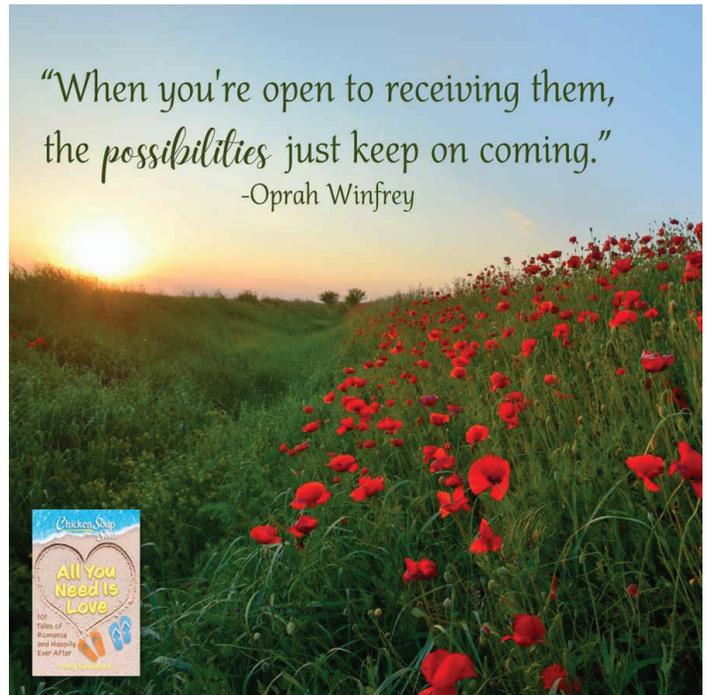


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## Groton Community Calendar

### Wednesday, June 21

Senior Menu: Turkey sub sandwich, lettuce and tomato, macaroni salad, watermelon.

Jr. Legion hosts Hamlin, 1 game, 8 p.m.; Legion hosts Hamlin, 1 game, 6 p.m.; June 21: U10R/W hosts Borge, 2 games, 5:30 p.m.; U8 Red hosts Borge, 5:30 p.m., 2 games; Softball at Clark (U8 at 6 p.m.)

### Thursday, June 22

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, corn, apple juice, mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.

Jr. Teener host Webster, 2 games, 5:30 p.m.; June 22: U12BB vs. Borge 12 at Aberdeen North Complex, 2 games, 5:30 p.m.; Softball hosts Mellette (U10 6:00 DH (Pink/White); U12 6:00 DH)

### Friday, June 23

Senior Menu: Tuna salad croissant, pea and cheese salad, mixed fruit.

Softball at Webster (U12 6:00 DH); T-Ball Gold hosts Andover, 6 p.m.; Jr. Legion at Lake Norden, 1 game, 7 p.m.; Legion at Lake Norden, 1 game, 5 p.m.

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

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

JANUARY 24, 2023

### World in Brief

during a visit to Beijing aimed to ease tensions between the two countries.

The U.S. is set to introduce heavy new sanctions on Myanmar's military junta this week, hitting the country's Foreign Trade Bank and Myanmar Investment and Commercial Bank, after the regime was accused of severe human rights violations.

President Joe Biden welcomes Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for two days of talks at the White House to bolster strategic ties. Democratic lawmakers urged the president to raise human rights issues during their discussion.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Ukraine's armed forces said that Russian occupiers in a city in the southern Kherson region are telling locals to evacuate in the event of a breakthrough by Kyiv.

### TALKING POINTS

"Some people say that we are neutral. But we are not neutral. We are on the side of peace," Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said of India's position on the Russia-Ukraine war during an interview with The Wall Street Journal.

"Not on God's green earth, as the phrase goes. I have been pretty consistently—including recently on Fox News—making the case for his candidacy," California Gov. Gavin Newsom said when asked during an Associated Press interview if he plans to challenge President Joe Biden for the 2024 Democratic presidential nomination.

"Dr. Dre's groundbreaking early work laid a foundation for hip-hop as we know it today. As a champion for some of today's biggest artists and a successful entrepreneur, he changed the culture around hip-hop," ASCAP President Paul Williams said of the organization's decision to give its inaugural ASCAP Hip-Hop Icon Award to rapper and producer Dr. Dre.

### WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

Special Counsel John Durham will appear before the House Judiciary Committee at 9 a.m. ET to discuss his report on the FBI's investigation into Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell is set to testify before the House Financial Services Committee at 10 a.m. ET as part of a two-day congressional hearing on monetary policy.

The Senate Banking Committee is scheduled to hold a nomination hearing to review President Joe Biden's pick for Federal Reserve Vice Chair, Philip Jefferson, at 10 a.m. ET. The committee will also consider the renomination of Fed Gov. Lisa Cook and Adriana Kugler to fill Jefferson's current seat on the central bank's board.

President Joe Biden will greet Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the White House, where the two leaders will have dinner as Modi's official state visit begins.

The U.K. and Ukraine are co-hosting a two-day International Ukraine Recovery Conference, which starts today in London. The event's goal is to mobilize support for Ukraine's recovery as Russia's war continues.

Summer 2023 begins with the arrival of the Summer Solstice.



**Pictured L to R: Clara Nolz, Mary Kay Kessler, Jackie Witlock, Aubrey O'Connel, Sharon Zastrow, Cyndy Larson.** (Courtesy Photo Alexa Schuring)

## Olive Grove Ladies Invitational Tournament

### Championship Flight

- 72 – Jackie Witlock and Aubrey O'Connel
- 76 – Suzie Easthouse and Angel McGregor
- 80 – Lyla Bultema and Dorene Borchard
- 80 – Lori Kulesa and Madonna Eckert
- 85 – Ellen Renner and Terri Holmes

### First Flight

- 81 – Cyndy Larson and Sharon Zastrow
- 84 – Haley Ellingson and Ashley Foster
- 84 – Cherry Baker and Chelle Naber
- 87 – Betty Dunker and Ranae Ball
- 90 – Brenda Waage and Sue Stanley

### Second Flight

- 91 - Clara Nolz and MaryKay Kessler
- 92 – Mavis Rossow and Sharon Sombke
- 96 – Julie Hinds and Denise Raap
- 98 – Deb Fredrickson and Michelle Johnson
- 110 – Katelyn Giedt and Betsy Harry
- 133 – Vicky Kramp and Jolene Townsend

### Pin Prizes

- Hole #4 Closest to the Pin – MaryKay Kessler
- Hole #2 Longest Drive – Angel McGregor
- Hole #9 Longest Putt – Ranae Ball (17'10")

## Groton council reviews comfort station plans, airport improvements

by Elizabeth Varin

A new combined tornado shelter and bathroom facility at the Groton City Park could cost as much as \$600,000.

That was the estimate given to the City Council on Tuesday evening, though a price tag for the city itself is anticipated to be quite a bit lower.

Discussion centered on which of three plans the council wants to move forward with as it looks to apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency grant funding geared toward creating stormproof facilities.

The federal grant money could cover about 85 percent of eligible costs to build the comfort space, said Ted Dickey, program coordinator at Northeast Council of Governments. However, those costs will likely only include one stall per bathroom and not include showers.

The plans presented to the council include a men's restroom with two urinals and one handicapped toilet stall, two sinks and two five-foot by three-foot showers. The women's restroom would include three stalls, two sinks and two showers. There would also be a family restroom with one toilet and sink, as well as a standing room as the main portion of the tornado shelter and a utility room.

A FEMA grant would cover the standing room and some of the bathroom facility costs, but likely not the family bathroom, the showers and two stalls per bathroom, Dickey said. Those would fall on the city to pay for.

The council looked through three options for the façade of the building. Option No. 1 includes two-toned pre-cast concrete walls, trusses and a gable roof. The trusses and roof would be added on top of a concrete shell that makes up the tornado shelter.

Option No. 2 includes a single-color pre-cast concrete shell with a flat roof that includes an overhang. Option No. 3 would be the same single-color pre-cast concrete shell, but the flat roof would not include any overhang.

The floor plan presented to the council has a standing room area that is 424 square feet, said Dean Marske, president and principal architect at HKG Architects based out of Aberdeen. That would leave room for 42 people at 10 square-feet per person or 84 at 5 square-feet per person.

The whole facility would be built to withstand a tornado, so the general cost of construction will likely be included, he said. However, some individual costs may not be included in the grant.

Marske asked the council for direction on which building façade the city would like to pursue.

However, Dickey and the council asked Marske to itemize costs more to figure out which would be eligible costs for the grant and which would be costs the city has to cover.

Mayor Scott Hanlon asked the council to consider which façade option they prefer. Later in the meeting, he polled the council members.

Hanlon, along with council men Brian Bahr, Jon Cutler and Jason Wambach, preferred the flat-roof with an overhang option.

Councilwoman Shirley Wells said she preferred the gable-roof option, but was hesitant because the trusses would not be tornado-proof.

Councilwoman Karyn Babcock also said she preferred the first option.

"It's because it's pretty, and we're girls," she joked of the two female council members preference.

The flat roof with an overhang was Babcock's second choice, and she added the third choice looked too much like a jail instead of a nice city facility.

Hanlon asked the council to keep thinking on the options presented.

### Roadway in the works at the Groton airport

The Groton airport is on the road to improvements... with a literal road in the works.

Darrell Hillestad reported he is getting farmers lined up to help haul dirt from the slough near the airport

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off of Highway 37 north of Groton. People from as far as Cresbard and Mina are coming to help move the dirt and create the roadway.

"It's going to be a lot of hauling. I'm not going to lie to you," he said. "...We're going to haul until we get sick of hauling.

"...This thing is getting crazy," he added. "People are hearing about it. We're trying to do it on a real tight budget. ...I'm not trying to spend your money, but we're trying to get an airport out here."

The immediate step is to get the road out there, he said. After that, he added, he hopes to have four hangars out there by next year.

Plans are already underway for the annual fly-in event, scheduled for September 9 and 10, Hillestad said.

Councilwoman Shirley Wells and Mayor Scott Hanlon thanked Hillestad for the work he has done and continues to do to make the airport a reality.

"If you build it, they will come," Hanlon said.

## **New vehicle on horizon for police department**

The police department may look into a newer vehicle after multiple problems with an older Ford the department has been having problems with.

Councilman Bahr told the council he and Councilman Kevin Nehls visited with Police Chief Stacy Mayou about the vehicle that has been causing problems for the department. The two councilmen took the vehicle on a drive, and weren't able to get it above 60 miles per hour.

"It needs a lot of help," Bahr said. "I mean, I drove it from the golf course to the clubhouse road, and we could only go 60."

The city has sunk a lot of money into repairs for the vehicle recently, and it's about time the police department looks into getting a replacement. Bahr asked the council to give the chief the OK to start looking for a different vehicle.

"I think we need to do it sooner rather than later," he said.

Mayor Hanlon said he would discuss options to trade in the vehicle or surplus it with the police chief.

## **In other action:**

- Pickleball court repairs could be coming soon. Mayor Hanlon told the council the company that originally worked on the courts will come back at the end of August to fill cracks and make some repairs on the courts. He also said the city should have someone down at the courts while the contractor is there to supervise the process. "I told Paul 'when those guys come down, call me.'"

- City offices will be closed July 3 and 4 for the Independence Day holiday. The city council meeting originally scheduled for July 4 has been rescheduled for July 6.

- Enrich Groton SoDak Treasurer Nancy Larsen updated the council on the new sound system at the Groton City Park. The about \$22,000 project was paid for by donors throughout the community. The equipment to utilize the new sound system has been delivered to City Hall. Larsen recommended putting in a right-to-use agreement that includes a deposit to make sure equipment is returned in good working order.

- Councilwoman Karyn Babcock asked for more information to be included on the bills presented to the council at its meetings. She said she would like to see which departments the bills are coming from. "Just something simple so we know where these bills are coming out of," she said.

- The council approved a \$30,000 change order from Dahme Construction Company for water system improvements. The original contract price (\$1,218,797.89) was already decreased to \$1,126,044.77 from a previous change order. Change order No. 2 increases the contract price to \$1,156,542.60. Change order No. 2 covers a bill from BNSF for a railroad flagger during installation of casing pipe under the rail road tracks.

- The council approved the second reading of an ordinance to reduce the timeframe from when the city lets a resident know about a sewer requirement violation to when the city can begin assessing penalties.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Native-led tourism alliance launches 'economic catalyst' tours on reservations

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JUNE 20, 2023 3:48 PM

South Dakota has fed off the state's connection to Native American history and heritage for decades, helping to propel the state's tourism industry to a reported \$7.6 billion economic impact in 2022.

The tourism crown jewel of South Dakota, the Black Hills, is a sacred place for the tribes that make up the Great Sioux Nation, the Oceti Sakowin. The region boasts attractions such as Black Elk Peak and the Crazy Horse Memorial (both named for historical Lakota figures) alongside attractions such as Mount Rushmore and Deadwood.

But actual tourism to the nine tribal nations and lands sharing South Dakota's geography hasn't kept pace with the rest of the state's attractions. A coordinated effort is now underway to bolster tourism on tribal lands.

The state Department of Tourism conducted a "niche travel survey" five years ago that demonstrated authentic Native American experiences are "of great interest to visitors." The department's 2022 return on investment study also showed that South Dakota's strengths compared to competitors include "offering Native American culture," said Katlyn Svendsen, department spokesperson, in an emailed statement.

That resulted in the Native-led South Dakota Native Tourism Alliance, which started in 2018 as a partnership between South Dakota Tourism, George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies and eight of South Dakota's nine tribal nations to assess tourism assets and challenges on reservations.

The group launched its marketing campaign this year along with its first large-scale tour last month across Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Standing Rock reservations. The alliance is running the tours through Trafalgar, an international guided tours company. About 25 tourists attended the first bus tour in May — bus tours can usually fit between 40 and 50 visitors.

The partnership is an opportunity for tribal nations to use tourism as an "economic catalyst," Svendsen said.

"We continue this work together because we believe in helping and being a resource to South Dakota's entire tourism industry, which our tribal nations are a part of," she said in an emailed statement.



**Dancers fill a powwow space.** (South Dakota Department of Tourism)

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**Lookout tower atop Black Elk Peak in the Black Hills.** (Makenzie

Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

But tourism existed on reservations years before the alliance formed. Tatanka Rez Tourz on Pine Ridge, a father-daughter operation owned by Guss and Tianna Yellowhair, is in its eighth year of business.

The two are members of the tourism alliance and have seen the interest in Native tourism grow since they started. By the end of April this year, the two already had 35 tours booked for the summer.

The tours consist of three-to four-hours drives through the Pine Ridge Reservation, stopping at Badlands National Park, touring organizations including Thunder Valley Community Development, and explaining daily life on the

reservation with stops at housing developments, Indian Health Service facilities, and tribal colleges. The Yellowhairs share stories, sing songs and share information with guests during the tour.

The tour ends at the Wounded Knee Massacre site, where they explain not only the historical tragedy but also share the importance of the modern Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons crisis.

"When somebody comes on our tour, we don't sugarcoat the history," Guss said. "We tell it like it is."

Frank Kills in Water is also a member of the tourism alliance and facilities director for the Rosebud Casino, a 20-minute drive south of Mission, the headquarters of the Sicangu Lakota, or the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Kills in Water started a small tourism business in the late 2000s but now owns a food truck and is training to be a tour operator for Trafalgar tours.

Kills in Water said the reservation tours are unique because the stories and information told by guides are handed down from ancestors rather than read from books. The tours also challenge misconceptions and prejudices tourists may have about Native Americans and reservations.

Six of the United States' poorest counties are in South Dakota and each are on reservations or have a high percentage of tribally owned land.

"Guests will take the informa-



**A sunrise silhouette of the entrance to the Wounded Knee Massacre memorial in South Dakota.** (Getty Images)

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**Tianna and Guss Yellowhair pose for a photo after being awarded the 2022 Excellence in Customer Service Tourism awarded by the American Indian Tourism Association.** (Courtesy of

Tatanka Rez Tourz)

South Dakota as a whole because it will translate into increased length of stay and visitor spending throughout the state.

The majority of the money guests spend on bus tours goes toward Trafalgar, but extra money guests spend on food or on artisan crafts at stops go directly to tribal members. That's a start toward economic development, Kills in Water said.

By encouraging artisans to sell their quillwork, beadwork, pottery and quilting, it not only allows for economic growth but encourages the revitalization of Native culture and those skills and values, Kills in Water said.

"These tours give guests a little insight into what we've come through with centuries of genocide, taking our land, killing our buffalo and trying to kill our spirituality – we've come through centuries of that and we're still here," Kills in Water said. "Tourism provides a catalyst of revitalization of our culture by showing guests who we are, what we do and the culture we've carried through the centuries."

*Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.*

tion they learned back with them to wherever they come from and share that information out," Kills in Water said. "Then the rest of the world won't think we live in tipis or think we're all drunks. It's time to change that narrative, because it is our time now to rewrite that narrative."

The nine-day North and South Dakota tour in May visited three South Dakota reservations and one North Dakota reservation, as well as national parks and monuments on the west side of the state. In addition to the typical stops at Crazy Horse and Mount Rushmore, the tour also visited the Wounded Knee Massacre site and Oglala Lakota Living History Village on Pine Ridge, along with a star knowledge presentation at Sinte Gleska University and a presentation by the Lakota Youth Development on language and spirituality reclamation on Rosebud.

The next bookable bus tours in 2023 are in August and September, with 2024 tours available from May through September.

Svensen added that bringing tourists onto reservations will benefit



**The 50-foot high stainless steel statue "Dignity of Sky and Earth" overlooks the Missouri River on a bluff near Chamberlain. Artist laureate Dale Lamphere designed the statue, which depicts an Indigenous woman in Plains-style dress receiving a star quilt.** (South Dakota Department of Tourism)

## COMMENTARY

# Solutions needed as societal changes strain wilderness rescue teams

MOLLY ABSOLON

When I was leading groups into the Wyoming wilderness in the 1990s, once we left a trailhead we were on our own.

If somebody got hurt, we could walk or carry the injured person out or send runners to the road to call for support. In the case of a life- or limb-threatening emergency, we could use a transponder to try to send a coded message to a passing aircraft, pleading for help.

Things have definitely changed.

"People expect to be rescued," said Tod Schimelfenig, who has been on the search and rescue team for Fremont County, Wyoming, since the 1970s. "Maybe it's that a whole generation has grown up with instant communication, and that drives what they do when they go into the wilderness."

What they do, according to Schimelfenig, is go farther and attempt more difficult objectives, which means demands on search and rescue teams have increased sharply over the last decade.

The United States has a patchwork of search and rescue organizations charged with responding to backcountry emergencies. Who comes to your aid depends on where you are and what land management agency is responsible. Most have volunteer teams that report to a local law enforcement officer, although some national parks, like Yosemite or Grand Teton, have paid crews on call.

In the 1930s, The Mountaineers, a Seattle-based climbing group, came up with what they called the Ten Essentials to help prepare people for outdoor emergencies. The checklist became ubiquitous. But it's longer now, says Maura Longden, a member of the Teton County Idaho Search and Rescue, who trains teams across the country.

In addition to practical things like water, food, a map and layers of clothing, the essentials list now includes cellphones, personal locating beacons and GPS devices. Communication is critical.

Carol Viau, who's been with Teton County, Wyoming, Search and Rescue for 23 years, says that many people choose climbing routes, ski descents and remote peaks just by surfing the Internet.

This past winter Viau helped rescue a skier who'd been injured in a fall while deep in the Tetons—a place he'd chosen online. He used his phone to call for assistance, and Teton County's SAR team brought him out.

Jim Webster has been involved in search and rescue since the 1970s and leads the Grand County, Utah, SAR team. He says today's outdoor recreationalists aren't as self-sufficient as they used to be.

This spring, Webster's team helped rescue a canyoneer who realized—midway down a rappel into a slot canyon—that her rope failed to reach the ground. She hung suspended in the air until rescuers were able to find her and haul her back out of the canyon.

Another spring rescue involved a solo boater who decided he wanted out from descending a flood-stage river. He couldn't—or wouldn't—go farther. Webster said he called for help and a rescue boat went to his aid.

Both of those calls had happy endings. But Webster's team has experienced the opposite, including recovering the body of a BASE jumper last fall.

Webster says his team of 30 to 35 people responds to around 120 calls per year, an average of two a week. But teams often get two or three calls in a single day. Most teams are made up of volunteers, though in the case of Grand County, volunteers get paid when they're on a call. Many have to take time off from work to respond.

This past winter in Wyoming, Viau says she was called out every day for a week—usually just as she was getting off her job as a guide at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. That stretched her eight-hour days into 12-plus-hour days. She's so busy, she says, she doesn't think she should own a dog.

It's undeniable that the volunteer search and rescue system is feeling the strain. Last October, Christo-

pher Boyer, executive director of the National Search and Rescue Association, told the PBS NewsHour the current system was "broke."

What's the solution? In Colorado, you can buy an inexpensive SAR card that reimburses a county for the cost of your rescue. Or what about diverting some tax revenue to equip and pay teams?

For now, these unsung heroes keep bringing a victim back alive. They do it even when the desperate caller has gone somewhere they probably shouldn't have — somewhere they couldn't leave without help.

*Molly Absolon is a contributor to Writers on the Range, [writersontherange.org](http://writersontherange.org), an independent nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She writes in Idaho.*

## After Dobbs, abortion access is harder, comes later and with a higher risk

BY: SOFIA RESNICK - JUNE 20, 2023 3:48 PM

In April, a Reddit user in Alabama posted a breathless message to the abortion subreddit the morning after learning she was pregnant. She guessed she was early, two or three weeks maybe.

"there's a clinic in GA about 3 hours away. They said they will do it as long as no heartbeat is found on the ultrasound. If they find a heartbeat what do I do then??"

Alabama, where abortion is a crime, is surrounded by states with abortion bans. But nearby Georgia currently allows a tiny window, which shuts once the embryo's cardiac activity registers on an ultrasound. This happens generally by six weeks' gestation, and the user was running out of time. And now she was sick to her stomach and passing gelatinous blood clots.

This very active subreddit is moderated around the clock by the Online Abortion Resource Squad, a group of mostly volunteers that debunk abortion misinformation and help users navigate a labyrinth of abortion bans and restrictions. The end of federal abortion rights changed access nationwide. Even ending a wanted pregnancy is now more difficult based on your income, how far along you are, and your state's ever-changing abortion laws.

In a plot twist for the user in Alabama, it turned out she had likely miscarried. "UPDATE!!!! My uterus is empty," she wrote. "Basically Alabama politicians made me drive across state lines and pay \$250 because I was too scared to go to my regular doctor."

But then there's the Reddit user who described weeping in a Planned Parenthood clinic because her pregnancy measured just a few days beyond its 19.6-week cutoff. Staff helped her make an appointment at another clinic. "I really want this to be over with," she wrote. "Now to just figure out transportation for next Saturday. Easy enough. \*fingers crossed\*"

It's been a year since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that states could criminalize all or most abortions, and now 15 states fully or mostly ban the procedure, while others have begun enacting gestational limits and other restrictions. That's left the hundreds of thousands of U.S. women and minors who annually seek abortions forced to travel if they can, overwhelming the abortion clinics in states where it's legal. This has led to astronomical patient costs and major care delays.

As a result, abortions in the second and third trimester of pregnancy appear to be on the rise, abortion providers, public health researchers, and patient advocates told States Newsroom. Many patients, they say, are experiencing the higher risks of complication, anxiety, and trauma that sometimes come with abortion later in pregnancy. And advocates say this situation is likely to get worse, with an abortion-provider shortage and states continuing to throw up new legislative barriers.

"Right now, in any state, there's just no scenario where people aren't getting delayed because of wait times for appointments," said Ariella Messing, a PhD candidate in bioethics and health policy from Johns Hopkins University, who founded OARS.

Messing told States Newsroom she spends about 80 hours a week managing the abortion subreddit and helping connect people to abortion providers and financial and practical support. OARS has been monitor-

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ing the subreddit since 2019, but activity spiked after Texas outlawed most abortions in 2021. Since Dobbs, it's exploded. Messing said OARS decided to keep r/abortion open during the Reddit blackout protest.

Some of the abortion cases are so complicated and medically necessary that Messing, who previously worked as a case manager for the Baltimore Abortion Fund, personally gets involved, sometimes spending a whole day trying to help someone desperate to terminate a pregnancy under a ticking clock.

The woman for whom it took eight weeks to terminate a pregnancy that had become dangerous kept Messing up at night, until that person terminated, finally, at 27 weeks.

"This wasn't how they should be getting care – by a random stranger on Reddit," Messing said.

## **Overwhelmed abortion providers and assistance groups**

While the true extent to which Dobbs has prevented people from getting abortions remains to be seen, emerging research suggests that women and minors are increasingly unable to end a pregnancy, especially people of color and people living in poverty.

The Society of Family Planning has been measuring the number of abortions reported by abortion clinics and hospitals. In the nine months after the Dobbs decision, the rate of medication abortion jumped, but overall, providers reported more than 25,000 fewer abortions nationwide.

The Society's latest #WeCount report did not capture how many people self-managed outside the formal health care system, or how far along patients were. But University of California San Francisco professor Ushma Upadhyay, who co-chairs the #WeCount project, said it would be logical for gestational ages to be rising, given the increased obstacles in accessing care quickly.

Additionally, brand-new research from the university's Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health program finds a nationwide increase in providers offering abortion later in gestation than they were previously due to rising demand, as well as more clinics offering telehealth medication abortion. But the demand is still overshadowing the need, especially later in pregnancy.

"The states where there are bans now, there were very few clinics in those states, because there were so many restrictions," Upadhyay said. "But those clinics that were open did offer abortion care till later, usually midway of the second trimester. ... So, right now there's huge swaths of the country where later abortion is simply unavailable."

Part of the problem is that so few clinics in the U.S., especially post Dobbs, go beyond 20 weeks' gestation. The vast majority are independent clinics not part of the Planned Parenthood network, which has more resources and political clout than the independents.

There is a tiny cluster of clinics that provide abortions in the third trimester, on a case-by-case basis. One is in Boulder, Colorado, and the others are concentrated in and around Washington D.C., which has become a major national abortion destination.

Abortion providers say they are scheduling visits weeks out.

"Anecdotally, we are seeing in some places, people are being pushed, or people are having to delay their care, and it has resulted in people having procedures one to two weeks later than they then we saw the previous year," said Melissa Fowler, chief program officer of the National Abortion Federation, which provides resources for abortion clinics and funds some patient costs. "And of course, we're also seeing a delay with people who need later care as well."

Dr. Sarah Traxler, the chief medical officer for Planned Parenthood North Central States, testified before the Minnesota lawmakers back in March about a 40% rise in second-trimester cases since Dobbs. The region encompasses Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota, with the bulk of patients going to Minnesota.

"Since June, I have cared for patients from everywhere," Traxler testified. "I've seen patients who've flown from Louisiana, only to find that their complex pregnancy condition kept them from being seen in a freestanding clinic like mine, forcing them to continue a dangerous pregnancy because hospital-based care was not available to them."

## **Astronomical costs**

A first-trimester abortion can range from \$500-\$1,000 to tens of thousands in the second trimester, and

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up to \$25,000 in the third, said Jade Hurley, communications manager for the DC Abortion Fund, one of more than 100 mutual aid organizations to crop up during the past two decades to help cover these steep costs, which are compounded by travel, transportation, and child care costs.

Financial and logistical barriers to abortion are not new, but Dobbs has exacerbated them. Shortly after the Supreme Court originally enshrined federal abortion rights in 1973, anti-abortion lawmakers began passing public-insurance bans on abortion, as a way to at least prevent part of the population from accessing this medical procedure.

"I would certainly like to prevent, if I could legally, anybody having an abortion – a rich woman, a middle class woman, or a poor woman," said the late U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) during a floor debate in 1976 to defend a ban on the use of Medicaid insurance for abortion. "Unfortunately, the only vehicle available is the [Medicaid appropriations] bill."

In D.C., as in 32 states, public insurance cannot fund abortion, according to the health policy research group KFF. And as costs rise, abortion and practical-support funds around the country report receiving more higher dollar requests. These days funds typically have to work together, pooling grants from multiple funds just to serve one patient. Representatives from multiple abortion funds told States Newsroom they are also receiving more donations than at any other time, but they say the need is still overwhelming demand.

Hurley says in 2023, the fund has pledged almost \$1 million to about 1,000 patients getting abortions in the D.C. area. On a recent webinar hosted by the abortion-rights activist group Reproaction, Hurley said individual pledge amounts made a "humongous jump" from \$200 to \$600.

"We're seeing a huge amount of people coming from all over the country," Hurley said. "We had a person come from California very recently, which is honestly, you know, it's shocking, because that's so far away. ... We're dealing with funding gaps that we didn't even know existed. And I think overall we don't even know the true need that's out there, from D.C. to across the country."

## **Medication abortions are getting later, too**

Two months ago, a 40-year-old woman in Arizona delivered a lifeless 13-week-old fetus into a plastic food storage container. The woman, who asked not to be named out of fear of criminal prosecution, told States Newsroom that the fetus had obvious deformities. She was a much wanted rainbow baby, the term given to a baby born after a pregnancy loss.

Until recently this mother of seven was "1,000% against abortion." One stillbirth separates two sets of three kids. Her eighth pregnancy, last year, resulted in a twinless twin. But this pregnancy was even grimmer: What started out as triplets became one surviving embryo. At 13 weeks, the remaining living fetus was diagnosed with trisomy 18, a fatal genetic condition.

She voraciously read the literature on trisomy 18 and learned that the vast majority of babies born with this disease die before their first birthday, within months, days, or hours. For her the decision to terminate was simple. "Imagine bringing this baby home and all my kids love her and get attached, and then she died at 3 months or something?" she said.

But getting timely, legal care was a different story.

Her state currently allows abortion up to 15 weeks' gestation, while an 1864 total abortion ban works its way through the courts. However, Arizona criminalizes something only a handful states do: Terminating a pregnancy because of fetal genetic abnormalities. Her doctor said she couldn't terminate the pregnancy but suggested she go to an abortion clinic and not disclose she'd had genetic testing done. But the nearest clinics were booked out until May and June. A clinic in Nevada could see her, but she didn't have the money or ability to travel.

Because she's had so many kids and two stillbirths, the Arizona woman decided to go outside the medical system. She had her stepdad get her misoprostol over the border in Mexico. This medication is typically used to treat ulcers but is also an abortifacient, and it's available over the counter for around \$30 in Mexico. The typical two-drug regimen approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration two decades ago comprises the hormone-blocker mifepristone followed by misoprostol, which causes the uterus to

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contract and expel the embryonic or fetal remains.

Medication abortion – whether obtained at a clinic or via legal telemedicine, or by ordering pills from abroad – has helped fill an access gap since Dobbs. Most often women are terminating with the same two-drug regimen approved by the FDA. However, that protocol is approved only for up to 10 weeks' gestation, while the World Health Organization okays the protocol for 12 weeks.

But many women are taking the medication as soon as they get them, even if that means well into the second trimester, because of travel and shipping delays, which fundamentally changes the experience. Rather than experiencing what may describe as moderate to heavy bleeding and moderate to excruciating cramps, second-trimester medication abortions involve delivering a more developed fetus, with its umbilical cord and placenta.

It took the Arizona woman about seven hours to deliver the fetus and placenta using the misoprostol-only regime, followed by weeks of bleeding. This method is considered safe and effective, but is associated with higher rates of incomplete abortion, and pain. Days later, the woman's doctor found retained placenta inside her. She says she couldn't imagine having done this without her birthing experience or guidance from her regular medical providers.

"Being like my basically ninth delivery, I knew what to do," she said, "I would never just give the pills to somebody that has never had a baby. ... I understood delivering the baby and then delivering the placenta, and my water breaking. But if you're like a first-time mom, and you had to go through the pills at the gestation I did, they would freak out."

And that's exactly what's happening, says family physician Linda Prine, who co-founded the Miscarriage and Abortion Hotline to help guide pregnant people seeking information on where to get abortion drugs and how to self-manage their abortions safely. She said at least once a day now the hotline is hearing from women who took the medication in the second trimester and were unprepared to deliver an intact fetus.

"Prior to the fall of Roe, we probably only had two calls per year of anyone using pills past 13 weeks. Now we have several every week and sometimes daily," Prine told States Newsroom a few months ago, for a previous story. "The issues we see are the psychological trauma if they are not prepared for the experience, and the potential legal risks."

Abortion access advocates note that all of this will be compounded if the U.S. Supreme Court ultimately orders a recall or severely restricts the abortion drug mifepristone in a high stakes lawsuit currently making its way to the high court.

## 'End of the line'

For the many years that Roe v. Wade protected abortion rights, the vast majority of abortions happened in the earliest stages of embryonic and fetal development. In 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 93% of abortions took place before 13 weeks, less than 6% performed between 14 and 20 weeks, and less than 1% after 21 weeks' gestation.

That 1% represents the most expensive, complex, and controversial abortion cases. They are multi-day procedures that involve on-call care and are performed by a vanishingly small number of providers. The physician who pioneered this work, Dr. George Tiller, was villainized by Fox News years before an anti-abortion activist assassinated him in 2009.

At 84, Dr. Warren Hern, a former colleague of Tiller's, is the oldest doctor doing this work, in Colorado. Another Tiller colleague, Dr. LeRoy Carhart, who provided later abortions in Maryland, died this past April at 81.

Shortly after Dobbs, Hern said his Boulder Abortion Clinic was seeing an uptick of 50% more patients but has been unable to sustain the demand. Hern told States Newsroom that his small clinic sees a weekly average of six to 12 cases from around the country, which is still more than before Dobbs. Whereas before his clinic would coordinate aftercare with patients' regular doctors, now Hern said he rarely communicates with OB-GYNs in banned states and sends patients with generic letters hoping they will receive necessary aftercare.

"This is a national catastrophe," Hern said. "The details are in our face every single day, every week. It has unfolding complications and consequences across the country for women, many of whom are not

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wanting an abortion, but they can't get medical care for the pregnancy because the doctors are afraid." Slowly a younger crop of third-trimester abortion providers is emerging. Morgan Nuzzo, an advanced practice clinician nurse-midwife, started an all-trimester abortion clinic Partners in Abortion Care in College Park, Maryland, seven months ago with her partner Dr. Diane Horvath, an OB-GYN who specializes in complex family planning and has provided abortion for almost two decades.

Nuzzo says colleagues refer to this clinic as the "end of the line," the last place in the country they can go for a safe and legal abortion. They see people on the spectrum of disability, from the very rich to the very poor. The oldest patient Nuzzo has seen is 53; the youngest is 10. Children over-represent Partners in Abortion Care's patient population, Nuzzo said. As research shows, many people seek abortions into the later stages of pregnancy because they found out new information about the pregnancy (such as a fatal fetal anomaly or a new health risk) or their life circumstances, or because they didn't know they were pregnant.

What her patients and their parents do share in common these days is confusion and anger, Nuzzo said. "Even people who are dismayed by grief, by this horrible fetal diagnosis they might have received later in pregnancy, are still angry and frustrated at the chaos that they have to navigate in their times of greatest need," Nuzzo told States Newsroom. "It is confusing, it is constantly changing, and it is chaotic. And sometimes you start to believe that that's on purpose."

Partners in Abortion Care treats an average of 10 to 12 patients weekly, Nuzzo said, prioritizing abortions after 20 weeks, with growing wait lists. They have to turn away at least one patient a week, she said, often because the patient is too far along, or has complicating health factors. Then it's time to talk to patients about other options: carrying to term, or adoption. Partners requires patients to secure an ultrasound in advance to confirm how far along they are, but she said patients in states with bans are often too scared or unable to obtain an ultrasound outside of religious anti-abortion pregnancy centers, which are typically unregulated and offer non-diagnostic ultrasounds.

"The number of fetal genital pictures that people are given with no accurate dating associated with it has been astronomical since we opened," Nuzzo said. "So, 'I'm a girl,' 'I'm a boy,' and a picture of a penis or a vagina. And a lot of times, that's the only picture they'll give to a patient. And I'm like, What am I supposed to do with this? This gives me no information."

## **Consequential compromises on later abortion**

In 2015, North Carolina Rep. Tricia Cotham made national headlines when she told her colleagues on the House floor about the painful and heartbreaking "induced miscarriage" she once had for a wanted but doomed and dangerous pregnancy. "This decision was up to me, my husband, my doctor, and my God," she testified. "It was not up to any of you in this chamber."

Then a Democrat, Cotham was testifying against a 72-hour abortion waiting period, which opponents argued would exacerbate abortion delays and which ultimately became law. Cotham told Time magazine she'd wanted to quell later-abortion stigma.

But in April, Cotham, who campaigned on abortion rights, switched parties. Soon after, she helped state Republicans override the governor's veto of a new 12-week abortion ban, which has limited exceptions for fetal anomalies. She also switched her own abortion narrative, now calling it a spontaneous miscarriage, contradicting her own words.

More GOP-led states (and presidential candidates) are leaning away from radioactive total abortion bans, and into these so-called gestational compromises. Like North Carolina, Nebraska recently prohibited abortions after 12 weeks. Florida's new 6-week ban is on hold while courts litigate the state's 15-week abortion ban.

A few Democratic-led states, meanwhile, are working on efforts to lift or relax their third-trimester gestational limits, like in Maine and Minnesota. But many others still ban abortion by or before 24 weeks' gestation, with some exceptions. And many of the state abortion-rights amendment initiatives underway also maintain this Roe-era standard.

Like Cotham, Erika Christensen is a white woman with enough privilege to have accessed a later abortion because of fetal anomalies. Because even in 2016, the abortion-access landscape and policies already

made it incredibly difficult to access and, for her, emotionally harrowing. But Christensen's pregnancy experience took her in a different professional direction than Cotham.

"We were radicalized by the plane," said Christensen, who was turned away in New York City and flew to Colorado for a multi-day procedure that cost thousands of dollars out of pocket. She and her husband soon after started Patient Forward, a later abortion advocacy group that successfully lobbied New York to relax its abortion law. Christensen said Roe-era gestational limits are too restrictive for this current landscape, and she criticizes Democratic-led initiatives that attempt to compromise on later abortion.

"There used to be a path where you could care for your patients up to a point, and then you sent them out of state," Christensen said. "And you wouldn't really have to put yourself out on the limb because there was somebody else who would take care of your patient. That path is gone. It's dead, and it's never coming back, not while we have what we have. So when we compromise on this population, we are really condemning them to forced pregnancy and birth."

*Sofia Resnick is a national reproductive rights reporter for States Newsroom, based in Washington, D.C. She has reported on reproductive-health politics and justice issues for more than a decade.*

## U.S. judge sets mid-August date for Trump trial in classified documents case

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JUNE 20, 2023 9:49 AM

Former President Donald Trump is set to face a jury trial on federal charges of mishandling classified information, after the Miami judge overseeing the case signed an order Tuesday scheduling the trial to begin Aug. 14.

U.S. District Judge Aileen M. Cannon, whom Trump appointed to her seat on the federal bench in the Southern District of Florida, signed an order calling for the mid-August start date "or as soon thereafter as the case may be called."

It will be the first time a former U.S. president is tried on criminal charges.

Delays in a trial date are not uncommon, and Cannon said Trump's case, which is relatively complex and will require security clearances, could be pushed back.

All pre-trial motions must be filed by July 24, according to the order. The trial's start date is subject to change, and Cannon scheduled a calendar call for the parties to check in on Aug. 8.

The trial is expected to take two weeks, she wrote. If the schedule holds, Trump's trial would likely end well before the Republican presidential caucuses and primaries, in which polls show Trump is the leading candidate.

Cannon's order also means the federal trial could occur before Trump's separate New York state trial for felony business fraud, even though a New York state grand jury indicted Trump three months before the federal indictment was unsealed.

The state trial, in which Trump is accused of illegally using campaign money in 2016 to pay hush money to adult film actress Stormy Daniels, is expected to begin in March.

The South Florida federal district has a reputation in legal circles as a "rocket docket" where cases are quickly adjudicated. Special Counsel Jack Smith, who is prosecuting the case for the U.S. Justice Department, said earlier this month he would push for a speedy trial.

A 37-count indictment unsealed June 9 accuses Trump of scheming with an aide to keep possession of top secret and other sensitive documents after he left the White House. The former president kept dozens of boxes of sensitive material unsecured in his South Florida estate and club, showed documents to people without security clearance and concealed from even his own lawyers how many documents he had, according to the indictment.

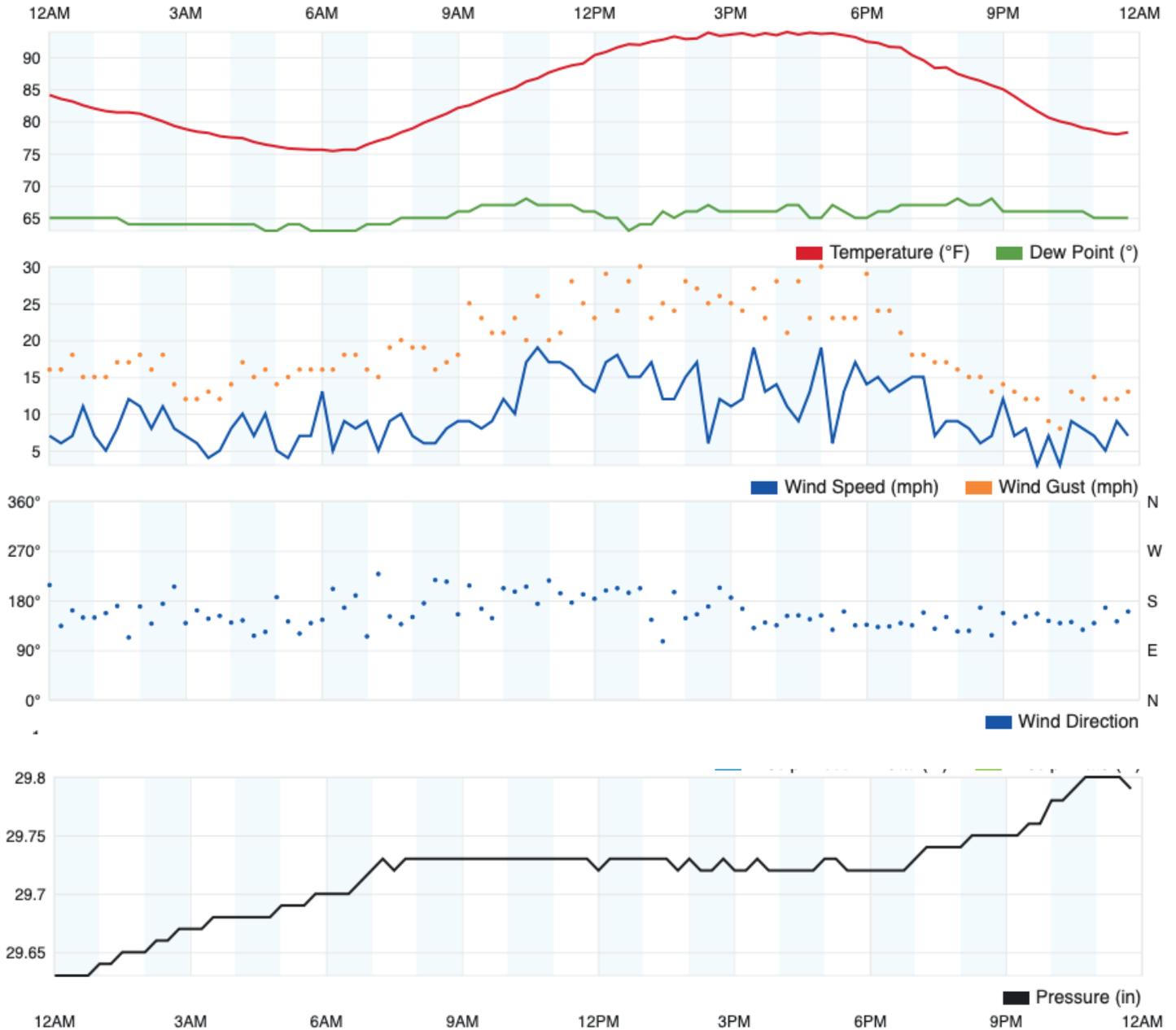
Trump has pleaded not guilty in both cases and has denied even having an affair with Daniels.

*Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.*

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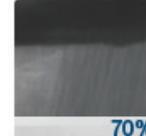
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Hot	Slight Chance T-storms	Showers Likely	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms then Showers Likely	Showers Likely	Showers Likely
High: 90 °F	Low: 68 °F	High: 86 °F	Low: 61 °F	High: 83 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 83 °F



## Severe Weather Threat Overview

June 21, 2023  
3:47 AM

Today into Tonight

### Timing/Location

Expect showers and thunderstorms this morning, mainly along and west of the James River valley. Additional storms can be expected later this afternoon and evening.

### Tornado Potential

**Very Low**    Low    Medium    High

### Max Hail Size

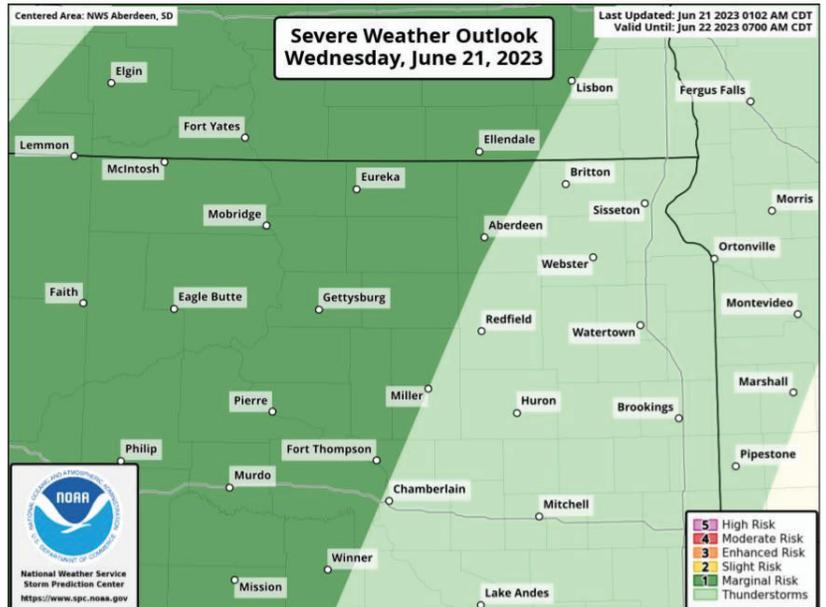
Dimes    **Quarters**    Golfball    Baseball

### Max Wind Speed

**< 60 mph**    60-70 mph    70-80 mph    > 80mph

### Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low    Low    **Medium**    High



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Showers and thunderstorms west of the James River this morning should diminish before noon. Additional showers and thunderstorms will be possible later this afternoon and evening. Some storms may produce hail and gusty winds. Locally heavy rainfall will also be possible.

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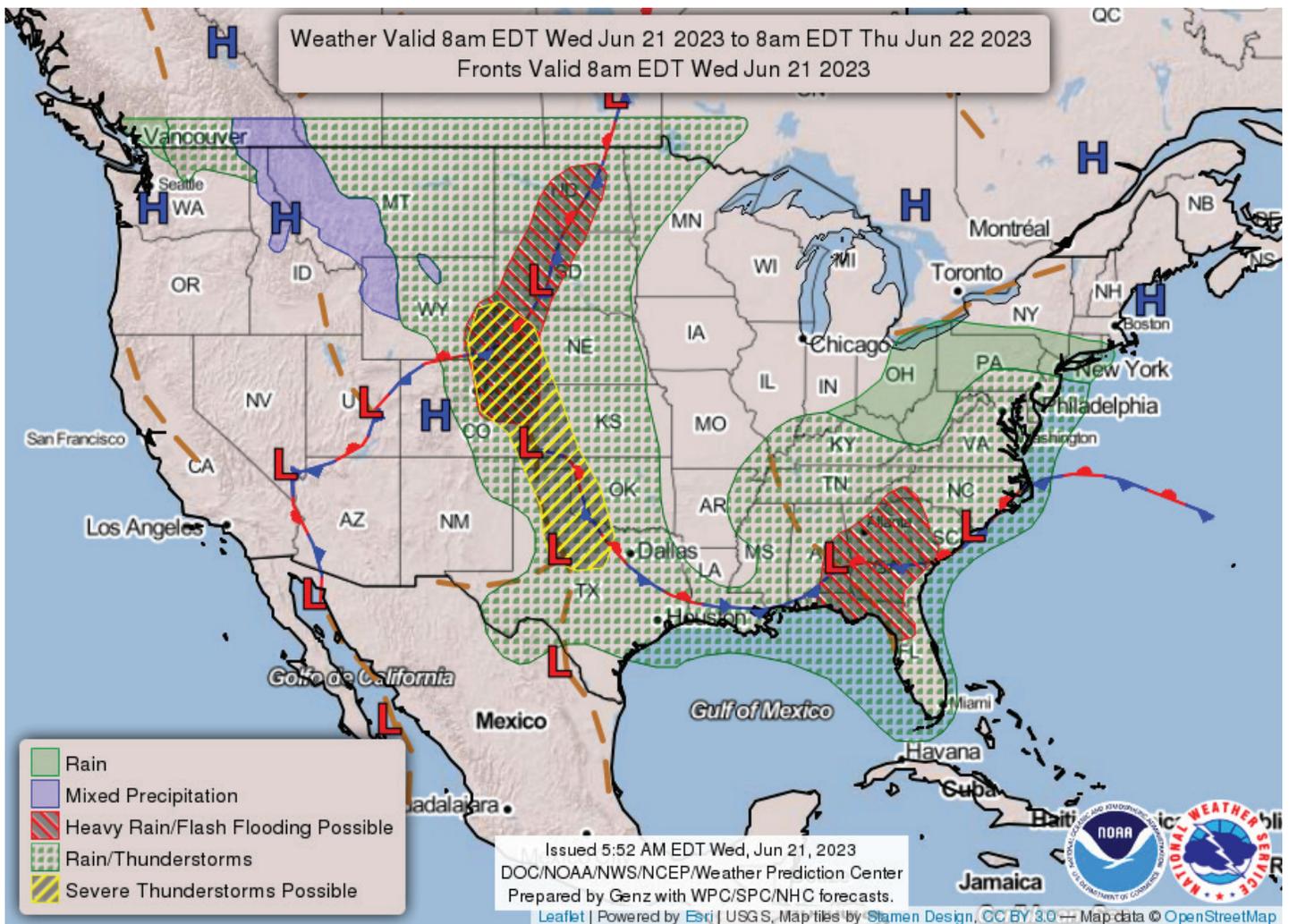
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 94 °F at 4:38 PM**  
**Low Temp: 75 °F at 6:08 AM**  
**Wind: 30 mph at 11:31 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 44 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 108 in 1988  
Record Low: 31 in 1902  
Average High: 82  
Average Low: 57  
Average Precip in June.: 2.56  
Precip to date in June.: 0.51  
Average Precip to date: 9.81  
Precip Year to Date: 8.42  
Sunset Tonight: 9:26:21 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:42:18 AM



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## Today in Weather History

June 21, 1902: Light to heavy frost occurred over most of the state with low temperatures ranging from the mid-20s to the lower 30s. Some record low temperatures include; 27 degrees in Ipswich and Leola, 29 in Kennebec, 30 in Mellette, 31 in Aberdeen, Clark, and Watertown, 32 in Faulkton and Gann Valley, 36 in Sisseton, and 40 degrees in Milbank.

June 21, 1961: One or more tornadoes moved southeast along a distance from east of Aberdeen to the southeastern edge of Sioux Falls. A funnel cloud was first seen between Aberdeen and Groton and later on near Raymond. A tornado hit about 4 pm a few miles southwest of Clark with about 20 farm buildings demolished. One house was destroyed, killing an elderly lady and injuring one person. A boy was reportedly lifted high in the air, and another woman carried 100 yards by winds. Both were injured. Between 4:30 and 5:00 pm, areas northeast of Willow Lake and in northern Kingsbury were hit with a total of 13 farm buildings destroyed or twisted off the foundations. Five buildings on one farm were destroyed, and a house was unroofed near Oldham. The house roof was found several miles away. The tornado was of F3 strength.

June 21, 1983: An F3 tornado touched down in a resort area two miles west of Pollock. Eleven people fled from the southwesternmost cabin and crawled under a nearby cabin. The southwest cabin was destroyed and the cabin the group crawled under was moved five feet from its concrete block foundation. Four people were treated for injuries. A van, boat, and trailer were demolished, and a small car was heavily damaged. The tornado turned east and reformed four miles east of Pollock, where it touched down briefly and dissipated. Another F3 tornado touched down in open prairie three miles northeast of Glad Valley and moved northeast, creating a path of destruction as it progressed. On one farm, nine buildings were wiped out and scattered up to two miles away. Trees and poles were uprooted and scattered a half mile away. This tornado was estimated to be on the ground for six miles with a path width of 300 yards. A third tornado, rated F2, touched down seven miles south of Pollock. This tornado damaged several cabin roofs, a restaurant, and downed several trees. Boats were tossed into a lake, and picnic tables were hurled against cars.

June 21, 2013: A long-lived severe thunderstorm developed over the southern Black Hills and moved eastward across the South Dakota plains during the morning hours. The storm produced large hail to softball size from eastern Custer to northern Jackson Counties. The softball size fell 12 miles east-southeast of Fairburn in Custer County, damaging property. This storm intensified along a strong warm front with volatile air and strong, deep layer winds into several supercell thunderstorms and a damaging line of thunderstorms/bow echo across parts of central and northeast South Dakota through the afternoon hours. Damaging winds up to 90 mph uprooted large trees and caused considerable structural and crop damage and loss of power to those along the path. The worst wind damage was located at Lake Poinsett, Watertown, and Milbank. A woman was killed, and her husband had been severely injured on Lake Poinsett when their lake house was destroyed. Numerous trees were downed along with many structures damaged or destroyed. Many trees had fallen onto homes, cabins, and trailers. The bowling alley in Clear Lake lost its roof along with numerous pole barns being destroyed along the path of the storm. Thousands of people were also left without power. Four tornado touchdowns occurred along with hail up to the size of softballs. Isolated flash flooding also occurred. Codington, Hamlin, Grant, and Deuel counties were all declared in a Federal Disaster Declaration. Total damage estimates were around 1,100,000 dollars.

1987: A tornado destroyed 57 mobile homes at the Chateau Estates trailer park northwest of Detroit, Michigan killing one person and injuring six others. Thunderstorms over Lower Michigan also drenched the Saginaw Valley with up to 4.5 inches of rain in less than six hours.

1988: The first full day of summer was a hot one, with afternoon highs of 100 degrees or above reported from the Northern and Central Plains to the Ohio Valley. Sixty-nine cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 110 degrees at Sioux Falls, SD was an all-time record for that location.

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### AGAINST ALL ODDS

Ernesto Malinowski was a builder of railroads in South America. He was once a member of a group that was asked about the possibility of building a railroad through the Andes Mountains in Peru. After several lengthy discussions and heated debates, all of the engineers involved in the discussion gave up except one: seventy-two-year-old Malinowski. His enthusiasm and energy prevailed because he believed in doing the impossible.

When completed, the project included sixty-two tunnels, thirty bridges and was interrupted and stopped twice because of wars. By Malinowski's refusal to quit, he motivated a group of fellow believers who followed his passion and overcame every obstacle and problem. His leadership, commitment, and deep faith in God made it possible to transport the abundant natural resources of the inland cities to the coastal cities and then shipped around the world.

Standing firm in our loyalty to Christ is often difficult, and at times, discouraging. However, we need to remind ourselves of the words written in Hebrews that "when we are exposed to public ridicule...trust in the Lord and remember the great reward it will bring."

God will guard, guide and reward us if we endure life's trials and remain faithful.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to stand firm in our faith and to be God-honoring and Christ-exalting in all that we do. May we rely on Your strength and trust in You at all times. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. Hebrews 10:32-36



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:  
06.20.23

6 37 39 45 46 21

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$320,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 50  
DRAW: Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.19.23

1 14 20 30 33 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$4,300,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 5 Mins 48  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.20.23

10 17 26 28 30 10

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

NEXT 15 Hrs 20 Mins  
DRAW: 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.17.23

7 8 16 21 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$107,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 20 Mins  
DRAW: 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.19.23

14 15 39 57 69 7

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

NEXT 15 Hrs 49 Mins  
DRAW: 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.19.23

36 39 52 57 69 1

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$400,000,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 49 Mins  
DRAW: 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### **DSU, Army Cyber sign partnership agreement**

GenCyber Girls campers part of historic ceremony

MADISON, S.D., June 20, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Dakota State University and ArmyCyber (ARCYBER) have signed an Educational Partnership Agreement (EPA) at a ceremony held at DSU on June 19.

This agreement will "promote joint research, collaboration, educational programs, and professional projects for both parties' mutual advantage," said the document, by forging a cooperative relationship to further the educational, research, and service missions. This is the first partnership of its kind for ARCYBER because it encompasses all five of its mission objectives, to operate, defend, attack, influence, and inform.

"We are proud and excited to broaden our relationship with Dakota State University," said Lt. Gen Maria Barrett, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Cyber Command.

"DSU's students and faculty have proven to be innovative, skilled, and forward-thinking — just the kind of talented, focused, and driven young minds our nation needs in its cyber workforce to counter our cyber adversaries and defend the networks and critical infrastructure that are vital to our nation."

As this relationship progresses throughout the five-year agreement, Dakota State and ArmyCyber will develop a deeper understanding of each other's needs and capabilities, said DSU President José-Marie Griffiths. Through this awareness, students will be able to see cyber career paths they may not be aware of, such as civilian roles available with the military. They may also be on the front lines with jobs that haven't been created yet.

"Dakota State is leading the new security frontier — which is cyber — and this agreement will provide us with distinctive opportunities to contribute to our nation's security while providing cutting-edge workforce experience for our students," she stated.

South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem said, "In South Dakota, we become the best — and then we do it again. We break our own records, we beat ourselves, we create a new precedent. We set the bar, and then we raise it."

"I have seen this kind of work ethic demonstrated by the folks at DSU time and time again. And this Educational Partnership Agreement is yet another opportunity to raise the bar. It's raising the bar for universities across the country who are getting involved in the cyber security field. But it is also raising the bar for our students, and for students all over the country. DSU is giving students the kind of career opportunities that they can't get anywhere else," Noem stated.

This event provided a timely example for potential DSU students. Over 100 middle school girls attending Dakota State University's GenCyber Girls in CybHER® camp were at the signing ceremony. Barrett, Noem, and U.S. Senator Mike Rounds explained the significance of this agreement to the campers, and described what doors the EPA can help open for rising cyber careers in these students' future.

"Dakota State University is a nationally recognized leader in the field of cybersecurity and artificial intelligence," said U.S. Senator Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Cybersecurity and co-chair of the Senate Artificial Intelligence Caucus.

"While today is a great day for DSU and our nation, it has been long in the making. I appreciate the work of Dr. Michael Sulmeyer, the Army's Principal Cyber Advisor, whose visit to DSU at my request helped pave the way for the signing of this agreement," he stated.

"Additionally, I am grateful for the visionary leadership of Dr. José-Marie Griffiths, who continues to find ways to take DSU to the next level as a top institution for cybersecurity. This agreement opens up a world of possibilities for DSU students and is another opportunity for South Dakota to play a critical role in maintaining the defense of our country."

## Pathward partners with Propel to launch new line of credit for consumers overlooked by traditional banks

STIOUX FALLS, S.D.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun 20, 2023--

Pathward®, N.A., a national bank driven by its purpose to power financial inclusion, is adding a new line of credit to open access for credit challenged consumers. While credit options are abundant for some consumers, others find themselves with limited opportunities to access credit. The new Pathward Line of Credit can provide credit solutions to an underserved population in a responsible way. In addition to the appeal of credit access, consumers really find value in the flexibility of the line of credit because they can move the funds to their core spending account.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20230620101276/en/>

Pathward has engaged fintech partner, Propel Holdings Inc. ("Propel") (TSX: PRL), to service the loans through its lending as a service (LaaS) platform. Propel is an innovative financial technology company (fintech) dedicated to credit inclusion, and by leveraging the fintech's experience and AI-powered, proprietary platform, the program enables Pathward to provide consumers access to credit while limiting credit risk. Powered by their proprietary technology, Propel manages customer service and outreach, applications, collections and more through its online platform.

"Creating financial access for individuals who often get overlooked by more traditional lenders by offering the Pathward Line of Credit aligns with our purpose," said Pathward President Anthony Sharett. "We are thrilled to partner with Propel to bring this program to the market as a part of our Banking as a Service offering. Working together, we can provide eligible borrowers with year-round access to credit through a better alternative to high interest programs."

The Pathward Line of Credit is a pre-approved option offered to consumers through Pathward's existing partner distribution channels. This model enables existing partners to connect their customers to credit access they might not otherwise have. Borrowers only pay interest on the drawn amount when they sign up for Pathward Line of Credit, and there are zero fees affiliated with the product.

"Propel and Pathward are driven by a common mission to expand financial access to consumers. For Propel, this partnership marks the launch of our lending as a service product offering, a natural and critical evolution of our business. When we founded Propel, we saw the limitations of existing technology and service to the tens of millions of underserved consumers and have met our goal of building out a best-in-class AI-powered solution. We believe that this is the beginning of a strong partnership that will have real impact for consumers overlooked by traditional lenders," said Clive Kinross, CEO of Propel.

## Antlers and fancy dress: Stonehenge welcomes 8,000 visitors for summer solstice

By PAN PYLAS and KIN CHEUNG Associated Press

STONEHENGE, England (AP) — All hail the rising sun.

Around 8,000 revellers gathered around a prehistoric stone circle on a plain in southern England to express their devotion to the sun, or to have some communal fun.

Druids, pagans, hippies, local residents and tourists, many clad in an array of colorful costumes and even antlers, stayed and celebrated at Stonehenge for the night and greeted sunrise on Wednesday, which is the longest day in the Northern Hemisphere.

At dawn, the sun rose behind what is known as the Heel Stone in the northeast part of the horizon and the first rays shone into the heart of Stonehenge, one of the world's most famous prehistoric monuments and a World Heritage Site.

A sun-filled dawn followed a slightly misty sunrise, which was greeted with drumming, chanting and cheering.

"Stonehenge continues to captivate and to bring people together to celebrate the seasons, just as it has

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done for thousands of years," said Nichola Tasker, director of Stonehenge at English Heritage, a charity that manages hundreds of historic sites.

"There was a wonderful atmosphere from sunset to sunrise, and everybody enjoyed a very atmospheric morning," she added.

In addition to the 8,000 people present, English Heritage said that approximately 154,000 people tuned in from around the world to watch the sunset and sunrise on the charity's livestream.

All over the U.K., optimism will reign supreme as summer officially starts. It's no coincidence that the nearby Glastonbury Festival, one of the world's biggest music events, opens its doors on Wednesday, too. Both Stonehenge and Glastonbury supposedly lie on ley lines — mystical energy connections across the U.K.

For the thousands making the pilgrimage to Stonehenge, approximately 80 miles (128 kilometers) southwest of London, it is more than looking forward to Elton John at Glastonbury or a few ciders in the sun. Many of those present at Stonehenge will be making the short 50-mile (80-kilometer) journey further west to Glastonbury over the coming days.

For druids, modern-day spiritualists linked to the ancient Celtic religious order, Stonehenge has a centuries-long importance, and they performed their rituals around the solstice in their traditional white robes. It's effectively all about the cycle of life, of death and rebirth.

This year, the summer solstice at Stonehenge started at 7 p.m. Tuesday and ran through 8 a.m. Wednesday. For this one night, worshippers are allowed to spend time inside the stone circle. Some chanted or played their acoustic guitars or banged their drums. Alcohol was prohibited, as were sound systems. Blankets were allowed, but no sleeping bags, please. And definitely, no climbing on the stones.

The rules have been tightened over the decades, certainly during the coronavirus pandemic. Back in the less-restrained past, tens of thousands would travel by foot, car, bus or motorcycle to worship at the solar temple, or just have a bit of fun.

Stonehenge is a symbol of British culture and history and remains one of the country's biggest tourist draws, despite the seemingly permanent traffic jams on the nearby A303 highway, a popular route for motorists traveling to and from the southwest of England.

Stonehenge was built on the flat lands of Salisbury Plain in stages starting 5,000 years ago, with the unique stone circle erected in the late Neolithic period about 2,500 B.C. Some of the stones, the so-called bluestones, are known to have come from the Preseli Hills in southwest Wales, nearly 150 miles (240 kilometers) away, but the origins of others remain a mystery.

The site's meaning has been the subject of vigorous debate, with some theories seemingly more outlandish, if not alien, than others.

English Heritage notes several explanations — from Stonehenge being a coronation place for Danish kings, a druid temple, a cult center for healing, or an astronomical computer for predicting eclipses and solar events.

The charity said the most generally accepted interpretation "is that of a prehistoric temple aligned with the movements of the sun."

After all, the stones match perfectly with the sun at both the summer and winter solstices.

Pan Pylas reported from London.

## Underwater noises heard in frantic search for submersible missing with 5 aboard near Titanic

By PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

A Canadian military surveillance aircraft detected underwater noises as a massive operation searched early Wednesday in a remote part of the North Atlantic for a submersible that vanished while taking five people down to the wreck of the Titanic.

A statement from the U.S. Coast Guard did not elaborate on what rescuers believed the noises could be, though it offered a glimmer of hope for those lost aboard the Titan as estimates suggest as little as

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a day's worth of oxygen could be left if the vessel is still functioning.

Meanwhile, questions remain about how teams could reach the lost submersible, which could be as deep as about 12,500 feet (3,800 meters) below the surface near the watery tomb of the historic ocean liner. Newly uncovered allegations also suggest there had been significant warnings made about vessel safety during its development.

Lost aboard the vessel are pilot Stockton Rush, the CEO of the company leading the expedition. His passengers are a British adventurer, two members of a Pakistani business family and a Titanic expert.

The Coast Guard wrote on Twitter that a Canadian P-3 Orion had "detected underwater noises in the search area." Searchers then moved an underwater robot to that area to search. However, those searches "have yielded negative results but continue."

"The data from the P-3 aircraft has been shared with our U.S. Navy experts for further analysis which will be considered in future search plans," the Coast Guard said.

The Coast Guard statement came after Rolling Stone, citing what it described as internal U.S. Department of Homeland Security emails on the search, said that teams heard "banging sounds in the area every 30 minutes."

In underwater disasters, a crew unable to communicate with the surface relies on banging on their submersible's hull to be detected by sonar. However, no official has publicly suggested that's the case and noises underwater can come from a variety of sources.

Yet the reports have sparked hope in some, including Richard Garriott de Cayeux, the president of The Explorers Club. He wrote an open letter to his club's adventurers, who include the missing British man and the Titanic expert aboard the Titan, that they had "much greater confidence" now after they spoke to officials in Congress, the U.S. military and the White House about the search.

Three C-17 transport planes from the U.S. military have been used to move commercial submersible and support equipment from Buffalo, New York, to St. John's, Newfoundland, to aid in the search, a spokesperson for U.S. Air Mobility Command said.

The Canadian military said it provided a patrol aircraft and two surface ships, including one that specializes in dive medicine. It also dropped sonar buoys to listen for any sounds from the Titan.

Rescuers have been racing against the clock because even under the best of circumstances the vessel could run out of oxygen by Thursday morning.

In addition to an international array of ships and planes, an underwater robot had started searching in the vicinity of the Titanic and there was a push to get salvage equipment to the scene in case the sub is found.

Authorities reported the carbon-fiber vessel overdue Sunday night, setting off the search in waters about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's.

The submersible had a four-day oxygen supply when it put to sea around 6 a.m. Sunday, according to David Concannon, an adviser to OceanGate Expeditions, which oversaw the mission.

CBS News journalist David Pogue, who traveled to the Titanic aboard the Titan last year, said the vehicle uses two communication systems: text messages that go back and forth to a surface ship and safety pings that are emitted every 15 minutes to indicate that the sub is still working.

Both of those systems stopped about an hour and 45 minutes after the Titan submerged.

"There are only two things that could mean. Either they lost all power or the ship developed a hull breach and it imploded instantly. Both of those are devastatingly hopeless," Pogue told the Canadian CBC network on Tuesday.

The submersible had seven backup systems to return to the surface, including sandbags and lead pipes that drop off and an inflatable balloon. One system is designed to work even if everyone aboard is unconscious, Pogue said.

Meanwhile, documents show that OceanGate had been warned there might be catastrophic safety problems posed by the way the experimental vessel was developed.

David Lochridge, OceanGate's director of marine operations, said in a 2018 lawsuit that the company's

testing and certification was insufficient and would "subject passengers to potential extreme danger in an experimental submersible."

The company insisted that Lochridge was "not an engineer and was not hired or asked to perform engineering services on the Titan." The firm also says the vessel under development was a prototype, not the now-missing Titan.

The Marine Technology Society, which describes itself as "a professional group of ocean engineers, technologists, policy-makers, and educators," also expressed concern that year in a letter to Rush, OceanGate's chief executive. The society said it was critical that the company submit its prototype to tests overseen by an expert third party before launching in order to safeguard passengers. The New York Times first reported about those documents.

The search for the missing vessel has drawn international attention. In Dubai, where the missing British adventurer Hamish Harding lives, Crown Prince Hamadan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum wrote: "Dubai and its people pray for their safety and hopeful return home."

Others aboard include Pakistani nationals Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman, whose eponymous firm invests across the country. In Pakistan's port city of Karachi, employees at his firms said they prayed for the two's safe return, as did government officials. French explorer and Titanic expert Paul-Henry Nargeolet also was on the vessel.

Associated Press writers Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Munir Ahmed in Islamabad contributed to this report.

## **China says Biden comments likening leader Xi to a dictator 'extremely absurd and irresponsible'**

BEIJING (AP) — China on Wednesday called comments by President Joe Biden referring to Chinese leader Xi Jinping as a dictator "extremely absurd and irresponsible."

The new clash of words comes just over a day after Secretary of State Antony Blinken concluded a visit to Beijing that sought to break the ice in a relationship that has hit a historical low.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said Biden's comments at a fundraiser in California "go totally against facts and seriously violate diplomatic protocol, and severely infringe on China's political dignity."

"It is a blatant political provocation. China expresses strong dissatisfaction and opposition," Mao said at a daily briefing.

"The U.S. remarks are extremely absurd and irresponsible," Mao said.

Blinken's visit, during which he met with Xi, was aimed at easing tensions between the two superpowers but appeared not to have achieved any solid results.

Biden, at the fundraiser on Tuesday night local time, said that Xi was embarrassed over the recent tensions surrounding a suspected Chinese spy balloon that had been shot down by the Air Force over the East Coast.

"That's a great embarrassment for dictators. When they didn't know what happened," Biden said.

Mao reiterated China's contention that the balloon was intended for meteorological research and had been blown off course accidentally.

"The U.S. should have handled it in a calm and professional manner," she said. "'However, the U.S. distorted facts and used forces to hype up the incident, fully revealing its nature of bullying and hegemony.'"

Blinken's visit had been originally scheduled for February, but was put on hold after the balloon incident. While it marked a return to high-level contacts between the sides, China continues to refuse talks between their militaries.

In recent days, the U.S. says Chinese warplanes and naval ships have maneuvered in threatening ways to their U.S. counterparts in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, despite agreements between them on protocols for avoiding such incidents.

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During Blinken's visit, China reiterated its strong objections to U.S. support for the self-governing island democracy of Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory. The U.S. has also sought to block Beijing's access to cutting-edge computer chip manufacturing technology that could be used for military purposes, and accused China of stealing American intellectual property.

After meeting with Xi on Monday, Blinken acknowledged entrenched differences. "We have no illusions about the challenges of managing this relationship. There are many issues on which we profoundly, even vehemently, disagree," he said.

## Aaron Rodgers is set to speak at a psychedelics conference

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press/Report for America

DENVER (AP) — Months after Colorado's voters decided to join Oregon in decriminalizing psychedelic mushrooms, Denver will host a conference this week put on by a psychedelic advocacy group bringing together an unlikely cohort of speakers — including an NFL star, a former Republican governor and a rapper.

The conference and the thousands expected to attend it is an indication of the creep, or perhaps leap, of cultural acceptance for psychedelic substances that proponents say may offer benefits for things like post-traumatic stress disorder and alcoholism. Still, medical experts caution that more research is needed on the drugs' efficacy and the extent of the risks.

NFL quarterback Aaron Rodgers, who'll soon debut with the New York Jets after years with the Green Bay Packers, has been open about his use of ayahuasca in the past and is slated to speak Wednesday. Rapper Jaden Smith, the son of Will Smith who has publicly shared the "ego dissolution" he felt when using psychedelics, will be speaking in Denver, too, as will former Texas Republican Gov. Rick Perry, who is an advocate for researching psychedelics' potential benefits for veterans experiencing PTSD.

The hosting organization, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, is the largest U.S. advocacy group. It has strategized to reach the full political spectrum, said Nicolas Langlitz, a historian of science who's researched the boom and bust of psychedelic movements.

"Overall, this strategy has been tremendously successful," he said. "At the time when any topic gets politically polarized, ironically these super polarizing substances now get bipartisan support."

Still, Langlitz said, this conference is "purely designed to promote the hype," which can exaggerate the potential benefits but can also drive further funding.

"Any kind of overselling is not good for science because science should be accurate rather than pushing things," he said. "It's a tradeoff. (The conference) generates interest, it generates ultimately more research, even though the research might be skewed toward positive results."

Psychedelics are illegal at the federal level, though acceptance and interest in studying their potential benefits has grown. For example, some researchers believe psilocybin, the compound in psychedelic mushrooms, changes the way the brain organizes itself and can help users overcome things like depression and alcoholism.

The drugs themselves — and the interest in them — are not new. Mid-last century, authors Aldous Huxley and Ken Kesey helped spur the use of psychedelics during the counterculture movement, and optimism brimmed among some psychologists over the drugs' potential to augment the human psyche.

But the Nixon administration criminalized psychedelics, pushing them underground.

"In both cases you have this upwelling of exuberance that may or may not be irrational," said author Michael Pollan, who wrote a book on psychedelics and will be speaking at the conference. "But I think a big difference (now) is that the enthusiasm for the potential of psychedelics cuts across a much more representative slice of the population — it's not about a counterculture."

Republican strongholds, including Utah and Missouri, have or are considering commissioning studies into the drugs, partly inspired by veterans' poignant stories. That's why, though he stops short of promoting recreational use, Perry has become an unlikely flagbearer and helped get a bill passed in the Texas legislature in 2021 to fund a study of psilocybin for treating PTSD.

In Congress, successful proposals to fund psychedelic research for PTSD in veterans brought progres-

sive Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez from New York and far-right Rep. Matt Gaetz from Florida into an unlikely alignment.

Public interest also appears to be growing. Just six years ago in Oakland, California, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies held a conference with roughly 3,000 attendees and a smattering of lesser-known speakers and die-hard proponents.

This time, organizers estimate at least 10,000 attendees. Other famous speakers will include former NHL player Daniel Carcillo, who owns a company specializing in psychedelic therapies; Olympic silver-medal figure skater Sasha Cohen; comedians Reggie Watts and Eric Andre, top-10 podcaster Andrew Huberman; and Carl Hart, the chair of Columbia University's psychology department.

The American Psychiatric Association has not endorsed the use of psychedelics in treatment, noting the Federal Drug Administration has yet to offer a final determination. The FDA did designate psilocybin as a "breakthrough therapy" in 2018, a label that's designed to speed the development and review of drugs to treat a serious condition. MDMA, often called ecstasy, also has that designation for PTSD treatment.

Both Pollan and Langlitz believe further research is key — especially as the nation faces an unprecedented mental health crisis and people struggle to find adequate treatment. But, Langlitz said, it's important to let research shape the narrative.

"I would just try to keep my mind open to the possibility that in retrospect we will tell a very different story from the one that the protagonists of psychedelic therapies are currently predicting," he said.

Bedayn is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

## **Pride and pain for Biden as his son Hunter reaches a plea deal after 5 years of investigation**

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden had just six words to offer after his 53-year-old son Hunter pleaded guilty to federal tax offenses in a deal that is also likely to spare him time behind bars on a weapons charge.

"I'm very proud of my son," he said.

That pride has been accompanied by pain, and for the president's family, both have been on public display. Republicans have worked to use Hunter Biden's actions — and his acknowledged struggle with addiction — as an anchor to try to drag down his father.

As a parent, Joe Biden has tried to keep his son close; they speak almost every day. Hunter was at his father's side on a recent trip to Ireland, on the lawn of the White House with other family members for the Easter egg roll and in the bleachers with his mom and dad as his daughter graduated from college last month.

But out of public view, a five-year criminal investigation was coming to a conclusion, with a plea deal announced Tuesday that resolves the probe into the taxes and foreign business dealings of the president's second son. The agreement with the Justice Department means Hunter Biden will plead guilty to a misdemeanor tax offense, and he'll avoid a more serious felony charge of illegally possessing a firearm as a drug user, as long as he adheres to conditions agreed to in court.

As a president, Joe Biden has made of point of keeping his distance from the federal investigation into his son's dealings.

The most fatherly of things he could do — advise a son going through a hard time — isn't exactly available for a man whose administration commands the office that was investigating his son and his political rival simultaneously.

"President Biden has always impressed me as someone who puts his family first," said Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, a close friend of the family. "In this case involving Hunter Biden, he has drawn a clear line.

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He has not been involved in or interfered in the Department of Justice in their five-year-long investigation, which is now coming to a close. I can only imagine the relief they may feel in being able to move forward.”

But Republicans are hardly satisfied with the outcome, particularly as the Justice Department indicted former President Donald Trump in an unrelated case where he is accused of mishandling classified documents. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., compared the outcome of Hunter Biden’s case to the Trump documents case now heading toward federal court and said, “If you are the president’s son, you get a sweetheart deal.”

Though Hunter Biden is a private citizen, he factors heavily into notable political moments over the past five years: surfacing as a central character in the first impeachment case against Trump, who tried to get Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelenskyy to announce an investigation into the younger Biden related to his position on the board of a Ukrainian gas company.

Hunter Biden had joined the board in 2014, around the time his father, then Barack Obama’s vice president, was helping conduct U.S. foreign policy with Ukraine. Trump and his allies have long argued, without evidence, that Hunter Biden’s work in Ukraine influenced the Obama administration’s policies toward the East European nation.

Hunter Biden’s descent into drugs and alcohol following the 2015 death of his brother Beau Biden from cancer led to some troubling decisions and interventions that Republicans have seized on as proof of his shady tactics, but he also doesn’t always help himself.

In 2020, the contents of a laptop that he’d left at a Delaware repair shop and never retrieved made their way to Republicans and were publicly leaked, revealing personal messages about his work and his life.

Addiction is still very much seen as a moral failing instead of a disease, said Patrick Kennedy, a former congressman who is now a leading voice on mental health and addiction, was himself an addict and also the son of a famous lawmaker, the late Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass.

Kennedy said Biden could use this as a teachable moment for the nation to shift how addiction is viewed, even if Hunter is being used as a tool to attack his father.

“The benefit of this president is that his policies are the most progressive of any president to date in terms of treating them as the medical issues they are,” Kennedy said. “In a sense, he is like my father was, from an old school. They kept this under wraps, it was shameful. They didn’t talk about it. But you know, to his credit, his policies reflect an enlightened approach.”

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said of Hunter Biden’s situation that he “felt very sorry for him and for his family. I respect the president for saying he loves his son. That’s a good thing even if your son does embarrassing things.”

There were questions as well about a White House arrangement in the early days of Biden’s presidency that allowed Hunter to sell his artwork without knowing the identity of the purchaser. Officials said it would avoid any potential ethical entanglements with the sales but Republicans have raised questions and are seeking an interview with the gallery owner.

Hunter Biden also has been tangled up in an ongoing child support dispute in Arkansas after a DNA test proved he was the father of a now 4-year-old. The Biden family hasn’t publicly acknowledged the child, and Hunter Biden initially objected to an effort by the woman to change the girl’s last name to Biden.

His recent trip to Ireland with his dad came up in court testimony when his lawyers said Hunter slept on a cot in his dad’s hotel room, part of an accounting of how he had been spending money.

And still, photos of Hunter Biden in the throes of addiction routinely circulate online. Biden said in his memoir he can shrug them off because he’s come out the other end thanks to the support of his family.

“I come from a family forged by tragedies and bound by a remarkable, unbreakable love,” he wrote in his 2021 memoir “Beautiful Things.”

In many ways the same could be said of President Biden’s political career, which was nearly cut short after the death of his wife and daughter in 1972 just days before Biden was sworn in to the Senate at age 30.

Sons Beau and Hunter, who were just about to turn 4 and 3 at the time, were seriously injured. The two brothers spent months together in the hospital, a bond that Hunter wrote was unbreakable. Even if they argued later in life, he wrote, they’d always close with an “I love you.”

Beau was the one who sought public life, a decorated Iraq war veteran and Delaware attorney general. The president has said many times that it should have been Beau on the stage as president rather than himself.

Hunter said he was content to have it be Beau in the spotlight. But when his brother died, Hunter came unglued. At one point, he wrote, he was living in a motel completely removed from his family in a haze of drug use.

"Dad saved me," he wrote. "Left on my own, I'm certain I would not have survived."

\_\_\_ Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Kevin Freking and Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

## In the West Bank, UNESCO site Battir could face a water shortage from a planned Israeli settlement

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

BATTIR, West Bank (AP) — Generations of Palestinians have worked the terraced hillsides of this West Bank farming village southwest of Jerusalem, growing olives, fruits, beans and exquisite eggplants renowned across the region in a valley linked to the biblical King David.

But residents fear their ancient way of life could soon be in danger as Israel's far-right government moves ahead with a settlement project on a nearby hilltop. Environmental groups say the construction could devastate already strained water sources supplying the agricultural terraces and cause extensive damage to an already precarious ecosystem.

Battir's plight shines a light on how the trappings of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — settlements, land disputes and military activity — can take a toll on the region's environment, natural resources and cultural heritage.

The proposed construction "will grab a great amount of land, and you don't know where it will end," said Rashid Owinah, 58, whose family has farmed in Battir for generations. "This will affect the community mentally, economically and socially."

Two environmental groups, EcoPeace and the Society for the Protection of Nature, have petitioned Israeli authorities to halt the plan, citing its potential impact on the lush terrace gardens below.

In the valley where the Bible says David battled the Philistines, which in spots seem undisturbed by modernity, the farmers channel water from a 2,000-year-old Roman-era pool to grow crops on terraces that cascade down the mountainsides.

On a recent day, water bubbled out of a rock face and trickled down an aqueduct beneath a fruiting mulberry tree toward the disused Ottoman train tracks below that once brought the terraces' produce to Jerusalem.

While the expansion of the Har Gilo settlement has long been on the books, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new ultranationalist and religious government has made such projects a top priority. Local settler leaders are pushing hard to make the plan a reality.

The United Nations' cultural heritage body, UNESCO, recognized the millennia-old terraces in the serpentine valleys around Battir as a world heritage site in 2014.

"The complex irrigation system of this water supply has led to the creation of dry walls terraces which may have been exploited since antiquity," according to documentation filed with UNESCO. "The integrity of this traditional water system is guaranteed by the families of Battir, who depend on it."

Between the terraces and a surrounding buffer zone meant to protect them, the UNESCO cultural landscape makes up around 10 square kilometers (3.8 square miles) of hills and wadis. Plastic litter left by picnickers is strewn along paths crisscrossing the valley.

The terraces, which for generations served as the market garden of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, are irrigated by intricate aqueducts and channels that the village's farmers share. Around 40% of Battir's 5,000 residents depend on agriculture for a living, according to former mayor Akram Bader.

"Here, we refuse to use the new machines," he said. "We want to keep the traditional way of agriculture."

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Environmentalists say those springs would be endangered by Israel's planned settlement construction in the buffer zone abutting the terraces.

"If you build an extensive town at the top, it destroys this landscape," said Nadav Tal, a hydrologist who serves as the Middle East Water Officer for EcoPeace, a joint Israeli-Palestinian group.

The springs dotting the valley at the base of Battir are fed by groundwater that is recharged by rainfall percolating into the limestone hills above. "If you build on top of these rocks, you can block the water from reaching the springs," he said.

Access to water is already a challenge for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, with many suffering from chronic supply shortages.

Israel effectively controls most of the water supply in the territory and limits the amount of water the Palestinians can extract from the mountain aquifer, the main water supply in the territory. Modern construction elsewhere has caused springs Palestinian farmers depend on to dry up.

On top of that, human-driven climate change is projected to raise global temperatures and cause more frequent droughts in the Levant. Burgeoning Israeli and Palestinian populations are expected to further strain limited water resources.

The future settlement plan, known as Har Gilo West, is slated to develop a craggy hilltop less than a mile (1.5 km) across the valley north of Battir. The project, which would effectively double the size of the existing Har Gilo settlement, is set to begin with 560 new housing units atop a ridge overlooking the terraces.

Shlomo Ne'eman, head of the Gush Etzion settlement council, said there is a dire housing shortage in the area, and Har Gilo in particular. He said all urban development comes at the expense of the environment, but in the case of Har Gilo West he argues that it is atop "a rocky hill that has no natural value."

"There are no springs, there are no forests, there is no rare flora," Ne'eman said, accusing environmental groups of selective, political activism.

He insisted that the Har Gilo West plans "aren't close to the terraces, don't approach them, don't harm and don't touch them."

In its petition, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel said the plan "doesn't meet any environmental criterion" and lacked standard environmental assessment documentation.

A summertime survey it conducted on the site found at least 195 plant species, 25 butterfly species, numerous bird species, including at least three listed as endangered, and said it was a habitat for the endangered mountain gazelle and threatened striped hyena.

COGAT, the Israeli military body responsible for civilian affairs in the occupied West Bank, said the existing plans are aimed at "minimizing damage to the landscape, and (pay) attention to other environmental issues." It said the planning would examine objections filed by environmental groups but gave no indication of when that would happen.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek those territories for a future independent state.

Most of the international community considers Israeli settlements an impediment to the creation of a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel. More than 700,000 Jewish settlers now live in dozens of settlements in east Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Previous plans to build a section of Israel's West Bank separation barrier adjacent to the terraces were scrapped after vocal opposition over its potential impact on wildlife and the ecosystem.

Yonathan Mizrachi of the Israeli anti-settlement group Peace Now said the Har Gilo West plans have already passed several steps in the byzantine settlement approval process.

Although the the plan still awaits final authorization before bulldozers move in, he said the approval of a highway expansion for Har Gilo last September indicates Israel's intention of moving forward.

## Gang behind slaughter of 41 women at Honduran prison, officials say

By MARLON GONZÁLEZ Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — Inmates had complained for weeks they were being threatened by gang members at a women's prison in Honduras. The gang fulfilled those threats, slaughtering 41 women, many of them burned, shot or stabbed to death.

President Xiomara Castro said Tuesday's riot at the prison in the town of Tamara, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northwest of Honduras' capital, was "planned by maras (street gangs) with the knowledge and acquiescence of security authorities."

Castro pledged to take "drastic measures," but did not explain how inmates identified as members of the Barrio 18 gang were able to get guns and machetes into the prison, or move freely into an adjoining cell block and slaughter all the prisoners there.

Video clips presented by the government from inside the prison showed several pistols and a heap of machetes and other bladed weapons that were found after the riot.

Sandra Rodríguez Vargas, the assistant commissioner for Honduras' prison system, said the attackers "removed" guards at the facility — none appeared to have been injured — around 8 a.m. Tuesday and then opened the gates to an adjoining cell block and began massacring women there. They started a fire that left cell walls blacked and bunks reduced to twisted heaps of metal.

Twenty-six of the victims were burned to death and the remainder shot or stabbed, said Yuri Mora, the spokesman for Honduras' national police investigation agency. At least seven inmates were being treated at a Tegucigalpa hospital.

The riot appears to be the deadliest at a female detention center in Central America since 2017, when girls at a shelter for troubled youths in Guatemala set fire to mattresses to protest rapes and other mistreatment at the overcrowded institution. The smoke and fire killed 41 girls.

The worst prison disaster in a century also occurred in Honduras, in 2012 at the Comayagua penitentiary, where 361 inmates died in a fire possibly caused by a match, cigarette or some other open flame.

There were ample warnings ahead of Tuesday's tragedy, according to Johanna Paola Soriano Euceda, who was waiting outside the morgue in Tegucigalpa for news about her mother, Maribel Euceda, and sister, Karla Soriano. Both were on trial for drug trafficking but were held in the same area as convicted prisoners.

Soriano Euceda said they had told her Sunday that "they (Barrio 18 members) were out of control, they were fighting with them all the time. That was the last time we talked."

Another woman, who did not want to give her name for fear of reprisals, said she was waiting for news about a friend, Alejandra Martínez, 26, who was been held in the ill-fated Cell Block One on robbery charges.

"She told me the last time I saw her on Sunday that the (Barrio) 18 people had threatened them, that they were going to kill them if they didn't turn over a relative," she said.

Gangs sometimes demand victims "turn over" a friend or relative by giving the gang their name, address and description, so that enforcers can later find and kidnap, rob or kill them.

Officials described the killings as a "terrorist act," but also acknowledged that gangs essentially had ruled some parts of the prison.

Julissa Villanueva, head of the prison system, suggested the riot started because of recent attempts by authorities to crack down on illicit activity inside prison walls and called Tuesday's violence a reaction to moves "we are taking against organized crime."

"We will not back down," Villanueva said in a televised address after the riot.

Gangs wield broad control inside the country's prisons, where inmates often set their own rules and sell prohibited goods.

They were also apparently able to smuggle in guns and other weapons, a recurring problem in Honduran prisons.

"The issue is to prevent people from smuggling in drugs, grenades and firearms," said Honduran human

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At a private meeting last week in Ethiopia, U.S. aid officials told international partners that this could be the largest-ever diversion of food aid in any country, aid workers said. In an interview with the AP, a senior official with the U.S. Agency for International Development said the exact amount of food aid stolen may never be known.

Donated medical supplies also were stolen, according to a Western diplomat and U.N. official who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

With USAID giving Ethiopia's government \$1.8 billion in humanitarian assistance since 2022, a delay in providing food aid causes widespread pain. Millions of people went hungry during the war while food stocks were looted, burned and withheld by combatants, and U.N. investigators have warned of possible starvation-linked war crimes.

Now the hunger is being traced to corruption.

Preliminary findings released this month by Tigray regional authorities said they have tracked the theft of more than 7,000 metric tons of donated wheat — or 15 million pounds — in their region, taken by federal and regional authorities and others. The findings did not specify the time period. Other regions have yet to report amounts.

Ethiopia's government dismisses as harmful "propaganda" the suggestion that it bears primary responsibility for the disappearance of aid in Tigray and other regions, but it has agreed to a joint investigation with the U.S. while the U.N.'s World Food Program carries out a separate probe.

The way that Western aid officials "distance themselves from the accusations by linking the alleged problem only to government institutions and procedures is absolutely unacceptable and very contrary to the reality on the ground," government spokesman Legesse Tulu told reporters earlier this month. He and other government spokespeople did not immediately respond to messages from the AP.

Aid workers say humanitarian agencies have long tolerated a degree of corruption by government officials. Provision of aid in Ethiopia has been heavily politicized for decades, including during the devastating famine of the 1980s, when the then-communist regime blocked assistance to areas controlled by rebel groups.

The senior USAID official told the AP that the latest theft of U.S. and U.N. food aid included the manipulation of beneficiary lists that the Ethiopian government has insisted on controlling, looting by Ethiopian government and Tigray forces and forces from neighboring Eritrea, and the diversion of massive amounts of donated wheat to commercial flour mills in at least 63 sites.

A former Tigray official said government workers often inflate beneficiary numbers and take the extra grain for themselves, a practice that two officials with international organizations working in Ethiopia called widespread elsewhere in the country.

Numerous officials accused WFP of simply dropping off rations in the middle of towns, where much of the aid was looted by forces from Eritrea.

There were also signs that people whom the USAID official described only as "market actors" were forcing hungry families to surrender food aid they received — something that WFP suspects as well.

In Ethiopia, which has a history of deadly hunger, "zero" of the 6 million people in Tigray received food aid in May after the pause in donations by the U.S. and U.N., according to a U.N. memo seen by the AP. That's unprecedented, it said.

With 20 million people across Ethiopia dependent on such aid, plus more than 800,000 refugees from Somalia and elsewhere, independent humanitarian groups warn that even a quick resolution to the dispute could see many people starve to death.

In the U.N. food agency's first extensive public comments, the WFP regional director for East Africa, Michael Dunford, acknowledged possible "shortcomings" in its monitoring of aid distribution.

"We accept that we could have done better," he told the AP this week. But until now, Dunford said, "it's been very much the Ethiopian government that was managing" the process.

For USAID's part, the senior agency official cited a range of reasons that U.S. officials missed the extent of the aid theft for so long. The war blocked the agency's ground access to the Tigray region for 20 months. Elsewhere in the country, COVID restrictions and security concerns limited USAID's oversight,

the official said.

Some Republican and Democratic lawmakers said the rare countrywide suspension of aid showed US-AID is taking the theft of U.S. aid with appropriate seriousness. Asked if he was concerned about USAID oversight, a senior Democrat, Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, said, "I'm concerned about the ways in which the Ethiopian military and government may have systematically diverted food that was meant for hungry Ethiopians."

U.S. and U.N. officials said they were working to limit — or end — Ethiopian government officials' role in the aid system.

"We're taking back all the control over the commodities," Dunford said. "The entire supply chain, from the time that we receive the food in the country to the time it's in the hands of the beneficiaries." Plans include third-party distribution, real-time third-party monitoring and biometric registration of beneficiaries, he said.

The U.S. government wants Ethiopia's government to remove itself from the compilation of beneficiary lists and the transport, warehousing and distribution of aid, according to a briefing memo by donors seen by the AP.

The senior USAID official said Ethiopia's government has committed to cooperate on reforms, but "we have not yet seen the specific reforms in place that would allow us to resume aid."

Civilians, again, are suffering.

Ethiopia's harvest season is over and the lean season is approaching. The U.N. humanitarian agency has privately expressed fears of "mass starvation" in remote parts of Tigray, according to an assessment made in April and seen by the AP. Another assessment in May cited reports of 20 people dying of starvation in Samre, a short drive from the Tigray capital, Mekele.

Tigray's main hospital reported a 28% increase in the number of children admitted for malnutrition from March to April. At the hospital in Axum town, the increase was 96%.

"It is a good day if we manage to eat one meal," said Berhane Haile, another of the thousands of war-displaced people going hungry.

Knickmeyer reported from Washington.

## Foreign companies are shifting investment out of China as confidence wanes, business group says

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Foreign companies are shifting investments and their Asian headquarters out of China as confidence plunges following the expansion of an anti-spying law and other challenges, a business group said Wednesday.

The report by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China adds is one of many signs of growing pessimism despite the ruling Communist Party's efforts to revive interest in the world's No. 2 economy following the end of anti-virus controls.

Companies are uneasy about security controls, government protection of their Chinese rivals and a lack of action on reform promises, according to the European Chamber. They also are being squeezed by slowing Chinese economic growth and rising costs.

Business confidence in China is "pretty much the lowest we have on record," the European Chamber president, Jens Eskelund, told reporters ahead of the report's release.

"There's no expectation that the regulatory environment is really going to improve over the next five years," Eskelund said.

President Xi Jinping's government, trying to shore up economic growth that sank to 3% last year, is trying to encourage foreign companies to invest and bring in technology. But they are uneasy about security rules and plans to create competitors to global suppliers of computer chips, commercial jetliners and other technology. That often involves subsidies and market barriers that Washington and the European Union

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say violate Beijing's free-trade commitments.

Two-thirds of the 570 companies that responded to the European Chamber's survey said doing business in China has become more difficult, up from less than half before the pandemic. Three out of five said the business environment is "more political," up from half the previous year.

Companies are on edge after police raided offices of two consultancies, Bain & Co. and Capvision, and a due diligence firm, Mintz Group, without public explanation. Authorities say companies are obliged to obey the law but have given no indication of possible violations.

Companies also are uneasy about Beijing's promotion of national self-reliance. Xi's government is pressing manufacturers, hospitals and others to use Chinese suppliers even if that raises their costs. Foreign companies worry they might be shut out of their markets.

Last month, the government banned using products from the biggest U.S. maker of memory chips, Micron Technology Inc., in computers that handle sensitive information. It said Micron had unspecified security flaws but gave no explanation.

One in 10 companies in the European Chamber survey said they have shifted investments out of China. Another 1 in 5 are delaying or considering shifting investments. In aviation and aerospace, 1 in 5 companies plan no future investment in China.

China has long been a top investment destination due to its huge and growing consumer market, but companies complain about market access restrictions, pressure to hand over technology and other irritants. The ruling party has tightened control since Xi took power in 2012, pressing foreign companies to give the party board seats and a direct say in hiring and other decisions.

The European Chamber noted it wasn't just foreign companies that are moving: 2 out of 5 in its survey reported Chinese customers or suppliers are shifting investments out of the country.

A separate group, the British Chamber of Commerce in China, said last month its members were waiting for "greater clarity" about anti-spying, data security and other rules before making new investments.

The biggest concern is the ruling party's sweeping expansion of its definition of national security to include the economy, food, energy and politics, Eskelund said.

"What does qualify as a state secret? Where does politics begin and the commercial world stop?" Eskelund said. That "creates uncertainty" about "where we can operate as normal businesses."

In the European Chamber survey, the top destination for companies moving their Asian headquarters out of China was Singapore, with 43% of companies that moved, followed by Malaysia. Only 9% went or plan to go to Hong Kong.

Leaders including Premier Li Qiang, China's top economic official, have promised to improve operating conditions, but businesses say they see few concrete changes.

"Our members are not really convinced that we are going to see tangible results," Eskelund said.

## **With Trump under indictment, House GOP calls on Trump-era special counsel who studied Russia probe**

By NOMAAN MERCHANT and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Donald Trump faces a 37-count federal indictment and the possibility of a lengthy prison sentence if convicted, House Republicans are using a special counsel's report to renew their argument that federal law enforcement is tainted by political bias.

John Durham, who recently completed his report on the FBI's investigation of Trump's 2016 campaign, will testify Wednesday before the House Judiciary Committee. That's one day after Durham met behind closed doors with members of the House Intelligence Committee.

While Durham produced just three prosecutions — with two acquittals — in a four-year investigation, his report highlighted FBI agents withholding key information from judges and contended the bureau disregarded reasons not to investigate Trump's campaign.

Republicans who control the House say they're still angry about the 2016 campaign probe, known as

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"Crossfire Hurricane," and intend to push new curbs on the FBI in exchange for renewing surveillance powers known as Section 702 that U.S. intelligence considers critical and that expire at the end of this year. Many Democrats also want new rules on what access the FBI has to search foreign surveillance data for information about U.S. citizens and companies.

GOP animosity toward the Justice Department was further fueled by Tuesday's announcement that President Joe Biden's son Hunter will likely avoid jail time in a plea deal on tax and gun allegations. Republican Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, who chairs the Judiciary Committee, tweeted, in all caps, that it was a "double standard of justice."

Durham was appointed by former Attorney General William Barr to review the origins of the investigation into ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign.

He concluded that the FBI acted too hastily and without sufficient justification to launch a full investigation and asserted the bureau showed more caution on allegations that former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton mishandled classified information on her private email server.

He also said the FBI cited the so-called Steele dossier before the primary U.S. surveillance court even after investigators failed to corroborate "a single substantive allegation" within it. The Clinton campaign partially funded creation of the dossier and agreed last year with the Democratic National Committee to pay a \$113,000 fine for misreporting campaign spending on research.

The Durham report yielded only one conviction — a guilty plea from a little-known FBI employee — and the only two other cases that were brought both ended in acquittals at trial.

And though Durham accused the FBI of confirmation bias, he did not allege that political bias or partisanship were guiding factors for the FBI's actions.

The bureau also is facing bipartisan criticism of how it handles intelligence collected electronically under Section 702. Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act allows spy agencies to collect foreign phone calls and e-mails for their investigations.

A newly declassified surveillance court opinion found that the FBI had run thousands of unsupported searches of Americans, including queries tied to the Jan. 6 insurrection and the 2020 protests following the killing of George Floyd.

Previewing Durham's meeting with the Intelligence Committee, Ohio Rep. Mike Turner, the panel's chairman, alleged last week that the FBI "went off the rails" and hurt the justice system's credibility.

"Rules and laws need to be changed so that these mechanisms cannot be used again in this way to really harm the American public," he said.

Connecticut Rep. Jim Himes, the panel's top Democrat, said after the committee's meeting Tuesday that Durham did not recommend any changes to existing law but broadly discussed the issues in the report and the handling of politically sensitive investigations.

"Our hearing was not political. Nobody was looking to score points," Himes said. "People asked questions that indicated their political affiliation, but that's because they were doing due diligence around things that concern them."

FBI Director Chris Wray has acknowledged errors in how the bureau handled the Trump-Russia probe. In a statement Tuesday, the bureau said it had "already implemented dozens of corrective actions, which have now been in place for some time."

The Durham report "reinforces the importance of ensuring the FBI continues to do its work with the rigor, objectivity, and professionalism the American people deserve and rightly expect," the statement said.

The House GOP push to highlight the Durham report comes as Trump — the frontrunner in the 2024 GOP primary — fights legal jeopardy never faced before by a former president.

Trump is under federal indictment accusing him of mishandling classified documents and indicted in New York over allegations that he knew about hush money payments made to a porn actress during his 2016 campaign.

Most Republicans have denigrated the New York indictment as tainted by politics, but they have split on the Justice Department case brought by special counsel Jack Smith.

Turner was asked last week if he was alarmed by the federal indictment. He responded, "The behavior that is described within the complaint, and the behavior that we're aware of that President Biden as a senator or vice president did, are wrong and place the nation at risk."

## Democrats downplay Hunter Biden's plea deal, while Republicans see opportunity to deflect from Trump

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Democrats, already anxious about President Joe Biden's reelection prospects, are seeking to downplay — or ignore altogether — revelations that the president's son has entered into a plea deal with federal prosecutors over tax offenses and a gun charge.

And as Democrats dodge, former President Donald Trump and his Republican allies seized on the extraordinary legal development to tighten his grip on the GOP and deflect from his own legal shortcomings.

But in a nation deeply divided and with voters from both parties firmly entrenched in their political outlook, there were few signs immediately after Hunter Biden's plea deal was announced on Tuesday that the unprecedented prosecution of a president's son had shifted the 2024 presidential election in any significant way.

In conversations with The Associated Press, some of the elected Democratic officials best positioned to challenge Biden for the party's presidential nomination reaffirmed their decisions not to run in 2024. And while party officials did not rush to support the president publicly, they privately described the development as a minor political distraction — at most — that could linger into next year's general election.

The Biden campaign declined to comment. At a summit on artificial intelligence in San Francisco on Tuesday, Biden smiled when asked if he's spoken to Hunter. "I'm very proud of my son," he said.

For now, veteran Democratic strategist Stephanie Cutter suggested that Hunter Biden's prosecution "is not on most Americans' radar."

"But to the extent it is, it shows that no one is above the law and what taking responsibility looks like, which in itself is a sharp contrast to the former president," Cutter said, referencing Trump's legal entanglements. "The MAGA echo chamber will continue to obsess over Hunter as they have for years, but those aren't President Biden's voters, and nothing changes in terms of his strategy for reelection."

Hunter Biden, 53, will plead guilty to the misdemeanor tax offenses as part of an agreement made public Tuesday. Under the agreement, he will avoid prosecution on a felony charge of illegally possessing a firearm as a drug user, as long as he adheres to conditions set by prosecutors.

The deal ends a long-running Justice Department investigation into Biden's younger son, who has acknowledged struggling with addiction following the 2015 death of his brother, Beau. It also averts a trial that would have generated distracting headlines for a first-term president just beginning to focus on the 2024 election.

Already, two high-profile Democrats with national ambitions have reaffirmed their support for the president's reelection bid since the plea deal came to light.

"Hunter changes nothing," California Gov. Gavin Newsom said Tuesday. He told the AP over the weekend that "not on God's green earth" would he run against Biden.

"My decision has not changed," Democratic Rep. Ro Khanna of California said of his own decision not to primary Biden. He has been a frequent presence in recent months in early presidential primary states like New Hampshire and Nevada.

That's not to say Democrats are excited about Biden's reelection bid.

Only about 1 in 3 Democrats want the 80-year-old president to seek a second term, according to a poll conducted in February by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

New Hampshire Democratic Rep. Steve Shurtleff, a former state House speaker, said on Tuesday that he didn't know if he would vote for Biden in 2024, although Hunter's legal problems have nothing to do with it.

"I feel sorry for the president. I know he loves his children," said Shurtleff, who has been one of Biden's closest allies in the state for several years. He decided this spring that the Democratic Party would be

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rights expert Joaquin Mejia. "Today's events show that they have not been able to do that."

Meanwhile, the grim task continued of trying to identify the bodies, some terribly burned.

"The forensic teams that are removing bodies confirm they have counted 41," said Mora.

The wait for news was torture for many families of inmates. Dozens of anxious, angry relatives gathered outside the rural prison.

"We are here dying of anguish, of pain ... we don't have any information," said Salomón García, whose daughter is an inmate at the facility.

Azucena Martinez, whose daughter was also being held at the prison, said "there are a lot of dead, 41 already. We don't know if our relatives are also in there, dead."

Tuesday's riot may increase the pressure on Honduras to emulate the drastic zero-tolerance, no-privileges prisons set in up in neighboring El Salvador by President Nayib Bukele. While El Salvador's crackdown on gangs has given rise to rights violations, it has also proved immensely popular in a country long terrorized by street gangs.

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AP writers Elmer Martínez in Tamara, Honduras, and Maria Verza and Mark Stevenson in Mexico City contributed to this report.

## **Once starved by war, millions of Ethiopians go hungry again as US, UN pause aid after massive theft**

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — An Orthodox Christian priest, Tesfa Kiros Meresfa begs door-to-door for food along with countless others recovering from a two-year war in northern Ethiopia that starved his people. To his dismay, urgently needed grain and oil have disappeared again for millions caught in a standoff between Ethiopia's government, the United States and United Nations over what U.S. officials say may be the biggest theft of food aid on record.

"I have no words to describe our suffering," Tesfa said.

As the U.S. and U.N. demand that Ethiopia's government yield its control over the vast aid delivery system supporting one-sixth of the country's population, they have taken the dramatic step of suspending their food aid to Africa's second-most populous nation until they can be sure it won't be stolen by Ethiopian officials and fighters.

Almost three months have passed since the aid suspension in parts of the country, and reports are emerging of the first deaths from starvation during the pause. At the earliest, aid to the northern Tigray region will return in July, the U.S. and U.N. say, and to the rest of the country at some point after that when reforms in aid distribution allow.

Tesfa, who lives in a school compound with hundreds of others displaced by the war in Tigray, laughed when asked how many meals he eats a day. "The question is a joke," he said. "We often go to sleep without food."

In interviews with The Associated Press, which first reported the massive theft of food aid, officials with U.S. and U.N. aid agencies, humanitarian organizations and diplomats offered new findings on the countrywide diversion of aid to military units and markets. That included allegations that some senior Ethiopian officials were extensively involved.

The discovery in March of enough stolen food aid to feed 134,000 people for a month in a single Tigray town is just a glimpse of the scale of the theft that the U.S., Ethiopia's largest humanitarian donor, is trying to grasp. The food meant for needy families was found instead for sale in markets or stacked at commercial flour mills, still marked with the U.S. flag.

The implications for the U.S. are global. Proving it can detect and stop the theft of aid paid for by U.S. taxpayers is vital at a time when the Biden administration is fighting to maintain public support for aid to corruption-plagued Ukraine.

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better off with a new generation of leadership.

"I may end up voting for him again, especially if he's running against Donald Trump or the governor of Florida (Ron DeSantis). If those are the options, I will vote for the president," Shurtleff said. "But I really wish he'd get out of the campaign."

For Republicans, who have been consumed by Trump's legal baggage for much of the year, the charges against Hunter Biden offered a much-needed opportunity to go on offense — at least temporarily. Republicans on Capitol Hill are vowing to continue investigating the president's son no matter what happens with his current criminal case.

Even in the immediate aftermath of the younger Biden's plea deal, outraged conservatives addressed the revelation in the context of the latest federal indictment against Trump, who is charged with 37 felony counts related to mishandling classified documents and misleading investigators.

The former president is facing years in prison if convicted. He's also fighting 34 felony charges in New York related to alleged hush money payments to a porn actor and a separate investigation by Georgia authorities probing his attempts to overturn the 2020 election.

Hunter Biden will likely avoid jail time based on his plea deal with the Justice Department.

He is set to plead guilty to two misdemeanors for failing to pay more than \$100,000 in taxes on over \$1.5 million in income in both 2017 and 2018. The felony gun charge states that Hunter Biden possessed a handgun for 11 days in October 2018 despite knowing he was a drug user.

"Wow! The corrupt Biden DOJ just cleared up hundreds of years of criminal liability by giving Hunter Biden a mere 'traffic ticket.' Our system is BROKEN!" Trump wrote on his social media site. "People are going wild over the Hunter Biden Scam with the DOJ!"

DeSantis, Trump's leading Republican rival, supported Trump's assessment.

"Looks like Hunter received a sweetheart deal and is not facing any charges on the massive corruption allegations," DeSantis tweeted. "If Hunter was not connected to the elite DC class he would have been put in jail a long time ago."

Experts consulted by the AP said that misdemeanor tax cases as well as gun possession charges not associated with another firearm crime are uncommon.

Republican operative Jim Merrill, a veteran of New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation presidential primary, predicted that Hunter Biden's plea deal would likely help Trump dominate the Republican Party's nomination fight for the foreseeable future by highlighting the differences between the Trump and Biden cases.

"That perceived contrast plays to Donald Trump's advantage in the short term," Merrill said. "And it will allow him to continue dominating primary media coverage and voter attention."

Regardless, there was an underlying belief among many Republicans that Trump's legal entanglements would quickly return to the forefront of the 2024 conversation.

Democrats, meanwhile, acknowledged that Biden has serious political challenges ahead even without his son's legal problems.

"I don't think that this will be a significant issue for voters either now or come November 2024," said Democratic strategist Lis Smith. "This is Hunter Biden, not his father."

"But taking a step back, there's no doubt that no matter who the Republican nominee is, this is going to be a dog fight," Smith added. "President Biden has his work cut out for him."

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Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

## 'She just wants a friend': Families push for full school days for children with disabilities

By CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press/Report for America

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP) — One Thursday morning in May, instead of sitting at a desk in her sixth grade classroom in the Oregon mountains, Khloe Warne sat at a table in her mother's bakery, doing her schoolwork on a laptop and watching her favorite clips of anime.

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Khloe, 12, loves drawing, writing and especially reading — in second grade, she was already reading at a sixth grade level. But she only goes to school one day a week for two hours. The district said she needed shorter school days last year when Khloe threw a desk and fought with students in outbursts her mother attributes to a failure to support her needs. Khloe, who has been diagnosed with autism, ADHD and an anxiety disorder, had no individualized education plan for her disability when she returned to in-person learning after the pandemic.

Not being able to attend school regularly has saddened Khloe, stunted her education and isolated her from her peers, her mother says. It has also upended her family's life. Her mother, Alyssa Warne, had to quit her job for a time in order to stay home with her. She described the fight to get her daughter back in the classroom as exhausting, stressful and sad.

"She just wants a friend," Alyssa Warne said. "It's not asking much to send your kid to school for at least one whole day."

Across the U.S., advocates say, schools are removing students with disabilities from the classroom, often in response to challenging behavior, by sending them home or cutting back on the days they're allowed to attend.

Schools say the move can be necessary to keep students and teachers safe and prevent disturbances. But parents and advocates argue the shortened days, often referred to as informal removals, amount to discrimination and violations of students' civil rights. Under federal law, it is illegal to bar a child from receiving the same education as their peers based on conditions stemming from their disability.

Alyssa Warne sued her daughter's school and school district this month, alleging disability discrimination. School officials did not respond to requests for comment on the lawsuit. In an earlier email, the school director said she couldn't comment on individual students because of privacy concerns.

In Oregon, a clash between parents and schools culminated this spring at the Statehouse. A bill to curb the use of shortened days, essentially giving parents veto power over such a decision, is pending in the House of Representatives after near-unanimous passage in the Senate. Pressure from school boards and superintendents has hurt the legislation's chances, its chief sponsor said.

"It shouldn't have been controversial because these kids have had this right for such a long time," Democratic state Sen. Sara Gelser Blouin said of her bill. "I wish that we could serve these kids, respect these kids and lift these kids up and honor their rights without being ordered by a court to do so."

Dan Stewart, managing attorney for education and employment at the National Disability Rights Network, said he wasn't aware of other states with laws limiting schools' use of shortened days as Oregon's bill would have. But a number of states have issued guidance through their departments of education informing schools that shortened days could potentially amount to discrimination under federal law.

Since the 1970s, federal law has guaranteed students with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. This means, as much as possible, they should be learning alongside their peers who don't have disabilities, with necessary accommodations. It's illegal for school districts to cite a lack of money or staff as a reason for not educating a child with disabilities.

But states don't always enforce the law, advocates say. Instead of hiring specialists, training teachers or providing tailored services, they say, some schools are shortening students' schedules as a way to manage difficult behavior.

Oregon is embroiled in a lawsuit over schools' use of shortened school days, filed by the nonprofit advocacy group Disability Rights Oregon in 2019. Experts appointed by the court to research the issue found about 1,000 Oregon students with disabilities — most of them in elementary school — are on shortened schedules.

"While less than 2% of students in special education are placed on a shortened school day, for those students and their families, this amounted to often a dramatic decrease in the amount of instruction received, a loss of opportunities for interaction with peers, and an educational program that put them in a position to lag further and further behind their peers in both academic and social emotional skills," the experts' report said.

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This spring, in the debate over the bill, teachers unions said a lack of specialized training and a post-pandemic crisis in student mental health were putting them in harm's way and disrupting classrooms.

"Education employees are reporting frequent injuries caused by students, and yet they are provided with limited training and scarce options to protect themselves from harm," wrote Susan Allen of the Oregon School Employees Association.

But schools receive federal and state money for kids with disabilities that they should use for training and staffing, advocates say.

"Resource allocation is a decision, and school districts have decided not to invest," said Meghan Moyer, public policy director for the nonprofit advocacy organization Disability Rights Oregon.

For some Oregon families, the bill's stalling is only their latest setback.

Another parent in Grants Pass, Chelsea Rasmussen, has been fighting for more than a year for her 8-year-old daughter Scarlett to attend full days at school.

Scarlett reads at her grade level, but is nonverbal and uses an electronic device and online videos to communicate. She was born with a genetic condition that causes her to have seizures and makes it hard for her to eat and digest food. Because of her medical needs, the school must have a resident nurse on site.

After the pandemic, Scarlett's mother agreed to start her on a three-day school week to ease her into in-person learning for the first time. But it took months of meetings to bump her up to five days a week, Chelsea Rasmussen said. School employees, she said, told her the district lacked the staff to tend to Scarlett's medical and educational needs at school.

Officials at the school system attended by Scarlett, Grants Pass School District 7, said staffing was not a factor in her case.

"We try not to shorten days for students with special needs," said Vanessa Jones, the district's director of special services. "It's a team decision and we use it as sparingly as we can."

At home, Scarlett kept showing her mom online videos of children playing or Sesame Street lessons. She longed to be at school, her mother said.

"We wasted a year with a child that could do grade-level work," Chelsea Rasmussen said.

She plans to continue speaking out — both for Scarlett and other families struggling with the same issue.

"How can you not allow a child to have an education?" she said. "We don't feel like we should have to fight that hard for a student to feel like they belong."

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Claire Rush is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

## Math scores plunge for 13-year-olds as pandemic setbacks persist

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Math and reading scores among America's 13-year-olds fell to their lowest levels in decades, with math scores plunging by the largest margin ever recorded, according to the results of a test known as the nation's report card.

The results, released Wednesday, are the latest measure of the deep learning setbacks incurred during the pandemic. While earlier testing revealed the magnitude of America's learning loss, the latest test casts light on the persistence of those setbacks, dimming hopes of swift academic recovery.

More than two years after most students returned to in-person class, there are still "worrisome signs about student achievement," said Peggy G. Carr, commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, a branch of the federal Education Department.

"The 'green shoots' of academic recovery that we had hoped to see have not materialized," Carr said in a statement.

In the national sample of 13-year-old students, average math scores fell by 9 points between 2020 and 2023. Reading scores fell by 4 points. The test, formally called the National Assessment of Educational

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Progress, was administered from October to December last year to 8,700 students in each subject.

Similar setbacks were reported last year when NAEP released broader results showing the pandemic's impact on America's fourth- and eighth-grade students.

Math and reading scores had been sliding before the pandemic, but the latest results show a precipitous drop that erases earlier gains in the years leading up to 2012. Scores on the math exam, which has been given since 1973, are now at their lowest levels since 1990. Reading scores are their lowest since 2004.

Especially alarming to officials were outside decreases among the lowest-performing students. Students at all achievement levels saw decreases, but while stronger students saw slides of 6 to 8 points, lower performing students saw decreases of 12 to 14 points, the results show.

There were also differences by race. Students from almost every race and ethnicity saw math scores slide, but the steepest drops were among American Indian students, at 20 points, and Black students, at 13 points. The decline for white students, by comparison, was 6 points, while Asian students held even.

Pandemic setbacks appear to be lingering even as schools across the U.S. spend billions of dollars to help students catch up. The federal government sent historic sums of money to schools in 2021, allowing many to expand tutoring, summer classes and other recovery efforts.

But the nation's 13-year-olds, who were 10 when the pandemic started, are still struggling, Carr said.

"The strongest advice I have is that we need to keep at it," she said. "It is a long road ahead of us."

Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said the results confirm what the Biden administration knew all along: "that the pandemic would have a devastating impact on students' learning across the country and that it would take years of effort and investment to reverse the damage as well as address the 11-year decline that preceded it."

Still, Cardona said he's encouraged by signs of improvement elsewhere, with some states returning to pre-pandemic levels on their own math and reading assessments.

The exam is designed to measure basic skills in math and reading. Students were asked to read passages and identify the main idea or locate certain information. In math, they were asked to perform simple multiplication and tackle basic geometry, calculating, for example, the area of a square. Most questions were multiple choice.

Asked about their reading habits, fewer students than ever say they're reading for fun every day. Just 14% reported daily reading for pleasure — which has been tied to better social and academic outcomes — down from 27% in 2012. Almost a third of students said they never or hardly ever read for fun, up from 22% in 2012.

The test also revealed a troubling increase in student absenteeism. The share of students missing five or more days of schools in a month doubled since 2020, reaching 10% this year. Students with fewer missed days had higher average scores in both reading and math, according to the results.

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The Associated Press education team receives support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## **Tropical Storm Bret spins toward eastern Caribbean as forecasters warn of heavy rainfall**

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Tropical Storm Bret chugged toward the eastern Caribbean on Tuesday as the region prepared itself for an unusually early storm and the torrential rains that are forecast.

Bret had maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (85 kph) late Tuesday night and was moving westward across the Atlantic Ocean at 17 mph (28 kph), according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami, which warned that it's been unable to get "a better handle on the system's intensity and size."

The storm was located some 730 miles (1,170 kilometers) east of the Windward Islands and is expected to pummel some eastern Caribbean islands on Thursday at near hurricane strength. A tropical storm watch was issued for Barbados, St. Lucia, Martinique and Dominica, where the meteorological service

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said Tuesday that the storm poses a “high threat” to the island and warned of landslides, flooding and waves of up to 12 feet (4 meters).

“Landslides are highly likely as we are coming out of a relatively dry period where grounds may be compromised or developed cracks,” said Fitzroy Pascal with Dominica’s Office of Disaster Management.

Meanwhile, the hurricane center urged people in the Lesser Antilles, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to closely monitor the storm and have their hurricane plans in place.

“Given the uncertainty in the track and intensity forecasts, it is too early to specify the location and magnitude of where Bret’s associated hazards could occur,” the center said.

Up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) of rain were forecast from the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe south to St. Lucia, and up to 4 inches (10 centimeters) of rain for Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The government of Guadeloupe warned that inclement weather would start Wednesday evening and continue until late Friday, with waves of up to 10 feet (3 meters).

“Be careful!” officials warned in a statement.

Unfavorable winds and drier air are expected to later weaken Bret as it swirls through the central Caribbean region, with some models showing the storm could dissipate after affecting islands in the eastern Caribbean.

The storm formed Monday — an early and aggressive start to the Atlantic hurricane season that began on June 1. A tropical disturbance with an 80% chance of cyclone formation is trailing Bret. No June on record has had two storms form in the tropical Atlantic, according to meteorologist Philip Klotzbach at Colorado State University.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has forecast 12 to 17 named storms for this year’s hurricane season. It said between five and nine of those storms could become hurricanes, including up to four major hurricanes of Category 3 or higher.

Virginia Tech meteorologist Stephanie Zick said she expects to see a higher than average number of storms rapidly intensify this season given warmer sea surface temperatures. She also noted that flooding from tropical systems that make landfall has caused the most deaths in the past 10 years.

“The hazards associated with tropical storms can occur hundreds of miles away from the storm center,” she said.

## Once wrongly imprisoned for notorious rape, member of ‘Central Park Five’ is running for office

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Outside a Harlem subway station, Yusef Salaam, a candidate for New York City Council, hurriedly greeted voters streaming out along Malcolm X Boulevard. For some, no introductions were necessary. They knew his face, his name and his life story.

But to the unfamiliar, Salaam needed only to introduce himself as one of the Central Park Five — one of the Black or Brown teenagers, ages 14 to 16, wrongly accused, convicted and imprisoned for the rape and beating of a white woman jogging in Central Park on April 19, 1989.

Now 49, Salaam is hoping to join the power structure of a city that once worked to put him behind bars.

“I’ve often said that those who have been close to the pain should have a seat at the table,” Salaam said during an interview at his campaign office.

Salaam is one of three candidates in a competitive June 27 Democratic primary almost certain to decide who will represent a Harlem district unlikely to elect a Republican in November’s general election. With early voting already begun, he faces two seasoned political veterans: New York Assembly members Al Taylor, 65, and Inez Dickens, 73, who previously represented Harlem on the City Council.

The incumbent, democratic socialist Kristin Richard Jordan, dropped out of the race in May following a rocky first term.

Now known to some as the “Exonerated Five,” Salaam and the four others — Antron McCray, Kevin

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Richardson, Raymond Santana and Corey Wise — served between five and 12 years in prison for the 1989 rape before a reexamination of the case led to their convictions being vacated in 2002.

DNA evidence linked another man, a serial rapist, to the attack. The city ultimately agreed in a legal settlement to pay the exonerated men \$41 million.

Salaam, who was arrested at age 15, served nearly seven years behind bars.

"When people look at me and they they know my story, they resonate with it," said Salaam, the father of 10 children. "But now here we are 34 years later, and I'm able to use that platform that I have and repurpose the pain, help people as we as we climb out of despair."

Those pain points are many in a district that has some of the city's most entrenched poverty and highest rent burdens.

Poverty in Central Harlem is about 10 points higher than the citywide rate of 18%, according to data compiled by New York University's Furman Center. More than a fourth of Harlem's residents pay more than half of their income on rent. And the district has some of the city's highest rates of homelessness for children.

Salaam said he's eager to address those crises and more. His opponents say he doesn't know enough about how local government works to do so.

"No one should go through what my opponent went through, especially as a child. Years later, after he returns to New York, Harlem is in crisis. We don't have time for a freshman to learn the job, learn the issues and re-learn the community he left behind for Stockbridge, Georgia," Dickens said, referring to Salaam's decision to leave the city after his release from prison. He returned to New York in December.

Taylor knows that Salaam's celebrity is an advantage in the race.

"I think that folks will identify with him and the horrendous scenario that he and his colleagues underwent for a number of years in a prison system that treated him unfairly and unjustly," Taylor said.

"But his is one of a thousand in this city that we are aware of," Taylor added. "It's the Black reality."

Harlem voter Raynard Gadson, 40, is cognizant of that factor.

"As a Black man myself, I know exactly what's at stake," Gadson said. "I don't think there's anybody more passionate about challenging systemic issues on the local level in the name of justice because of what he went through," he said of Salaam.

During a recent debate televised by Spectrum News, Salaam repeatedly mentioned his arrest, prompting Taylor to exclaim that he, too, had been arrested: At age 16, he was caught carrying a machete — a charge later dismissed by a judge willing to give him a second chance.

"We all want affordable housing, we all want safe streets, we all want smarter policing, we all want jobs, we all need education," Salaam said of the candidates' common goals. What he offers, he said, is a new voice that can speak about his community's struggles.

"I have no track record in politics," he conceded. "I have a great track record in the 34 years of the Central Park jogger case in fighting for freedom, justice and equality."

All three have received key endorsements. Black activist Cornell West has backed Salaam. Dickens has the backing of New York City Mayor Eric Adams and former New York U.S. Rep. Charlie Rangel. Taylor is being supported by the Carpenter's Union.

Rangel recalled at a campaign rally that Salaam had called to let him know he was entering the race. Rangel then quipped that Salaam had a "foreign name." Salaam responded pointedly on social media.

"I am a son of Harlem named Yusef Salaam. I went to prison because my name is Yusef Salaam," he tweeted. "I am proud to be named Yusef Salaam. I am born here, raised here & of here — but even if I wasn't, we all belong in New York City."

Rangel later apologized.

Salaam also would like an apology from Donald Trump, who in 1989 placed ads in four newspapers before the group went on trial with the blaring headline, "Bring back the death penalty."

When asked by a reporter in 2019 if he would ever apologize, Trump said there were "people on both sides" of the matter.

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"They admitted their guilt," Trump had said, of the Central Park Five, referring to what the men said were coerced confessions. "Some of the prosecutors," Trump added "think the city should never have settled that case. So, we'll leave it at that."

When Trump was indicted in New York in April on charges of falsifying business records, Salaam mocked him with his own ad on social media that visually mimicked Trump's from long ago.

"Over 30 years ago, Donald Trump took out full page ads calling for my execution," Salaam tweeted above the ad, headlined: "Bring Back Justice & Fairness."

## Controversial Virginia state senators, including 'pro-life' Democrat, ousted in primary election

By SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — A handful of Virginia incumbents prevailed over challengers in Tuesday's primary election, but two of the state's most controversial political figures — Democratic Sen. Joe Morrissey and Republican Sen. Amanda Chase — lost their party's nomination, along with at least three more of their Senate colleagues.

Morrissey, a political centrist and increasingly rare Democrat who supports limits on abortion access, lost to former state legislator Lashrecse Aird, an unapologetic, "100%" supporter of abortion rights.

"Joe's been here too long. It's time for new blood," said Gail Coleman, 62, who voted for Aird Tuesday afternoon in suburban Richmond.

Chase, a right-wing firebrand who has served in the Senate since 2016 and embraced falsehoods about the 2020 presidential election, was edged out by Glen Sturtevant, a lawyer and former member of the chamber seeking a political comeback in the red-leaning suburban Richmond district.

Dozens of other races took place around the state, including in some swing districts that will help determine the balance of power in the General Assembly in the November election. Virginia, where the Legislature is currently politically divided, is one of the few states that holds its legislative races in odd-numbered years. With its unusual calendar and quasi-swing state status, the state's results are often closely watched for hints of voter sentiment heading into the following year's midterm or presidential cycle.

Both parties and both chambers had competitive contests on the ballot, and an unusually high number of sitting officeholders faced serious challenges in an election season upended by new political maps.

This year marks the first cycle in which legislative candidates are running in districts created during the redistricting process that ended in late 2021. The new maps were drawn by outside experts without regard to incumbent protection. That's contributed to a wave of retirements by many of the General Assembly's veteran lawmakers and diminished the name-recognition advantage for incumbents, some of whom ran in almost entirely new districts.

The losses by Chase, Morrissey and their colleagues will add to the already lofty turnover.

In another high-profile race, Democrat L. Louise Lucas, a veteran legislator, knocked off another incumbent, fellow Sen. Lionell Spruill. The race in the heavily Democratic Hampton Roads seat was one of only two featuring current officeholders from the same chamber running against one another. It was marked by particularly sharp personal attacks lobbed on social media and in TV ads.

Lucas, who has served in the Senate since 1992, campaigned as a fighter. She donned boxing gloves in some ads, promising to take on Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

"MOMMA SAID KNOCK YOU OUT!" she tweeted.

In northern Virginia, challengers upset at least two incumbents.

Saddam Salim, a first-generation immigrant and political activist, defeated moderate Democratic Sen. Chap Petersen.

Petersen, a lawyer, has angered the liberal wing of his party by joining with Republicans as a key vote in getting several of Youngkin's priorities across the finish line, including legislation that ended school mask mandates last year.

Stella Pekarsky, a member of the Fairfax County School Board, beat Democratic Sen. George Barker,

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who has served in the Senate since 2008 and wields significant influence from his perch as co-chair of the chamber's Finance and Appropriations Committee.

In a contentious Republican contest for a southwest Virginia House seat, freshman Del. Wren Williams defeated fellow Del. Marie March. In northern Virginia, former CIA officer Russet Perry secured the Democratic nomination in a Senate seat expected to be a key battleground in the general election.

Elsewhere, incumbents easily cruised past challengers. Democratic Sen. Lamont Bagby handily defeated Katie Gooch in a Richmond-area race, and Sen. Dave Marsden defeated Heidi Drauschak, who was backed by the big-spending advocacy group Clean Virginia.

In a Charlottesville-anchored seat, Democratic Sen. Creigh Deeds fended off a spirited challenge from Sally Hudson, a member of the House of Delegates. Deeds, a respected advocate on mental health issues, campaigned as a pragmatic progressive, arguing that his experience and relationships in Richmond would be a boon to his constituents, an argument echoed by other incumbents.

Among Republicans, Chase was the only Senate incumbent to face a challenge Tuesday. She campaigned as a champion of gun rights and other conservative values. She also persistently repeated former President Donald Trump's falsehoods about widespread fraud in the 2020 election.

Although Chase had campaigned with Youngkin after unsuccessfully seeking the party's nomination for governor herself in 2021, Youngkin did not endorse her in the race. Nor did he wade into an eight-way Senate contest in the Shenandoah Valley won by farmer Timmy French.

But the night went especially well for other candidates the governor backed. All of the seven on the ballot Tuesday won their nomination contests. The three others in competitive races he backed had won party-run nominations earlier.

In the central Virginia Senate nomination contest with Morrissey, Aird was powered to victory with the help of an unusual number of legislators and members of the state's congressional delegation who endorsed her. She also far outspent Morrissey, who ran a scrappy operation with no official campaign manager.

A disbarred attorney with a long history of personal and professional controversies, Morrissey identifies as "pro-life" but has long supported some abortion access. He has recently expressed a willingness to vote with Republicans to enact stricter limits.

Until this race, Morrissey had time and again overcome personal controversies to win elected office. As he campaigned for office this year, he faced allegations of mistreatment and physical abuse by his decades-younger estranged wife, which he strenuously denied.

Despite those headwinds, many observers were unwilling to count him out because of his long-established reputation as an effective grassroots campaigner who takes care of bread-and-butter issues for constituents. Morrissey conceded to Aird.

Aird, who works in higher education administration, will head into the general election season as the favorite in the blue leaning district south and east of Richmond.

A handful of other races were too early to call late Tuesday.

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A previous headline on this story was corrected to reflect that Lashrecse Aird is a former state legislator, not a current state legislator.

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Associated Press photographer Steve Helber contributed to this report from Dinwiddie.

## Judge rules Arkansas ban on gender-affirming care for transgender minors violates US Constitution

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — A federal judge struck down Arkansas' first-in-the-nation ban on gender-affirming care for children as unconstitutional Tuesday, the first ruling to overturn such a prohibition as a growing number of Republican-led states adopt similar restrictions.

U.S. District Judge Jay Moody issued a permanent injunction against the Arkansas law, which would

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have prohibited doctors from providing gender-affirming hormone treatment, puberty blockers or surgery to anyone under 18.

Arkansas' law, which Moody temporarily blocked in 2021, also would have prohibited doctors from referring patients elsewhere for such care. At least 19 other states have enacted laws restricting or banning gender-affirming care for minors following Arkansas' law, and nearly all of them have been challenged in court.

In his order, Moody ruled that the prohibition violated the due process and equal protection rights of transgender youth and families. He said the law also violated the First Amendment rights of medical providers.

"Rather than protecting children or safeguarding medical ethics, the evidence showed that the prohibited medical care improves the mental health and well-being of patients and that, by prohibiting it, the state undermined the interests it claims to be advancing," Moody wrote in his ruling.

Moody's ruling echoed remarks that judges have made in other decisions temporarily blocking similar bans in Alabama and Indiana.

Republican Attorney General Tim Griffin said in a statement he planned to appeal Moody's ruling to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which last year upheld the judge's temporary order against the law. Griffin said he was disappointed in the ruling, calling the health care "experimentation," an argument the judge's ruling said was refuted by decades of clinical experience and scientific research.

Republican lawmakers in Arkansas enacted the ban in 2021, overriding a veto by former GOP Gov. Asa Hutchinson. Hutchinson, who left office in January and is now seeking the Republican presidential nomination, said the law went too far by cutting off treatments for children currently receiving such care.

The ruling affects only the Arkansas ban but may carry implications for the fates of similar prohibitions, or discourage attempts to enact them, in other states.

"This decision sends a clear message. Fear-mongering and misinformation about this health care do not hold up to scrutiny; it hurts trans youth and must end," said Holly Dickson, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas. "Science, medicine, and law are clear: gender-affirming care is necessary to ensure these young Arkansans can thrive and be healthy."

The ACLU challenged the law on behalf of four transgender youth and their families and two doctors.

The ruling comes as even more states are poised to enact bans on care for transgender youth. Louisiana's Democratic governor has said he intends to veto a similar prohibition, though the Republican Legislature likely has the votes needed to override him. Proposed bans are also pending in North Carolina and Ohio's legislatures.

Three states have banned or restricted the care through regulations or administrative orders.

Florida's law goes beyond banning the treatments for youth by also prohibiting the use of state money for gender-affirming care and placing new restrictions on adults seeking treatment. A federal judge has blocked Florida from enforcing its ban on three children who have challenged the law.

Children's hospitals around the country have faced harassment and threats of violence for providing such care.

The state has argued that the prohibition is within its authority to regulate the medical profession. People opposed to such treatments for children argue they are too young to make such decisions about their futures. Major medical groups, including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, oppose the bans and experts say treatments are safe if properly administered.

Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Hutchinson's successor, in March signed legislation attempting to effectively reinstate Arkansas' ban by making it easier to sue providers of gender-affirming care for children. That law doesn't take effect until later this summer.

Sanders on Tuesday called the care "activists pushing a political agenda at the expense of our kids."

"Only in the far-Left's woke vision of America is it not appropriate to protect children," Sanders tweeted.

A roughly two-week trial before Moody included testimony from one of the transgender youths challenging the state's ban. Dylan Brandt, 17, testified in October that the hormone therapy he has received has transformed his life and that the ban would force him to leave the state.

"I'm so grateful the judge heard my experience of how this health care has changed my life for the better and saw the dangerous impact this law could have on my life and that of countless other transgender people," Brandt said in a statement released by the ACLU.

Sabrina Jennen, another of the transgender youth who sued over the ban, said she felt a "wave of relief" over the ruling.

"I can say with 100% certainty that if I hadn't had this care, I would not be here today or at least in such a stable, mental state as happy as I am and as thriving as I am," Jennen, 17, told The Associated Press. "Having this care, it truly lifted me up from the deepest, darkest place."

## Trump adviser faces possible disbarment over his efforts to overturn 2020 election

By STEFANIE DAZIO, MICHAEL R. BLOOD and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Attorney John Eastman, the architect of a legal strategy aimed at keeping former President Donald Trump in power, concocted a baseless theory and made false claims of fraud in an attempt to overturn the 2020 election, a prosecutor said Tuesday in arguing that Eastman be disbarred.

Eastman's attorney countered that his client never intended to steal the election, but was considering ways to delay electoral-vote counting so states could investigate allegations of voting improprieties. Trump's claims of fraud were roundly rejected by courts, including by judges the Republican appointed.

Eastman faces 11 disciplinary charges in the State Bar Court of California stemming from his development of a dubious legal strategy aimed at having Vice President Mike Pence interfere with the certification of President Joe Biden's victory. If the court finds Eastman culpable of the alleged violations it can recommend a punishment such as suspending or revoking his law license. The California Supreme Court makes the final decision.

Duncan Carling of the office of chief trial counsel — which is seeking Eastman's disbarment — said Eastman's legal theory was "unsupported by historical precedent and law and contrary to our values as a nation." Eastman continued his efforts to undermine the election even after state and federal officials publicly rejected Trump allies' claims of fraud, Carling said.

"All of his misconduct was done with one singular purpose: To obstruct the electoral count on Jan. 6 and stop Vice President Pence from certifying Joe Biden as the winner of the election," Carling said. "He was fully aware in real time that his plan was damaging the nation," he added.

Eastman's attorney, Randall A. Miller, told the judge that Eastman "was not there to steal the election or invent ways to make President Trump the winner." Miller argued Eastman was merely engaging in what he said was a serious debate at the time about what authority the vice president had concerning the certification of the election.

"The facts will show that the purpose of Dr. Eastman's eventual assessment here was to delay, to delay the counting of the electoral votes so that there could be reasonable investigation undertaken by those states," he said.

The proceedings are expected to last at least eight days. The California State Bar is a regulatory agency and the only court system in the U.S. that is dedicated to attorney discipline. Eastman is expected to testify later Tuesday.

Others who will testify in the hearing in the State Bar Court of California include Greg Jacob, a former attorney for Pence. Jacob had pushed back against Eastman's plan to have Pence stop the certification of Biden's victory. Pence didn't have the power to overturn the election and has said so.

The State Bar alleges that Eastman violated California's business and professions code by making false and misleading statements that constitute acts of "moral turpitude, dishonesty, and corruption," and in doing so he "violated this duty in furtherance of an attempt to usurp the will of the American people and overturn election results for the highest office in the land — an egregious and unprecedented attack on our democracy."

Eastman has been a member of the California Bar since 1997, according to its website. He was a law clerk

for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and a founding director of the Center for Constitutional Jurisprudence, a law firm affiliated with the Claremont Institute. He ran for California attorney general in 2010, finishing second in the Republican primary.

Eastman retired as dean of the Chapman University law school in Southern California last year after more than 160 faculty members signed a letter calling for the university to take action against him.

Eastman's disciplinary hearing comes as special counsel Jack Smith continues his investigation into efforts by Trump and his Republican allies to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

A federal grand jury in Washington has been meeting behind closed doors for months to hear testimony from witnesses, including Pence, who has publicly described a pressure campaign by Trump aimed at getting him to halt Congress' certification of the election results and the win by Biden, a Democrat.

Federal agents seized Eastman's cellphone last summer as he was leaving a restaurant, he said in a court filing. That day, law enforcement officials conducted similar activity around the country as part of their probe.

In an interview after the hearing, Eastman said he had not been contacted by the Justice Department or summoned by the grand jury.

Eastman said of his advice to Trump, "It's what lawyers are expected to do, kind of lay out what are the options we have before us to consider."

"There are huge problems," Eastman added, saying he wanted to ensure that alleged voting irregularities did not influence the outcome in the election. "I think it's important, quite beyond the partisan controversies over the former president ... to identify whether our election system has such vulnerabilities that we can't trust it anymore."

Since Smith's appointment in November, he has cast a broad net in demanding interviews and testimony related to fundraising, Trump's rally that preceded the U.S. Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021, and communications between Trump associates and election officials in battleground states. Eastman spoke at the rally.

In December, Smith subpoenaed local election officials in Wisconsin, Michigan, Arizona and Pennsylvania, asking for communications with or involving Trump, his 2020 campaign aides and a list of allies — including Eastman — who were involved in his efforts to try to overturn the results of the election.

The investigation is separate from another probe by Smith into classified documents found at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, that led this month to felony charges against Trump. Trump pleaded not guilty last week to 37 felony counts, including conspiracy to obstruct justice.

Richer reported from Boston.

## What to know about Hunter Biden's plea deal in federal tax and gun case

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

The announcement that federal prosecutors have reached a plea deal with President Joe Biden's son Hunter over tax and gun charges marks the likely end of a five-year Justice Department investigation that has dogged the Biden family.

It doesn't, however, mean that congressional Republicans are done with their own wide-ranging probe into nearly every facet of Hunter Biden's business dealings, including examining foreign payments and other aspects of his finances.

Some of the Republican candidates hoping to face off against President Biden in the 2024 election are decrying the deal as evidence of an unfair justice system, particularly in light of the recent federal indictment of GOP front-runner Donald Trump, though there are obvious differences between the two cases.

Here's what to know about the charges, plea agreement, other probes involving the president's son and the politics:

### WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?

According to a letter filed in U.S. District Court in Delaware, Hunter Biden has been charged with mis-

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demeanor charges of failing to pay federal income tax. Court documents allege that he failed to pay more than \$200,000 in federal income taxes for 2017 and 2018.

The federal probe into Hunter Biden began in 2018, bursting into public view in December 2020 — one month after the presidential election — when he revealed that he had received a subpoena as part of the Justice Department's scrutiny of his taxes.

That subpoena sought information on the younger Biden's business dealings with a number of entities, including Burisma, a Ukraine gas company whose board he joined in 2014. That move sparked concerns about the perceptions of a conflict of interest, given the elder Biden was deeply involved in U.S. policy toward Ukraine.

An investigation by the then-Republican-controlled Senate did not identify any policies that were directly affected by Hunter Biden's work.

At the time of that subpoena, Hunter Biden said that he was "confident that a professional and objective review of these matters will demonstrate that I handled my affairs legally and appropriately, including with the benefit of professional tax advisors."

The younger Biden has also reached an agreement with the Justice Department on a charge that he illegally possessed a firearm while being a drug user.

Federal law prohibits people who use drugs from possessing firearms or ammunition, although a federal judge challenged the legality earlier this year. According to the Justice Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, between 1998 and 2014, nearly 100,000 prospective gun purchasers went home empty-handed because they were flagged as using illegal drugs.

## WHAT DOES THE PLEA AGREEMENT MEAN?

By entering a plea, Hunter Biden avoids a trial, and it's unlikely that he will spend time in jail, although penalties are ultimately up to a judge.

Biden was charged under an information, a formal document that lays out the charges against him but doesn't require a vote by a grand jury, which would be an indictment.

A person familiar with the investigation said the Justice Department would recommend probation for the tax charges. But the decision to go along with any deal is up to a judge. The person was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

The charge of willful failure to file a tax return is rarely used as a primary charge by federal prosecutors, according to data from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University. There were just 48 prosecutions in the last six fiscal years, according to TRAC.

The gun charge carries a maximum sentence of up to 10 years in prison, but the Justice Department says Hunter Biden has reached a pretrial agreement on that charge, too.

It is somewhat unusual to resolve a federal criminal case at the same time the charges are filed in court, though it is not totally unheard of.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The agreement essentially means the case is over, unless Hunter Biden fails to abide by it.

A deferred prosecution is an agreement offered by prosecutors in which a defendant must adhere to strict conditions, which will be known after he appears in court. A date for that appearance hasn't been set.

Usually a judge sets regular check-ins for the defendant to appear to ensure they are playing by the rules. If they don't, their deal is revoked and the criminal charges reinstated, which in Hunter Biden's case carry a maximum of a decade in prison. But if he does adhere to the rules, the case will be wiped from his record.

## ISN'T THERE ANOTHER PROBE?

Yes. Congressional Republicans have been pursuing their own investigations into nearly every facet of Hunter Biden's business dealings, including examining foreign payments and other aspects of his finances.

The misdemeanor tax crimes that the younger Biden is set to plead guilty to are far more limited in scope than the allegations that have been pursued for years by congressional Republicans. On Tuesday, Rep. James Comer, the Republican chair of the House Oversight Committee, said that the "charges against

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Hunter Biden and sweetheart plea deal have no impact on" his panel's probe.

Even before he ran for president in 2020, Joe Biden has faced questions about his son's business dealings and drug addiction.

And there have been other controversies. While his father was vice president, Hunter joined the Naval Reserve and was discharged after testing positive for cocaine in his system, later revealing a yearslong struggle with addiction.

In the weeks before the 2020 election, Trump supporters used the existence of a laptop they said was connected to Hunter Biden — and the emergence of someone who maintains he had business discussions with him — to raise questions about Joe Biden's knowledge of his son's activities in Ukraine and China. President Biden has said he did not discuss his son's international business dealings with him and has denied having ever taken money from a foreign country.

WHAT ARE THE POLITICS?

News of the plea agreement comes days after Trump appeared in federal court on charges related to his retention of classified documents. In the wake of those 37 charges, Republicans across the country have levied criticism against the Biden administration, accusing the Justice Department of "politicization" and assailing Hunter Biden's business dealings.

The Trump charges came from a special counsel, appointed by Attorney General Merrick Garland to conduct an independent investigation to avoid any potential conflict of interest in the Justice Department. The Hunter Biden charges, meanwhile, were filed by the U.S. attorney for Delaware, Trump appointee David Weiss.

Some of the Republicans competing to potentially face off with Biden in the 2024 general election wasted no time taking their critique of the plea agreement public.

On his Truth Social platform, Trump on Tuesday said "the corrupt Biden DOJ just cleared up hundreds of years of criminal liability by giving Hunter Biden a mere 'traffic ticket.'

Biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy tweeted Tuesday that "it's no accident that the farcical Hunter Biden 'plea deal' comes right after the Trump indictment," calling it "the perfect fig leaf to pretend that 'no one is above the law,' while absolutely putting certain people above the law."

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, in a tweet, also decried the "sweetheart deal" and said that, were Biden "not connected to the elite DC class he would have been put in jail a long time ago."

Asked about the plea deal during a Tuesday night Fox News town hall, Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina called perceptions of inequality in the justice system "dangerous" and implored voters "to thank God" for congressional Republicans' ongoing inquiry into the president's son.

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Associated Press writers Lindsey Whitehurst, Colleen Long and Nomaan Merchant in Washington contributed to this report.

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Meg Kinnard can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>

## Trump's penchant for talking could pose problems as Mar-a-Lago criminal case moves ahead

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Criminal defendants are routinely advised to avoid commenting on pending charges against them. But Donald Trump, the former president and current White House hopeful, is no ordinary defendant.

In his first televised interview since his arraignment last week on federal charges, the former president acknowledged that he delayed turning over boxes of documents despite being asked to do so, drew factually incorrect parallels between his case and classified document probes concerning other politicians, and claimed he didn't actually have a Pentagon attack plan that the indictment says he boasted about to others.

Those comments — like any remarks made by a defendant about an ongoing case — could complicate

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his lawyers' work, potentially precluding defenses they might have otherwise wanted to make or alternately boxing them into certain arguments so as to remain consistent with their clients' claims. The interview could give the Justice Department compelling, and admissible, insight into Trump's state of mind as the case moves forward, allowing prosecutors to preemptively attack defenses he might intend to invoke.

"If my client went on TV and said everything that he said, I might have fainted," said Jeffrey Jacobovitz, a Washington criminal defense lawyer.

The interview with Fox News aired just hours after a federal magistrate judge granted a Justice Department request for a protective order in the case that would prevent the public disclosure of evidence provided to the Trump team through the information-sharing process known as discovery, though nothing said in the interview would seem to have run afoul of that directive.

It's part of a long-running pattern by Trump, who is also seeking the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, of commenting openly about legal matters. Sometimes those comments have been to his own detriment, including last month when E. Jean Carroll, the advice columnist who won a \$5 million sexual abuse and defamation award against Trump, sought at least \$10 million more over remarks he made after the verdict.

The stakes are even higher in a criminal case.

"You typically say to your clients, 'Don't make any statements. Direct people to me,'" said Richard Serafini, a former Justice Department official and Florida defense lawyer. "Just politely decline to make any comment about the case and let your attorney do any commenting for you."

A Trump campaign spokesperson did not immediately respond to a question seeking comment about the Fox interview.

The indictment filed by Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith charges Trump with illegally retaining classified documents at Mar-a-Lago and obstructing government efforts to recover them, including by asking an aide to relocate boxes before a visit by investigators and suggesting that his lawyer hide or destroy documents demanded by a grand jury subpoena.

In the interview Monday night, Trump repeatedly denied wrongdoing.

But in so doing, he seemed to undercut potential future arguments from his lawyers that he was not intimately involved in the handling of the boxes, or that he had moved quickly to cooperate with demands to give the records back. He asserted incorrectly that he was entitled under the Presidential Records Act to retain the documents that he took with him from the White House and acknowledged that he delayed giving the boxes over because he wanted to first remove personal belongings that investigators say were commingled with the files — something he suggested he had been too busy to do.

Asked about an allegation in the indictment that he told his lawyer to tell the Justice Department that a subpoena for records had been fully complied with, he said, "Before I send boxes over, I have to take all of my things out. These boxes were interspersed with all sorts of things: golf shirts, clothing, pants, shoes. There were many things."

"He's essentially admitting that he knew the documents were there," Jacobovitz said. "That's inconsistent with saying, 'It was planted there.'"

One of Trump's GOP rivals, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, said the procrastination excuse, in his mind, served as proof of obstruction of justice, given that Trump is alleged to have caused his lawyers to certify to the Justice Department, incorrectly, that the requested classified materials had been returned.

"It appears to me last night, as a former prosecutor, that he admitted obstruction of justice on the air last night," Christie said. "I can tell you this: His lawyers this morning are jumping out of whatever window they're near."

In addition, Trump denied the Justice Department's characterization of a core allegation in the indictment — that during a 2021 meeting at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, he showed off a Pentagon "plan of attack" and told others that it was "secret" information that he could no longer declassify because he wasn't president anymore. But Trump, in the interview, denied that he was holding a specific document.

"There was no document. That was a massive amount of papers and everything else, talking about Iran

and other things," Trump told Fox News host Bret Baier. "And it may have been held up or may not, but that was not a document. I didn't have a document, per se. There was nothing to declassify. These were newspaper stories, magazine stories and articles."

The episode detailed in the indictment is based on an audio recording obtained by prosecutors, who could also presumably call as witnesses people who were present for the Bedminster encounter to testify about the document that's alleged to have been showed off.

But as is always the case with Trump, the court of public opinion matters too. Well-practiced in legal delay tactics, Trump could hope to drag out the proceeding so long that a trial does not conclude until after the election.

Meanwhile, the judge in the case, Aileen Cannon, on Monday set an initial Aug. 14 trial date, though that will unquestionably slip given the complexities of a criminal case centering on sensitive classified information.

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Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

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Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

## Counter-terrorism experts say Africa is the world's terrorism hot spot with half of 2022's victims

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Counter-terrorism experts said Tuesday that Africa is now the world's terrorism hot spot, with half of the victims killed last year in sub-Saharan Africa, though al-Qaida and Islamic State affiliates remain widespread, persistent and active elsewhere around the globe.

Interpol, the international criminal police agency, also reported during a panel discussion at the U.N. that terrorism linked to extreme right-wing ideology increased an estimated 50-fold over the past decade, particularly in Europe, North America and parts of the Asia-Pacific.

The experts see other trends: Deteriorating global security is making the terrorism threat "more complex and decentralized." Extremists are increasingly using sophisticated technology, and drones and artificial intelligence have opened new ways to plan and carry out attacks.

The United Nations this week is hosting its third high-level conference of heads of counter-terrorism agencies. Tuesday's panel on assessing current and emerging terrorist trends and threats brought together experts from the U.N., Interpol, Russia, the United States and Qatar, and Google's senior manager for strategic intelligence.

The overall theme for the week is addressing terrorism through reinvigorated international cooperation. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said during Monday's opening session the key is to unite not only in foiling attacks but also critically to focus on preventing terrorism by tackling poverty, discrimination, poor infrastructure, gross human rights violations and other underlying drivers.

At Tuesday's session, it was Africa that took the spotlight.

"Africa has emerged as the key battleground for terrorism, with a major increase in the number of active groups operating on the continent," U.N. Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari said, noting that local political, economic and social "fractures," porous borders and "identity-based mobilization" had fueled the emergence of al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, also known as ISIS.

Several areas of the continent, from Burkina Faso and the Sahel and more broadly to Chad and Sudan, still face the consequences of the flow of weapons and foreign fighters from Libya, Khiari said.

Oil-rich Libya plunged into chaos following the NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. After the Islamic State's self-styled caliphate was defeated in Iraq in 2017, many of its foreign fighters fled to the North African nation.

Col. Gen. Igor Sirotkin, deputy director of Russia's Federal Security Service and head of its National Anti-Terrorism Committee, told the meeting that West Africa, especially the Maghreb and the Sahel, "are becoming the epicenter of the Islamist terrorist threat, with the armed terrorist groups expanding their

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influence, and we see the danger of ISIS being reincarnated as an African caliphate.”

Qatar’s special envoy for counter-terrorism, Mutiaq Al-Qahtani, who said half the victims of terrorist acts last year were in sub-Saharan Africa, called for counter-terrorism efforts to focus on the continent.

Justin Hustwitt, the coordinator of experts monitoring U.N. sanctions against the Islamic State and al-Qaida, said the situation in West Africa continues to deteriorate and IS “seems to be trying to position itself as a political actor.”

He said IS in the greater Sahara is taking advantage of the lack of counter-terrorism operations, especially in the tri-border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and there are “growing concerns” about IS and al-Qaida taking advantage of any opportunity in Congo.

Interpol’s counter-terrorism director, Gregory Hinds, said al-Qaida and IS-related groups continue to inspire and carry out attacks in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, North America, Europe “and now across Africa and Asia at alarming pace.”

Hinds said the 50-fold increase in terrorism linked to extreme right-wing ideology “is being influenced by global events and global agenda.”

Secretary-General Guterres also said “neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements are fast becoming the primary internal security threats in a number of countries.”

On the significant deterioration of global security in the last few years, the U.N.’s Khiri said the number of conflicts globally is on the rise again after two decades of consistent decline, and their nature has changed.

“Civil wars that start off locally are more likely to become internationalized, and conflict parties are increasingly fragmented,” he said. “Civil wars aggravate grievances and foment regional international instabilities creating a fertile ground for non-state armed groups, including terrorist groups, to proliferate.”

On a more positive note, Gregory LoGerfo, the U.S. State Department’s deputy coordinator for counter-terrorism, said IS has not only been defeated in Iraq and Syria but its leadership has been “taken out or captured,” large-scale attacks have been prevented, and billions have been invested in stabilizing the region.

“But for all of our progress, we’re not done yet,” he said.

The U.N.’s Hustwitt echoed that Daesh’s leadership has suffered serious attrition, adding that “the group’s resources are depleting, and they are very focused on revenue generation.”

Tobias Peyeri, Google’s senior manager for strategic intelligence who formerly worked for the U.N. Office of Counter-Terrorism, said the company bans content produced by or supporting designated terrorist organizations, and is committed to fighting “the hatred and extremism that leads to terrorist violence.”

But he said bad actors, like extremist groups, “continue to become more savvy in evading detection,” citing as examples their use of coded communications, complex narratives and conspiracy theories, and their modifications of existing popular computer games.

To counter these efforts, he said Google relies on expertise in local markets, “advanced AI-driven visual matching technologies,” special detection technologies, and other measures.

Peyeri said artificial intelligence “is already helping the world with challenges from disease to climate change, “but if not developed and deployed responsibly, AI systems could amplify current societal issues such as misinformation, discrimination, and the misuse of tools by bad actors including terrorists.”

## Hawaii volcano stops erupting, putting an end to stunning lava show

HONOLULU (AP) — The nearly two-week eruption of a Hawaii volcano, one of the most active in the world, has come to a pause, scientists said.

After a three-month hiatus, Kilauea began erupting again June 7 — displaying fountains of glowing red lava without threatening any communities or structures.

Crowds of people flocked to the Big Island’s Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, which offered safe views of the lava.

Scientists declared the eruption paused again Monday when it rapidly declined in the afternoon, the U.S. Geological Survey’s Hawaiian Volcano Observatory said. Still, some lava continues to flow on the crater

floor, which may continue for days as the lava cools, the observatory said, adding that scientists will continue to monitor the volcano.

On Tuesday afternoon, only small, faint pockets of red could be seen on the USGS livestream that showed bright bursts of lava on the eruption's first day.

The previous night, park rangers could still see lava through cracks on the hardened surface of the lava lake, which provided "still pretty good viewing," said Jessica Ferracane, park spokesperson.

"Park visitation still robust," she said in an email, adding that the parking lot was full Tuesday at the Kilauea Visitor Center.

Kilauea, Hawaii's second largest volcano, erupted from September 2021 until last December. For about two weeks in December, Hawaii's biggest volcano, Mauna Loa, was also erupting on Hawaii's Big Island.

After a short pause, Kilauea began erupting again in January. That eruption lasted for 61 days, ending in March.

A 2018 Kilauea eruption destroyed more than 700 homes.

## **DA, ethics panel back judge in Donald Trump hush-money case, finding no evidence of bias**

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's tempestuous views aside, Manhattan prosecutors say neither the former president nor his lawyers have shown any evidence to support their claims that the judge in his hush-money criminal case has an anti-Trump bias. They urged him to reject defense demands that he step aside from the case.

In court papers made public Tuesday, the Manhattan district attorney's office defended Judge Juan Manuel Merchan against Trump's claims that he's a "Trump-hating judge," amplifying a court ethics panel's recent opinion that a judge in his situation wouldn't have to recuse himself.

The opinion, issued May 4 by the state's Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics, suggests Merchan may have sought the panel's input as he wrestled with the gravity of his role in the case and nagging concerns that he could be seen as having a bias or conflict of interest. The opinion doesn't list names, but the details match, with "the inquiring judge" described as presiding in a criminal case involving "a former public official."

Trump's lawyers contend Merchan, a state court judge in Manhattan, is biased because his daughter is a political consultant whose firm has worked for some of Trump's Democratic rivals, and that some of his rulings in two prior Trump-related cases have shown a pro-prosecution bent.

The Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics, in its opinion, concluded that a judge in that precise situation "may continue to preside in the matter provided the judge believes he/she can be fair and impartial."

Matthew Colangelo, a senior counsel to District Attorney Alvin Bragg, agreed that neither issue was grounds for Merchan to step aside. He painted Trump's recusal motion as the latest in his "prolific history of baselessly accusing state and federal judges around the country of bias."

The decision on recusal is up to Merchan himself. He previously rejected a similar request when Trump's company, the Trump Organization, was on trial.

Separately, Trump's lawyers are seeking to move the case to federal court, which would also eliminate Merchan from the judicial equation. A federal judge has scheduled a June 27 hearing on that request.

A message seeking comment was left with Merchan. Court spokesperson Lucian Chalfen said: "As this case remains a pending matter before Judge Merchan, we have no further comment."

Prosecutors also responded Tuesday to attempts by Trump's lawyers to fight a pair of subpoenas, including a request to writer E. Jean Carroll's lawyers for the full contents of a deposition Trump gave in connection with a lawsuit that resulted in a \$5 million sexual abuse and defamation judgment against him. While Trump's lawyers have described the request as overly broad, prosecutors said the full transcript and video of the deposition — not all of which has been released publicly — is "clearly relevant" to their own case.

The second subpoena concerns emails exchanged among Trump Organization employees and the White House, as well as severance and confidentiality agreements for key figures in Trump's company. Prosecutors

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are also seeking emails between Trump's wife, Melania, and Rhona Graff, a longtime company executive. Trump pleaded not guilty in April to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. The charges relate to hush-money payments made during the 2016 campaign to bury allegations that Trump had extramarital sexual encounters. He has denied wrongdoing.

The New York case is one of two criminal cases against Trump. Last week in federal court in Miami, he pleaded not guilty to 37 felony counts of mishandling classified material and taking steps to hide records and impede investigators. He is the first president to be charged with a federal crime.

In defending Merchan, Colangelo wrote that recusal is only required by state law when there's "a direct, personal, substantial or pecuniary interest in reaching a particular conclusion," Colangelo wrote. That provision doesn't extend to Merchan's daughter working for Trump's political foes, he argued.

Merchan's daughter, Loren, is a political consultant whose firm has worked on campaigns for prominent Democrats including Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and California Gov. Gavin Newsom.

In an affirmation included with Tuesday's filing, Bragg's political consultant disclosed that he had discussions with Loren Merchan's firm last fall regarding potential campaign work. The firm wasn't hired and Bragg's consultant said he wasn't informed of Loren Merchan's connection to the judge until around the time of Trump's arraignment.

Trump, the leading contender for the Republican nomination in 2024, could face Biden again as he seeks a return to the White House. He and his allies have seized on Merchan's political ties in portraying his prosecution as part of a Democrat-led "witch hunt."

Colangelo also took issue with the central point of Trump's argument for recusal: that Merchan acted inappropriately by involving himself in plea negotiations last year for Trump's longtime finance chief.

Merchan signed off on a deal that required ex-CFO Allen Weisselberg testify against Trump's company in exchange for a five-month jail sentence. That testimony ultimately helped prosecutors convict the Trump Organization of tax fraud, but the way Trump's lawyers described Merchan's involvement in the negotiations was "factually incorrect."

"At no point did the Court seek to 'induce' Mr. Weisselberg to cooperate against defendant, or condition any provision of the sentence on such cooperation," Colangelo wrote, citing a sworn statement from a prosecutor involved in the plea negotiations.

Trump's lawyers, Susan Necheles and Todd Blanche, had also asked Merchan to explain three political donations totaling \$35 that were made to Democratic causes in his name during the 2020 election cycle.

Merchan has yet to respond to that request, nor has he responded to inquiries from The Associated Press asking him to confirm or deny if he's the person who made the donations, which include \$15 for President Joe Biden's campaign against Trump, according to federal campaign finance records.

The Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics' opinion suggested that, if a judge like Merchan made such small-dollar contributions — even to a defendant's political opponent — he'd still be able to stay on the case.

"These modest political contributions made more than two years ago cannot reasonably create an impression of bias or favoritism in the case before the judge," the panel wrote.

Trump's case ended up in Merchan's courtroom because of a rotation in which judges assigned to oversee grand juries handle any cases that arise from them, according to the court system.

Merchan also often handles financial cases and runs Manhattan's mental health court, where some defendants get a chance to resolve their cases with treatment and supervision.

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

## Sweltering heat tests Texas' power grid and patience as thousands in South still without electricity

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas' power grid operator asked residents Tuesday to voluntarily cut back on electricity due to anticipated record demand on the system as a heat wave kept large swaths of the state and southern U.S. in triple-digit temperatures.

On the last day of spring, the sweltering heat felt more like the middle of summer across the South, where patience was growing thin over outages that have persisted since weekend storms and tornadoes caused widespread damage.

In the Mississippi capital, some residents said Tuesday that they had been without power and air conditioning for almost 100 hours, which is longer than the outages caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Entergy Mississippi, the state's largest electric utility, said its crews had worked 16-hour shifts since Friday, but some officials expressed doubts about its preparedness.

High temperatures in the state were expected to reach 90 degrees (32 degrees Celsius) on Tuesday.

"The delay in restoring power has caused significant hardship for their customers and it is unacceptable," said Brent Bailey, a member on the Mississippi Public Service Commission, the state's energy regulator.

The request by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, which serves most of that state's nearly 30 million residents, was its first of the year to cut energy consumption. ERCOT said it was "not experiencing emergency conditions," but it noted that the state set an unofficial June record on Monday for energy demand.

In the oil patch of West Texas, temperatures in San Angelo soared to an all-time high of 114 degrees (46 degrees Celsius) on Tuesday, according to the National Weather Service.

Many Texans have been skeptical of the state's grid since a deadly 2021 ice storm knocked out power to millions of customers for days. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has said improvements since then have made the grid more stable, but those improvement efforts continue to draw scrutiny.

In neighboring Oklahoma, more than 100,000 customers were eagerly awaiting the restoration of power and air conditioning following weekend storms that downed trees and snapped hundreds of utility poles. Officials say at least one person in Oklahoma has died because of the prolonged outages, which could last into the weekend for some residents.

Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders on Tuesday declared a state of emergency because of the weekend's storms, citing damage from the weather and "numerous" downed power lines.

In Louisiana, more than 51,000 electricity customers were still without power Tuesday because of the storms that damaged more than 800 structures around Shreveport alone, according to Mayor Tom Arceaux. Officials said more than a dozen major transmission lines were still awaiting repairs.

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Associated Press writers Michael Goldberg in Jackson, Mississippi, and Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Arkansas, contributed to this report.

## Kyle Kuzma opts out of his contract with the Wizards, AP source says

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Kyle Kuzma will be a free agent when the league's annual offseason shopping period starts next week.

Kuzma has declined his \$13 million player option with the Washington Wizards for next season, a person with knowledge of his decision said Tuesday, meaning he will be a free agent. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither side disclosed the move.

ESPN first reported Kuzma had declined the option. The move was not a surprise: Kuzma had said to The Washington Post and The Athletic in December that he was not planning to exercise the option, and given what he will command on the market, his decision makes sense.

Kuzma is coming off the highest-scoring season of his six-year career. He averaged 21.2 points for the

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Wizards, who are finalizing a trade that will send three-time All-Star Bradley Beal to the Phoenix Suns. It's possible that Kuzma could return to Washington on a far more lucrative deal; \$13 million for someone averaging more than 20 points a game would be an absolute steal.

Free agency opens June 30.

Meanwhile, the Toronto Raptors announced Tuesday that guard Gary Trent Jr. has exercised his \$18.5 million option for next season, meaning he will bypass the chance to be a free agent.

Trent averaged 17.4 points this past season for Toronto, his third consecutive season averaging at least 15 points.

Over his five-year career with the Raptors and Portland, Trent — the son of former NBA guard Gary Trent — has averaged 14.4 points.

AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/hub/NBA> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## In race against clock, expanding fleet of ships searches for submersible lost near Titanic wreck

By PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

In a race against the clock on the high seas, an expanding international armada of ships and airplanes searched Tuesday for a submersible that vanished in the North Atlantic while taking five people down to the wreck of the Titanic.

U.S. Coast Guard officials said the search covered 10,000 square miles (26,000 square kilometers) but turned up no sign of the lost sub known as the Titan. Although rescuers planned to continue looking, time was running out because the vessel would have less than two days of oxygen left if it is still intact and functioning.

"This is a very complex search, and the unified team is working around the clock," Cpt. Jamie Frederick of the First Coast Guard District in Boston told a news conference.

Frederick said the crew would have no more than about 41 hours of oxygen remaining as of midday Tuesday. That means its air supply could run out Thursday morning.

He added that an underwater robot had started searching in the vicinity of the Titanic and that there was a push to get salvage equipment to the scene in case the sub is found.

Three C-17 transport planes from the U.S. military have been used to move commercial submersible and support equipment from Buffalo, New York, to St. John's, Newfoundland, to aid in the search, a spokeswoman for U.S. Air Mobility Command said.

The Canadian military said it provided a patrol aircraft and two surface ships, including one that specializes in dive medicine.

Authorities reported the carbon-fiber vessel overdue Sunday night, setting off the search in waters about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's. At the helm was pilot Stockton Rush, the CEO of the company leading the expedition. His passengers were British adventurer Hamish Harding, two members of a Pakistani business family and a Titanic expert.

The submersible had a four-day oxygen supply when it put to sea around 6 a.m. Sunday, according to David Concannon, an adviser to OceanGate Expeditions, which oversaw the mission.

CBS News journalist David Pogue, who traveled to the Titanic aboard the Titan last year, said the vehicle uses two communication systems: text messages that go back and forth to a surface ship and safety pings that are emitted every 15 minutes to indicate that the sub is still working.

Both of those systems stopped about an hour and 45 minutes after the Titan submerged.

"There are only two things that could mean. Either they lost all power or the ship developed a hull breach and it imploded instantly. Both of those are devastatingly hopeless," Pogue told the Canadian CBC network on Tuesday.

The submersible had seven backup systems to return to the surface, including sandbags and lead pipes that drop off and an inflatable balloon. One system is designed to work even if everyone aboard is unconscious, Pogue said.

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Eric Fusil, director of the University of Adelaide's Shipbuilding Hub, said there are other scenarios that could cut communications, including an electrical fire that could create toxic fumes and render the crew unconscious.

Another possibility is that Titan became entangled in the wreck of the Titanic and is stuck there, Fusil said. "What I would like to believe ... is that Titan suffered from a power loss, but they could still go back to the surface" and be spotted by aircraft and ships, he said.

Experts said the rescuers face steep challenges.

Alistair Greig, a professor of marine engineering at University College London, said submersibles typically have a drop weight, which is "a mass they can release in the case of an emergency to bring them up to the surface."

"If there was a power failure and/or communication failure, this might have happened, and the submersible would then be bobbing about on the surface waiting to be found," Greig said.

Another scenario is a leak in the pressure hull, in which case the prognosis is not good, he said.

"If it has gone down to the seabed and can't get back up under its own power, options are very limited," Greig said. "While the submersible might still be intact, if it is beyond the continental shelf, there are very few vessels that can get that deep, and certainly not divers."

The Canadian research icebreaker Polar Prince, which was supporting the Titan, was to continue conducting surface searches with help from a Canadian Boeing P-8 Poseidon reconnaissance aircraft, the Coast Guard said on Twitter. Two U.S. Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft also conducted overflights.

The Canadian military dropped sonar buoys to listen for any sounds from the Titan.

OceanGate's expeditions to the Titanic wreck site include archaeologists and marine biologists. The company also brings people who pay to come along. They take turns operating sonar equipment and performing other tasks in the submersible.

Rush told The Associated Press in June 2021 that the Titan's technology was "very cutting edge" and was developed with the help of NASA and aerospace manufacturers.

"This is the only submersible – crewed submersible – that's made of carbon fiber and titanium," Rush said, citing a design that includes 5-inch-thick carbon fiber and 3.25-inch-thick titanium.

Passengers included Harding, who lives in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates; Pakistani nationals Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman, whose eponymous firm invests across the country; and French explorer and Titanic expert Paul-Henry Nargeolet.

Greg Stone, a longtime ocean scientist based in California and a friend of Rush, called the lost submersible "a fundamentally new submarine design" that showed great promise for future research. Unlike its predecessors, the Titan was not spherical and instead relied on a cylindrical shape that tapers at one end.

"Stockton was a risk taker. He was smart ... he had a vision. He wanted to push things forward," Stone said.

The expedition was OceanGate's third annual voyage to chronicle the deterioration of Titanic, which struck an iceberg and sank in 1912, killing all but about 700 of the roughly 2,200 passengers and crew. The wreckage was discovered in 1985 and has been slowly succumbing to metal-eating bacteria.

OceanGate's website described the "mission support fee" for the 2023 expedition as \$250,000 a person.

Recalling his own trip aboard the Titan, Pogue said the vessel got turned around looking for the Titanic.

"There's no GPS underwater, so the surface ship is supposed to guide the sub to the shipwreck by sending text messages," Pogue said in a segment aired on "CBS Sunday Morning." "But on this dive, communications somehow broke down. The sub never found the wreck."

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Associated Press writers Danica Kirka, Jill Lawless and Sylvia Hui in London, Rob Gillies in Toronto, Olga R. Rodriguez in San Francisco, Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Munir Ahmed in Islamabad contributed to this report.

## Court monitor warned of medical care issues at Border Patrol stations before girl's death

By VALERIE GONZALEZ and ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — A court-appointed monitor said in January that child migrants held in medical isolation may be overlooked when Border Patrol stations get too crowded, a warning issued five months before an 8-year-old girl with a heart condition died in custody during an unusually busy period in the same Texas region he inspected.

Dr. Paul H. Wise, a pediatrics professor at Stanford University, called the death of Anadith Danay Reyes Alvarez of Panama “preventable” during an interview this week while in Texas’ Rio Grande Valley to look into the circumstances.

“Any child who is ill, but particularly kids with chronic problems, there should be little hesitation to refer them to local hospitals, preferably a children’s hospital or hospital with good pediatric capabilities,” Wise told The Associated Press.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has acknowledged the girl was seen at least three times by medical personnel the day she died — complaining of vomiting, a stomachache and suffering what appeared to be a seizure — before she was taken to a hospital. CBP did not respond to a request for comment on Wise’s January report or his latest comments.

Wise authored a lengthy report in January on Border Patrol custody conditions for children in the Rio Grande Valley and El Paso, Texas, that gave satisfactory reviews on many counts but also flagged serious concerns. Last year, a federal judge asked him to examine custody conditions in the two busy regions as part of a 1997 court settlement to ensure safe treatment of child migrants.

Wise plans to submit a report soon on the May 17 death of the girl, who died on her ninth day in custody after being transferred to a station in Harlingen, Texas, with her family after being diagnosed with influenza. The agency limits custody to 72 hours under its own policy.

While his findings are not yet known — he declined to discuss them — some of his earlier warnings may resurface.

Wise previously expressed concern about crowding of children in medical isolation. His January report tells how “one medical team” in El Paso was responsible for 125 ill patients, a number that “far surpasses” the team’s capabilities.

The Border Patrol also struggled to meet a requirement to conduct regular medical assessments of children when they came in families and were in crowded stations, Wise said in January.

“The 5-day repeat medical assessment is most important when families are being held for protracted periods in overcrowded conditions,” he wrote. “However, because of other important demands on available medical staff, this medical protocol appears to be given relatively low priority under these conditions.”

Wise further raised concerns about chronic conditions going undetected and “relevant medical information” being unknown or not shared among staff.

CBP’s relatively detailed public account of the girl’s time in custody does not directly address the requirement for exams every five days or how crowded the Harlingen station was when she was there.

The government’s responsibilities for medical care of children is clearly defined in the recently updated agreement for the El Paso and Rio Grande Valley sectors. “CBP shall promptly activate the 911 system or refer juveniles to the local health system whenever appropriate for evaluation and treatment. Further, CBP shall refer juveniles with urgent or emergent medical issues to the local health system,” the agreement stipulates.

During his visit, Wise interviewed Anadith’s mother, Mabel Alvarez Benedicks, who told the AP that agents repeatedly ignored pleas to hospitalize her medically fragile daughter as she felt pain in her bones, struggled to breathe and was unable to walk.

Agents said her daughter’s diagnosis of influenza did not require hospital care, Benedicks said. They knew the girl had a history of heart problems but was told to return if she fainted, the mother said.

Troy Miller, CBP’s acting commissioner, has since ordered a review of all medically fragile detainees to

ensure limited time in custody. Wise said he spoke with U.S. officials, including medical staff, to convey concerns from his recent visit.

"I have enough information at this point to make urgent recommendations to CBP, (the Department of Homeland Security) and to the court. And this will be focused around the steps that should be taken, in my view, to ensure that no preventable deaths occur to children in CBP custody," he said.

This story has been updated to correct the spelling of the girl's name. It was Anadith Danay Reyes Alvarez, not Anadith Tanay Reyes Alvarez.

## What it's like to get a Wes Anderson education, from 'Rushmore' to 'Asteroid City'

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When Tony Revolori, then a 17-year-old with little Hollywood experience, was beginning to shoot Wes Anderson's "The Grand Budapest Hotel," Jason Schwartzman took him aside to give some advice.

No one knew better than Schwartzman what Revolori, who was starring alongside Ralph Fiennes, was in for. Schwartzman was by then a regular member of Anderson's troupe, but he was also 17 when he first broke through as Max Fischer in Anderson's "Rushmore."

"He looked at me and he said, 'None of this is going to make sense until you've actually gone through it,'" Revolori recalls. "Your life is going to change in no way and every way. But as long as you keep the people around you, you're good."

Much has been made of Anderson's recurring regulars, like Bill Murray, Adrien Brody and Owen Wilson. But for many young actors, Anderson's film sets have been their first real blush with moviemaking — or, at least, Anderson's elegant style of it.

Since "Rushmore" introduced Schwartzman, Anderson's films have been nurturing, if surreal, environments for young performers and a singular rite of passage. Anderson's productions are atypically communal, with nightly feasts among cast and crew, and a spirit that can resemble summer camp. For young actors, it can be a thrilling education.

"This is one of the most powerful learning experiences I've ever had," says Grace Edwards, one of the newcomers of Anderson's latest, "Asteroid City."

Part of the joy of "Asteroid City" is seeing successive generations of Anderson actors, including Schwartzman, Revolori and a new crop of young faces, assemble like homegrown players on a team of all-stars. For Schwartzman, it brings back memories of his "Rushmore" audition — his first glimpse at Anderson's way of treating young actors. On his way out, Anderson asked his opinion about a wardrobe item.

"While I was answering it, I was thinking: Why does this feel so bizarre?" says Schwartzman. "I realized because no adult other than my family had, at that age, asked me a question and really listened to the answer. I was being related to by a person who was 27. He was an adult, but not."

In the years since, the young actors who have come through Anderson's films — often in prominent roles — have had similar encounters. Jake Ryan was just seven when he played a younger brother in 2012's "Moonrise Kingdom."

"I don't remember much, but I remember feeling at home there," says Ryan, now 19. "It felt very cozy."

"Asteroid City," which opens nationwide Friday, may be Anderson's most multigenerational film yet. The story features frames within frames, but the heart of the movie concerns a fictional 1955 Southwest town where a widowed war photographer named Augie Steenbeck (Schwartzman) arrives with his bright son Woodrow (Ryan, in his third Anderson movie) and three younger daughters.

A visit with their grandfather (Tom Hanks) awaits, but first there's a stargazer convention to commemorate a meteorite impact. The gathering has also lured a renowned movie star (Scarlett Johansson) and her intelligent daughter (Grace Edwards).

The pains, regrets and melancholies of the adult characters mingle with the fresher but no less complex

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experiences of the teenagers getting a taste of love, death and fellowship for the first time.

In Anderson's films, younger characters tend to be just as adult, if not more so, than the grown-ups. Gene Hackman's Royal Tenenbaum or George Clooney's Fantastic Mr. Fox are far from paragons of maturity. "Moonrise Kingdom" starred Kara Hayward and Jared Gilman as a pair of 12-year-old runaway romantics who sway to Françoise Hardy's "Les Temps de l'Amour." Revolori's "lobby boy" Zero played sidekick to Fiennes' concierge, M. Gustave.

In "Rushmore," Schwartzman's Max and Bill Murray's Herman Blume are decades apart but equal rivals in love and revenge. At the beginning of shooting, Schwartzman asked Anderson why his character looked up to Murray's.

"And he says, 'Well, I don't think he looks up to him. I think he sees eye-to-eye with him,'" remembers Schwartzman. "That's the funny thing about these movies. They're not for kids, but they are, in a weird way. It's like they're for kids when they grow up."

When Edwards, 18, was auditioning for "Asteroid City," Anderson had her first read from "Moonrise Kingdom" — both the part of 12-year-old Suzy and her mother, played by Frances McDormand. Once she landed the role, Anderson handed her books about Hollywood in the 1950s to read and films to watch.

"I watched some Jodie Foster films because he figured the character was very sensible and very much a Jodie Foster-like personality," Edwards says. "He wanted me to get a strong sense of what she was like on screen."

Revolori describes Anderson as almost "a pseudo father." After "Grand Budapest" came out, they continued to regularly email. Revolori depended on Anderson's advice in navigating his career.

"I think he enjoys working with young performers and discovering someone that he sees talent in and giving them an opportunity. I sure as hell am very, very thankful for it. It obviously kind of made my career there," Revolori says, chuckling.

"Somebody like Tony — and exactly the same with Jake and Grace — they are wildly prepared," says Anderson himself. "But they also have young minds. The brain tissue is younger. They can remember everything. So their knowledge of the script is so ready and enhanced. They tend to be interesting just as animals. We've never seen them before. They're new, young people and they're still forming themselves."

Anderson's young actors don't always know what he's seen in them. But his young protagonists are invariably clever, precocious kids that are in some ways stand-ins for the director, who grew up a brainy child of divorce with a Super 8 camera in hand.

"One thing that really stuck out was he said Woodrow — and the other stargazers, for that matter — are very intelligent," Ryan says. "But it's that intelligence that makes them sort of outsiders from their would-be peers. There's a sense of loneliness in all five of them. And after meeting each other, there's a sense of: 'Wow, everyone's like me. This is how it's supposed to be.'"

More often than not, the actors Anderson casts are likewise full of passions and curiosities, and able to recite dialogue at a good clip. Edwards envisions acting in movies like the European films she and Anderson would discuss.

"Going home after was strange," says Edwards, who lives in Bismarck, North Dakota. "I have no right to compare it to a soldier coming home from the front but there is a similar aspect."

Revolori, now 27, has been reluctant to turn mentor, even though he's remained in the company, returning in "The French Dispatch" and "Asteroid City."

"I feel like I have to keep proving myself in his films. They're always the best times so I never not want to be called back," says Revolori. "Every time I do get called back I'm like, 'You better be on your A-game.' And I wonder if anyone else feels that way.

"But I do feel like I'm part of his family."

For Anderson and Schwartzman, "Asteroid City" marks just how far they've come since they met. In the film, Schwartzman's manner, accent and movement are unlike anything he's done before — a father, and a far cry from Max Fischer.

"When we made 'Rushmore,' he relied a lot on me," says Anderson. "Now, in a way, he doesn't rely

on me at all. He went to the set every day whether he was working or not in costume — not something I asked him to do. He had a ritual for how to prepare each day that I wasn't even aware of. There was nothing like that back when we met. He's on a totally different level."

Schwartzman, 42, wasn't even sure he could pull off the part. He worked extensively with a dialect coach and even used a moisturizing clay to mold his face into a more rigid expression.

"When you know someone for so long, there's really no hiding," Schwartzman says of Anderson. "Reading the script, it was definitely like: I don't know how to do this. I felt like what he was saying by giving this to me was: 'I think you have this in you.'"

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

## Border Patrol wouldn't review the medical file of a girl with a heart condition before she died

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

HARLINGEN, Texas (AP) — Border Patrol medical staff declined to review the file of an 8-year-old girl with a chronic heart condition and rare blood disorder before she appeared to have a seizure and died on her ninth day in custody, an internal investigation found.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has said the child's parents shared the medical history with authorities on May 10, a day after the family was taken into custody.

But a nurse practitioner declined to review documents about the girl the day she died, CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility said in its initial statement Thursday on the May 17 death. The nurse practitioner reported denying three or four requests from the girl's mother for an ambulance.

Anadith Danay Reyes Alvarez, whose parents are Honduran, was born in Panama with congenital heart disease. She received surgery three years ago that her mother, Mabel Alvarez Benedicks, characterized as successful during a May 19 interview with The Associated Press.

A day before she died, Anadith showed a fever of 104.9 degrees Fahrenheit (40.5 degrees Celsius), the CBP report said.

A surveillance video system at the Harlingen, Texas, station was out of service since April 13, a violation of federal law that prevented evidence collection, according to the Office of Professional Responsibility, akin to a police department's office of internal affairs. The system was flagged for repair but wasn't fixed until May 23, six days after the girl died.

Still, the report relied on interviews with Border Patrol agents and contracted medical personnel to raise a host of new and troubling questions about what went wrong during the girl's nine days in custody, which far exceeded the agency's own limit of 72 hours.

Investigators gave no explanation for decisions that medical staff made and appeared to be at a loss for words.

"Despite the girl's condition, her mother's concerns, and the series of treatments required to manage her condition, contracted medical personnel did not transfer her to a hospital for higher-level care," the Office of Professional Responsibility said.

Troy Miller, CBP's acting commissioner, said the initial investigation "provides important new information on this tragic death" and he reaffirmed recent measures including a review of all "medically fragile" cases in custody to ensure they are out of custody as soon as possible. Average time in custody has dropped by more than half for families in two weeks, he said.

"(This death) was a deeply upsetting and unacceptable tragedy. We can — and we will — do better to ensure this never happens again," Miller said.

Anadith entered Brownsville, Texas, with her parents and two older siblings May 9 when daily illegal crossings topped 10,000 as migrants rushed to beat the end of pandemic-related restrictions on seeking asylum.

She was diagnosed with the flu May 14 at a temporary holding facility in Donna, Texas, and was moved with her family to Harlingen. Staff had about nine encounters with Anadith and her mother over the next

four days at the Harlingen station until her death over concerns including high fever, flu symptoms, nausea and breathing difficulties. She was given medications, a cold pack and a cold shower, according to the Office of Professional Responsibility.

A court-appointed monitor expressed concern in January about chronic conditions of medically fragile children not getting through to Border Patrol staff.

Dr. Paul H. Wise, a Stanford University pediatrics professor who was in South Texas last week to look into the circumstances around what he said was a "preventable" death, said there should be little hesitation about sending ill children to the hospital, especially those with chronic conditions.

Anadith's mother told the AP that she informed staff of her child's conditions, which included sickle-cell anemia, and repeatedly asked for medical assistance and an ambulance to take her daughter to a hospital but the requests were denied until her child fell unconscious.

Karla Marisol Vargas, an attorney for the Texas Civil Rights Project who is representing the family, said Border Patrol agents rejected her pleas for medicine until the day she died.

"They refused to review documents showing the illnesses that her daughter had," Vargas said.

The family is living with relatives in New York City while funeral arrangements are made.

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This story has been updated to correct the spelling of the girl's name. It was Anadith Danay Reyes Alvarez, not Anadith Tanay Reyes Alvarez.

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Associated Press writer Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this story.

## **Border agency reassigns chief medical officer after custody death of 8-year-old girl**

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Customs and Border Protection has reassigned its chief medical officer after the in-custody death of an 8-year-old girl whose mother's pleas for an ambulance were ignored despite her daughter's chronic heart condition, rare blood disorder, high fever and other ailments, authorities said Thursday.

Dr. David Tarantino was CBP's first person to hold the job, which was created in 2020 amid growing numbers of families and young children who have presented Border Patrol agents with complex medical challenges.

CBP commended Tarantino for "years of service" and role in expanding medical services for people in custody but signaled it was time for change. He is expected to take a temporary position next week at the Department of Homeland Security, which includes CBP. His reassignment was first reported by The Washington Post.

Anadith Danay Reyes Alvarez was moved with family to a Border Patrol station Harlingen, Texas, after being diagnosed with the flu until she died on her ninth day in custody on May 17. Staff had about nine encounters with the Panamanian girl and her mother over her final four days.

"As CBP works to implement required improvements to our medical care policies and processes, including from the ongoing investigation into the tragic in-custody death of a child in Harlingen, we are bringing in additional senior leadership to drive action across the agency," CBP said in a statement.

A nurse practitioner reported denying three or four requests from the girl's mother for an ambulance, despite the girl having a 104.9-degree Fahrenheit (40.5-degree Celsius) temperature, nausea and breathing difficulties, according to CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility. She was given medications, a cold pack and a cold shower.

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This story has been updated to correct the spelling of the girl's name. It was Anadith Danay Reyes Alvarez, not Anadith Tanay Reyes Alvarez.

## Booze, drugs, a pet snake and foreign dealings: Families can cause headaches for a White House

By SEUNG MIN KIM The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hunter Biden, the son of President Joe Biden whose plea deal on federal tax and gun charges was made public Tuesday, is by no means the first presidential relative whose personal troubles have brought unwelcome headlines and headaches for a White House.

The younger Biden will plead guilty to misdemeanor tax offenses in an agreement that also allows him to avoid full prosecution on a felony charge of illegally possessing a firearm as a drug user, as long as he abides by certain conditions. The deal closes a long-running Justice Department probe into Hunter Biden, long known to struggle with substance abuse.

Children of U.S. presidents, like Hunter Biden, have long been subjects of fascination and curiosity, with their every move under public scrutiny.

Former President Donald Trump's son Donald Jr., for one, was in the news for meeting with Russian operatives offering damaging information on Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Sometimes the behavior is pure mischief, such as little Quentin Roosevelt (son of Teddy) running his toy wagon through a painting of a first lady. Or Alice Roosevelt, Quentin's sister, who swore, showed up at parties with her pet snake and was so determined to smoke at the White House that she once called a news conference on its roof and lit a cigarette there.

"I can either run the country or I can attend to Alice, but I cannot possibly do both," the president famously lamented.

Other misbehavior by presidential children has been more serious, and run afoul of the law.

Jenna and Barbara, the twin daughters of President George W. Bush, were each busted for underage drinking during a five-week span in 2001. Jenna Bush Hager, who now works as a television host for NBC, described during a conversation on "Today with Hoda & Jenna" how her father responded with regrets of his own as she tried to apologize.

"When I called my dad to say, 'I'm really sorry' ... he said, 'No, I'm sorry,'" Bush Hager said. "He said, 'I'm sorry, I told you you can be normal, and you can't. You can't order margaritas.'" She added of her parents: "We embarrassed them, although they never said it, on the world stage."

Both John Adams, the second U.S. president, and his son John Quincy Adams, the sixth, had children who suffered from alcoholism. George W. Bush, himself a future presidential child, was arrested for drunken driving in 1976 at the age of 30, and decided to give up alcohol a decade later.

For several presidents, the financial dealings of relatives have caused unpleasant publicity.

One notable example was Billy Carter, the beer-loving younger brother of President Jimmy Carter who was already known for making racist and anti-Semitic remarks when he registered as a paid agent of the Libyan government and accepted \$220,000 from Tripoli that covered his bills and various expenses.

Calling the Libyans "the best friends I've got in the world right now," Billy Carter's actions came under scrutiny of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which unanimously voted to establish a panel to look into the first brother's business dealings abroad. The committee at the time included a young Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del.

Richard Nixon once asked the CIA to put a "full cover" on his brother Donald, whose business connections the president blamed hurting him in elections, according to books written by former Nixon aides. Although the CIA declined, the Secret Service agreed to keep watch on Donald, who had ties to the billionaire Howard Hughes and once received a \$205,000 loan from him.

Neil Bush, one of President George H.W. Bush's six children, was an outside director at a failed savings and loan association that came under scrutiny of federal regulators in the 1990s. He did not face criminal charges but did agree to help settle a civil case brought by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. as one of a dozen defendants in a negligence suit.

Neil Bush had faced accusations of conflict of interest through his position at Silverado Banking, Savings and Loan Association in Denver, which he repeatedly denied. He asserted that he was unfairly targeted because he was a son of a president.

The brothers of former first lady Hillary Clinton — Tony and Hugh Rodham — were publicly rebuked by their brother-in-law's administration for a planned business venture that would entail exporting hazelnuts from the republic of Georgia with assistance from a political rival of Eduard Shevardnadze, who was the country's president at the time.

Though the Clinton White House distanced itself from those dealings, it didn't hesitate to offer presidential help to other family members.

Shortly before leaving office in 2001, President Bill Clinton pardoned his half-brother, Roger, for a 1985 drug offense in which he conspired to distribute cocaine. The president credited the conviction for helping to turn Roger Clinton's life around and told then-U.S. attorney Asa Hutchinson, the prosecutor in the case, that the episode probably saved his brother's life.

"The prosecution was very tough on the family and then-Governor Clinton responded to it as a loving brother would," Hutchinson, who is now running for the Republican presidential nomination, told the Associated Press at the time. "I haven't followed Roger that closely, but I know he's made an effort to change directions."

## **Pentagon accounting error provides extra \$6.2 billion for Ukraine military aid**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon said Tuesday that it overestimated the value of the weapons it has sent to Ukraine by \$6.2 billion over the past two years — about double early estimates — resulting in a surplus that will be used for future security packages.

Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said a detailed review of the accounting error found that the military services used replacement costs rather than the book value of equipment that was pulled from Pentagon stocks and sent to Ukraine. She said final calculations show there was an error of \$3.6 billion in the current fiscal year and \$2.6 billion in the 2022 fiscal year, which ended last Sept. 30.

As a result, the department now has additional money in its coffers to use to support Ukraine as it pursues its counteroffensive against Russia. And it come as the fiscal year is wrapping up and congressional funding was beginning to dwindle.

"It's just going to go back into the pot of money that we have allocated" for the future Pentagon stock drawdowns," said Singh.

The revelation comes as Ukraine moves ahead with the early stages its counteroffensive, in an effort to dislodge the Kremlin's forces from territory they've occupied since a full-scale invasion in February 2022. The counteroffensive has come up against heavily mined terrain and reinforced defensive fortifications, according to Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the commander in chief of Ukraine's armed forces.

Russia, meanwhile, has been bombarding the Kyiv region with dozens of Shahed exploding drones, in an assault that has exposed gaps in the country's air protection after almost 16 months of war. Officials said Ukrainian air defenses downed 32 of 35 drones that were launched by Russia early Tuesday.

The Pentagon has repeatedly used presidential drawdown authority to pull weapons, ammunition and other equipment off the shelves, so that it can get to Ukraine far more quickly than going through a purchase process.

Based on previous estimates announced June 13, the U.S. had committed more than \$40 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since Russia invaded. Using the new calculation, the U.S. has actually provided less than \$34 billion in aid.

Officials have not been able to give exact totals for the amount of money that remains for the drawdowns or for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which provides longer-term funding to purchase weapons, including some of the larger air defense systems.

The U.S. has approved four rounds of aid to Ukraine in response to Russia's invasion, totaling about \$113 billion, with some of that money going toward replenishment of U.S. military equipment that was sent to the frontlines. Congress approved the latest round of aid in December, totaling roughly \$45 billion

for Ukraine and NATO allies. While the package was designed to last through the end of the fiscal year in September, much depends upon events on the ground, particularly as the new counteroffensive ramps up.

President Joe Biden and his senior national security leaders have repeatedly stated that the United States will help Ukraine "as long as it takes" to repel the Russian forces. Privately, administration officials have warned Ukrainian officials that there is a limit to the patience of a narrowly divided Congress — and American public — for the costs of a war with no clear end.

Members of Congress have repeatedly pressed Defense Department leaders on how closely the U.S. is tracking its aid to Ukraine to ensure that it is not subject to fraud or ending up in the wrong hands. The Pentagon has said it has a "robust program" to track the aid as it crosses the border into Ukraine and to keep tabs on it once it is there, depending on the sensitivity of each weapons system.

Singh said the accounting mistake won't affect the ongoing delivery of aid to Ukraine.

## How you water the garden can save you money, gallons and your plants, too

By JESSICA DAMIANO Associated Press

Until I installed soaker hoses throughout my vegetable beds this year, I'd always watered my plants by hand, which over the years had become tiresome.

Standing outside holding a garden hose wasn't exactly my idea of a good time, but it directs water precisely to the soil above roots, making sure it lands where it's needed. That eliminates waste, and goes a long way toward preventing diseases like powdery mildew. That's good for plants, the environment and the water bill.

Placing flexible, porous rubber or fabric soaker hoses on the soil around plants is another preferred way to irrigate, as it allows water to seep slowly over roots. Drip irrigation hoses (rigid tubes with emitter holes that drip or stream water) work similarly.

There are plenty of other easy ways to save water around the garden.

### WHEN TO WATER, AND HOW DEEPLY

Applying water in the morning, for instance, allows time for it to permeate deeply into the soil before the sun gets too hot. Wait until later in the day, and a good portion of that water will evaporate from the soil surface before doing its job. Later still, and moisture could stick around overnight, risking mold, mildew and fungal diseases.

How you water is just as important as when. Giving plants a quick, daily sprinkle offers little if any benefit to roots, which, depending on the plant, could extend a foot or more into the soil. Instead, water less frequently but deeply.

And when the soil is really dry, it's even more important to slow down, or the water will run off without penetrating the surface, just as a bone-dry kitchen sponge has difficulty absorbing a spill.

### CAPTURE AND REUSE WATER

You can recycle water from boiling pasta, vegetables and eggs instead of pouring it down the drain, as long as it hasn't been salted. Water from dehumidifiers can be used, too. Waste not, want not.

Redirect a downspout to fill a rain barrel, then use the captured water to fill watering cans. Or use an adapter to attach a garden or soaker hose to the spigot hole at the bottom of the barrel.

### SOME PLANTS ARE THIRSTIER THAN OTHERS

When planting a garden, we typically give thought to what looks good with what and (hopefully) each plant's sunlight requirements. Consider water needs, too, so as not to overwater drought-resistant plants when trying to appease thirsty water hogs nearby.

For the same reason, it's a good idea to keep lawns separate from trees, shrubs, groundcovers, perennials and annuals if you use an automatic sprinkler system, which, by the way, wets the foliage of plants in the path of the spray, making them susceptible to disease.

Better yet, use native plants, most of which are drought-tolerant. They'll need regular watering during their first year or two, but once they're established, they can typically get by on rainwater alone, except

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maybe during prolonged heat waves. To find plants native to your area, plug your zip code into the online databases at The National Wildlife Federation (<https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/Plants>) and Audubon Society (<https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>) websites.

## HOLD IN MOISTURE WITH MULCH, COMPOST, EVEN A DIAPER

When planting in the garden, incorporate a generous amount of compost into holes to increase the water-holding capacity of sandy soil and improve drainage in clay.

Apply 2 to 3 inches of mulch around trees, shrubs and plants to retain soil moisture, reduce surface evaporation and inhibit weeds. Wait until the soil warms up before mulching, and keep the material a few inches away from stems and trunks.

When planting containers, look for a potting mix that includes vermiculite, a moisture-retaining mineral. Soil moisture polymer granules such as SoilMoist can also be added to reduce watering needs by as much as 50%.

You can even tear open a (clean!) baby diaper and mix the absorbent hydrogels with your potting mix, or simply place an unfolded diaper at the bottom of a container (plastic side down, with holes poked in for drainage) to absorb and hold moisture. Just don't use any of these if your container includes succulents or other plants that require dry, well-draining soil.

## FACTOR IN THE RAIN

If you're using an automatic sprinkler, set the timer for early in the morning, preferably just before dawn. Look for a timer with a rain sensor, or manually override its programming to avoid waste on rainy days.

Most lawns need about 1 to 1 ½ inches of water per week, including from rain, but you won't know how much your system puts out unless you test it. Set a tuna fish can on the lawn during a cycle, then measure the water accumulation in the can.

A rain gauge, which sort of looks like a test tube marked with measurements, will also inform on rainfall amounts.

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Jessica Damiano writes regular gardening columns for the AP and publishes the award-winning Weekly Dirt Newsletter. You can sign up here for weekly gardening tips and advice.

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For more AP gardening stories, go to <https://apnews.com/hub/gardening>.

## 4 dead after battery causes fire at New York City e-bike shop that spreads to apartments

NEW YORK (AP) — A fire at a New York City e-bike shop quickly spread to upper-floor apartments and killed four people early Tuesday in the latest deadly blaze linked to exploding lithium ion batteries.

The fire, reported shortly after midnight, happened at a shop that was cited last summer for safety violations related to the storage and charging of batteries, officials said. Investigators determined that it was an accident caused by a lithium ion battery, which can overheat while being charged and explode in an intensely hot flare of flame, fire officials said.

A pile of burned bikes, scooters and other debris lay on the sidewalk outside the shop, HQ E-Bike Repair, which was on the ground floor of a six-story building in Manhattan's Chinatown neighborhood.

So far this year, there have been more than 100 fires and 13 deaths linked to battery explosions in the city, said Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh.

"There was a very large number of both batteries and e-bikes," Kavanagh said at a morning news conference. "This location is known to the fire department. We have written violations at this location before and we have conducted enforcement at this location before."

Two men and two women died in Tuesday's fire. Two other women were hospitalized in critical condition, officials said. A firefighter suffered minor injuries.

Chief Fire Marshal Daniel Flynn said the shop was inspected last August and later cited for safety violations related to battery charging, the number of batteries at the site and the electrical system. The shop

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was fined \$1,600. Authorities recently surveilled the store and found there were many batteries there, but none of them were being charged at the time, he said.

A man who said he was the owner of the bike shop told The Associated Press that he made his usual checks of the store before he left Monday night. He denied that any e-bike batteries were being charged.

"The shop has been there for six years. I check before I leave every night," said the man, who spoke in Mandarin in a phone interview and only gave his last name, Liu. "I checked last night, turned off the power besides the ones for the monitor and automatic door."

He added: "I got a call from a neighbor ... and told me about the fire. I went to my shop but couldn't get close when they were working on the fire. I saw a lot of smoke. My shop is gone. I've been working for nothing for years."

Liu said he was at the police station waiting to talk with officers Tuesday morning.

The blaze startled the neighborhood in the middle of the night.

"A friend of mine came in and yelled 'there's a fire next door,'" neighborhood resident Belal Alayah told WABC-TV. "I step out. I see the flames so hot it's going through the metal gate. I knew it was the bike store, so I called the fire department. But the fire kept getting bigger and bigger and it took them a while to stop the fire."

Electric bikes have become popular, non-gasoline-powered ways to make deliveries, commute and zip around a city that has promoted cycling in recent decades. Many run on lithium ion batteries, which have been blamed for numerous fires.

Last month, an e-bike battery caused a blaze at an apartment building in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan, killing four people including a 94-year-old woman, officials said. In April in the Queens section, two children were killed in a fire blamed on an e-bike battery. Another Manhattan fire in November that injured more than three dozen people was caused by a malfunctioning e-bike battery, officials said.

Last year in the city, nearly 200 fires and six deaths were tied to such batteries, with an 8-year-old girl and a 5-year-old girl among those who died in blazes linked to scooter batteries. Fire officials have repeatedly issued warnings and safety tips, and the city passed new regulations this year aimed at preventing battery fires.

"So we would like to really emphasize today something that we have been saying over and over ... it is also very, very important to get the word out how incredibly dangerous this is," Kavanagh said. "This exact scenario where there's an e-bike store on the first floor and residences above and the volume of fire created by these lithium ion batteries is incredibly deadly."

Lithium ion batteries can catch fire because they contain a flammable electrolyte solution that allows electrical current to flow, experts say. Many fires have been linked to such batteries in laptops, cellphones and other items.

## Actor Jonathan Majors' domestic violence trial scheduled for Aug. 3

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Actor Jonathan Majors' domestic violence case will go to trial Aug. 3, a Manhattan judge said Tuesday, casting him in a real-life courtroom drama as his idled Hollywood career hangs in the balance.

Majors' accuser alleges he pulled her finger, twisted her arm behind her back, struck and cut her ear and pushed her into a vehicle, causing her to fall backwards, during a March confrontation in New York City. The woman was treated at a hospital for minor head and neck injuries, police said.

Majors' attorney, Priya Chaudhry, said Tuesday that she provided prosecutors with video evidence showing the female accuser attacked her client, not the other way around. The woman has not been named in court records.

Majors had been a fast-rising Hollywood star with major roles in recent hits like "Creed III" and "Ant-Man and The Wasp: Quantumania." But in the wake of his arrest, the U.S. Army pulled TV commercials starring Majors, saying it was "deeply concerned" by the allegations. Disney last month postponed Majors'

upcoming Marvel film "Avengers: Kang Dynasty" from May 2025 to May 2026. He is also slated to appear in "Avengers: Secret Wars" in 2027.

Judge Rachel Pauley wished the actor "best of luck" as she scheduled his trial. "Yes, ma'am," Majors said, standing with his lawyers in front of Pauley's bench in Manhattan's domestic violence court.

Majors, 33, is charged with misdemeanors, including assault, and could be sentenced to up to a year in jail if convicted.

Tuesday's hearing was his first time in court since just after his March 25 arrest in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood. He appeared by video at a hearing last month where prosecutors said they were revising the assault charge to reflect the accuser's perspective. A police officer's account was used in the original version.

Before his case was called Tuesday, Majors watched from the courtroom gallery with his lawyers and his girlfriend Meagan Good, who stars in the "Shazam!" movies, as two men in unrelated cases had their domestic violence charges thrown out.

Chaudhry urged the Manhattan district attorney's office to do the same for Majors and to instead charge his 30-year-old accuser, "holding her accountable for her crimes." In lieu of a decision, Chaudhry requested that Majors' case go to trial as soon as possible.

Chaudhry said she's provided prosecutors with "compelling evidence" of Majors' innocence, including video showing the woman assaulting the actor and Majors running away from her.

"We also provided photographs illustrating the injuries she inflicted on Mr. Majors and photos of his clothing torn as a direct consequence of (the woman's) violent actions," Chaudhry said.

She has also accused police and prosecutors of racial bias against Majors, who is Black. She said a white police officer got in Majors' face and taunted him when he tried showing the officer injuries that he said the woman caused.

Before scheduling Majors' trial, the judge issued a sealed decision that prompted Chaudhry to withdraw court papers she'd filed challenging the case. Pauley handed copies of her ruling to Majors' lawyers and prosecutors, but did not discuss any details in open court.

Majors, who plays villain Kang the Conqueror in the Marvel films, carried his personal Bible and a poetry journal into court. He smiled at times, but said little other than his brief exchange with the judge, which lasted all of three minutes.

Majors must continue to abide by a protection order barring him from contact with his accuser. A warrant could be issued for his arrest if he does not show up for his trial date, the judge said.

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

## Paris 2024 Olympics HQ searched in third consecutive Summer Games scandal

By ANGELA CHARLTON and GRAHAM DUNBAR Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French police searched the Paris Olympic organizers' headquarters on Tuesday as part of corruption investigations into contracts linked to the Games, according to prosecutors, the third straight time graft allegations have dogged a Summer Olympics.

The Paris organizing committee said in a statement that a search was carried out at its headquarters in the suburb of Saint-Denis and it was cooperating with investigators. It defended what it called "stringent procedures" around several hundred contracts it has awarded for the Games.

Tuesday's search and other related raids were linked to two preliminary investigations of the Paris Olympics, according to an official with the financial prosecutor's office, who was not authorized to be publicly named according to office policy. One probe was opened in 2017 — the year Paris was picked by the International Olympic Committee as the 2024 host — and the other began last year.

Neither investigation had been made public until Tuesday.

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Corruption allegations have hung over the world's biggest sporting event many times — from accusations surrounding how the Games were awarded to how contracts for construction, sponsorship and team services were handed out.

Accusations of vote buying linked to the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics and the Tokyo Games in 2021 led to the removal of several members of the IOC. Scandals around the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games led to reforms that limited IOC members' contact with candidate countries, though did not entirely remove the scope for corruption.

But Paris 2024 had gone to lengths to prove it would be different. The biggest event France is hosting in decades, the Games are being billed as a celebration of openness after two Olympics closed off by the COVID-19 pandemic, and as an example of democratic celebration after two World Cups tainted by human rights concerns in Qatar and Russia.

The organizers and Paris city hall have stressed a spirit of transparency and social justice — including planning an opening ceremony outdoors along the Seine River that will be free for up to half a million people. The Games are scheduled for July 26-Aug. 11, 2024.

Saccage 2024, an anti-Olympics group that argues that the Games cause widespread ecological and social damage, said it was "very pleased" the raids took place.

"For us, an event of Olympic proportions cannot be held without corruption," the group said in a statement. "It's the size of the event that makes it necessary, whatever the country."

The probe opened in 2017 is looking into suspected embezzlement of public funds and favoritism, and concerns about an unspecified contract reached by Paris organizers, the prosecutor's office said.

The 2022 investigation followed an audit by the French Anti-corruption Agency. The prosecutor's office said that case targets suspected conflict of interest and favoritism involving several contracts reached by the organizing committee and Solideo, the public body in charge of Olympic infrastructure.

That body's offices were also searched, prosecutors said. According to Le Monde newspaper, raids also took place at the headquarters of several companies and consultants linked to the organization of the Games.

Solideo oversees construction and renovation of more than 60 projects for the multibillion-dollar Olympics — including the athletes' village in the Saint-Denis neighborhood that is set to provide about 2,000 housing units after the games.

Paris 2024 organizers would not comment on the contracts mentioned by prosecutors or the alleged wrongdoing. In a statement, Paris 2024 described itself "as one of the most audited organizations in France," with regular monitoring of its governance and tough procedures aimed at "transparency and propriety" around contracts.

The IOC said in a statement that it was informed by the organizers that they are cooperating with authorities. It did not comment further.

The raids unfolded as the IOC executive board began a two-day meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland. IOC president Thomas Bach told reporters early Monday the meeting "of course will be about Paris, where we have some good news after the visit of the coordination mission and after my visit to France, to President Macron, and also the organizing committee."

Paris was awarded its Olympics six years ago — and at the same time the IOC also rewarded its only remaining bid rival, Los Angeles, with the 2028 Summer Games.

Avoiding a contested vote removed the scope for vote-trading and bribery in a process that has since changed again to effectively shut down public campaigning. Brisbane was picked two years ago as the 2032 Summer Games host after being pre-selected by the IOC to get exclusive negotiating rights.

With the IOC hugely sensitive about cost overruns and potential white-elephant venues, Paris bid leaders insisted during their campaign for hosting rights that their project was in line with IOC recommendations encouraging the use of existing facilities and infrastructure to save money.

More than 70% of the proposed venues in the Paris bid were existing facilities, with a further 25% being temporary structures. But the overall budget, including the cost of building and renovating venues, is about 8 billion euros (\$8.2 billion) and has already gone up from its original estimate, in part because of

high inflation.

The runup to the 2024 Games has seen turmoil in French sports.

Just last month, the president of the French Olympic Committee resigned following a period of intense infighting.

Also, Noël Le Graët resigned as president of the French soccer federation in February after a government audit found he no longer had the legitimacy to lead because of his behavior toward women and his management style. Bernard Laporte resigned as president of the French Rugby Federation in January after he was convicted of corruption and illegally acquiring assets and handed a suspended prison sentence.

Last October, Claude Atcher was fired as chief executive of the Rugby World Cup. That event opens in France in September, and also will serve as a test of France's security preparations for the Olympics. Atcher's removal followed an investigation by French labor inspectors into his workplace conduct.

Dunbar contributed from Geneva. AP Sports Writer Samuel Petrequin reported from Brussels.

AP Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2024-paris-olympic-games> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## **New NATO member Finland swears in government regarded as country's most right-wing in decades**

By JARI TANNER Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — Finland, which recently became NATO's 31st member, swore in a new coalition government Tuesday that is considered the most right-wing one in the Nordic country's modern history.

President Sauli Niinistö appointed the 19-member Cabinet of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo, the leader of the conservative National Coalition Party, after Finnish lawmakers approved the lineup of ministers.

The National Coalition Party won the most seats in an April 2 parliamentary election. Following seven weeks of coalition talks, the party announced a deal to form a government with three other parties, including the far-right, euroskeptic Finns Party.

The two junior partners in the coalition are the Christian Democrats and the Swedish People's Party of Finland. Due to the dominance of the two senior partner parties, Finnish media described Orpo's government as "national conservative" in nature.

The four parties hold a majority of 108 seats in the 200-member Parliament. Political analysts said the new Cabinet was Finland's most right-wing government since World War II.

Finland's economy was the central issue in April's election. While campaigning, conservative candidates accused the center-left Cabinet of former Prime Minister Sanna Marin of excessive spending, contributing to rising state debt and other economic problems.

Despite Marin's personal popularity and high international profile, voters shifted their allegiances away from her Social Democratic Party and to parties on the political right. The Social Democrats finished third in the election, after the National Coalition Party and the Finns Party.

Orpo, a 53-year-old veteran politician, is a former finance and interior minister and has headed the NCP, Finland's main conservative party, since 2016.

The party's other key Cabinet posts include Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen and Defense Minister Antti Häkkinen, who is the NCP's vice chair.

Häkkinen's post is particularly significant since Finland joined NATO in April. The country of 5.5 million, which shares a long border with Russia, is in the process of integrating its military systems and infrastructure into the alliance.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine prompted Finland to abandon decades of military non-alignment and to seek NATO membership together with Sweden in May 2022. Under Marin's leadership, Finland was one of Ukraine's most vocal and active European supporters in terms of military and civilian aid.

Häkkinen offered assurances that the new government would not change Finland's position toward

Ukraine.

"Finland's support to Ukraine will continue to be very strong. There will be no changes to this policy," he told The Associated Press on the sidelines of the new Cabinet's first news conference.

The populist Finns Party, which follows a largely nationalist and anti-immigration agenda, received several important Cabinet posts. Party leader Riikka Purra was made finance minister in the new government, and other party members were named to lead Finland's interior and justice ministries.

While Finland's strategy on Ukraine may stay the same, Orpo's Cabinet is expected to carry out major social policy and labor reforms, as well as budget cuts, over the next four years.

It seeks to substantially decrease Finland's government debt and is taking a hard stance on immigration, including tightening the requirements for residence permits and citizenship.

## Inside the deepening rivalry between Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and California Gov. Gavin Newsom

By STEVE PEOPLES and MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California Gov. Gavin Newsom says there's no chance "on God's green earth" he's running for president in 2024, but he wants to make clear that Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is running, is "weak" and "undisciplined" and "will be crushed by Donald Trump."

DeSantis, meanwhile, likes to mock Newsom's apparent "fixation" on Florida while insisting that the Democratic governor's "leftist government" is destroying California.

Welcome to one of the fiercest rivalries in U.S. politics, featuring dueling term-limited governors who represent opposite ends of the ideological spectrum and lead two of the nation's largest and most influential states. Newsom and DeSantis almost certainly won't face each other on any ballot in 2024, but in many ways, they are defining the debate from their corners of America as the presidential primary season gets underway.

Newsom addressed both his contempt for DeSantis and loyalty to President Joe Biden — even after Tuesday's revelations that the president's son, Hunter, reached a deal with federal prosecutors on federal tax offenses and a gun charge — in an interview just as the Florida governor launched a two-day fundraising trek spanning at least five stops across California. The Golden State has become one of DeSantis' favorite punching bags as he tries to avoid a direct confrontation with his chief Republican presidential rival, Trump, and the former president's escalating legal challenges.

"He's taking his eye off the ball," Newsom said of DeSantis' escalating attacks against him. "And that's not inconsistent with my own assessment of him, which is he is a weak candidate, and he is undisciplined and will be crushed by Donald Trump, and will soon be in third or fourth in national polls."

Representatives for DeSantis did not make the governor available for an interview. Beneath the war of words, however, strategists in both parties suggest there may be a mutually beneficial dynamic at play. As they jab at each other's policies and personalities through comments in the press and on social media, the governors are scoring points with their respective political bases, raising money and expanding their national brands.

Both men issued fundraising appeals Monday going after the other by name.

But it's not all helpful.

Newsom, in particular, is facing nagging questions about his presidential ambitions less than a week after DeSantis dared him to "stop pussyfooting around" and launch a primary challenge against Biden.

The California governor, whose second and final term concludes at the end of 2026, has seen his national profile grow since he easily beat back a recall attempt in 2021 and cruised to reelection last fall. He finished the midterm campaign with roughly \$16 million in the bank. And in March, he channeled \$10 million to a new political action committee he's calling the Campaign for Democracy.

All the while, Newsom's team has been moving deliberately to avoid the perception that he's running a shadow presidential campaign just as Biden ramps up his political activities.

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For example, Newsom's new PAC is initially focusing on challenging Republican leaders in deep-red states that are largely irrelevant in the 2024 presidential race. He campaigned in Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi in April on his first trip associated with the PAC.

Newsom is expected to avoid battleground states or key presidential primary states for the foreseeable future, his allies say.

At the same time, the California governor and his team have been in regular contact with Biden and his top aides, including Jen O'Malley Dillon, who managed the president's 2020 campaign and serves as deputy White House chief of staff. A Biden campaign official said the president's team coordinates closely with Newsom.

"Newsom is not going to run against Joe Biden and never would. But life is long, and Newsom is one of the prominent national Democrats. It's part of that role to have these big national battles," longtime Newsom adviser and friend Nathan Ballard said of the feud with DeSantis.

"There is the 2024 election, and then there is a 2028 election," Ballard added.

Indeed, veteran Democratic consultant Roy Behr, whose clients included former California Sen. Barbara Boxer, said the two governors are engaged in what could become an early preview of the 2028 presidential contest.

"It's not inconceivable that four years from now, these two guys could be their respective parties' nominees," he said. In tangling with DeSantis, who is 44, the 55-year-old Newsom is building his national brand and visibility and is "certainly trying to create opportunities for himself."

Sacramento-based Democratic consultant Andrew Acosta said he expected the ongoing rivalry to continue given that it's beneficial for both politicians with their core supporters. He described Newsom and DeSantis as "frenemies."

"They both get points off it," Acosta said. "There is a hard core of voters on both sides who think this is great."

While polling shows that many Democrats don't want the 80-year-old Biden to seek a second term, Newsom said there are no circumstances in which he would challenge the sitting president of his own party.

"Not on God's green earth, as the phrase goes," Newsom said in the weekend interview, adding that he would be with Biden on Monday and hosting a fundraiser for him Tuesday. "I have been pretty consistently — including recently on Fox News — making the case for his candidacy."

On Tuesday, Newsom reaffirmed his support for Biden shortly after news surfaced that the president's son, Hunter, reached a plea deal with federal prosecutors on charges he failed to pay federal income tax and illegally possessed a weapon.

"Hunter changes nothing," Newsom told the AP, noting that he was spending the day with Biden.

DeSantis did not plan to make any public appearances during his California fundraising tour, which included stops in Sacramento and the Bay Area on Monday and continues Tuesday with events planned for San Diego, Orange County and Los Angeles.

Over the weekend in Nevada, DeSantis noted that he's seen a surge of "disgruntled Californians" moving to Florida.

"Why would you leave like a San Diego to come to say, Jacksonville, Florida? I see people doing that," DeSantis told thousands of conservative activists at a weekend gathering close to the California border. "It's because leftist government is destroying that state. Leftist government is destroying cities all over our country. It's destroying other states."

Former Nevada attorney general Adam Laxalt, who hosted the weekend event and leads the pro-DeSantis super PAC, said the policy contrast between the leaders of Florida and California is "a debate that our whole country needs to have."

"California has been the model for many leftist policies. I would take the contrast between Florida's policies and its results led by Gov. DeSantis and the California policies, any day of the week," Laxalt said in an interview. "We can already see what leftist policies do."

Both DeSantis and Newsom took office in 2019 and won reelection for their second and final terms in

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2022. While in office, both have been buoyed by multiple billion-dollar budget surpluses and the help of statehouses controlled by their own party that supercharged their agendas.

In California, Newsom expanded the state's Medicaid program to cover all eligible adults, regardless of their immigration status. He signed a raft of legislation to make it easier to get an abortion, including authorizing \$20 million in state spending to help people from other states travel to California. When the U.S. Supreme Court declined to strike down an abortion law in Texas that was enforced by private lawsuits, Newsom signed a similar law in California — only he made it about guns.

And earlier this month, he proposed amending the U.S. Constitution to institute what he called a "reasonable" waiting period for all gun purchases, a ban on so-called assault rifles, universal background checks and raising the minimum age to buy a firearm to 21.

"I think Gavin Newsom is a very useful foil for Ron DeSantis, quite frankly," said Lanhee Chen, a California Republican who attended one of DeSantis' five California fundraisers this week. "The more kinds of crazy things that Newsom does — at least, crazy in the eyes of Republican voters — the more I think Ron DeSantis frankly benefits as somebody who's seen as a counterweight to that."

In Florida, DeSantis has leaned into cultural conservative issues in what he calls his "war on woke."

Earlier this month, his administration flew groups of migrants from Texas to Sacramento to draw attention to the influx of Latin American immigrants trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border. He did the same last fall, sending dozens of immigrants from Texas to Martha's Vineyard, which he often highlights during his stump speeches.

DeSantis also signed and then expanded the Parental Rights in Education bill — known by critics as the "Don't Say Gay" law, which bans instruction or classroom discussion of LGBTQ+ issues in Florida public schools for all grades. He seized control of Disney World's governing body after the company publicly opposed the law.

The Florida governor this year also signed a law banning abortions at six weeks, which is before most women realize they're pregnant. And he took control of a liberal arts college that he believed was indoctrinating students with leftist ideology.

While DeSantis does not have the legal entanglements that Trump faces, Newsom said Democrats may be wrong to assume the former president would be an easier candidate to defeat in the 2024 general election.

"I see deep weakness — I refer to it often — weakness with DeSantis masquerading as strength," Newsom said. "I think he'd be a more favored candidate. But I'll leave that judgment to more objective minds."

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Associated Press writers Adam Beam in Sacramento and Michelle Price in New York contributed.

This story has been corrected to delete a reference to Hunter Biden pleading guilty to a gun charge. He has reached a deal with prosecutors on the gun charge but is not pleading guilty.

## **Vegas-Florida Stanley Cup Final shows the value of street hockey in many US markets**

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

Music blared from speakers outside the Vegas Golden Knights' practice facility while kids ran around with hockey sticks, batting a ball into a couple of nets. Pizza was available nearby.

A similar scene played out a week later steps from the Florida Panthers' arena before Stanley Cup Final games, with young fans playing inside an inflatable rink underneath palm trees.

The final between Vegas and Florida showcased the benefits of ball and roller hockey in many U.S. markets, with or without professional teams, where ice is hard to come by. The NHL earlier this year launched a street hockey program aimed at knocking down barriers to the sport, with the goal of creating interest in the game, even at more casual levels.

"The influence of our teams going to the South, and you see the players getting drafted out of California, Texas and Florida, and you're seeing that influence already," said former player Andrew Ference, who is

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spearheading the NHL Street program as part of his job with the league. "It's a great success story that we have some NHLers coming from those areas, but imagine how many kids are left out. ... There's so many kids and families that aren't going to have the ability to overcome some of those barriers that it takes in those cities."

Barriers range from cost and time commitments to the competitive nature of youth sports and even many families thinking they don't belong in hockey. Stakeholders in the sport are trying many avenues to bring down those barriers, and street hockey is one of the latest attempts.

Ference, who played more than 1,000 NHL games as a defenseman from 1999-2015 and won the Stanley Cup with the Boston Bruins, was lucky to have outdoor ice available to him half the year while growing up in Edmonton. Still, he thinks many future pros logged more time playing street hockey in driveways and cul-de-sacs during their formative years.

"All I did when I was a kid was play ball hockey: literally get home from school, go outside, play with my friends," said retired goaltender Andrew Raycroft, who joined Ference at an NHL Street event in Boston this past weekend. "It's the easiest way to get into the game. Certainly the cost of skates, sticks, ice time living in the city, it's really tough. But you can still love the game and play the game."

As Commissioner Gary Bettman said, "The more kids are playing hockey in any form, the better it is for the growth of the game." His oldest grandson, Matthew, is a New Jersey high school state champion with a net in his family's driveway, and his 5-year-old grandson is taking skating lessons.

Getting on the ice to skate is harder in some places.

According to Arena Guide, a site that tracks indoor and outdoor rinks in North America, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, Arizona and Oklahoma have only 41 combined — many of them larger arenas not suited for youth hockey. USA Hockey's last annual report counted just over 6,000 players in those six states combined, which is less than in North Carolina alone thanks to growth spurred by the Hurricanes playing there since 1997.

More ice rinks being are being built in other NHL markets like Dallas, Las Vegas and Tampa, which portends positive signs for the future, according to Bettman, who also pointed out how popular ball hockey has been for quite some time across North America.

Because of that, Ference said he and his colleagues aren't trying to reinvent what street hockey is — just adding more structure to the old tradition of knocking on doors to see if enough neighborhood kids are around for a pickup game. But for a sport built on a team-first attitude, with attention to detail and discipline engrained from a young age, this isn't about copying that.

"We don't have to try to just kind of take ice hockey and put it on the street — basically take the skates off and take the exact same culture and put it on the street," said Ference, now director of social impact, grown and fan development for the NHL. "Instead, let the kids that are doing the program kind of figure out how they want it to look and feel: What kind of moves do they want to do on a breakaway? What kind of music do they want on the playlist?"

Basically, make hockey fun.

Ference said the league drew inspiration from AND1 basketball, snowboarding and video games to try to see what elements of youth interest, culture and creativity could be derived from them. Basketball and winter sports have evolved as a result, and video games are a case of kids being able to try something without practice, to interact with friends and make mistakes more so than on the ice in organized hockey.

The idea is to create an enjoyable environment similar to flag football where the pressure is off but still open a new gateway to hockey.

"Hopefully getting a lot of the crossover athletes that look at it and see something cool and want to try something new," Ference said. "They're not committing their life to it, but you can create a lot of casual fans that way and people that have a good interaction with hockey. They might not be the complete die-hard, all of them, but a lot of them will now be introduced to a sport that they wouldn't have in the past."

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AP Sports Writer Jimmy Golen in Boston contributed to this report.

AP NHL: <https://apnews.com/hub/nhl> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Social media star Andrew Tate charged with rape and human trafficking in Romania

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Andrew Tate, a social media personality known for expressing misogynistic views online, was charged in Romania with rape, human trafficking and forming a criminal gang to exploit women, prosecutors said Tuesday.

Prosecutors also filed charges against Tate's brother, Tristan, and two Romanian women in a court in Bucharest, Romania's capital, the nation's anti-organized crime agency said.

In a statement, the Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism alleged the four defendants formed a criminal group in 2021 "in order to commit the crime of human trafficking" in Romania as well as the United States and Britain.

The agency alleged that seven female victims were misled and transported to Romania, where they were sexually exploited and subjected to physical violence by the gang. One defendant is accused of raping a woman twice in March 2022, according to the statement.

Tate, 36, has resided in Romania since 2017. The former professional kickboxer has repeatedly claimed Romanian prosecutors have no evidence and alleged the case is a political conspiracy designed to silence him.

Tate's spokesperson, Mateea Petrescu, said Tuesday that the brothers were prepared to "demonstrate their innocence and vindicate their reputation." The two men are expected to attend a hearing in Bucharest on Wednesday morning, she added.

"Tate's legal team are prepared to cooperate fully with the appropriate authorities, presenting all necessary evidence to exonerate the brothers and expose any misinterpretations or false accusations," Petrescu said.

Under Romanian law, a judge has up to 60 days to assess the files in the case before defendants are sent to trial.

The Tate brothers, who are dual British-U.S. citizens, and the two Romanian suspects were detained in late December in Bucharest. The brothers won an appeal on March 31 to be moved from police custody to house arrest.

At the time, Tate was a hugely successful social media figure with more than 6 million Twitter followers, many of them young men and schoolchildren. He previously was banned from TikTok, YouTube and Facebook for hate speech and his misogynistic comments, including that women should bear responsibility for getting sexually assaulted.

He returned to Twitter last year after the platform's new CEO, Elon Musk, reinstated Tate's account. Hope Not Hate, a group campaigning against far-right extremism in the U.K., has warned that Tate continues to attract a huge following among young men and teenage boys who are drawn to his "misogynist, homophobic and racist content" by the luxurious lifestyle the influencer projects online.

Romania's anti-organized crime agency, known as DIICOT, said the seven alleged victims were recruited with false declarations of love and taken to Romania's Ilfov county, where they were forced to take part in pornography. The women were allegedly controlled by "intimidation, constant surveillance" and claims they were in debt, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors ordered the confiscation of the Tate brothers' assets, including 15 luxury cars, luxury watches and about \$3 million in cryptocurrency, the agency's statement said.

Several women in Britain also are pursuing civil claims to obtain damages from Tate, alleging they were victims of sexual violence. In a recent interview with the BBC, Tate denied spreading a culture of misogyny and accusations that he manipulated women for financial gain.

## **Supreme Court turns away veterans who seek disability benefits over 1966 hydrogen bomb accident**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected an appeal on behalf of some U.S. veterans who want disability benefits because they were exposed to radiation while responding to a Cold War-era hydrogen bomb accident in Spain.

The justices not did comment in turning away an appeal from Victor Skaar, an Air Force veteran in his mid-80s.

Skaar, of Nixa, Missouri, filed class-action claims seeking benefits for him and others who say they became ill from exposure to radiation during the recovery and cleanup of the undetonated bombs at the accident site in Palomares, a village in southern Spain, in 1966.

A federal appeals court rejected the class-action claims. The Supreme Court's action leaves that ruling in place.

The Justice Department, arguing against high-court review, noted that Congress last year enacted legislation that expands eligibility for benefits for many Palomares veterans. But the department also acknowledged that Skaar is not covered by the legislation.

Skaar's lawyers told the Supreme Court that he suffers from leukopenia, described as a condition that can be caused by exposure to radiation. Skaar also has had skin cancer, now in remission, the lawyers wrote in a court filing.

He was among 1,400 U.S. service members who were sent to Palomares to help clean up what has been called the worst radiation accident in U.S. history.

On Jan. 17, 1966, a U.S. B-52 bomber and a refueling plane crashed into each other during a refueling operation in the skies above Palomares, killing seven of 11 crew members but no one on the ground. At the time, the U.S. was keeping nuclear-armed warplanes in the air near the border with the Soviet Union.

The midair collision resulted in the release of four U.S. hydrogen bombs. None of the bombs exploded, but the plutonium-filled detonators on two went off, scattering 7 pounds (3 kilograms) of highly radioactive plutonium 239 across the landscape.

## **Vatican document highlights need for concrete steps for women, 'radical inclusion' of LGBTQ+**

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — An unprecedented global canvassing of Catholics has called for the church to take concrete steps to promote women to decision-making roles, for a "radical inclusion" of the LGBTQ+ community and for new accountability measures to check how bishops exercise authority.

The Vatican on Tuesday released the synthesis of a two-year consultation process, publishing a working document that will form the basis of discussion for a big meeting of bishops and laypeople in October. The synod, as it is known, is a key priority of Pope Francis, reflecting his vision of a church that is more about the faithful rank-and-file than its priests.

Already Francis has made his mark on the synod, letting lay people and in particular women have a vote alongside bishops. That reform is a concrete step toward what he calls "synodality," a new way of being a church that envisions more co-responsibility in governance and the key mission of spreading the Catholic faith.

The document highlights key concerns that emerged during the consultation process, which began at the local parish level and concluded with seven continent-wide assemblies. It flagged in particular the devastating impact that clergy sexual abuse crisis has had on the faithful, costing the hierarchy its credibility and sparking calls for structural changes to remove their near-absolute power.

The synthesis found a "unanimous" and "crucial" call for women to be allowed to access positions of responsibility and governance. Without raising the prospect of women's ordination to the priesthood, it asked whether new ministries could be created, including the diaconate — a reflection of a years-long call

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by some women to be ordained deacons in the church.

The document noted that “most” of the continent-wide assemblies and “several” bishops’ conferences called for the diaconate question to be considered by the synod.

The document also asked what concrete steps the church can take to better welcome LGBTQ+ people and others who have felt marginalized and unrecognized by the church so that they don’t feel judged: the poor, migrants, the elderly and disabled, as well as those who by tribal or caste feel excluded.

Perhaps most significantly, the document used the terminology “LGBTQ+ persons” rather than the Vatican’s traditional “persons with homosexual tendencies,” suggesting a level of acceptance that Francis ushered in a decade ago with his famous “Who am I to judge” comment.

Even the seating arrangements for the synod are designed to be inclusive. Delegates are to be seated at round tables, with around a dozen laity and clergy mixed together in the Vatican’s big auditorium.

Previously, synods took place in the Vatican’s theater-like synod hall, where cardinals and bishops would take the front rows and priests, nuns and finally lay people getting seated in the back rows, far from the stage.

Unlike past working documents, the synthesis doesn’t stake out firm points, proposals or conclusions, but rather poses a series of questions for further discussion during the October assembly. The synod process continues in 2024 with the second phase, after which Francis is expected to issue a concluding document considering the proposals that have been put to him by the delegates.

The working document re-proposed a call for debate on whether married priests could be considered to relieve the clergy shortage in some parts of the world. Amazonian bishops had proposed allowing married priests to minister to their faithful who sometimes go months at a time without Mass, but Francis shot down the proposal after an Amazonian synod in 2019.

It called for more “meaningful and concrete steps” to offer justice to survivors of sexual abuse. It noted that the faithful have also been victims of other types of abuse: “spiritual, economic, power and conscience abuse” that have “eroded the credibility of the Church and compromised the effectiveness of its mission.”

It suggested that the church must reevaluate the way authority is exercised by the hierarchy, suggesting structural, canonical and institutional reforms to eradicate the “clericalism,” or privilege that is afforded to clergy.

It acknowledged the fear and opposition that the synodal process has sparked among some bishops who see it as undermining their authority and power, but said transparency and accountability were absolutely necessary and that bishops should even be evaluated as a way to rebuild trust.

“The synodal process asks them (bishops) to live a radical trust in the action of the spirit in the life of their communities, without fear that the participation of everyone need be a threat to their ministry of community leadership,” it says.

Even before the synod began, the document and the consultative process that preceded it were already having an effect.

Sister Nadia Coppa, who heads the umbrella group of women’s religious orders, said anyone who exercises governance in religious orders was being called to develop a new way of exercising authority.

“It will be important for us to propose a style of governance that develops structures and participatory procedures in which members can together discern a new vision for the church,” Coppa told a press conference.

## Germany unveils a teddy bear as the mascot for Euro 2024 but this time with pants

GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany (AP) — The mascot for next year’s European Championship in Germany will be a teddy bear — and this time it won’t be naked from the waist down.

The mascot made its first appearance Tuesday morning by surprising children at a primary school in Gelsenkirchen, where it was set to appear again later before the team’s friendly game against Colombia.

The large-headed mascot with big eyes has shorts — in contrast to the 2006 World Cup mascot, a lion

named "Goleo" that was widely ridiculed for not having pants.

The as-yet unnamed teddy bear also has a soccer jersey, socks and boots. Fans were to help name it by choosing between Albärt, Bärnardo, Bärnheart or Herzi von Bär. "Bär" is the German word for bear.

"As a parent, I know how important it is to stimulate children's imagination," Euro 2024 tournament director Philipp Lahm said. "With the launch of our tournament mascot, we hope to create a fun and likeable character that will inspire them to enjoy playing football."

The mascot is due to appear in host cities over the next year. Germany will host the tournament from June 14-July 14, 2024.

AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## **Auto tycoon Ghosn files \$1 billion lawsuit in Lebanon against Nissan over his imprisonment in Japan**

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Auto tycoon Carlos Ghosn has filed a \$1 billion lawsuit against Nissan and about a dozen individuals in Beirut over his imprisonment in Japan and what he says is misinformation spread against him, Lebanese officials said Tuesday.

According to the officials, Ghosn's lawsuit accuses Nissan and the individuals of defamation and of "fabricating charges" against him, which eventually put him behind bars in Japan.

The lawsuit was filed last month, the judicial officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the case. The officials did not identify the individuals that Ghosn is accusing.

Ghosn was arrested in Japan in November 2018 on charges of breach of trust, misusing company assets for personal gains and violating securities laws by not fully disclosing his compensation.

According to Judge Sabbouh Suleiman, who is at the Beirut's prosecutor's office, a hearing date in the case was set for September.

The judicial officials who spoke to The Associated Press said that Nissan and the accused individuals are expected to send representatives to Beirut or name a Lebanese lawyer to represent them.

The 69-year-old Ghosn, who for two decades was the head of Nissan and Renault, has repeatedly said he is innocent. In December 2019, he jumped bail in Japan in a daring escape by hiding in a box spirited aboard a private jet out of the country.

Prosecutors in Japan have charged three Americans with helping Ghosn escape the country.

He now lives in Lebanon, which has no extradition treaty with Japan and does not extradite its citizens. Renault and Nissan have both been distancing themselves from the Ghosn scandal. Ghosn has citizenship in Lebanon, France and Brazil.

Lebanon has received three notices from Interpol based on arrest warrants in Japan and France for Ghosn. In France, he is facing a number of legal challenges, including tax evasion and alleged money laundering, fraud and misuse of company assets while at the helm of the Renault-Nissan alliance.

## **At least 6 teens shot after Milwaukee Juneteenth celebration ends**

MILWAUKEE (AP) — At least six teenagers were shot around where Milwaukee's Juneteenth celebration had just wrapped up, according to police and fire officials.

The shooting happened about 4:20 p.m. Monday outside Greater Philadelphia Church of God in Christ, according to witnesses and a Facebook Live video taken by a bystander in the immediate aftermath of the shooting, according to local media outlets.

Milwaukee Police Chief Jeffrey Norman said six teens were shot, including a 17-year-old who may have been a gunman himself and is in custody. Police were still seeking additional suspects who hadn't yet been identified.

Police said the victims ranged in age from 14 to 19.

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Norman said the shooting may have stemmed from a fight among a number of girls and young women, but he didn't know what sparked the dispute. The injuries of those wounded varied but did not appear life-threatening, the chief said.

"Milwaukee, what's going on with our children?" Norman wondered aloud at a news conference. He noted that he has taken part in the city's Juneteenth celebrations for eight years without any such bloody aftermath.

"Parents, guardians, elders, we need to engage in ensuring that this violence that our children are bringing these streets ceases. No handgun, no weapons of destruction, should be in the hands of our young ones."

"This is a story that plays out too often, and it's getting really old. Really old," Norman said.

The violence followed a bloody weekend of shootings across the United States.

Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson stressed that Monday's Juneteenth observance itself was a safe and growing event, calling the subsequent violence "totally, totally unacceptable."

"We had thousands and thousands of people here celebrating and bringing themselves together and having a sense of community. That's a powerful thing. That's the true story about what this day is," said Johnson, a Democrat.

A man who identified himself as T. Jenkins told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that a fight between two women preceded the shooting. A young man pulled out a gun and everyone scattered, Jenkins said. The man did some of the shooting, he said.

Jenkins provided aid to a young woman with a neck wound. There was blood coming out of the left side of her neck, he said. "I applied pressure to her neck," he said. "I tried to keep everyone calm around me."

A Facebook Live video taken in the immediate aftermath of the shooting shows at least two young people with gunshot wounds being treated by paramedics on the pavement.

The person who filmed the Facebook Live said in the video that a teenage girl or young woman had suffered a gunshot wound to the neck. The Facebook user tried to comfort her sobbing friend, who was trying to contact her mother. Only about 20 minutes after the festival had officially ended, hundreds of people were still walking along the street.

Thousands of people packed King Drive for the festival, which ran from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vendors selling food and wares lined the street along with community organizations offering resources, snacks and free giveaways.

Music thumped from booths and food trucks offering refreshing treats in the heat drew long lines. Youth dance groups, marching bands and drill teams entertained crowds in a parade along King Drive earlier in the day. Police officers were stationed in several places along the route.

Keith Caldwell, another vendor, described the scene this way: "I just heard commotion, gunshots, people screaming."

On security at the event, Caldwell talked of the need for gun control.

"Right now, it's like an uncontrollable situation," he said.

## Today in History: June 21, Constitution goes into effect

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, June 21, the 172nd day of 2023. There are 193 days left in the year. Summer begins today.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 21, 1788, the United States Constitution went into effect as New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify it.

On this date:

In 1377, King Edward III died after ruling England for 50 years; he was succeeded by his grandson, Richard II.

In 1834, Cyrus Hall McCormick received a patent for his reaping machine.

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In 1942, an Imperial Japanese submarine fired shells at Fort Stevens on the Oregon coast, causing little damage.

In 1954, the American Cancer Society presented a study to the American Medical Association meeting in San Francisco which found that men who regularly smoked cigarettes died at a considerably higher rate than non-smokers.

In 1964, civil rights workers Michael H. Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James E. Chaney were slain in Philadelphia, Mississippi; their bodies were found buried in an earthen dam six weeks later. (Forty-one years later on this date in 2005, Edgar Ray Killen, an 80-year-old former Ku Klux Klansman, was found guilty of manslaughter; he was sentenced to 60 years in prison, where he died in January 2018.)

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Miller v. California*, ruled that states may ban materials found to be obscene according to local standards.

In 1977, Menachem Begin (men-AH'-kem BAY'-gihn) of the Likud bloc became Israel's sixth prime minister.

In 1982, a jury in Washington, D.C. found John Hinckley Jr. not guilty by reason of insanity in the shootings of President Ronald Reagan and three other men.

In 1989, a sharply divided Supreme Court ruled that burning the American flag as a form of political protest was protected by the First Amendment.

In 1997, the WNBA made its debut as the New York Liberty defeated the host Los Angeles Sparks 67-57.

In 2010, Faisal Shahzad (FY'-sul shah-ZAHD'), a Pakistan-born U.S. citizen, pleaded guilty to charges of plotting a failed car bombing in New York's Times Square. (Shahzad was later sentenced to life in prison.)

In 2011, the Food and Drug Administration announced that cigarette packs in the U.S. would have to carry macabre images that included rotting teeth and gums, diseased lungs and a sewn-up corpse of a smoker as part of a graphic campaign aimed at discouraging Americans from lighting up.

Ten years ago: A one-page criminal complaint unsealed in federal court accused former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden of espionage and theft of government property in the NSA surveillance case. President Barack Obama nominated James Comey, a top Bush-era Justice official, to head the FBI, succeeding Robert Mueller. The Food Network said it was dropping Paula Deen, barely an hour after the celebrity cook posted the first of two videotaped apologies online begging forgiveness from fans and critics troubled by her admission to having used racial slurs in the past.

Five years ago: First lady Melania Trump visited with migrant children during a brief stop at a Texas facility housing some children separated from their parents at the border; she caused a stir when she left Washington wearing a green, hooded military jacket with lettering that said, "I REALLY DON'T CARE, DO U?" Pulitzer Prize-winning conservative columnist and pundit Charles Krauthammer died at 68; he had said a year earlier that he was being treated for a tumor in his abdomen.

One year ago: The House Jan. 6 committee heard testimony that Donald Trump's relentless pressure to overturn the 2020 presidential election led to widespread threats against local workers and state officials. A month after the Uvalde, Texas school massacre, the state's public safety chief testified that police had enough officers on the scene to have stopped a gunman three minutes after he entered the building and killed 19 students and two teachers. Officers with rifles instead stood and waited in a hallway for more than an hour before they finally stormed the classroom and killed the gunman. Józef Walaszczyk, a member of the Polish resistance who rescued dozens of Jews during the Nazi German occupation of Poland during World War II, died at age 102.

Today's Birthdays: Composer Lalo Schifrin is 91. Actor Bernie Kopell is 90. Actor Monte Markham is 88. Songwriter Don Black is 85. Actor Mariette Hartley is 83. Comedian Joe Flaherty is 82. Rock singer-musician Ray Davies (The Kinks) is 79. Actor Meredith Baxter is 76. Actor Michael Gross (Baxter's co-star on the sitcom "Family Ties") is 76. Rock musician Joe Molland (Badfinger) is 76. Rock musician Don Airey (Deep Purple) is 75. Rock musician Joey Kramer (Aerosmith) is 73. Rock musician Nils Lofgren is 72. Actor Robyn Douglass is 71. Actor Leigh McCloskey is 68. Cartoonist Berke Breathed is 66. Actor Josh Pais is 65. Country singer Kathy Mattea is 64. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown is 63. Actor Marc Copage (koh-PAJ') is 61. Actor Sammi Davis is 59. Actor Doug Savant is 59. Country musician Porter Howell is 59. Actor Michael Dolan

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is 58. Writer-director Lana Wachowski is 58. Actor Carrie Preston is 56. Rapper/producer Pete Rock is 53. Country singer Allison Moorer is 51. Actor Juliette Lewis is 50. Actor Maggie Siff is 49. Musician Justin Cary is 48. Rock musician Mike Einziger (Incubus) is 47. Actor Chris Pratt is 44. Rock singer Brandon Flowers is 42. Britain's Prince William is 41. Actor Jussie Smollett is 41. Actor Benjamin Walker is 41. Actor Michael Malarkey is 40. Pop singer Kris Allen (TV: "American Idol") is 38. Pop/rock singer Lana Del Rey is 38. Actor Jascha Washington is 34. Country musician Chandler Baldwin (LANCO) is 31. Pop singer Rebecca Black is 26.