and respect," Attorney General Merrick Garland told a news conference in Minneapolis. "But the patterns and practices we observed made what happened to George Floyd possible."

Garland said officers routinely neglected the safety of people in custody, noting numerous examples in which someone complained that they could not breathe, only to have officers reply with a version of "You can breathe. You're talking right now."

The officers involved in Floyd's May 25, 2020, arrest made similar comments.

Police "used dangerous techniques and weapons against people who committed at most a petty offense and sometimes no offense at all," the report said. Officers "used force to punish people who made officers angry or criticized the police."

Police also "patrolled neighborhoods differently based on their racial composition and discriminated based on race when searching, handcuffing or using force against people during stops," according to the report.

As a result of the investigation, the city and the police department agreed to a deal known as a consent decree, which will require reforms to be overseen by an independent monitor and approved by a federal judge. That arrangement is similar to reform efforts in Seattle, New Orleans, Baltimore, Chicago and Ferguson, Missouri.

Consent decrees require agencies to meet specific goals before federal oversight is removed, a process that often takes many years and requires millions of dollars.

Terrence Floyd, a younger brother of George Floyd, praised the Justice Department for its review.

"That's how you solve and stop what's going on with law enforcement," said Floyd, who is based in Brooklyn, New York.

Police Chief Brian O'Hara, who was hired last year to oversee reforms in the aftermath of Floyd's killing, said his agency was committed to creating "the kind of police department that every Minneapolis resident deserves."

Mayor Jacob Frey acknowledged the work ahead.

"We understand that change is non-negotiable," Frey said. "Progress can be painful, and the obstacles can be great. But we haven't let up in the three years since the murder of George Floyd."

The scathing report reflected Garland's efforts to prioritize civil rights and policing nationwide. Similar investigations of police departments have been undertaken in Louisville, Phoenix and Memphis, among other cities.

The Minneapolis investigation was launched in April 2021, a day after former officer Derek Chauvin, who is white, was convicted of murder and manslaughter in the killing of Floyd, who was Black.



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During their encounter, Floyd repeatedly said he couldn't breathe before going limp as Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for 9 1/2 minutes. The killing was recorded by a bystander and sparked months of mass protests as part of a broader national reckoning over racial injustice.

The Justice Department reviewed police practices dating back to 2016, and found that officers sometimes shot at people without determining whether there was an immediate threat.

Officers also used neck restraints like the one Chauvin used on Floyd nearly 200 times from Jan. 1, 2016 to Aug. 16, 2022, including 44 instances that did not require an arrest. Some officers continued to use neck restraints after they were banned following Floyd's killing, the report said.

The investigation found that Black drivers in Minneapolis are 6.5 times more likely to be stopped than whites, and Native American drivers are 7.9 times more likely to be pulled over. And police often retaliated against protesters and journalists covering protests, the report said.

The city sent officers to behavioral health-related 911 calls, "even when a law enforcement response was not appropriate or necessary, sometimes with tragic results," according to the report.

The findings were based on reviews of documents, body camera videos, data provided by the city and police, and rides and conversations with officers, residents and others, the report said.

President Joe Biden called the conclusions "disturbing" and said in a written statement that they "underscore the urgent need for Congress to pass common sense reforms that increase public trust, combat racial discrimination and thereby strengthen public safety."

Some changes have already been made.

The report noted that police are now prohibited from using neck restraints like the one that killed Floyd. Officers are no longer allowed to use some crowd control weapons without permission from the chief. "No-knock" warrants were banned after the 2022 death of Amir Locke.

The city has also launched a program in which trained mental health professionals respond to some calls rather than police.

Keisha Deonarine, director of opportunity, race and justice for the NAACP, applauded the Justice Department for holding police accountable but said much work remains, and not just in Minneapolis.

"This is a constant issue across the nation," Deonarine said. "When you look at the police system, it's a militarized system. It is absolutely not used, utilized or trained in the way that it should be."

The Justice Department is not alone in uncovering problems.

A similar investigation by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights found "significant racial disparities with respect to officers' use of force, traffic stops, searches, citations, and arrests." It criticized "an organizational culture where some officers and supervisors use racist, misogynistic and disrespectful language with impunity."

The federal report recommends 28 "remedial" steps to improve policing as a prelude to the consent decree. Garland said the steps "provide a starting framework to improve public safety, build community trust and comply with the constitution and federal law."

The mayor said city leaders want a single monitor to oversee both the federal plan and the state agreement to avoid having "two different determinations of whether compliance has been met or not. That's not a way to get to clear and objective success."

Floyd, 46, was arrested on suspicion of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill for a pack of cigarettes at a corner market. He struggled with police when they tried to put him in a squad car, and though he was already handcuffed, they forced him on the ground.

Chauvin was sentenced to 22 1/2 years for murder. He also pleaded guilty to a federal charge of violating Floyd's civil rights and was sentenced to 21 years in that case. He is serving those sentences in Tucson, Arizona.

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Salter reported from O'Fallon, Missouri. Associated Press writers Lindsay Whitehurst in Washington, Aaron Morrison in New York and Summer Ballentine in Columbia, Missouri, contributed to this report.

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Find AP's full coverage of the killing of George Floyd at: <https://apnews.com/hub/death-of-george-floyd>

## Vietnam-era whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked Pentagon Papers, dies at 92

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Daniel Ellsberg, the history-making whistleblower who by leaking the Pentagon Papers revealed longtime government doubts and deceit about the Vietnam War and inspired acts of retaliation by President Richard Nixon that helped lead to his resignation, has died. He was 92.

Ellsberg, whose actions led to a landmark First Amendment ruling by the Supreme Court, had disclosed in February that he was terminally ill with pancreatic cancer. His family announced his death Friday morning in a letter released by a spokeswoman, Julia Pacetti.

"He was not in pain, and was surrounded by loving family," the letter reads in part. "Thank you, everyone, for your outpouring of love, appreciation and well-wishes to Dan in the previous months. It all warmed his heart at the end of his life."

Until the early 1970s, when he disclosed that he was the source for the stunning media reports on the 47-volume, 7,000-page Defense Department study of the U.S. role in Indochina, Ellsberg was a well-placed member of the government-military elite. He was a Harvard graduate and self-defined "cold warrior" who served as a private and government consultant on Vietnam throughout the 1960s, risked his life on the battlefield, received the highest security clearances and came to be trusted by officials in Democratic and Republican administrations.

He was especially valued, he would later note, for his "talent for discretion."

But like millions of other Americans, in and out of government, he had turned against the yearslong war in Vietnam, the government's claims that the battle was winnable and that a victory for the North Vietnamese over the U.S.-backed South would lead to the spread of communism throughout the region. Unlike so many other war opponents, he was in a special position to make a difference.

"An entire generation of Vietnam-era insiders had become just as disillusioned as I with a war they saw as hopeless and interminable," he wrote in his 2002 memoir, "Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers." "By 1968, if not earlier, they all wanted, as I did, to see us out of this war."

The Pentagon Papers had been commissioned in 1967 by then-Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, a leading public advocate of the war who wanted to leave behind a comprehensive history of the U.S. and Vietnam and to help his successors avoid the kinds of mistakes he would only admit to long after. The papers covered more than 20 years, from France's failed efforts at colonization in the 1940s and 1950s to the growing involvement of the U.S., including the bombing raids and deployment of hundreds of thousands of ground troops during Lyndon Johnson's administration. Ellsberg was among those asked to work on the study, focusing on 1961, when the newly-elected President John F. Kennedy began adding advisers and support units.

As much as anyone, Ellsberg embodied the individual of conscience — who answered only to his sense of right and wrong, even if the price was his own freedom. David Halberstam, the late author and Vietnam War correspondent who had known Ellsberg since both were posted overseas, would describe him as no ordinary convert. He was highly intelligent, obsessively curious and profoundly sensitive, a born proselytizer who "saw political events in terms of moral absolutes" and demanded consequences for abuses of power.

As much as anyone, Ellsberg also embodied the fall of American idealism in foreign policy in the 1960s and 1970s and the upending of the post-World War II consensus that Communism, real or suspected, should be opposed worldwide.

The Pentagon Papers were first published in The New York Times in June 1971, with The Washington Post, The Associated Press and more than a dozen others following. They documented that the U.S. had defied a 1954 settlement barring a foreign military presence in Vietnam, questioned whether South Vietnam had a viable government, secretly expanded the war to neighboring countries and had plotted to send American soldiers even as Johnson vowed he wouldn't.

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The Johnson administration had dramatically and covertly escalated the war despite the "judgment of the Government's intelligence community that the measures would not" weaken the North Vietnamese, wrote the Times' Neil Sheehan, a former Vietnam correspondent who later wrote a Pulitzer Prize winning book on the war, "A Bright Shining Lie."

The leaker's identity became a national guessing game and Ellsberg proved an obvious suspect, because of his access to the papers and his public condemnation of the war over the previous two years. With the FBI in pursuit, Ellsberg turned himself in to authorities in Boston, became a hero to the antiwar movement and a traitor to the war's supporters, labeled the "most dangerous man in America" by National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, with whom Ellsberg had once been friendly.

The papers themselves were seen by many as an indictment not just of a given president or party, but of a generation of political leadership. The historian and philosopher Hannah Arendt would note that growing mistrust of the government during the Vietnam era, "the credibility gap," had "opened into an abyss."

"The quicksand of lying statements of all sorts, deceptions as well as self-deceptions, is apt to engulf any reader who wishes to probe this material, which, unhappily, he must recognize as the infrastructure of nearly a decade of United States foreign and domestic policy," she wrote.

The Nixon administration quickly tried to block further publication on the grounds that the papers would compromise national security, but the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6-3 in favor of the newspapers on June 30, 1971, a major First Amendment ruling rejecting prior restraint. Nixon himself, initially unconcerned because the papers predated his time in office, was determined to punish Ellsberg and formed a renegade team of White House "plumbers," endowed with a stash of White House "hush money" and the mission of preventing future leaks.

"You can't drop it," Nixon fumed privately to his chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman. "You can't let the Jew steal that stuff and get away with it. You understand?"

Ellsberg faced trials in Boston and Los Angeles on federal charges for espionage and theft, with a possible sentence of more than 100 years. He had expected to go to jail, but was spared, in part, by Nixon's rage and the excesses of those around him. The Boston case ended in a mistrial because the government wiretapped conversations between a defense witness and his attorney. Charges in the Los Angeles trial were dismissed after Judge Matthew Byrne learned that White House "plumbers" G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt had burglarized the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist in Beverly Hills, California.

Byrne ruled that "the bizarre events have incurably infected the prosecution of this case."

Meanwhile, the "plumbers" continued their crime wave, notably the June 1972 break-in of the Democratic Party's national headquarters, at the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C. The Watergate scandal didn't prevent Nixon from a landslide reelection in 1972, but would expand rapidly during his second term and culminate in his resignation in August 1974. U.S. combat troops had already left Vietnam and the North Vietnamese captured the Southern capital, Saigon, in April 1975.

"Without Nixon's obsession with me, he would have stayed in office," Ellsberg told The Associated Press in 1999. "And had he not been removed from office, he would have continued the bombing (in Vietnam)."

Ellsberg's story was depicted in the 2009 documentary "The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers." The movie had its West Coast premiere only a few blocks from the Rand Corp. headquarters in Santa Monica, Ellsberg former workplace. He sent college students with fliers to urge old colleagues to attend the screening, but none attended.

Ellsberg was born in Chicago in 1931, to Jewish parents who converted to Christian Science. His father was an unemployed engineer in the early years of the Great Depression and the family later moved to suburban Detroit, where his father worked in a plant making B-24 bombers. Daniel held vivid memories of learning that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941, and of reports of the Nazis bombing London and the U.S. bombing Germany and Japan.

In his teens, Ellsberg found himself in agreement with Harry Truman and other "Cold War liberals," believing in civil rights and economic justice at home, and containing the Soviet Union overseas. He was also shaped profoundly by personal tragedy. During a car trip in 1946, his father nodded off at the wheel and

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crashed into a sidewall, killing Ellsberg's mother and younger sister. Ellsberg would look back with a sense of loss and mistrust — his father, the authority figure, had failed to keep his family safe.

With thoughts of becoming a labor organizer, Ellsberg won a scholarship to Harvard University and graduated summa cum laude. He served in the Marines as an act of defiance against his Ivy League background, but eventually returned to Harvard and earned a doctorate in economics. In 1959, he became a strategic analyst at the Rand Corp., a global policy think tank based in Santa Monica, California, and consulted for the Defense Department and the White House on nuclear weapons, nuclear war plans and crisis decision-making. Ellsberg spent two years in the mid-1960s with the State Department in Vietnam, where he learned first-hand how casually military and political officials lied and became convinced the conflict was unwinnable, in part through the firefights with the North Vietnamese that he survived.

Encouraged by a close friend from Rand, researcher Anthony J. Russo, Ellsberg had decided by the fall of 1969 that the Nixon administration would continue the policies of other presidents and that the McNamara study needed to be seen. His life would soon resemble an espionage thriller.

Ellsberg removed some of the bound, classified volumes from his safe in the Rand offices, placed them in his briefcase and walked past security guards and a sign reading "Loose Lips Sink Ships." With Russo's girlfriend owning an advertising agency, Ellsberg spent months copying the documents on an office Xerox machine, sometimes helped by his teenage son Robert. On occasion, the office alarm would mistakenly ring, police would show up, and leave soon after. Ellsberg became so worried that he began slicing off the "Top Secret" markings from the papers, in case authorities wanted to inspect more closely.

Leaking to the Times was not his first choice. He had hoped that government officials, including Kissinger, would read the study and realize the war was hopeless. Legislators turning him down included Sen. William J. Fulbright of Arkansas, the longtime chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Sen. George McGovern of South Dakota, who in 1972 would run for president as an antiwar candidate.

A final plot twist was unknown to Ellsberg until decades later. He had showed some of the report to Marcus Raskin and Ralph Stavins of the liberal think tank the Institute for Policy Studies before approaching Sheehan. Only in the early 2000s did he learn that Raskin and Stavins, who had recommended that he speak with Sheehan, had already given some of the papers to the Times reporter. Sheehan, who died in 2021, also defied Ellsberg's request not to make duplicate copies and did not give him advance notice before the first Times report ran.

"It was just luck that he didn't get the whistle blown on the whole damn thing," Sheehan later said of Ellsberg, whom he regarded as "out of control."

In his later years, a spry, silver-haired Ellsberg became a prominent free speech and anti-Iraq war activist, drawing parallels between U.S. involvement in Iraq and Vietnam, and called for impeachment of President George W. Bush. He expressed similar fears about Afghanistan during the Obama administration, saying it had the potential to become "Vietnamistan" if the U.S. increased troops there.

He was active in campaigns to prevent nuclear arms proliferation and drew upon his history in government for the 2017 book "The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner," in which he included a once-top secret document showing that the U.S. had considered launching nuclear attacks on the Chinese in 1958. He also defended other leakers and whistleblowers, among them WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden, the government contractor who disclosed details of secret U.S. surveillance programs and is now living in Russia.

"Many of the people whistle-blowers work with know the same things and actually regard the information in the same way — that it's wrong — but they keep their mouths shut," Ellsberg told The New York Times in 2023.

On Friday, Snowden tweeted that he had spoken with Ellsberg last month and found him more concerned about the world's fate than about his own.

"He assessed the risk of a nuclear exchange to be escalating beyond 10%," Snowden wrote. "He had hoped to dedicate his final hours to reducing it, for all those he would leave behind. A hero to the end."

Ellsberg is survived by his second wife, the journalist Patricia Marx, and three children, two from his first marriage. He and Marx wedded in 1970, the year before the Pentagon Papers were made public. In a New

York Times wedding announcement, he was identified as a "senior research fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for International Studies, where he was writing a critical study of United States involvement in Vietnam."

Associated Press reporters Eric Tucker and Nomaan Merchant in Washington, D.C., contributed to this story, which includes biographical material compiled by former AP reporter Louise Chu.

Online:

<http://www.ellsberg.net>

## **The Reddit blackout, explained: Why thousands of subreddits are protesting third-party app charges**

BY WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands of Reddit discussion forums have gone dark this week to protest a new policy that will charge some third-party apps to access data on the site, leading to worries about content moderation and accessibility.

"Reddit is killing third-party applications (and itself)," multiple subreddits wrote in posts seen on the platform's homepage this week.

The new fees are part of broader changes to Reddit's API, or application programming interface, that the company announced recently.

Organizers of the blackout, which began Monday, say Reddit's changes threaten to end key ways of historically customizing the platform — which relies heavily on the work of volunteer moderators. Subreddit "mods" often use tools outside of the official app to keep their forums free of spam and hateful content, for example, as well as improve accessibility.

Nearly 9,000 subreddits went dark this week and more than 4,000 remained dark on Friday, including communities with tens of millions of subscribers like r/music and r/videos — according to a tracker of the boycott. While some returned to their public settings after 48 hours, others say they will stay private indefinitely, until Reddit meets their demands.

But Reddit, a subsidiary of New York-based Advance Publications, is not changing course. CEO Steve Huffman says that supporting high-usage third-party developers to access its data is too expensive. The company also notes that the new fees will only apply to eligible apps that require high usage limits, and the majority of API users will not have to pay for access.

Here's what you need to know.

**WHAT IS API? AND HOW IS REDDIT CHANGING ACCESS TO THIRD-PARTY APPS?**

In short, an API allows computer programs to communicate with each other. Third parties have used Reddit's free API access in the past, for example, to request data and build apps that work with the platform.

But Reddit announced it would be changing its API access policies earlier this year. Starting July 1, Reddit plans to charge third-party apps requiring higher usage limits.

"Running a product like reddit is expensive," Huffman told The Associated Press, pointing to the millions of dollars Reddit spends on supporting high-usage, third-party apps. "I would like to be a self-sustaining company — it means we're defensible.... and it that we can endure into the future. So that's what we're working towards."

Not all third-party apps will be charged, as the policy is based on usage levels, and some noncommercial, accessibility-focused apps can also continue with free access, the company said. Reddit also noted that API access will remain free for moderator tools and bots.

**WHY ARE SUBREDDITS PROTESTING THIS CHANGE?**

Reddit's API changes have caused outrage — as many Redditors say they are concerned about losing long-used third-party resources. Popular third party apps, including Apollo and Reddit Is Fun, have already announced plans to shut down at the end of the month due to costs of the API changes — with Apollo

developer Christian Selig estimating fees would total about \$20 million a year.

Reddit's backbone of volunteer moderators who rely on these and similar apps will likely feel the brunt of the impacts, experts note.

"While Reddit has promised that moderation tools will not be affected by changes to the API, many moderators rely on third party apps and access to data archives to effectively do their work," Sarah Gilbert, postdoctoral associate at Cornell University and Citizens and Technology Lab research manager, said in a statement — later pointing to how risks of moderator burnout and essential retention.

Gilbert added that API access helps moderators keep communities safe and "more quickly respond to spam, bigotry, and harassment." Third-party apps are also important for screen readers, she said, as the official Reddit app is not accessible for people who are visually impaired.

**WHEN WILL THE REDDIT BLACKOUT END?**

Some subreddits participating in this week's blackout returned to Reddit in 48 hours, but others say their protest isn't over.

Numerous subreddits have signaled that they planned to stay private until Reddit meets their demands — which include lowering the API charges for high usage, third-party developers so that popular apps can stay alive.

But Huffman said he is holding firm. He also said that the subreddits currently participating in the blackout are "not going to stay offline indefinitely" — even if that means finding new moderators.

The company's response to the blackout has fueled further outrage among protest organizers.

"We continue to ask reddit to place these changes on pause and explore a real path forward that strikes a balance that is best for the widest range of reddit users," read a Thursday night post on subreddit dedicated to moderator coordination.

Beyond Reddit, Twitter ended free API access earlier this year, in a move that also sparked outrage.

## Homophobic chants force US-Mexico soccer match to end early in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The United States men's match against Mexico was cut short Thursday night by the referee after the stadium devolved into echoes of homophobic chants from Mexican soccer fans, who for years have directed a slur at opposing teams' goalkeepers.

Officials have been trying to stamp out the troubling tradition for just as long, with fines, banishment from stadiums, and now early finishes.

Play was halted because of the deafening noise in the 90th minute at Allegiant Stadium with the U.S. up three goals. When action resumed, 12 minutes of stoppage time were signaled but the persistent chanting caused Salvadoran referee Iván Barton to end the match in the eighth added minute.

Four players were ejected in a testy second half of the game, which the U.S. won 3-0 for a spot Sunday in the CONCACAF Nations League final against Canada.

Christian Pulisic scored two goals and Ricardo Pepi scored one in a strong showing, but this game will be remembered much more for the ugliness.

"In terms of the chant, I want to make it very clear first and foremost, for our beliefs and our culture, it has no place in the game," B.J. Callaghan said after his first game as U.S. interim coach. "It has no place in our value system."

FIFA fined Mexico 100,000 Swiss francs (\$108,000) in January for anti-gay chants by fans at two games. That came after the sport's governing body banned fans from two of Mexico's games in 2021 after the chants broke out at an Olympic qualifying tournament.

FIFA also fined Mexico 60,000 Swiss francs (\$65,000) in 2021 for the chants.

Before the stoppage of play, Americans Weston McKennie and Sergiño Dest were ejected by Barton along with Mexicans César Montes and Gerardo Arteaga.

That means McKennie and Dest are suspended for the final against Canada.

"These are rivalry games. These are derby games. Things like this happen across the world and in no

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way am I embarrassed," Callaghan said about the ejections. "It comes from a good place. They care about each other so much in that locker room that they're standing up for each other. Sometimes does it have an issue where we take a red card? Yeah, but when you know where it comes from, you can accept it and it's a learning lesson for us.

As Callaghan coached the game on an interim basis, news broke that Gregg Berhalter had agreed to return as U.S. national team coach after being cleared in a domestic violence investigation. The U.S. Soccer Federation announced Friday that Berhalter will coach the team through the 2026 World Cup. He won't take over until after CONCACAF Gold Cup.

Pulisic, the top American player, said last week the USSF should consider bringing Berhalter back.

Luca de la Torre and Joe Scally are possible replacements for McKennie and Dest in the final.

"It's definitely a blow," Tim Weah said. "It comes with the game. I know the red cards are definitely a bummer, but it happens. Aggressive match tonight."

Striker Folarin Balogun made his debut after the 21-year-old decided to play for the U.S. over England and Nigeria.

"The boys told me it was going to be intense, but I'm definitely still shocked by the events," said Balogun, who at one point was shoved to the field. "I was just on the floor because I was in pain, but when I looked up I just saw so many people around and I knew my teammates were just trying to defend me."

Making his first start for club or country since April 15, Pulisic put the U.S. ahead in the 37th minute and doubled the lead in the 46th. He has 25 goals in 59 international appearances, including four goals against Mexico. Pepi scored in the 79th, five minutes after replacing Bologun.

With its first three-goal victory over Mexico in 23 years, the U.S. stretched its unbeaten streak against El Tri to six (four wins, two draws), matching the Americans' longest, from 2011-15.

The U.S. went ahead when Gio Reyna poked the ball off Montes and then while prone, poked it forward off Jorge Sánchez. Pulisic burst behind the defenders, took a pair of touches and from the edge of the 6-yard box slotted the ball past goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa.

McKennie started the move toward the second goal with a long pass down a flank to Weah, who crossed. A sprinting Pulisic got behind Israel Reyes and Sánchez, stabbing the ball in with his left foot from 6 yards.

Montes was given a straight red card in the 69th for kicking Balogun while the two were challenging. McKennie was given a red card two minutes later for placing a hand on Sánchez's neck during the ensuing arguing and shoving.

Pepi scored his seventh international goal, receiving a pass from Dest, taking a touch and rounding Ochoa. Dest and Arteaga were sent off in the 86th for shoving each other.

"There was moments on both teams that we could have handled better," Callaghan said.

Notes: Reyna, his hair dyed blonde, made his first start for club or country since March 27, also the last time Dest and goalkeeper Matt Turner had appeared in any match. ... Canada beat Panama 2-0 in the opener on goals by Jonathan David in the 25th and Alphonso Davies in the 69th. Mexico and Panama meet in the third-place match.

AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## University of Colorado football coach Deion Sanders might have to have his left foot amputated

Deion Sanders might lose his left foot as a result of circulation issues that forced him to have two toes amputated in 2021.

Sanders allowed camera crews with "The Pregame Show" to film a meeting with his medical team at the University of Colorado, where he's preparing for his first season as head football coach.

In an 11-minute segment released Friday on YouTube, Sanders met with orthopedic surgeon Dr. Ken Hunt, vascular surgeons Dr. Donald Jacobs and Dr. Max Wohlauer and athletic trainer Lauren Askevold to discuss his daily pain levels and possible next steps.

"You just have to understand what the risks are. Things can cascade," Jacobs said, adding that Sanders

might not just lose another toe but "he could lose the foot."

"Well, I know what risks are," Sanders replied. "I only have eight toes. So, I'm pretty sure I understand."

Sanders said he has no feeling on the bottom of his left foot and said if a procedure is recommended he wants to get it done right away because once the season starts he'll too busy.

"I want to do it this summer because when we get rolling, I'm not going to have time to do it," Sanders said. "This is the best downtime I have."

Sanders missed three games at Jackson State in 2021 after having two toes amputated during the season.

Sanders took over the downtrodden Buffaloes program in December following Colorado's 1-11 season in 2022. His hiring has led to a resurgence of interest in the program that's had just two winning seasons since 2016, one of those was a 4-2 mark during the pandemic season of 2020.

The Buffs sold out their spring game in April and has sold out its season ticket allotment for the first time in nearly three decades. Colorado opens at TCU on Sept. 2 and hosts former Big 12 rival Nebraska a week later at Folsom Field.

AP college football: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-football> and [https://twitter.com/ap\\_top25](https://twitter.com/ap_top25)

## **Greek coast guard defends actions as more than 500 migrants heading for Europe feared dead in wreck**

By DEREK GATOPOULOS and NICHOLAS PAPHITIS Associated Press give

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — The Greek coast guard on Friday defended its response to a ship that went down off the country's south coast and left more than 500 migrants presumed drowned. Criticism mounted over Europe's yearslong failure to prevent such tragedies.

Patrol boats and a helicopter spent a third day scouring the area of the Mediterranean Sea where the packed fishing vessel capsized early Wednesday, in what the U.N. migration agency said could be the second deadliest migrant shipwreck recorded. The deadliest occurred when a vessel capsized off the coast of Libya en route to Italy in April 2015, killing an estimated 1,100 people.

Greek coast guard spokesman Nikos Alexiou said that both coast guard and private ships repeatedly offered by radio and loudspeaker to help the vessel Wednesday while it was in international waters, also heading from Libya to Italy, but they were rejected.

Alexiou argued that any effort to tow the overcrowded trawler or move hundreds of unwilling people onto nearby ships would have been too dangerous.

"You will have a disturbance, and the people will surge — which, unfortunately is what happened in the end," Alexiou told state-run ERT TV. "You will have caused the accident."

Alexiou also said that, after accepting food from a merchant ship, the trawler's passengers rejected a rope bringing more from a second merchant ship "because they thought the whole process was a way for us to take them to Greece."

Greek authorities sent the first ship, the tanker Lucky Sailor, to give the migrants food and water. The company managing the tanker said Friday that the people on board "were very hesitant to receive any assistance, and at any attempt of approach the boat started to maneuver away."

Eastern Mediterranean Maritime Limited said in a statement that the people on the trawler were eventually persuaded to accept supplies.

Experts said maritime law obligated Greek authorities to attempt a rescue.

They definitely "had a duty to start rescue procedures" given the condition of the vessel, said Professor Erik Røsæg of the University of Oslo's Institute of Private Law. He said a refusal of assistance can be overruled if deemed unreasonable, as it appeared to have been on Wednesday.

Flavio Di Giacomo of the Mediterranean office of the U.N. migration agency IOM tweeted that all migrant boats should be considered dangerous and rescued immediately because "even when they appear to have no problems, in a few minutes they can sink."



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Rescuers pulled 104 survivors from the water and later recovered 78 bodies but have not located any more since late Wednesday. The Greek coast guard said the search-and-rescue operation would continue beyond the standard 72 hours.

The U.N.'s migration and refugee agencies issued a joint statement calling timely maritime search and rescues "a legal and humanitarian imperative" and calling for "urgent and decisive action to prevent further deaths at sea."

A group of nongovernmental organizations, including Amnesty International and Doctors Without Borders, said the EU should "stop seeing solutions solely in the dismantling" of smuggling networks, and set up state-led search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean.

"The Greek government had specific responsibilities toward every passenger on the vessel, which was clearly in distress," Adriana Tidona of Amnesty International said. "This is a tragedy of unimaginable proportions, all the more so because it was entirely preventable."

Greece and other southern EU nations that typically are the first destinations for Europe-bound asylum-seekers traveling by sea have toughened border protection measures in recent years, extending walls and intensifying maritime patrols.

"This is a European problem. I think it's time for Europe to be able, in solidarity, to define an effective migration policy for these kinds of situations not to happen again," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said during a news conference at U.N. headquarters in New York late Thursday.

The EU's executive commission says the 27-nation bloc is close to an agreement on how member countries can share responsibility in caring for migrants and refugees who undertake the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean.

A judicial investigation is also underway into the causes of the sinking. Greek officials say the vessel capsized minutes after it lost power, speculating that panic among the passengers may have caused the boat to list and roll over.

Most of the survivors were being moved Friday from a storage hangar at the southern port of Kalamata, where relatives also gathered to look for loved ones, to migrant shelters near Athens.

Abdo Sheikhi, a Kurdish Syrian living in Germany, traveled to Kalamata to find out what happened to five family members who were on the boat.

On Friday, he discovered that only his younger brother Ali and another relative had survived. He managed to speak on the phone to Ali, who has been moved to the camp near Athens.

"(Ali) told me he jumped (off the) ship while the others could not jump," Sheikhi said. "They were scared. They were holding on to the boat as it swayed."

Nine people — all men from Egypt, ranging in age from 20 to 40 — were arrested and detained and charged Friday of people smuggling and participating in a criminal enterprise. Twenty-seven of the survivors remain hospitalized, health officials said. The smuggling suspects are due to appear in court Monday.

The IOM has estimated the boat carried as many as 750 people, and U.N. human rights office spokesman Jeremy Laurence said the missing included "large numbers of women and children."

The survivors were all boys and men from Egypt, Pakistan, Syria and the Palestinian territories. Alexiou, citing survivor accounts, said passengers in the hold of the fishing boat included women and children but that the number of missing, believed to be in the hundreds, still remained unclear.

Officials at a state-run morgue outside Athens photographed the faces of the victims and gathered DNA samples to start the identification process.

Late Friday, Greece's coast guard said a navy helicopter located a sailboat with migrants off southwestern Greece after being alerted by Italian authorities. It said three merchant ships had reached the vessel, which reported no trouble and was heading for Italy. ERT TV said about 60 people were believed to be on board.

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Associated Press journalists Frances D'Emilio in Rome, Renata Brito in Barcelona, Sarah El Deeb in Beirut, Lebanon, and Costas Kantouris in Thessaloniki, Greece, contributed to this report. \_\_\_\_

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## Like Daniel Ellsberg, others who leaked US government secrets have been seen as traitors and heroes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Daniel Ellsberg's decision to leak a secret Defense Department study of the U.S. war in Vietnam — the Pentagon Papers — made him a traitor in the eyes of the White House and its supporters and an instant hero to opponents of the war.

That's been true of others who released top-secret information that they felt was evidence of official wrongdoing. While Ellsberg, who died Friday, will be remembered in a largely positive light, the reputations of more recent figures are still contested.

Here are some other examples of people who exposed government secrets:

### W. MARK FELT

An associate director at the FBI, Felt was "Deep Throat," the source who gave information about the Watergate break-in to The Washington Post in the 1970s.

Ellsberg's release of the Pentagon Papers indirectly led to Watergate. Infuriated at the exposure of the study, Nixon ordered an effort to dig up dirt on Ellsberg. Operatives linked to the White House broke into the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Months later, five of them would be caught trying to break into Democratic Party offices at the Watergate.

A high-ranking FBI official, Felt provided hints to Post writers Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein as they investigated the burglary and attempted cover-up. Journalists and congressional investigations eventually implicated Nixon, leading to his resignation.

"Deep Throat" became a shadowy star of the classic film "All the President's Men." Felt unmasked himself in 2005, shortly before his death in 2008.

### EDWARD SNOWDEN

Snowden, 39, disclosed how U.S. intelligence agencies were secretly collecting massive amounts of Americans' phone calls, emails, and other data, launching a national debate over privacy and national security.

A contractor and systems engineer at the National Security Agency, Snowden showed how the NSA could seize data from U.S. telecommunications companies and how it spied on leaders allied with Washington, among other programs.

Shortly after the first stories with his cooperation were published in 2013, Snowden left Hong Kong for Moscow with plans to eventually travel to Ecuador. The U.S. cancelled his passport and he stayed in a Moscow airport for weeks.

He would eventually settle in Moscow and speak remotely to audiences around the world about civil liberties and privacy. The Justice Department during the administration of former President Barack Obama charged him with espionage and theft in a case that remains active today.

A decade later, he remains in Russia and took Russian citizenship last year. His detractors point to that decision as proof that he damaged national security and should not be considered a hero.

On Twitter Friday, Snowden said Ellsberg had hoped to dedicate his final hours to reducing the risk of a nuclear exchange, calling him a "hero to the end."

### CHELSEA MANNING

Manning, 35, gave more than 700,000 documents to the web site WikiLeaks while working as an intelligence analyst in Iraq in 2010.

The documents included State Department cables and classified video of a helicopter attack by U.S. forces gunning down a group of Iraqi men, including two journalists for Reuters.

Manning was convicted in military court of having violated the Espionage Act and sentenced to 35 years in prison. Her sentence was commuted by Obama just before he departed office in January 2017.

She then was jailed for more than a year because she refused to testify before a grand jury investigating WikiLeaks.

### REALITY WINNER

Winner, 31, leaked a classified report on Russian government efforts to penetrate voting software ahead

of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. She printed out a copy of the report at an NSA office in Georgia and mailed it to a news outlet.

While authorities never explicitly identified the outlet, the Justice Department announced her arrest in June 2017 on the same day that The Intercept reported on a top secret NSA document about Russian hacking.

She pled guilty in 2018 to a single count of transmitting national security information. Given a five-year sentence, she was eventually released early in June 2021.

## **Fox News producer out after onscreen message calling President Biden a 'wannabe dictator'**

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A longtime producer for Tucker Carlson is out at Fox News after he was deemed responsible for the on-air headline that referred to President Joe Biden as a “wannabe dictator” because of the indictment of former President Donald Trump.

The producer, Alex McCaskill, confirmed his exit in an Instagram post. Fox News did not comment on Friday.

He had remained at Fox after Carlson, the network’s most popular personality, was fired on April 24. The reason for Carlson’s sudden ouster, less than a week after Fox agreed to pay Dominion Voting Systems \$787 million to end a defamation case, has never been publicly explained.

It was during the last minutes of Carlson’s former time slot on Tuesday when the message appeared under separate onscreen boxes that showed Biden and Trump talking. It read: “Wannabe dictator speaks at the White House after having his political rival arrested.”

Carlson, in a Twitter monologue posted Thursday, said “the women who run the network panicked” about the post and scolded the person responsible. Carlson didn’t name the producer, but said he was “considered one of the most capable persons in the building.”

The producer offered to resign with two weeks’ notice, but was told to clean out his desk and leave immediately, he said.

Fox, in a statement on Wednesday, said the chyron had been taken down and the issue “addressed,” without further explanation.

In an Instagram message posted on Twitter by Justin Baragona of The Daily Beast, McCaskill is pictured outside of Fox’s Manhattan office holding a box.

“Today was my last day at Fox,” read the message under his picture. “It’s been a wild 10 years and it was the best place I’ve ever worked because of the great people I met. But the time has come. I asked them to let me go, and they finally did. To all my friends there: I will miss you forever.”

A call and text message to a phone listed as McCaskill’s was not immediately returned.

Plenty of Biden critics have suggested politics was behind Trump’s indictment by special prosecutor Jack Smith on charges of hoarding classified documents and resisting government attempts to retrieve them. Biden has not commented on the case.

McCaskill was named this spring in a lawsuit filed by a former Fox producer, Abby Grossberg, who also worked on Carlson’s staff. Her lawsuit said McCaskill “habitually belittled female employees” at Fox. He said that a room at Fox set aside for employees to pump breast milk was a “waste of space” and should be replaced with a room for men to tan their testicles, according to the lawsuit.

Fox has denied allegations in Grossberg’s lawsuit.

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Associated Press correspondent Beatrice Dupuy and researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

## Iowa Supreme Court declines to reinstate strict abortion limits, but a new law could be coming

By HANNAH FINGERHUT and SCOTT McFETRIDGE Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Abortion will remain legal in Iowa after the state's high court declined Friday to reinstate a law that would have largely banned the procedure, rebuffing Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds and, for now, keeping the conservative state from joining others with strict abortion limits.

In a rare 3-3 decision, the Iowa Supreme Court upheld a 2019 district court ruling that blocked the law. The latest ruling comes roughly a year after the same body — and the U.S. Supreme Court — determined that women do not have a fundamental constitutional right to abortion.

The blocked law bans abortions once cardiac activity can be detected, usually around six weeks of pregnancy and before many women know they are pregnant. The law contains exceptions for medical emergencies, rape, incest and fetal abnormality.

Writing for the three justices who denied the state's request to reinstate the law, Justice Thomas Waterman said granting that request would mean bypassing the legislature, changing the standard for how the court reviews laws and then dissolving an injunction enacted by a lower court that blocked the law.

"In our view it is legislating from the bench to take a statute that was moribund when it was enacted and has been enjoined for four years and then to put it in effect," Waterman wrote.

The court has seven members but one justice declined to participate. Her former law firm had represented an abortion provider. All of the justices were appointed by Republican governors and five were appointed by Reynolds.

In a statement, Reynolds expressed disappointment in the court's ruling.

"Not only does it disregard Iowa voters who elected representatives willing to stand up for the rights of unborn children, but it has sided with a single judge in a single county who struck down Iowa's legislation based on principles that now have been flat-out rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court," Reynolds said.

Reynolds added that "the fight is not over." She said her administration was considering options but didn't give specifics, such as calling for a special legislative session to enact stricter abortion laws.

Republicans hold large majorities in the state House and Senate, and leaders of both chambers criticized the ruling and suggested they will work toward passing new legislation.

Ruth Richardson, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood North Central States, called the decision "an enormous win."

"Each person deserves control of their body, and Iowans have that right, based on today's court decision," she said in a statement. "Abortion bans make pregnancy more dangerous than it already is, and it shouldn't matter which state you live in."

While the state's high court maintains the block on the law, it does not preclude Reynolds and lawmakers from passing a new law that looks the same. The decision Friday was largely procedural — the 2022 appeal to the 2019 ruling was too late.

Abortions remain legal in Iowa up to 20 weeks of pregnancy.

Most Republican-led states have severely curtailed access to abortion in the year since the U.S. Supreme Court stripped women's constitutional right to abortion by overturning *Roe v. Wade* and handing authority over the issue to states.

Courts have put enforcement of several abortion bans and restrictions on hold while they consider whether they comply with state constitutions, including six currently paused. But there have been final rulings in just a handful of cases since the *Dobbs* ruling — and no clear trend on how they're going.

A state appeals court ruled last year that an abortion ban dating back to before Arizona was a state does not apply to doctors, but whether it applies to other "helpers" is part of an ongoing legal dispute. The South Carolina Supreme Court earlier this year struck down a ban on abortions there after cardiac activity can be detected. Since then, though, the state has adopted a new ban, though enforcement of it has been paused by a court.

Judges in some other states have found bans unconstitutional only in narrow ways.

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The top court in Oklahoma last month struck two state laws banning abortion, but abortion remains illegal in all stages of pregnancy there, with some exceptions, because of another ban that remains in effect.

A federal judge last year barred Idaho from enforcing its abortion ban in medical emergencies just after another federal judge made the opposite call on a Texas state law.

Reynolds signed Iowa's 2018 law despite state and federal court decisions at the time, including Roe, affirming a woman's constitutional right to abortion. Planned Parenthood sued and a state judge blocked the law the following year. Reynolds did not appeal the decision at the time.

In a separate case, the Iowa Supreme Court decided last year to reverse an opinion saying the state's constitution affirms a fundamental right to abortion. Roe was overturned a week later and Reynolds sought to dissolve the 2019 decision.

A state judge ruled last year that she had no authority to do so and Reynolds appealed to the state's Supreme Court, which is now far more conservative than when the law was first passed. Reynolds appointed five of the court's seven members.

Because Friday's decision was tied, the court affirms the lower court decision but otherwise the high court's opinions have no other authority. That means earlier rulings that applied an "undue burden test" for abortion laws remains in effect.

The undue burden is an intermediate level of scrutiny that requires laws do not create a significant obstacle to abortion. Lawyers for the state argued the law should be analyzed using rational basis review, the lowest level of scrutiny to judge legal challenges.

In his opinion supporting reversal of the law, Justice Christopher McDonald wrote that to reject the appeal and deny the reinstatement of a law is to curtail the power of the legislative branch. He goes on to argue that there has been substantial change in law that allows for the dissolution of the 2019 ruling.

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Associated Press writer Geoff Mulvihill in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, contributed to this report.

## **Unionized UPS workers could strike this summer, scrambling supply chains and home delivery**

By HALELUYA HADERO and MATT OTT AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Unionized UPS workers voted overwhelmingly on Friday to authorize a strike, setting the stage for a potential work stoppage if the package delivery company and Teamsters can't come to an agreement before their contract expires next month.

The Teamsters said 97% of unionized workers voted for the authorization, which the union urged for in order to have more leverage during negotiations with the company. But a yes vote does not mean a strike is imminent.

"If this multibillion-dollar corporation fails to deliver on the contract that our hardworking members deserve, UPS will be striking itself," Teamsters General President Sean O'Brien said in a prepared statement. "The strongest leverage our members have is their labor and they are prepared to withhold it to ensure UPS acts accordingly."

The Teamsters represent about 340,000 UPS employees, more than half of the company's workforce in the largest private-sector contract in North America. If a strike occurs, it would be the first since a 15-day walkout by 185,000 workers crippled the company a quarter century ago.

UPS has grown vastly since then and become even more engrained in the U.S. economy. The company says it delivers the equivalent of about 6% of nation's gross domestic product. That means a strike would carry with it potentially far-reaching implications for the economy.

UPS said in a prepared statement the strike vote does not impact the company's current business operations.

"Authorization votes and approvals are normal steps in labor union negotiations," the company said. "We continue to make progress on key issues and remain confident that we will reach an agreement that provides wins for our employees, the Teamsters, our company and our customers."

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UPS workers are still seething about the current contract, which they feel was forced on them by prior union leadership in 2018 based on a technicality. The contract created two hierarchies of workers with different pay scales, hours and benefits. The union wants it eliminated.

In addition to addressing part-time pay and what workers say is excessive overtime, the union wants improvements to driver safety, particularly the lack of air conditioning in delivery trucks, which has been blamed for the death of a driver and hospitalizations of others.

On Tuesday, the union and the company announced they reached a tentative agreement to equip more trucks with air conditioning equipment. Under the agreement, UPS said it would add air conditioning to U.S. small delivery vehicles purchased after January 1, 2024.

But those changes aren't extending to vehicles already in operation - at least not yet. Instead, the union says two fans would be installed in all vehicles when a new contract is ratified. It also said the company agreed to add heat shield to some vehicles, and put air vents in all cars within 18 months of a new contract. Under the agreement, UPS says roughly 95% of its existing U.S. package delivery fleet will be enhanced.

Teamsters spokesperson Kara Deniz said there have been two dozen tentative agreements reached with UPS since the negotiations began in April. The current contract expires on July 31.

UPS delivers around 25 million packages a day, representing about a quarter of all U.S. parcel volume, according to the global shipping and logistics firm Pitney Bowes. That's about 10 million parcels more than it delivered each day in the years leading up to the pandemic.

UPS profits have soared since the pandemic began in 2020 as millions of Americans grew to rely on the delivery to their doorstops.

Annual profits at UPS in the past two years are close to three times what they were pre-pandemic. The Atlanta company returned about \$8.6 billion to shareholders in the form of dividends and stock buybacks in 2022, and forecasts another \$8.4 billion for shareholders this year.

The Teamsters say that profit growth is largely due to the hard work of UPS drivers and warehouse workers who carry everything from 50-pound bags of dog food and cases of wine to prescriptions.

The acrimony over the current contract was the impetus for workers rejecting a candidate to lead the Teamsters favored by longtime union head James Hoffa. Union members instead chose O'Brien, who has dug in on the Teamsters' contract demands of UPS.

A win at UPS could also have implications for the organized labor outside the company.

There have been prominent labor organization campaigns at Apple, Starbucks, Trader Joe's, even strippers at a dance club in Los Angeles. Teamsters are also attempting to organize workers at Amazon. On Friday, the new president of the United Auto Workers gave his strongest warning yet that the union is preparing for strikes against Detroit's three automakers when contracts expire in September.

\_\_\_\_\_ AP Auto Writer Tom Krisher contributed to this report from Detroit

## Trump's promise of payback for prosecution follows years of attacking democratic traditions

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and GARY FIELDS Associated Press

As Donald Trump became the first former president to face federal charges, he and his supporters went through a familiar routine of mounting a victimhood defense in the face of unprecedented allegations of wrongdoing. But this time, the stakes are higher.

Trump upped the level of his claims and threats as he faces the potential of years in prison if convicted on 37 charges of obstruction, illegal retention of defense information and other violations. Hours after pleading not guilty, Trump claimed he is being targeted by the special prosecutor, who is nonpartisan, for political reasons and vowed to retaliate against President Joe Biden if he is elected president in 2024.

"There was an unwritten rule" to not prosecute former presidents and political rivals, Trump told supporters in a speech at his golf club in New Jersey. "I will appoint a real special prosecutor to go after the most corrupt president in the history of America, Joe Biden, and go after the Biden crime family."

The vow is reminiscent of the "lock her up" chants against Democrat Hillary Clinton that Trump led dur-

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ing his 2016 campaign, but the new level of specificity alarmed many experts.

"If he did that, it'd be an authoritarian system, the end of a system of laws rather than of one man," said Lindsay Chervinsky, a presidential historian.

Even as he pledges to retaliate if elected, Trump and his supporters claim he is being targeted in a way that is similar to authoritarian regimes — such as in Russia, where opponents of President Vladimir Putin have been jailed, or Venezuela, where President Nicolas Maduro's chief rival was prosecuted. There is no evidence that Biden made the sort of pledge to target Trump that the former president has now made, and the president said he has never tried to influence the Justice Department on any case.

Trump's attacks on the justice system are the latest step in a now eight-year campaign by the former president and his allies against the traditions and institutions that have helped maintain American democracy.

Trump has long complained about being unfairly treated by the legal system, from contending that the judge in a lawsuit against his for-profit university was biased against him to targeting the FBI over its probe of Russian interference in his 2016 win. He even vowed retribution in that case, assigning a special prosecutor to review how the investigation into his campaign's possible coordination with Russia was handled, which led to only one conviction.

That track record makes his pledge of retribution more menacing, said Fred Wertheimer, president of Democracy 21, a group advocating for better government.

"He has shown repeatedly during his presidency that he is perfectly willing to misuse and abuse his office to carry out purely personal activities," Wertheimer said.

Stephen Saltzburg, a former top official in the criminal division of the Justice Department who is now a George Washington University law professor, said Trump was signaling that he would use the department to settle scores — just the thing he is claiming led to his indictment.

"This is typical of what Donald Trump does," Saltzburg said. "He essentially accuses people of doing what he would do if he were in the position."

The indictment came from a grand jury in Trump's adopted state of Florida after an investigation led by a special counsel, Jack Smith, who is independent of political appointees in the Biden administration and has previously prosecuted Democrats as well as Republicans. Speaking after the indictment was made public, Smith stressed that investigations such as the one into the documents follow the facts and the law.

"We have one set of laws in this country, and they apply to everyone," he said.

Many experts, of all political persuasions, said the charges against Trump stem from the proper functioning of the legal system, rather than a political vendetta. William Barr, Trump's former attorney general, said the allegations in the indictment were serious and that Trump had no right to keep such documents.

"There is not an attorney general of either party who would not have brought today's charges against the former president," Michael Luttig, a former federal judge who was a conservative favorite for a Supreme Court post, wrote on Twitter.

According to the indictment, Trump held onto classified documents after leaving the White House, admitted on tape that they were classified and that he no longer had the presidential power to declassify them, then refused to return the records when the government demanded them back.

The former president's complaints about being persecuted, if not his vow of retribution, have been taken up by a wide swath of Republicans, from longtime supporters in Congress to governors who position themselves as moderates. That includes Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, who bemoaned on Twitter what he called "a two-tiered justice system where some are selectively prosecuted, and others are not."

Another sign of how the right has absorbed Trump's world view came Tuesday night, hours after his court appearance, when Fox News briefly captioned images of Biden and Trump with the words "wannabe dictator speaks at the White House after having his political rival arrested." The network took down the chyron and said in a statement the matter was "addressed" without providing further details.

Trump's complaints about being persecuted are standard for former political leaders in other countries who are charged with crimes, said Victor Menaldo, a political scientist at the University of Washington.

"It makes sense politically if the leader has a rabid support group like Trump," Menaldo said. But in other countries, he said, the leaders are usually successfully prosecuted, and democracy continues.

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The federal charges against Trump come two months after the Manhattan District Attorney's office charged him with 34 counts of falsifying business information in arranging payments to a porn star who said she had an affair with him. He also faces legal jeopardy in Fulton County, Georgia, where local prosecutors have launched a wide-ranging investigation of his attempt to have the state's electors assigned to him even though he lost the state to Biden in 2020, a result that was affirmed multiple times. A federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., continues to probe Trump's efforts to overturn his 2020 loss.

The Manhattan charges have drawn skepticism even from some Trump critics, who contend they're legally dubious. Trump's defenders — who include much of his own political party — don't make that distinction, condemning all probes of the former president. Indeed, after taking control of the House of Representatives following November's elections, Republicans empaneled a committee investigating the so-called "weaponization of government" against conservatives that is highlighting perceived injustices in the Trump probes.

The combination of the new federal charges, filed Friday, and the Republican presidential primary has led to stepped up complaints about scrutiny of the former president.

"I, and every American who believes in the rule of law, stand with President Trump against this grave injustice," House Speaker Kevin McCarthy tweeted after Trump announced the indictment against him. "House Republicans will hold this brazen weaponization of power accountable."

He and other Trump allies note that Biden also improperly had classified documents from his time as vice president — though there are big differences with the Trump case. The current president returned the records when requested and there is no evidence that he tried to conceal more, as is alleged with Trump. A second special prosecutor is looking at Biden's document handling.

Former U.S. Attorney Roscoe Howard said he has faith that the public will see past those protestations in the current case just by looking at the indictment.

"You can read it and make a determination of whether he's violating the law. And anybody who does the same thing, we treat them the same way," Howard said. "When you peel back some of the arguments we're hearing, it is a bit like, 'Oh I don't have to follow these rules.'"

That's the point when it comes to Trump, said Ruth Ben-Ghiat, a historian at New York University who studies authoritarians.

"It's an old situation he's in, but now because this is extremely serious, of course he's going to ramp up that narrative," Ben-Ghiat said. "What strongmen do is, if you are corrupt, you need to get back into power to shut down all the institutions that can harm you."

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Fields reported from Washington, Riccardi from Denver.

## **Nusrat Chowdhury confirmed as the first Muslim female federal judge in U.S. history**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nusrat Chowdhury, a civil rights lawyer, has been confirmed by the Senate as the first Muslim female federal judge in U.S. history.

She will assume her lifetime appointment in Brooklyn federal court in New York after a 50-49 vote on Thursday along party lines.

The confirmation drew praise from the American Civil Liberties Union, where she is the legal director of the ACLU of Illinois. Prior to that post, she served from 2008 to 2020 at the national ACLU office, including seven years as deputy director of the ACLU Racial Justice Program.

In a tweet, the ACLU called her a "trailblazing civil rights lawyer."

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., who recommended her, said she makes history as the first Bangladeshi American as well as the first Muslim American woman to be a federal judge.

"Nusrat Choudhury is a shining example of the American Dream," Schumer said in a statement. "She is the daughter of immigrant parents, a graduate of Columbia, Princeton, and Yale Law School, and has dedicated her career to making sure all people can have their voices heard in court."



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Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., voted against the appointment, citing her support for criminal justice reform. He said in a statement that some of her past statements call into question her ability to be unbiased toward members of law enforcement.

After finishing law school, Chowdhury clerked in New York City for U.S. District Judge Denise L. Cote and 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Barrington Parker Jr.

She has served on the Presidential Task Force on Building Public Trust in the American Justice System. Her appointment was consistent with President Joe Biden's pledge to emphasize diversity in background, race and gender in his judicial nominations.

Two years ago, the Senate confirmed the nation's first federal Muslim judge, Zahid Quraishi, to serve as a district court judge in New Jersey. Quraishi's first day on the job at a New York law firm was Sept. 11, 2001. He would go on to join the Army's legal arm and served two deployments in Iraq.

## German archeologists find Bronze Age sword so well-preserved it 'almost shines'

BERLIN (AP) — A bronze sword made more than 3,000 years ago that is so well-preserved it "almost still shines" has been unearthed in Germany, officials say.

Bavaria's state office for the preservation of historical monuments says the sword, which is believed to date back to the end of the 14th century B.C. — the middle of the Bronze Age — was found during excavations last week in Noerdlingen, between Nuremberg and Stuttgart in southern Germany.

It has a bronze octagonal hilt and comes from a grave in which three people — a man, a woman and a boy — were buried in quick succession with bronze objects, the Bavarian office said in a statement this week. It is not yet clear whether the three were related to each other and, if so, how.

"The sword and the burial still need to be examined so that our archeologists can categorize this find more precisely," said the head of the office, Mathias Pfeil. "But we can already say that the state of preservation is extraordinary. A find like this is very rare."

It's unusual to find swords from the period, but they have emerged from burial mounds that were opened in the 19th century or as individual finds, the office said.

## Ex-NYC Mayor de Blasio ordered to pay \$475K for misusing public funds on failed White House bid

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio was ordered Thursday to pay \$475,000 by a city ethics board that found he misused public funds on a police security detail during his failed presidential bid.

The hefty fine is the largest ever handed out by New York's Conflicts of Interest Board, capping off a yearslong investigation into the two-term mayor's use of taxpayer dollars to cover the travel costs of NYPD officers who accompanied him on cross-country campaign stops.

Under the ruling, which he has vowed to appeal, de Blasio, a Democrat, will be forced to reimburse the city for \$320,000 spent on the officers' flights, hotels, meals and rental cars during the four-month campaign. He will also have to pay a fine of \$5,000 for each of the security detail's 31 out-of-state trips, amounting to \$155,000.

The order was handed down by the Conflicts of Interest Board Chair, Milton Williams, who found that de Blasio "plainly violated" the city's prohibition on using public resources to advance a political campaign. De Blasio was advised of this rule prior to his campaign, but "disregarded the Board's advice," Williams wrote in his ruling.

In a statement, an attorney for de Blasio, Andrew G. Celli Jr., described the ruling as "reckless and arbitrary," arguing that recent acts of political violence underscored the security needs of public servants.

"In the wake of the January 6th insurrection, the shootings of Congressmembers Giffords and Scalise, and almost daily threats directed at local leaders around the country, the COIB's (Conflicts of Interest Board's)

action – which seeks to saddle elected officials with security costs that the City has properly borne for decades – is dangerous, beyond the scope of their powers, and illegal,” he wrote.

De Blasio has faced previous allegations of misusing his security detail. Months before he left office in 2021, a report by the city’s Department of Investigation found he treated the officers as a “concierge service,” using them to move his daughter into an apartment and shuttle his son to college.

De Blasio did consult with the Conflicts of Interest Board about the costs of his security prior to announcing his presidential campaign in May 2019. He was told the salaries for NYPD officers would be covered, but that all other costs associated with their travel would not, the board said.

During interviews with investigators, de Blasio said he did “not have a 100% clear understanding” of the guidance, and “suggested that it was an issue for others to resolve,” according to Kevin Casey, an administrative law judge that recommended the fine imposed by the Conflicts of Interest Board.

Casey accused de Blasio of showing a “deliberate indifference” to the city’s ethics board, then blaming his own employees for the error.

“It is troubling that during his DOI (Department of Investigation) interview respondent repeatedly attempted to shift blame to his lawyers and campaign staff, while failing to recognize his personal responsibility for following the law,” Casey wrote.

In an interview with New York Magazine published earlier this week, de Blasio described his White House bid as a mistake.

“I think my values were the right values, and I think I had something to offer, but it was not right on a variety of levels,” he said. “I think I got into a place of just extreme stubbornness and tunnel vision.” \_\_\_\_\_

This story was first published on June 15, 2023. It was updated on June 16, 2023, to correct the breakdown of a \$155,000 fine de Blasio was ordered to pay.

## **Japan raises the age of sexual consent to 16 from 13, which was among the world’s lowest**

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan’s parliament on Friday raised the age of sexual consent to 16 from 13, a limit which had remained unchanged for more than a century and was among the world’s lowest, amid calls for greater protection of children and women.

The revision was part of a revamping of laws related to sex crimes. Separately, Parliament passed a new law on Friday to increase awareness of LGBTQ+ issues which activists criticized for not guaranteeing equal rights for sexual minorities.

Reforms providing greater protection for victims of sexual crimes and stricter punishment of assailants have come slowly in a country where the legislative and judicial branches have long been dominated by men.

Japan in 2017 revised its criminal code on sexual crimes for the first time in 110 years. A series of acquittals in cases of sexual abuse and growing instances of sexual images taken of girls and women without their consent have triggered public outrage, prompting the new revisions.

The changes enacted Friday make sexual intercourse with someone below age 16 considered rape. They specify eight scenarios of “consentless sex crimes,” a new term for forced sexual intercourse, including being assaulted under the influence of alcohol or drugs, fear, or intimidation.

They also ban the filming, distribution and possession of sexually exploitative images taken without consent.

The statute of limitations for sex crimes was also extended by five years, to 10 years for consentless sexual intercourse. That crime is now subject to up to 15 years in prison, while “photo voyeurism” can be punished by up to three years’ imprisonment.

The changes were sparked in part by a case in Nagoya in which a father who raped his 19-year-old daughter was acquitted by a court which ruled that while the daughter did not give her consent, she did not resist violently. The decision prompted nationwide protests.

Activists said the new LGBTQ+ law threatens them instead of promoting equality because of last-minute changes which apparently catered to opponents of transgender rights.

Japan is the only member of the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations which does not have LGBTQ+ legal protections. Support for same-sex marriage and other rights has grown among the Japanese public, but opposition remains strong within the governing Liberal Democratic Party, known for conservative values and a reluctance to promote gender equality and sexual diversity.

The final version of the law states that "unjust discrimination" is unacceptable but doesn't clearly ban discrimination.

It says that conditions should be created so that "all citizens can live with peace of mind," which activists say shows the governing party prioritized the concerns of opponents of equal rights over the rights of sexual minorities.

"The law does not look at us or our ordeals, and instead looks to the direction of those causing us pain," said Minori Tokieda, a transgender woman. "I'm deeply concerned about how the law treats us as if our presence threatens the people's sense of safety."

## Popular 'low T' treatment is safe for men with heart disease, but doctors warn it's no youth serum

By LAURA UNGAR AP Science Writer

Testosterone replacement therapy is safe for men with "low T" who have heart disease or are at high risk for it, a new study suggests.

But doctors warn the popular treatment is no "anti-aging tonic."

The research, published Friday in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, found that heart attacks, strokes and other major cardiac issues were no more common among those using testosterone gel than those using a placebo.

That implies the gel is also safe for men without cardiovascular problems who have low T, said Dr. Steven Nissen, a cardiologist at the Cleveland Clinic and senior author of the study. But, he added, it doesn't mean the treatment should be used by men without low T — a condition also known as hypogonadism that's measured by levels of the sex hormone in the blood.

"What we've shown here is that for a very specific group of men, testosterone can be given safely," Nissen said. "But it is not to be given as an anti-aging tonic for widespread use in men who are aging."

More than 5,000 men ages 45-80 at 316 trial sites throughout the U.S. were randomly assigned to get the testosterone gel or the placebo, which they rubbed on their skin daily for an average of about 22 months. "Major cardiac events" occurred in 182 patients in the testosterone group and 190 patients in the placebo group.

The testosterone group did have a higher incidence of less severe problems, such as atrial fibrillation, acute kidney injury and issues from blood clots in veins.

The large study helps address "a gap of understanding" about how testosterone treatment affects cardiovascular outcomes for men with true low T, said Dr. Alan Baik, a cardiologist at the University of California-San Francisco who was not involved in the research.

But he'd like to see more research, he said, on whether testosterone therapy can actually reduce cardiovascular risk factors in men with low T, who seem more likely to have conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes.

Treating low T has been a big business for many years, largely driven by advertisements for pills, patches, gels and injections. Online sites and clinics across the nation offer the treatment, and many tie low T to common issues such as fatigue and weight gain.

The new study, led by the Cleveland Clinic and funded by a consortium of drug companies, was done in response to a 2015 mandate by the Food and Drug Administration for makers of testosterone products to carefully examine the risk of heart attack or stroke. A previous FDA review had shown that many men got low T treatment even though their testosterone levels hadn't been checked.

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Nissen said while low T is a "very common disorder," aging men also want to feel like they're 18 again and "have the sexual performance they had when they were young," he said.

But the treatment, he added, "should not be used by bodybuilders. It should not be used by athletes. The concerns about the misuse of testosterone are quite high. And I think we have to be very cautious."

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## What to stream this week: 'Extraction 2,' Stan Lee doc, 'Star Trek' and 'The Wonder Years'

By The Associated Press undefined

Albums from John Mellencamp and Killer Mike, as well as the return of Chris Hemsworth's gun-for-hire anti-hero in Netflix's "Extraction 2" are among the new television, movies, music and games headed to a device near you.

Among the offerings worth your time as selected by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists are season two of "Star Trek: Strange New Worlds," and the season seven premiere of "Outlander" that continues the story of its time-crossed lovers Jamie and Claire Fraser.

### NEW MOVIES TO STREAM

— Clinical death is just a minor obstacle for Chris Hemsworth's action hero Tyler Rake, who audiences can see again in "Extraction 2," which arrived on Netflix on Friday. In this outing, he's assigned the dangerous task of rescuing a Georgian gangster's family from a prison. Director Sam Hargrave promised twice as much action and more emotion in this outing, produced again by the Russo brothers. And Hemsworth has said that they opted for practical stunts and set pieces over green-screen fakery, which could be a bit frightening filming a sequence atop a train going 40 miles per hour through the snowy Czech Republic while a helicopter hovered 23 feet in front of him flying backwards. (Read AP's review here.)

— "Chevalier," a lush, dramatic biopic of an accomplished Black man in Marie Antoinette's France who was all but erased, came and went in theaters without a lot of fanfare. But it's now on Hulu where audiences can learn about Joseph Bologne, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, the son of a wealthy French plantation owner and an enslaved Senegalese teenager who rose through the ranks of French society due in part to his extraordinary musical talents as a composer and a violinist. Kelvin Harrison Jr. plays the title role in the Stephen Williams-directed film, which I wrote in a review "may be more fiction than history, but it's worthwhile with effective acting, tension (helped by Kris Bowers' score) and a decadently beautiful production."

— And on Disney+, a new original documentary about the late Stan Lee premieres Friday. "Stan Lee," directed by David Gelb, promises to explore Lee's life and cultural impact. Lee, who died in 2018 at 95, co-created an army of comic book characters including Spider-Man, the X-Men, Iron Man, the Incredible Hulk, the Fantastic Four, Ant-Man and many more who have in the past 15 years become household names thanks to the popularity of Marvel films, many of which feature fun Stan Lee cameos.

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

### NEW MUSIC TO STREAM

— John Mellencamp's output is not slowing down. A year after releasing the album "Strictly a One-Eyed Jack," the heartland rocker is back with "Orpheus Descending." Many of the 11 tracks — including the anti-gun violence anthem "Hey God" and a song about the homeless crisis "The Eyes of Portland" — focus on social issues. "All of these homeless/Where do they come from?/In this land of plenty/Where nothing gets done," sings Mellencamp, 71, on the latter track.

— Father's Day may be around the corner, but Killer Mike is honoring his mother on his new solo album, "Michael." The single "Motherless" has Mike rapping about his late mother, featuring R&B singer Eryn Allen Kane: "I be missin' huggin' you, I miss kissin' you/I miss all the jewels and I miss all your wisdom, too." Another single is the Run the Jewels-like "Don't Let the Devil," in which he shows off his delinquent side, with the lyrics "Catch me after Sunday service disturbin' the church's workers."

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— Loss is also in the DNA of the new album by multi-instrumentalist, singer-songwriter Meshell Ndegeocello. "The Omnichord Real Book" is an album made after she lost her parents. "This album is about the way we see old things in new ways," Ndegeocello says. First single "Clear Water" is a soul-searching Sly Stone-inspired song featuring Jeff Parker's bluesy guitar lines and vocals by Justin Hicks. The album was produced by Josh Johnson and also features Jason Moran, Ambrose Akinmusire, Joel Ross, Jeff Parker, Brandee Younger, Julius Rodriguez, Mark Guiliana, Cory Henry, Joan As Police Woman and Thandiswa.

— Only one band can make fonts sound cool and that's Queens of the Stone Age, who are back with the 10-track studio album "In Times New Roman..." On the spiky, off-kilter "Emotional Sickness," front-man Josh Homme sings "Use once and destroy/Single servings of pain/A dose of emotion sickness I just can't shake." But on "Carnavoyeur," he has a smooth, distant cool: "Flying high, realize/There are no more mountains to climb."

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

## NEW SERIES TO STREAM

— Season two of "Star Trek: Strange New Worlds" arrived on Paramount+ on Thursday. If you haven't watched yet, the show takes place about a decade before "Star Trek: The Original Series," so it features younger versions of some of the "Star Trek" characters viewers know and love. "Strange New Worlds" stars Anson Mount as Captain Christopher Pike when he led the USS Enterprise, with a crew that includes Ethan Peck as Spock, Rebecca Romijn as Una Chin-Riley (otherwise known as Number One), and Celia Rose Gooding as Nyota Uhura. The season one finale introduced Paul Wesley in the role of James T. Kirk and he's back in the new season.

— Caitriona Balfe and Sam Heughan are star-crossed lovers in the time-traveling romance drama, "Outlander." It begins with a British nurse named Claire visiting Scotland after World War II who accidentally falls back in time to the 18th century when Scotland and England are at war. Claire has left her husband behind in the future, and feels like she will never get back there, so she begrudgingly marries a Highland warrior named Jamie. The two end up falling in love and embark on an epic romance. Season seven, premiering Friday on Starz, take place during the American Revolution. The story is based on the book series by Diana Gabaldon.

— The new "The Wonder Years" about a middle-class Black family in Montgomery, Alabama, in the 1960s, returned for its second season Wednesday on ABC. The show is told from the point of view of 12-year-old Dean Williams (played by Elisha "EJ" Williams) with Don Cheadle narrating as the adult version of Dean. It's already been announced that season two will feature several guest stars including Donald Faison, Bradley Whitford, Phoebe Robinson, Malcolm-Jamal Warner and Patti LaBelle.

— "Gold Rush" fan favorite Todd Hoffman is trying to turn his fortune around by rehabilitating a rundown mine in Alaska in Discovery Channel's "Hoffman Family Gold." In season two, Todd has a small crew to help him including his father, Jack, and son, Hunter, but even with the familial assist, it's a major task and success is not guaranteed. On top of the pressure, Todd and Hunter are very competitive and no one pushes your buttons quite like family. "Hoffman Family Gold" season two debuts Friday.

— Alicia Rancilio

## NEW VIDEO GAMES TO PLAY

— Formula One racing has been booming in America lately, thanks in large part to the popular Netflix documentary series "Drive to Survive." It's gotten so big that EA Sports, which bailed out early in the century, got back on the track in 2021. The publisher is billing F1 23 as "a fresh start," though longtime developer Codemasters is still behind the wheel. It includes 20 drivers and 10 teams from the real-life circuit, as well as a fictional story mode and a career-building "F1 World" series of races. There are also new courses in Las Vegas and Qatar, and a 35% race distance option that offers a quick challenge if you're short on time. Get your motor running Friday on PlayStation 5/4, Xbox X/S/One and PC.

— Lou Kesten

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Catch up on AP's entertainment coverage here: <https://apnews.com/apf-entertainment>.

## Biden is returning to his union roots as his 2024 campaign gears up

By WILL WEISSERT and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden opened his 2020 presidential run at a Pittsburgh union hall, declaring, “I’m a union man. Period.” As he gears up for reelection, the president’s first political rally is being held at a union gathering on the other side of Pennsylvania, punctuating just how much Biden is counting on labor support to carry him to a second term — especially in a critical battleground state.

The symmetry is no accident. Rallying labor activists on Saturday at Philadelphia’s convention center can help Biden’s campaign spark enthusiasm and tap early organizing muscle. That may eventually boost Democratic voter turnout in the city’s suburbs and other key parts of Pennsylvania, which in 2020 helped him flip the state where Biden was born from Donald Trump.

“It speaks to this president’s visceral understanding that, when the labor movement in the United States is strong, the economy and our democracy are strong,” said Mary Kay Henry, international president of the 2-million-member Service Employees International Union. “He sees the role that working people and unions play in everything that he’s trying to make happen.”

Many of the country’s top unions, including the AFL-CIO, American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, announced Friday their endorsements of Biden’s 2024 campaign — the first time the groups have done so in a coordinated manner and this early in the presidential election cycle.

“We wanted to have all of the unions onboard and making a very strong statement,” said Lee Saunders, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and head of the AFL-CIO’s political committee, who pushed for the coordinated endorsements. “We’re going to hit the ground running and make it clear that all of labor is supportive of the president, and we’re going to do what is necessary to get him reelected.”

The announcement was similar to one Wednesday night, when top environmental and climate groups teamed up for a joint endorsement of Biden’s reelection.

Biden has used executive actions to promote worker organizing, personally cheered unionization efforts at corporate giants like Amazon and authorized federal funding to aid union members’ pensions. He’s also traveled the country, trumpeting how union labor is building bridges and improving train tunnels as part of the bipartisan, \$1.1 trillion public works package Congress passed in 2021.

Though the number of workers belonging to a union has risen, overall union membership rates nationwide fell to an all-time low in 2022. The country’s largest unions have nonetheless built sprawling get-out-the-vote efforts, which Biden is counting on to help turn out his supporters in pivotal swing states.

Still, the White House’s relationship with labor has occasionally been tested, such as in December when some union activists criticized Biden for signing legislation preventing a nationwide rail strike.

The United Auto Workers said last month that it wasn’t immediately endorsing Biden’s reelection campaign due to concerns over the administration’s efforts to transition the U.S. into a nation reliant on electric vehicles. Biden supporters attribute the holdout to the union’s new leadership, which is taking a more confrontational posture ahead of bargaining sessions with the major auto companies.

Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., who leads the Senate Democrats’ campaign arm, said “we still have a lot of time right now between now and the election” and that the auto worker union will likely endorse Biden’s reelection eventually.

“He’s clearly, probably, the most pro-union president we’ve had in a very long time, if ever,” Peters said.

Meanwhile, ongoing strikes have sometimes complicated the administration’s messaging.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre has given conflicting comments on whether the administration weighs in on strikes that are in progress, saying in early May that “we don’t speak to an ongoing strike” when asked about Hollywood writers, yet offering support earlier this month to striking journalists

at the Gannett newspaper chain.

The White House press office also apologized last week for crossing a digital picket line by referencing in a news release coverage from the news outlet Insider, where reporters are striking.

Biden nonetheless frequently addresses union gatherings and seems to revel in doing so. Though Saturday is his first campaign rally, mere hours after he announced that he was seeking reelection in April, the president made an official visit to the North America's Building Trades Unions Legislative Conference in Washington and declared, "I make no apologies for being labeled the most pro-union president in American history."

His economic message can also resonate with non-union members. Charlotte Valyo, Democratic Party chairwoman of Chester County in Philadelphia's suburbs, which Biden carried comfortably in 2020.

"There are issues that are universal, regardless of socioeconomic status, or whether you're in the suburbs or the cities or rural areas," Valyo said. But she also said that the top issue among Chester County voters was defense of abortion rights after the Supreme Court struck down the constitutional right to an abortion last summer.

"Roe v. Wade is huge," Valyo said.

Even as Biden won major endorsements from union leadership in 2020, meanwhile, some rank-and-file members supported Trump. Biden won the support of about six in 10 union members then, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of the national electorate. That's a healthy, but not commanding, margin.

Brent Booker, general president of the Laborers' International Union of North America, which represents mostly construction and energy sector workers and endorsed Biden last week, said that a key reason the union announced it was backing Biden so early was to ensure its members know how much his administration has accomplished, especially with the public works law.

"We saw what 2016 to 2020 looked like and those policies — or lack thereof — for our membership," Booker said. Noting that Trump is again running for president, he added, "If it is Biden vs. Trump part two, I can point to: 'What did the Trump administration do on infrastructure? And what did the Biden administration do on infrastructure?'"

Henry also noted that her union "had some small percentage of members that were for Trump" in the past. But she said the group has worked to counter that with ongoing messaging on union websites, through social medial campaigns and field staff work and even via paper leaflets — and that such efforts continue during canvassing this summer.

She said Biden's pro-labor reelection message is a strong one, but also cautioned that the president, when he speaks to voters, refrain from against getting "bogged down in the recitation of accomplishment" and instead makes clear "how those accomplishments are going to make a difference in people's everyday lives."

"Talking about how he understands that, for the vast majority of the American people, there's still a lot of struggle to make ends meet," Henry said, "and that he's tried to use his first four years in office to intervene in that struggle."

## Prince Harry and Meghan Markle part ways with Spotify after less than a year of 'Archetypes' podcast

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

The production company founded by Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, is splitting ways with Spotify less than a year after the debut of their podcast "Archetypes."

It is unclear why the podcast, hosted by Meghan, is leaving the platform but Spotify and Archewell Audio said in a joint statement that the decision was mutual.

Archewell landed a multiyear partnership with Spotify in 2020 to create podcasts and shows that would tell stories through diverse voices and perspectives.

The podcast premiered in August last year with tennis great Serena Williams as a guest and it was an

instant hit.

It topped Spotify charts in seven countries, including the U.S. and the U.K., and it won the top podcast award at the People's Choice awards last year.

"I loved digging my hands into the process, sitting up late at night in bed, working on the writing and creative. And I loved digging deep into meaningful conversation with my diverse and inspiring guests, laughing and learning with them, and with each of you listening," Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, said at the time.

The show also had as guests Mariah Carey, Trevor Noah, Mindy Kaling and Paris Hilton.

Tech companies have been cutting costs in a rough economic environment and Spotify has not been immune. Six months after announcing that it would cut 6% of its global workforce, or about 600 jobs, Spotify said last week that it was trimming another 200 jobs.

The company said at the time that it would be combining podcast networks Parcast and Gimlet into its Spotify Studios operation.

Prince Harry has been at the High Court of London this month. He is accusing the publisher of the Daily Mirror of using unlawful techniques on an "industrial scale" to score front-page scoops on his life. The Duke of Sussex became the first senior member of the royal family to testify in more than a century.

## Central Park birder Christian Cooper is turning his viral video fame into a memoir and TV show

By LEANNE ITALIE AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There's nothing that can keep Christian Cooper from enjoying his "happy place," the bird-friendly Ramble of Central Park — not even his tense, viral video encounter three years ago with a woman walking her dog off leash in his refuge.

Cooper is a lifelong birder, and Black, a relative rarity for the pastime. The dog owner is Amy Cooper, who is white and no relation. His video of her pleading with a 911 operator to "send the cops" because, she falsely claimed, an African American man was threatening her life has been viewed more than 45 million times on social media.

Much has happened to each Cooper since.

She was fired by an investment firm and a judge tossed her lawsuit challenging the dismissal. Later, a misdemeanor charge against her was dropped after she completed a program on racial bias.

He scored a memoir, out this week, and has his own series on Nat Geo Wild, traveling the U.S. doing what he loves most: birding. "Extraordinary Birder with Christian Cooper" premieres Saturday.

Something else happened the day the two Coopers clashed. Just hours later, George Floyd was killed under the knee of a white police officer more than 1,000 miles away in Minneapolis. They had no way of knowing that, of course, but Christian Cooper told The Associated Press in a recent interview he had another Black man, Philando Castile, on his mind when he flipped his phone camera to record.

Castile was fatally shot in the Minneapolis area in 2016 by an officer who wrongly thought the 32-year-old was reaching for a gun during a traffic stop. Castile's girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, had the presence of mind to hit record on her phone, and her livestream on Facebook touched off protests around the country. (The officer who shot Castile was acquitted by a jury.)

Christian Cooper's decision to record was personal but routine for birders trying to convince park officials to do something about dogs off leashes where signs clearly prohibited it to protect plantings in The Ramble and leave the birds undisturbed. He was polite but firm as he spoke off-camera while Amy Cooper raged.

"I thought to myself, you know what? They're going to shoot us dead no matter what we do. And if that's the case, I'm going out with my dignity intact," he told the AP.

For a second, he added, "I was like, oh, yeah, when a white woman accuses a Black man, I know what that means. I know what trouble that can mean in my life. Maybe I should just stop recording and maybe this will all go away in a split second. Then I thought, nah, I'm not going to be complicit in my own de-



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humanization.”

Amy Cooper never apologized directly to him, though she issued a statement of regret. And since then, Christian Cooper has done some soul-searching on what it must be like, at least sometimes, for women to feel unsafe in public outdoor spaces.

“I would hate to think that I would go through a situation like that and not learn something myself. And so I try to keep in mind now that, yes, I’m perfectly comfortable in The Ramble. It’s my happy place. But that’s not necessarily true of everyone,” he said.

Amy Cooper demanded he stop recording, upset when he offered her cocker spaniel, Henry, a dog treat. It’s a tactic controversial among birders frustrated by unleashed dogs in The Ramble. “It’s a very in-your-face move. You know, no bones about that. I haven’t done it since,” he said.

He declined to cooperate with prosecutors in the criminal case against Amy Cooper. It was an election cycle, he said, so it felt performative. But also, he felt, she had been punished enough through public disgrace.

“I decided I kind of have to err on the side of mercy, particularly weighing with that a sense of proportionality because I had not been harmed. I had not been thrown to the ground by the police or, God forbid, worse. I had never even had to interact with the police. I’m sure my opinion would be different if I had,” he said.

Now, Cooper is all about spreading the gospel of birding once again. His book, “Better Living through Birding: Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World,” opens with the Central Park encounter, and then launches into his life:

How birding helped him connect to the world as a closeted gay child in his predominantly white Long Island hometown. How all things Star Trek, science fiction and Marvel Comics have sustained him to this day, at age 60.

“The cure to my outsider status was to go outside, outside of myself, outside of my own head, outside into nature. Because you can’t go looking for birds without really focusing on what you’re doing, and focusing on the natural world around you,” he said.

“And when you do that, you can’t be preoccupied anymore about, ‘Oh my God, I feel so horrible.’”

As a longtime board member of the New York City Audubon Society, Cooper has seen the ranks of Black birders increase, and he has participated in a movement among National Audubon Society chapters to cast off the name of John James Audubon. The 19th-century artist and naturalist known for his paintings of North American bird species was an anti-abolitionist who owned, purchased and sold enslaved people.

Cooper’s chapter of the society is in the process of coming up with a new name, though the parent organization declined to do the same.

With his book, Cooper said, “I hope to reach a whole mass of people who have never really thought about birds or maybe haven’t engaged with nature on that level. If I can communicate some of my passion for birding, for birds, and get them to sort of open their awareness just a little bit more to these creatures around them, because they are spectacular, then the book will have achieved its goal.”

On Nat Geo (the series hits Disney+ on June 21), Cooper serves as host and was a consulting producer. He’s a kid in a wonderful, winged candy shop.

The six episodes have him scaling a Manhattan bridge tagging peregrine falcon chicks, navigating volcanic terrain in Hawaii in search of elusive honeycreepers, and trekking rainforests in Puerto Rico to check on fertility issues among parrots. He also shot in Palm Springs, California, and Washington, D.C., as well as Selma, Alabama, where members of his father’s family once lived.

Cooper has spent time in public schools teaching kids about birding. He wants to reach even more with the fame he earned the hard way.

“I’m hopeful that a lot of young Black kids will see maybe one of the first big birding shows on TV with a black host leading the show and think, ‘Oh, maybe that’s something I can do, too.’ That would be awesome.”

Find Leanne Italie on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/litalie>

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## 'The Full Monty' returns 25 years on, with its politics laid bare

By LIZZIE KNIGHT Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The Sheffield strippers of "The Full Monty" return 25 years on, in a new TV series that wears its politics on its sleeve.

In the much-loved original movie, a group of unemployed men from the north of England decide to form a striptease act in a desperate attempt to raise money after the local steelworks closed down.

A new comedy-drama TV series from the same writer, Simon Beaufoy, and producer, Uberto Pasolini, returns to those characters more than two decades later in a compelling portrait of contemporary Britain. After the dismantling of heavy industry, the area has been subjected to an erosion of public services and the welfare safety net.

"The politics are in there," actor Steve Huison told The Associated Press recently. "You don't have to be slammed in the face with them but hopefully people will see it and realize, 'Oh, you know, that's where I'm at at the moment.'"

The original movie was a surprise international hit, earning nearly \$260 million and even spawning a musical in 2000 and a play in 2013. Robert Carlyle, who plays grifter Gary "Gaz" Schofield, attributes that success to its universal themes.

"One of the principal reasons why it did have such an appeal worldwide, particularly in Europe, was that places like Sheffield exist all over Europe, and all over the U.S., if you think of it, you know, probably Detroit or something like that. The death of the car industry there is similar to the death of the steel industry in Sheffield," Carlyle said.

The 1997 movie was nominated for four Academy Awards, including best picture, and won one for Anne Dudley's score.

The men of "The Full Monty" — older but not necessarily wiser — do not strip in the TV series, but are struggling to keep up with developments in modern society and, in some cases, to survive. It co-stars original castmembers Tom Wilkinson, Mark Addy, Wim Snape, Paul Clayton and Paul Barber.

Original star Hugo Speer, who once taught King Charles III a dance routine from the movie at the then-prince's 50th birthday party, was sacked from the show after allegations of inappropriate conduct, but does make a brief appearance in the series.

Beaufoy co-wrote the series with frequent collaborator Alice Nutter, the Chumbawamba singer who's also written for "Trust" and "The White Princess." Unlike the movie, the new TV series doesn't just focus on the plight of working class men; women are front and center in the story, no longer just sidelined as wives.

"You know, from the original to the series, I felt that Simon had been incredibly generous," said Lesley Sharp, who returns as Jean. "He and Alice have invested really beautifully in other female characters."

The series has a new character, Destiny, a tearaway teen played by Talitha Wing who has inherited her father Gaz's tendency to get her friends into trouble, but has a steely determination to get on in life.

"There's really, really strong women," said Wing ("Alex Rider," "Wolfe"). "It's fantastic to see and to play as well."

The eight-part original series from FX is now available on Hulu in the U.S. and Disney+ in the U.K.

## Live Nation and SeatGeek say you'll see true costs up front as Biden pushes to end hidden junk fees

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden highlighted progress in chipping away at hidden junk fees tacked on to ticket, lodging and other prices as a "win for consumers" as major company executives meeting with him at the White House announced they'll start showing customers the real cost up front.

Live Nation, which is based in Beverly Hills, California, said Thursday that it will provide customers with upfront all-in pricing — meaning the actual purchase price including service charges and any other fees — for its owned venues by September and that Ticketmaster will give consumers the option to view all-in

pricing up front for other venues on the live-entertainment tickets platform. SeatGeek, based in New York, will unveil features to make it easier to browse for tickets with the true cost displayed.

Biden, who met with those and other companies that have taken steps to embrace more transparency, including Airbnb, prioritized the effort to combat surprise or undisclosed fees in his State of the Union address and has called for legislation, regulation and private sector action to end them. The Democratic president, at Thursday's event, praised actions by companies that have eliminated or plan to eliminate those surprise fees.

The consumer advocacy push is part of Biden's pitch to voters in his 2024 reelection bid that government can help improve their lives in big and small ways.

Besides the moves by Live Nation and SeatGeek, San Francisco-based Airbnb rolled out its all-in pricing tool in December, after Biden first called on companies to stop hiding fees.

"These are just the latest private sector leaders who are responding to my call to action," Biden said, saying junk fees "can add hundreds of dollars a month and make it harder for families to pay their bills."

"I'm asking their competitors to follow suit and adopt an all-in pricing as well," Biden said. "These actions matter and it's inspiring companies to change their practices."

National Economic Council director Lael Brainard said in a statement that the president "has been working to lower costs for hardworking families by bringing down inflation, capping insulin prices for seniors, and eliminating hidden junk fees."

"More companies are heeding the President's call so that Americans know what they're paying for up front and can save money as a result," Brainard said.

## **China calls hacking report 'far-fetched' and accuses the US of targeting the cybersecurity industry**

BEIJING (AP) — China's government on Friday rejected as "far-fetched and unprofessional" a report by a U.S. security firm that blamed Chinese-linked hackers for attacks on hundreds of public agencies, schools and other targets around the world.

A foreign ministry spokesperson repeated accusations that Washington carries out hacking attacks and complained the cybersecurity industry rarely reports on them.

Mandiant's report came ahead of a visit to Beijing by Secretary of State Antony Blinken aimed at repairing relations that have been strained by disputes over human rights, security and other irritants. Blinken's visit was planned earlier this year but was canceled after what the U.S. government said was a Chinese spy balloon flew over the United States.

The report said hackers targeted email to engage in "espionage activity in support of the People's Republic of China."

"The relevant content is far-fetched and unprofessional," said the Chinese spokesperson, Wang Wenbin.

"American cybersecurity companies continue to churn out reports on so-called cyberattacks by other countries, which have been reduced to accomplices for the U.S. government's political smear against other countries," Wang said.

The latest attacks exploited a vulnerability in a Barracuda Networks email system and targeted foreign ministries in Southeast Asia, other government agencies, trade offices and academic organizations in Taiwan and Hong Kong, according to Mandiant.

It described the attacks as the biggest cyber espionage campaign known to be conducted by a "China-nexus threat actor" since a 2021 attack on Microsoft Exchange. That affected tens of thousands of computers.

China is regarded, along with the United States and Russia, as a leader in the development of computer hacking for military use. Security consultants say its military also supports hobbyist hacking clubs that might work for outsiders.

Barracuda announced on June 6 that some of its email security appliances had been hacked as early

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as October, giving the intruders a back door to compromised networks.

Mandiant said the email attacks focused on issues that are priorities for China, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. It said the hackers searched for email accounts of people working for governments of political or strategic interest to China at the time they were participating in diplomatic meetings.

Earlier this year, Microsoft said state-backed Chinese hackers have been targeting U.S. critical infrastructure and could be laying the technical groundwork for the potential disruption of critical communications between the U.S. and Asia during future crises.

## Today in History: June 17, South Carolina church shooting

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, June 17, the 168th day of 2023. There are 197 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 17, 2015, nine people were shot to death in a historic African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina; suspect Dylann Roof was arrested the following morning. (Roof was convicted of federal hate crimes and sentenced to death; he later pleaded guilty to state murder charges and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.)

On this date:

In 1775, the Revolutionary War Battle of Bunker Hill resulted in a costly victory for the British, who suffered heavy losses.

In 1885, the Statue of Liberty arrived in New York Harbor aboard the French ship *Isere* (ee-SEHR').

In 1930, President Herbert Hoover signed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which boosted U.S. tariffs to historically high levels, prompting foreign retaliation.

In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Abington (Pa.) School District v. Schempp*, struck down, 8-1, rules requiring the recitation of the Lord's Prayer or reading of Biblical verses in public schools.

In 1967, China successfully tested its first thermonuclear (hydrogen) bomb.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon's eventual downfall began with the arrest of five burglars inside the Democratic headquarters in Washington, D.C.'s, Watergate complex.

In 1994, after leading police on a slow-speed chase on Southern California freeways, O.J. Simpson was arrested and charged with murder in the slayings of his ex-wife, Nicole, and her friend, Ronald Goldman. (Simpson was later acquitted in a criminal trial but held liable in a civil trial.)

In 2008, hundreds of same-sex couples got married across California on the first full day that gay marriage became legal by order of the state's highest court.

In 2009, President Barack Obama extended some benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees. Nevada Sen. John Ensign resigned from the GOP leadership a day after admitting an affair with a former campaign staffer.

In 2019, Iran announced that it was breaking compliance with the international accord that kept it from making nuclear weapons; the announcement meant that Iran could soon start to enrich uranium to just a step away from weapons-grade levels. The Trump administration followed Iran's announcement by ordering 1,000 more troops to the Middle East.

In 2020, prosecutors in Atlanta brought murder charges against white police officer Garrett Rolfe in the fatal shooting of a Black man, Rayshard Brooks, following a struggle; a second officer, Devin Brosnan, was charged with aggravated assault and violating his oath. (Both officers are awaiting trial.) Q

Ten years ago: A G-8 summit of wealthy nations opened in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, under a cloud, with Russian President Vladimir Putin defiantly rejecting calls from the U.S., Britain and France to halt his political and military support for Syrian leader Bashar Assad's regime. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7-2 that states can't demand proof of citizenship from people registering to vote in federal elections unless they get federal or court approval to do so.

Five years ago: Former first lady Laura Bush, writing in the Washington Post, said the policy of separating

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immigrant parents and children along the nation's southern border was "cruel" and "immoral." Conservative Ivan Duque was elected Colombia's next president, after promising to change parts of a peace accord with leftist rebels. Brooks Koepka (KEHP'-kuh) won the U.S. Open for the second straight year, becoming the seventh golfer to win the event back-to-back.

One year ago: The European Union's executive arm recommended putting Ukraine on a path to membership, a symbolic boost for a country that was fending off a Russian onslaught. SpaceX, the rocket ship company run by Tesla CEO Elon Musk, fired several employees involved in an open letter that blasted the billionaire for his behavior. Vince McMahon stepped down as CEO and chairman of WWE during an investigation into alleged misconduct involving the longtime leader and public face of the pro wrestling organization. (McMahon would return as a board member six months later.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Peter Lupus is 91. Movie director Ken Loach is 87. Singer Barry Manilow is 80. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich is 80. Comedian Joe Piscopo is 72. Actor Mark Linn-Baker is 69. Actor Jon Gries (gryz) is 66. Rock singer Jello Biafra is 65. Movie producer-director-writer Bobby Farrelly is 65. Actor Thomas Haden Church is 63. Actor Greg Kinnear is 60. Actor Kami Cotler is 58. Olympic gold medal speed skater Dan Jansen is 58. Actor Jason Patric is 57. Actor-comedian Will Forte is 53. Latin pop singer Paulina Rubio is 52. Tennis player Venus Williams is 43. Actor Arthur Darvill is 41. Actor Jodie Whittaker is 41. Actor Manish Dayal is 40. Country singer Mickey Guyton is 40. Actor Marie Avgeropoulos is 37. Rapper Kendrick Lamar is 36. NHL forward Nikita Kucherov is 30. Actor KJ Apa is 26.