

Groton Daily Independent

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Tuesday, July 11

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, oriental blend vegetables, frosted brownie, whole wheat bread, fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Church Council, 7 p.m.

Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Groton Community Center

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Olive Grove: Bridge, Ladies League at 6 p.m.

Legion at Aberdeen Smitty's, 1 game, 6 p.m.

Jr. Teener Regional Tournament, TBD

U10 R/B hosts Milbank, DH, 5:30 p.m.

Softball U12 hosts Clark, 6 p.m.

"Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines."

-Robert Schuller



Wednesday, July 12

Senior Menu: Chicken cordon bleu hot dish, broccoli and carrots, pears, chocolate pudding, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Campfire night, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

Olive Grove: Kid's Lessons; Men's League

Jr. Teener Regional Tournament, TBD

T-Ball B&G Scrimmage, 6 p.m.

Thursday, July 13

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes, carrots, apricots, whole wheat bread.

Jr. Teener Regional Tournament, TBD

Softball hosts Webster (U8 at 6 p.m., U10 at 6 p.m. DH, U12 at 7:30 p.m. DH)

T-Ball Black at Andover, 6 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

JULY 10, 2023

World in Brief

At least five people have died after a helicopter carrying foreign tourists crashed near Mount Everest in Nepal, with another passenger still missing. Four of the dead are Mexican nationals, while the pilot was Nepalese.

A plurality of Americans support President Joe Biden's attempts to cancel student debt, even after the Supreme Court struck down his effort, according to a poll conducted exclusively for Newsweek. For more on the Supreme Court, see below.

Subway will today give away select free sandwiches between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Tuesday, in order to promote its new initiative of fresh sliced deli meats.

The promotion is limited to the first 50 customers at each participating location and consumers will be limited to one free sandwich.

The selection process for a new grand jury is scheduled to begin in Atlanta, with the panel expected to decide whether to bring formal charges against Donald Trump or his allies for their efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election in Georgia.

A group of 21 right-wing House Republicans told Speaker Kevin McCarthy that they will vote against any legislation if Congress spends more than the levels agreed to in the bipartisan debt limit agreement.

Israel's parliament voted 64-56 in favor of a controversial judicial overhaul by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that would limit some powers of the Supreme Court.

Olympic runner Caster Semenya won her appeal over track and field's rules on testosterone levels in female athletes. The European Court of Human Rights decision could force the sport's highest court to undo its demands that female athletes artificially reduce naturally high testosterone levels in order to compete.

Hawaiian professional surfer Mikala Jones has died at the age of 44 after a fatal accident while surfing in Indonesia's Mentawai Islands. He reportedly suffered an injury to his femoral artery.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russia may be losing its grip on Bakhmut, with the Ukrainian counteroffensive possibly poised to regain control of the war-ravaged city, the Institute for the Study of War said..

TALKING POINTS

"I think it's just absurd. I mean, California is a sanctuary state. They actually provide benefits for illegal aliens, and so they're serving, really, as a magnet for people to cross our border illegally. Don't get me wrong, Stuart: We will shut the border down when I'm president. We'll stop the invasion," Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis told Fox Business host Stuart Varney when asked about an investigation into flights of migrants sent to California.

"Justice is conformity to what is right. It should be pursued and fought for. Forgiveness is releasing personal vengeance and desiring for the offender to find true repentance and peace. I am holding both, especially today," Rachael Denhollander tweeted following reports that former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar was stabbed in prison.

"Thank you for your positive energy, Prayers, and words of healing and encouragement. I have felt your love. I'm on the road to recovery and incredibly grateful for all the blessings in my life," Madonna said in an Instagram update following her hospitalization last month..

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

The 2023 NATO Summit kicks off today in Vilnius, Lithuania. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is expected to be the main agenda item at the two-day summit.

Iowa's General Assembly is scheduled to begin a special legislative session to consider new abortion restrictions.

The PGA Tour-LIV Golf merger will be the focus of a U.S. Senate subcommittee hearing taking place this morning. PGA Tour Chief Operating Officer Ron Price is expected to testify.



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23

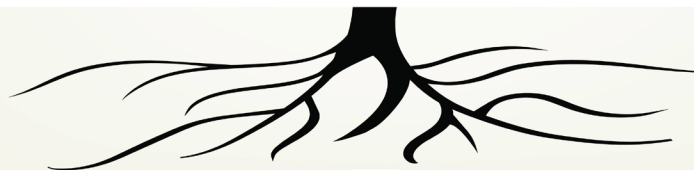


Photo from KSFY featuring Charla Imrie who was deployed to help out after Hurricane Harvey hit in 2017.

Fruit of the Spirit

Ladies Luncheon & Program

Wednesday, July 12 at Noon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Silent Auction 10:30 - 11:30

Door Prizes

Charla Imrie from The American Red Cross
will be the guest speaker

Advance tickets required \$15.00

Call Kay Espeland 605-492-3507 or
Jane Goehring 605-290-1420

Governor Noem Announces Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Noem announced that more than 90 teachers' aides have been selected to participate in South Dakota's Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway. This pilot program will launch with the 2023-2024 school year and result in these apprentices gaining teacher certifications.

"When I announced that we would be rebooting our Registered Apprenticeship programs here in South Dakota, this is exactly the kind of thing I had in mind," said Governor Noem. "This new opportunity will allow South Dakotans to work towards their bachelor's degree this year, while still providing them the Freedom to continue working. Our kids and grandkids deserve the best teachers we can give them, and this pathway will help us meet that goal."

The Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway will take successful para-educators, employed by school districts, and help them become fully certified teachers. These para-educators represent more than 50 school districts or systems across the state.

Over a two-year period, teacher's aides will complete their coursework, which is offered virtually in the evenings and at other convenient times. This program will culminate with the para-educator serving as a student-teacher in their home district. Teachers' aides will walk away with a bachelor's degree in education.

"I am very excited for these para-educators. They are all fitting candidates to fill the state's teacher pipeline. They already live and work in our communities, and they are committed to providing their students with the best possible education," said Dr. Joseph Graves, South Dakota Secretary of Education. "I want to thank Dr. Kathryn Blaha, our Director of the Division of Certification and Accreditation, who worked tirelessly to get this project off the ground."

Northern State University and Dakota State University have partnered through the support of the Board of Regents to offer the coursework for this program. The Department of Education is providing oversight and funding. And the Department of Labor and Regulation is providing funding and guidance to the development of the Registered Apprenticeship program in compliance with the U.S. Department of Labor.

Nest Predator Bounty Program Sets Record for Youth Participation

Pierre, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) today announced the final tail collection total for the fifth year of the Nest Predator Bounty Program as part of Gov. Noem's Second Century Initiative. For 2023, 50,552 total tails were submitted by 2,481 participants.

The 2023 program saw the highest level of youth participation since inception, with youth under the age of 18 composing 46% of total participants. Youth participation has steadily increased, with last year's participation at 32%.

"It is very exciting to see the next generation out trapping and getting involved in wildlife management," said Kevin Robling, GFP Department Secretary. "Youth participation continues to increase each year of the program, and we are so proud to see more youth and families getting outdoors."

New for 2023, every participating youth received one free live trap when submitting their tails for the first time. In total, 1,014 live traps were distributed to youth across South Dakota.

"In an effort to get more youth involved in trapping, we offered a free live trap for every youth participant," continued Robling. "We also renamed our Youth Trap Giveaway in honor of Benton Howe. Each week one participating youth under the age of 18 was drawn to receive a raccoon trapping starter kit, trapping handbook, a knife, and a write-up remembering Benton Howe's love for the outdoors."

The 2023 program opened for South Dakota youth under the age of 18 on March 1. The program then opened to all South Dakota residents on April 1. The cap of 50,000 tails was reached on June 29.

Overall, participation was up for the program, with 5% more participants than in 2022.

"The primary nesting season is complete, conditions across most of the state looked excellent for pheasant production, and we're looking forward to seeing this excitement transition to the fields this fall," concluded Robling.

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Mike Scott oversees the Brown County Landfill and the 18 canister sites in Brown County. He is seen taking a photo of the excess non-compliant material dumped off at the Groton site east of town. He said that the Groton site has the honor of being the most abused site in the county. Scott has been at his job for 31 years.



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This Monday morning sunrise photo was taken by Mike Scott.

State aid drop, local fund shortfall a “double-edged sword” for Groton Area School District

by Elizabeth Varin

A drop in revenue for the Groton Area School District budget has brought up concerns the district may have to face in the coming year.

The school board reviewed the district’s proposed budget for the 2023-2024 school year, which show some areas with significant changes from the preliminary budget presented in May.

After reviewing state aid calculations, the budget revision includes a drop in state aid from a possible \$314,100 down to \$160,000, said Business Manager Becky Hubsch. Revenue from local sources like utility taxes and other state sources like the bank franchise tax are also estimated to fall. It’s a “double-edged sword,” she said.

That drop in revenue will require the district to transfer an estimated \$700,000 from capital outlay funds to make up for the deficit.

“We weren’t comfortable with where that (revenue decrease) was going to leave the general fund, so we have to do something there,” said Superintendent Joe Schwan. “Really the only immediate option is to increase that amount.

“...If you look at where that leads you at the end of FY24, regardless of what happens with the state aid we have some serious discussions in front of us,” he continued. “There’s only two ways to address it. ... You opt out of the general fund property tax freeze or you reduce expenditures. Or a combination of those two things.

“It’s an issue we have to address,” he said. “What are we going to do? What are we going to use the money for?”

One nice thing is that the district has this information now instead of in November when the state makes its first payment to school districts, Hubsch said.

There may also be some items in the budget that the district won’t have to pay for.

The budget accounts for open positions at the district, Hubsch said.

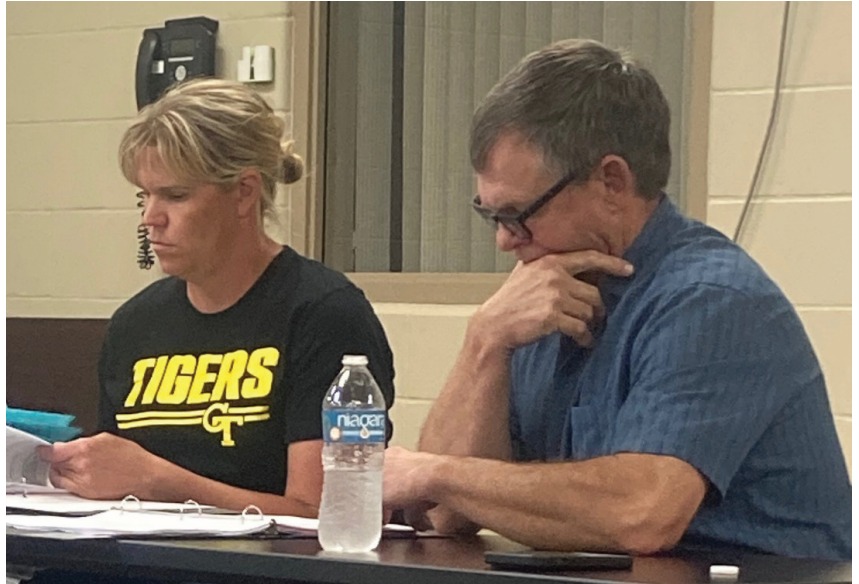
“We have to keep a line item in there for those things just in case it happens,” she said.

The district is looking at a 2.6 percent increase in general fund expenditures, Hubsch said. Much of that, though, is increases in things like transportation costs and insurance price increases.

An expenditure increase like that isn’t out of line when you consider inflation has shot up in some areas by almost eight percent, Schwan said. He harkened back to a message from previous Business Manager Mike Weber.

“Mike’s always said, and I totally agree with it, ‘you have to protect your general fund balance,’” Schwan continued.

“The fact of the matter is the revenue hasn’t kept up, but it still creates a problem for us that we’ll have to address one way or another,” Schwan said. “That’s the work for the fall. We’ve got to get some answers before January and February.”



Steve Smith attended his final school board meeting Monday night as he choose not to seek re-election. His replacement is Heather Lerseth-Fliehs. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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While it would be nice to use that \$700,000 for capital projects, it definitely needs to be used on the general fund for now, said board member Tigh Flihs.

Land for sale

The school board will open bids in August for a piece of land in Day County that used to house a school.

The one-acre plot is the former Oak Gulch School District school. Oak Gulf Township is located between Conde and the former town of Lily.

"Is it just farmland?" asked Grant Rix.

It's pasture, answered Superintendent Schwan.

"Oh geez!" Rix said.

Schwan said he didn't see any problem with selling the site.

"There's really nothing that can be done with that acre of property," he said.

However, he added, because it's public property, it has to go through either a bid process or a public auction.

The district probably wouldn't find an auctioneer willing to sell just one acre of land, Tigh Flihs said.

Schwan suggested accepting bids and opening them at the August meeting.

"We have to go through the legal channels to protect our butts," said Marty Weismantel before making the motion to accept sealed bids for the property.

New look for school board

New board member Heather Lerseth-Flihs and incumbent Grant Rix were sworn in as board members during the annual reorganization portion of the meeting.

Board President Deb Gengerke welcomed Lerseth-Flihs, as well as new Business Manager Becky Hubsch and Middle School/High School Principal Shelby Edwards. However, she added, it is the end of an era after the exit of outgoing board member Steve Smith, former Business Manager Mike Weber and former Middle School/High School Principal Kiersten Sombke.

Together, she said, those three have more than 60 years of service to the Groton Area School District.

"You might not have agreed with their decisions, but they worked the best they could to provide services for the district," she said.

Gengerke was reappointed to serve as president of the board, with Marty Weismantel will continue as vice president of the board.

The board also appointed members to various ad hoc committees. Tigh Flihs and TJ Harder will continue on the buildings, grounds and transportation committee. Kara Pharis and Lerseth-Flihs were appointed to the personnel, policy and curriculum committee. Gengerke, Weismantel and Grant Rix were appointed to



Heather Lerseth-Flihs (above) and Grant Rix (below) signed their oath of office as they were installed on the Groton Area School Board. (Photos by Elizabeth Varin)



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New business manager Becky Hubsch oversees the election of the school board officers. Deb Gengerke was re-elected as president and Marty Weismantel was re-elected as vice-president. Pictured going clockwise are Hubsch, Superintendent Joe Schwan, Weismantel, Elementary Principal Brett Schwan, Heather Lerseth-Fliehs and Gengerke. (Photo

by Elizabeth Varin)

the negotiations committee.

Rix was also re-appointed as the North Central Special Education Cooperative governing board representative.

In other action:

- Rates for before- and after-school care at Groton Area Elementary School are rising. Rates are currently \$2.75 per hour, but those rates will rise to \$3 per hour starting at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year. That rate hasn't increased since 2013, said Superintendent Schwan. There is a need for an increase based on salaries increasing and other

child care rates rising.

- School lunch rates will stay the same for the 2023-2024 school year. For junior kindergarten through fifth grade, breakfast costs \$2.50 and lunch costs \$3.25. In sixth through 12th grade, breakfast costs \$3 and lunch costs \$3.75. For adults, breakfast is \$3.25 and lunch is \$4.50. The price for a second milk is 50 cents.

- Tickets for games and other activities will remain the same for the 2023-2024 school year. Adult admission is \$5 per game and \$6 for a double header. Adult 10-punch tickets cost \$45. All-activities passes for adults remains at \$75. Student admission for those in grades one through 12 are \$4 each. All students who participate in activities for which an activity stipend is paid are required to purchase activity tickets. Activity tickets for those in grades one through five are \$25, and those for grades six through 12th are \$30.

- The school board approved hiring Jesse Zak and Ryan Olson as boys soccer coaches for the 2023 at 3.5 percent of base salary. Mike Imrie will serve as volunteer assistant boys soccer coach for the 2023 season.

- Newly-hired sixth grade teacher and junior high track and field coach Brooke Malsom will serve another roll during the 2023-2024 school year. The former Valley City State University track and field athlete will also fill the head cross country coach shoes for the 2023 season. The position opened up in June after former head coach Adam Franken submitted his resignation to the district.

- The board accepted the resignation of Teri Foertsch, kindergarten paraprofessional, for the 2023-2024 school year.

- The board also approved having Dalton Locke serve as volunteer assistant football coach for the 2023 season.

- Projects are continuing at the school district. Superintendent Schwan told the board the health science lab renovation project is nearing completion. However, new interior wood doors have still not arrived. The

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high school arena air conditioning project is also on schedule, with testing expected the last week of July or the first week of August. Roofing work could begin this week at the elementary school. The project has been delayed due to weather and forecasts of rain.

- The FFA program received a boost recently as the district received a \$5,000 check from the Bayer Fund through the America's Farmers Grow Communities program on behalf of Barb Paepke. Superintendent Schwan thanked both Barb and Tom Paepke for their support of the school district and the students.

- The district is still missing positions at the elementary and middle/high school. Openings include a high school agriculture education instructor/FFA advisor, K-12 vocal music teacher, middle school/high school special education paraprofessional, kindergarten paraprofessional, substitute teachers and a junior high wrestling coach.

- Substitute teachers and substitute bus drivers will make the same per day as they did last school year. Substitute teachers will receive \$130 per day, and substitute bus drivers will receive \$90 per day.

- The board set board member salaries for the upcoming school year. Board members will receive \$50 per meeting, with the chairman receiving \$75 per meeting. Mileage will be calculated as it is applicable. The rates stayed the same as last year, though discussion waivered about the rate. "Do we have to have salaries?" said board President Deb Gengerke. "I just want it out there."

- Groton Area School buses and vans will continue to utilize MJ's Sinclair – Fuel Stop for gas and diesel. The board approved a bid that includes \$3.17 per gallon for No. 2 diesel, \$3.76 for No. 1 diesel, \$2.115 per gallon for E-85, \$3.0054 per gallon for ethanol and \$3.3624 per gallon for unleaded gasoline.

- The board designated the Groton Independent as its official newspaper for the 2023 fiscal year. Two bids were submitted and opened at Monday's meeting. The quote for the Reporter & Farmer, based in Webster, included 32.27 cents per line for legal notices, 40 cents per word for classified ads with an \$8 minimum charge, and \$8.15 per column inch for display advertising. The Groton Independent advertising quote was 31.95 cents per line for legal notices, 10 cents per word for classified advertisement with a \$3 minimum charge, and \$5 per column inch for local open display ads.

- The district is looking to implement a new time management system. Business Manager Hubsch gave an overview of the new system that could help district staff see how much leave time they have, allow for an open line of communication between staff and administrators and save time. "I think it's just going to help us be a little more efficient this year," Hubsch said.

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Krause's Walk-off Gives Groton Jr. Teeners Victory Over Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern

A walk-off single led Groton Jr. Teeners past Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern 7-6 on Tuesday. The game was tied at six with Groton Jr. Teeners batting in the bottom of the eighth when Lincoln Krause singled on a 3-1 count, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners earned the victory despite allowing Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern to score four runs in the second inning. The offensive onslaught by Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern was led by Austin Nash and Logan Fischbach, all knocking in runs in the inning.

Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern got things started in the first inning when Alec Mikkelson doubled on a 0-1 count, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners knotted the game up at six in the bottom of the sixth inning, when TC Schuster drew a walk, scoring one run.

After Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern scored four runs in the top of the second, Groton Jr. Teeners answered with four of their own. Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern scored when Nash singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run and Fischbach doubled on a 2-2 count, scoring three runs. Groton Jr. Teeners then answered when Schuster singled on a 0-1 count, scoring one run, Karson Zak drew a walk, scoring one run, Krause drew a walk, scoring one run, and Alex Abeln grounded out, scoring one run.

Schuster was the winning pitcher for Groton jr. Teeners 14U. The pitcher allowed zero hits and zero runs over one-third of an inning, walking zero. Abeln threw two and a third innings in relief out of the bullpen.

Fischbach took the loss for Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern. The pitcher allowed one hit and one run over one inning, striking out one.

Ryder Schelle started the game for Groton jr. Teeners 14U. Schelle surrendered six runs on nine hits over five and a third innings, striking out two. Lincoln Kroll started the game for Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern. The bulldog lasted one inning, allowing three hits and four runs while striking out two.

Groton Jr. Teeners collected 11 hits on the day. Krause and Abeln each collected multiple hits for Groton jr. Teeners 14U. Krause led Groton Jr. Teeners with four hits in five at bats. Groton Jr. Teeners didn't commit a single error in the field. Krause had seven chances in the field, the most on the team.

Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern saw the ball well today, racking up nine hits in the game. Parker Wood, Fischbach, and Nash all collected multiple hits for Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern. Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern was sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Kroll made the most plays with seven.

SD Claremont Post 262 Legion Bests Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion In Close Game

Both teams were strong on the hill on Tuesday, but SD Claremont Post 262 Legion was just a little bit stronger at the plate in a victory over Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion on Tuesday. Gavin Englund started the game for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion and recorded 12 outs.

A single by Jarrett Erdmann in the second inning was a positive for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion.

Rennan Bruns was the winning pitcher for SD Claremont Post 262 Legion. The fireballer lasted three and two-thirds innings, allowing two hits and zero runs while striking out three. Colby Dauwen and Grant Cutler entered the game out of the bullpen and helped to close out the game in relief.

Englund took the loss for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. The pitcher lasted four innings, allowing four hits and three runs while striking out six.

Nicholas Morris and Erdmann each managed one hit to lead Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion.

Dauwen went 2-for-2 at the plate to lead SD Claremont Post 262 Legion in hits.

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Groton Legion Post 39 Win In Fashion, Walk It Off Versus SD Claremont Post 262 Legion

Groton Legion Post 39 took Monday's game in dramatic fashion, with a 9-8 walk-off victory over SD Claremont Post 262 Legion at Groton. The game was tied at eight in the bottom of the seventh when Tate Larson singled, scoring one run.

Both offenses were strong at the plate as Groton Legion Post 39 collected 12 hits and SD Claremont Post 262 Legion eight in the high-scoring affair.

SD Claremont Post 262 Legion opened the scoring in the first after Jack Podoll drew a walk, scoring one run.

Bradin Althoff singled after a 6-pitch at-bat, which helped Groton Legion Post 39 tie the game at one in the bottom of the first.

SD Claremont Post 262 Legion flipped the game on its head in the top of the second, scoring five runs on three hits to take a 6-1 lead. The biggest blow in the inning was a single by Colby Dauwen that drove in two.

Groton Legion Post 39 made the score 9-8 in the bottom of the seventh after Kaleb Hoover singled, scoring one run, Althoff doubled, scoring two runs, and Larson singled, scoring one run.

Logan Ringgingberg earned the win for Groton Legion Post 39. The right-handed pitcher allowed two hits and one run (zero earned) over two innings, striking out three and walking two. Brevin Fliehs pitched four innings in relief for Groton Legion Post 39. The right-handed pitcher gave up five hits and four runs (two earned) while, striking out six and walking two. Kassen Keough took the loss for SD Claremont Post 262 Legion. The reliever went two-thirds of an inning, giving up four runs on four hits, striking out none and walking one. Colby Dunker stepped on the mound first for Groton Legion Post 39. They surrendered one hit and three runs over one inning, striking out one and walking five. Jesse Keough stepped on the mound first for SD Claremont Post 262 Legion. They allowed eight hits and five runs (one earned) over six innings, striking out two and walking four.

Groton Legion Post 39 piled up 12 hits in the game. Althoff led Groton Legion Post 39 with three hits in three at bats. Dunker and Althoff each drove in three runs for Groton Legion Post 39. Cade Larson and Larson each collected multiple hits for Groton Legion Post 39. Groton Legion Post 39 turned one double play in the game.

Will Cutler led SD Claremont Post 262 Legion with two hits in three at bats. Dauwen drove the middle of the lineup, leading SD Claremont Post 262 Legion with three runs batted in. They went 1-for-4 on the day. Ben Gustafson led SD Claremont Post 262 Legion with three walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, piling up nine walks for the game. SD Claremont Post 262 Legion stole five bases in the game. SD Claremont Post 262 Legion turned one double play in the game.

Groton Jr. Teeners Defeats Selby in Blow Out Victory Thanks to Fourth Inning Boost

Groton Jr. Teeners knocked in seven runs in the fourth on its way to an 11-1 victory over Post 100 14U on Monday. Ryder Schelle, Easton Weber, Ethan Kroll, Alex Abeln, and Schelle all moved runners across the plate with RBIs in the inning.

Groton Jr. Teeners tallied seven runs in the fourth inning. Groton jr. Teeners 14U's big inning was driven by a walk by Schelle, a triple by Schelle, a single by Abeln, by Kroll, and a double by Weber.

Abeln earned the victory on the hill for Groton jr. Teeners 14U. The pitcher lasted five innings, allowing two hits and one run while striking out five.

Kaden Russell took the loss for Post 100 14U. The righthander surrendered one run on three hits over one and one-third innings, striking out one.

Xavier Ritter started the game for Post 100 14U. The pitcher allowed 13 hits and ten runs over three and two-thirds innings, striking out two

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Groton Jr. Teeners totaled 16 hits in the game. Abeln, TC Schuster, Lincoln Krause, Weber, Schelle, and Braeden Flihs all collected multiple hits for Groton jr. Teeners 14U. Abeln led Groton Jr. Teeners with four hits in five at bats. Groton Jr. Teeners didn't commit a single error in the field. Krause had the most chances in the field with five.

Groton Locke Electric Stays Scrappy In Loss To Northville

Despite a 6-run deficit in the sixth inning, Groton Locke Electric almost came all the way back, eventually falling 6-5 to Northville on Sunday. Groton Locke Electric tallied five runs in the failed comeback. Spencer Knecht, Conner Thaler, Dylan Frey, and Garret Knebel fueled the rally with RBIs.

Groton Locke Electric lost despite out-hitting Northville 11 to five.

Groton Locke Electric tallied three runs in the seventh inning. Groton Locke Electric big bats were led by Knecht and Thaler, all knocking in runs in the inning.

Maxfield was the winning pitcher for Northville. The bulldog surrendered five runs on 11 hits over nine innings, striking out ten.

Chandler Larson took the loss for Groton Locke Electric. The pitcher surrendered two runs on four hits over five innings, striking out five.

Groton Locke Electric had 11 hits in the game. Johnny Celedonio, Thaler, Knecht, and Wyatt Locke all managed multiple hits for Groton Locke Electric. Celedonio went 3-for-5 at the plate to lead Groton Locke Electric in hits.

Northville totaled five hits. Heyne and Josh all had multiple hits for Northville. Northville didn't commit a single error in the field. Heyne had nine chances in the field, the most on the team.

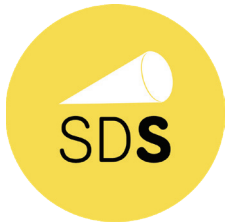
Items stolen from vehicles in Groton

From the Groton Police Department Facebook Page:

During the night of July 7th 2023 through the morning of July 8th 2023 The Groton Police Department has received calls for several vehicles that had been gone through. Multiples items have been reported stolen including a vehicle. The vehicle has since been located with the help of the Brown County Sheriff's Office. These incidents are still under investigation and if you have any information, or videos/pictures you believe may be helpful please contact the Groton Police Department.

The Groton Police Department would also like to remind everyone to follow these three simple rules to help prevent thefts from your vehicle and the theft of your vehicle.

- Make sure you lock your vehicle.
- Do not leave anything of value in your vehicle.
- Do not leave the keys in the vehicle.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Civil rights committee finds Native voting rights impeded, finalizes recommendations

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JULY 10, 2023 5:46 PM

Native Americans living on tribal land face many barriers to their voting rights, according to a new report finalized Monday by a civil rights committee.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency established in 1957. The commission's mission is to investigate and report on issues related to civil rights, and to make non-binding recommendations.

In the wake of concerns raised by some Native American voters, the U.S. Commission's South Dakota Advisory Committee decided to focus on the issue.

"There have been 25 voting rights cases in South Dakota with American Indian plaintiffs, the second largest number of cases in the country," the committee's policy brief says. "In nearly all, the American Indian plaintiffs either won or successfully settled."

The 11-member committee of diverse backgrounds and political affiliations will publish the final report online in the coming days. The committee provided South Dakota Searchlight with a policy brief Monday that summarizes the broader report.

The committee held five public hearings in 2022, inviting input from legal experts, academics, advocacy groups and people impacted by the issue.

The final report, "Voting Rights and Access in South Dakota," lists recommendations including funding voter transportation and mobile polling locations on reservations, designating Indian Health Service locations as places people can register to vote, educating voters that they do not need identification to register to vote, and encouraging ballot drop boxes on reservations.

The non-binding report of findings and recommendations will now be sent to federal, state and local officials.

Charles Abourezk is an advisory committee member, as well as chief judge of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Court and chief justice of the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Supreme Court. He said the implementation of the recommendations would improve Native American voter participation and trust in the state's election process.

And in the end, the state would "avoid a lot of litigation, and I would say very expensive litigation," Abourezk said during an April 10 meeting.

Committee Chair Travis Letellier is an economist. He said the diversity of viewpoints and experiences on the committee made the work challenging but also gave the report more authority.

"Every person on that committee is there for a reason," Letellier said. "They had something to add, whether it's their personal voice or their professional voice."

The process

The committee approved the draft contents of the report on May 8. Huron Attorney Aaron Pilcher abstained from voting while all other members voted in favor.

Pilcher issued a press release soon after, condemning some of the recommendations – such as the recommendation discouraging law enforcement from hanging out in tribal polling locations – and highlighted himself as the member who "filed the lone dissent to the report."

"We cannot perpetuate distrust between local law enforcement and the Native American community," Pilcher wrote. "It is unwise to remove local law enforcement from polling places on a misguided belief that doing so will create a newfound confidence in government."

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The report says only 5% of Native Americans living in tribal areas told the committee they trust non-tribal governments; therefore, having police present is intimidating and makes them less likely to vote.

Dissent is part of the process, Mallory Trachtenberg with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights told South Dakota Searchlight after the Monday meeting.

"No report is going to be unanimous," Trachtenberg said.

Pilcher was absent from Monday's meeting, where everyone else in attendance voted in favor of the final report.

Findings, recommendations

The committee heard it can be hard for American Indians who live in tribal areas to vote because they have to travel long distances to register, go to polling places, or drop off absentee ballots. Of 352 registered American Indian voters surveyed, 309 of them noted difficulty in traveling long distances.

Voting by mail is also problematic on reservations due to a lack of residential mail delivery. This can cause delays in receiving mailed ballots, which is something 80% of American Indians living in tribal areas reported as a problem. Some American Indians living in tribal areas have non-standard addresses, which can make it difficult for election officials to identify their correct voting districts. Non-standard addresses can also make it challenging to ensure that reservation residents are able to vote on everything they're eligible for.

Additionally, tribal members are having disproportionate trouble registering to vote online because some don't have adequate technology or internet access.

State recommendations

Amend Help America Vote Act reimbursement rules to allow county reimbursement for pre-paid postage for absentee voting and voter registration.

Enact legislation and allocate funding for a nonpartisan "Complete Count Committee" to ensure accurate census counts – ensuring funding is properly allocated to tribes.

Designate Indian Health Service locations and Veterans Affairs Medical Centers as voter sites.

Repeal any South Dakota state law that obstructs the translation of ballots into languages other than English.

Ensure the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office creates and distributes a one-page infographic on "How to Vote" in South Dakota, including information on permitted IDs, affidavit voting without an ID, and other relevant details.

Clarify the definition of having completed "serving a sentence" in state law regarding voter eligibility.

Take measures to increase American Indian voting participation and support the "Remove the Stain" Act, which would rescind medals awarded to soldiers for the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre, to build more trust.

County/Municipality recommendations

Include more American Indian voices in civics by reaching out to tribal governments for recommendations to improve engagement.

Ensure that county auditor offices have a reasonable number of American Indians as officials.

Urge tribal leaders to hold tribal elections on the same day as county, state and federal elections.

Encourage counties with reservation land to utilize Help America Vote Act funding to create satellite offices to offer in-person voting services on reservations, with consultation and approval by the respective tribes.

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

State aims to convert 90 teacher aides into certified educators

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - JULY 10, 2023 5:18 PM

About 90 teacher aides from more than 50 school districts have been selected for a program to help them become fully certified teachers.

Over a span of two years, the aides will have the opportunity to complete accredited coursework virtually outside of work – ultimately earning a bachelor's degree. Participants will be responsible for up to \$1,000 per year to assist with tuition, the cost of required books and the cost of testing.

"This new opportunity will allow South Dakotans to work towards their bachelor's degree this year, while still providing them the freedom to continue working," Gov. Kristi Noem said in a news release.

The Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway aims to address a statewide teacher shortage by helping para-educators who are already employed by school districts to obtain full teacher certification. During the 2022-23 school year, about 175 teacher vacancies went unfilled in the state, according to the state Department of Education.

State Education Secretary Joseph Graves said he is "very excited for these para-educators."

"They are all fitting candidates to fill the state's teacher pipeline," he said in a news release. "They already live and work in our communities, and they are committed to providing their students with the best possible education."

Northern State University and Dakota State University have partnered with the state Board of Regents to offer the coursework.

The state Department of Education will oversee and provide funding for the program, and the state Department of Labor and Regulation will also provide funding and guidance.

Multiple inquiries by South Dakota Searchlight to state officials about the program's expected cost and funding source were not immediately answered.

COMMENTARY

Protection of domestic violence victims is at stake in US Supreme Court case

ROGER BARON and LORI K. GOAD

On June 30, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to grant review in *U.S. v. Rahimi*, a case from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit. The sole issue presented for the court's review is the constitutionality of the federal law that prohibits possession of firearms by people subject to protective orders issued under domestic-violence laws.

Although the 5th Circuit initially upheld the federal statutory protection granted to victims, it changed its mind after the Supreme Court handed down *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association Inc. v. Bruen*, a 2022 decision that struck down a New York law because it infringed upon the right to bear arms. The *Bruen* case did not involve a domestic violence issue, but the decision did represent a more assertive effort by the court to strengthen the Second Amendment right to bear arms.

The court's disposition of the *Rahimi* case has the potential to drastically impact victims of domestic violence nationwide and particularly here in South Dakota.

Under current federal law, South Dakota victims are protected by federal law in two aspects: gun possession is prohibited for people convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence, and gun possession is also prohibited for people who are currently subject to a restraining order issued on behalf of an intimate partner or children. Furthermore, a specific provision in the South Dakota statute (SDCL 25-10-24) permits a judge to order a defendant to surrender dangerous weapons and concealed carry permits to law enforcement authorities.

South Dakota lies within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit, which has already ruled on the right to bear arms issue. In *U.S. v. Bena*, decided in 2011, the 8th Circuit held that the federal statute (protecting victims of domestic violence) is not defeated by the Second Amendment right to bear

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arms. But, the continued reliability of the Bena decision hinges on the Supreme Court's ruling in Rahimi.

If the approach adopted by the 5th Circuit is also adopted by the U.S. Supreme Court, the 8th Circuit's Bena decision will be overridden and victims of domestic violence in South Dakota will lose substantial protection.

Roger Baron is a professor emeritus at the University of South Dakota School of Law. He writes frequently about the opinions of the South Dakota Supreme Court and the 8th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. He also maintains and operates USDLAW, an email discussion group for the legal community in South Dakota.

Lori Goad graduated with honors from the University of South Dakota Law School in 2017 and served as judicial clerk for the Fourth Judicial Circuit upon graduation. She currently works as an assistant public defender in Pennington County.

U.S. House Dems want data on impact of Supreme Court ruling on wetlands protection

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JULY 10, 2023 3:55 PM

Top Democrats on the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee asked federal agencies Monday to track possible negative effects from a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that limited federal authority to regulate clean water.

Washington's Rick Larsen, the ranking Democrat on the committee, and Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee ranking member Grace Napolitano of California, expressed concern in a Monday letter to the heads of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers that the Supreme Court's ruling in May would degrade water quality across the country.

The court decision struck down the EPA's definition of waters of the United States, or WOTUS, the term for what waters and wetlands the federal government had authority to regulate under the Clean Water Act.

In a 5-4 opinion written by conservative Justice Samuel Alito, the court's majority ruled wetlands must have a "continuous surface connection" to navigable waters like streams, lakes, oceans and rivers for federal agencies to have jurisdiction.

That would remove the EPA's and Army Corps' power to authorize building and other activity that could threaten the environment and water quality for about half of U.S. wetlands, Larsen and Napolitano wrote to EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Michael L. Connor.

"In ignoring the [Clean Water Act's] plain and unambiguous language, as well as almost 5 decades of unbroken, bipartisan protection of the nation's waterbodies, five members of the Court redefined the Act's scope to serve their hyper-conservative judicial philosophy," the lawmakers wrote.

They asked the EPA and Army Corps to "systematically document the individual and systematic impacts" of the decision and listed several areas of data they sought.

The lawmakers asked the agencies to list sites that were no longer subject to federal jurisdiction following the court ruling, and to catalog the potential ecological harms to those areas.

Larsen and Napolitano also asked how the ruling might affect efforts to protect some specific areas, including the Great Lakes, the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland and Virginia, the Everglades wetlands in Florida and the Puget Sound in Washington.

The House members also requested the Corps and EPA provide guidance on how Congress could update clean water laws "to ensure this nation does not lose progress in meeting the goals" of the Clean Water Act following the Supreme Court decision.

GOP asked for rule update

The Democrats' letter comes weeks after leading Republicans on the House panel and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee sent their own request to federal agencies.

A June 21 letter from House committee Chairman Sam Graves of Missouri and subcommittee Chairman David Rouzer of North Carolina, U.S. Sens. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, the ranking member on the Senate committee, and Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming, the senior Republican on the EPW Fisheries,

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Water and Wildlife Subcommittee, asked for an update on the EPA and the Army Corps' plans to update federal rules following the Supreme Court decision.

The ruling struck down the definitions governing the agencies' regulations, but the agencies had not yet created new definitions, the Republicans wrote.

The GOP lawmakers said they were concerned that the Biden administration was stalling in its obligation to conform to the court's ruling.

"In implementing the Court's decision, the Agencies must adhere to the majority opinion and not slow-walk compliance with the decision," they wrote.

The lawmakers asked what steps the agencies were taking to implement the court's decision. The agencies briefed lawmakers on their plans, but have not responded in writing, according to a House committee spokesman.

The Republicans also asked the agency heads to ensure that regional and district offices comply with the court ruling when evaluating environmental analyses and permit applications.

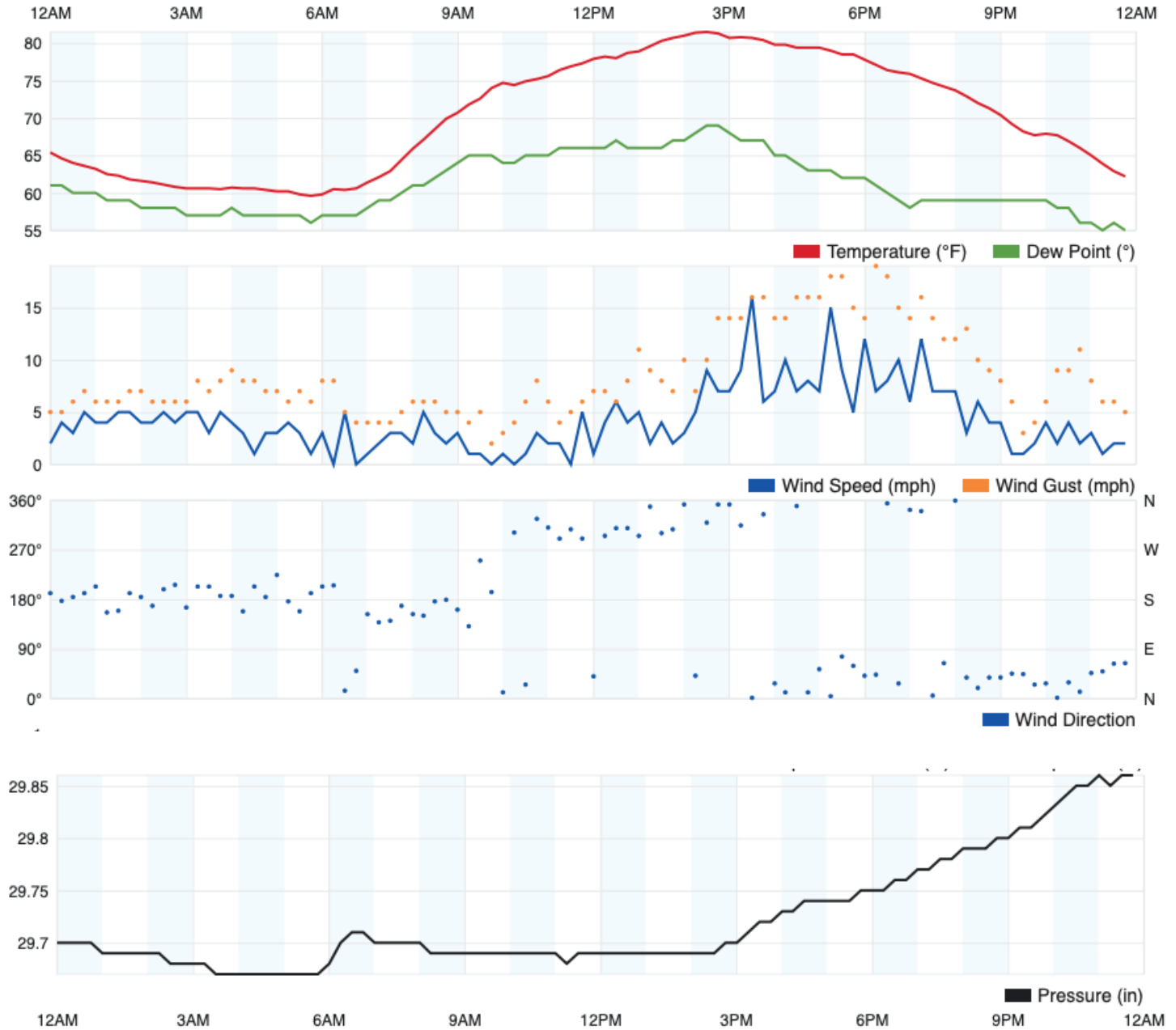
Any delay in implementing the court ruling could slow infrastructure projects, including those funded by the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law, they wrote. Capito was a leading sponsor of that bill, while Graves, Rouzer and Lummis voted against it.

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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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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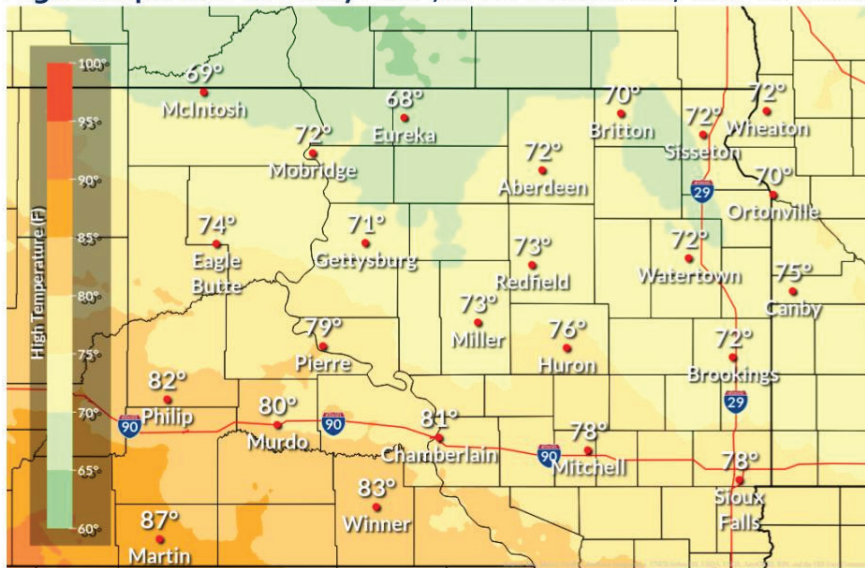
Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
50%	40%	30% 30%	30%		20%	
Partly Sunny then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance Showers then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Sunny	Slight Chance T-storms	Sunny
High: 72 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 80 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 85 °F	Low: 60 °F	High: 84 °F



Brief Cooldown with Scattered Showers & Storms

July 11, 2023
4:52 AM

High Temperatures Today: 60s-70s for most areas, near 80 south



Timing of Showers & Storms



40 to 70% chances of showers & thunderstorms

This Morning: Showers & Storms over central SD and the Missouri Valley

This Afternoon: Showers & Storms expanding to northeast SD and west central MN. A few strong-severe storms developing West River.

Tonight: Scattered Showers & Storms possible for most areas. A few severe storms West River into south central SD.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A stationary frontal boundary across western South Dakota and the approach of an upper level disturbance will lead to increasing chances for showers and storms today across most of the area. Just general showers and non-severe storms are expected for most areas during the day. However, areas West River in central and south central South Dakota could see a few severe storms late this afternoon into tonight. Temperatures will remain on the cooler side thanks to the cloud cover and the rain.

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Severe Weather Threat Overview

July 11, 2023
4:52 AM

Details

Thunderstorms will develop across parts of western SD during the afternoon. These storms are forecast to progress southeastward through the evening into the early overnight.

Tornado Potential

Very Low	Low	Medium	High
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Max Hail Size

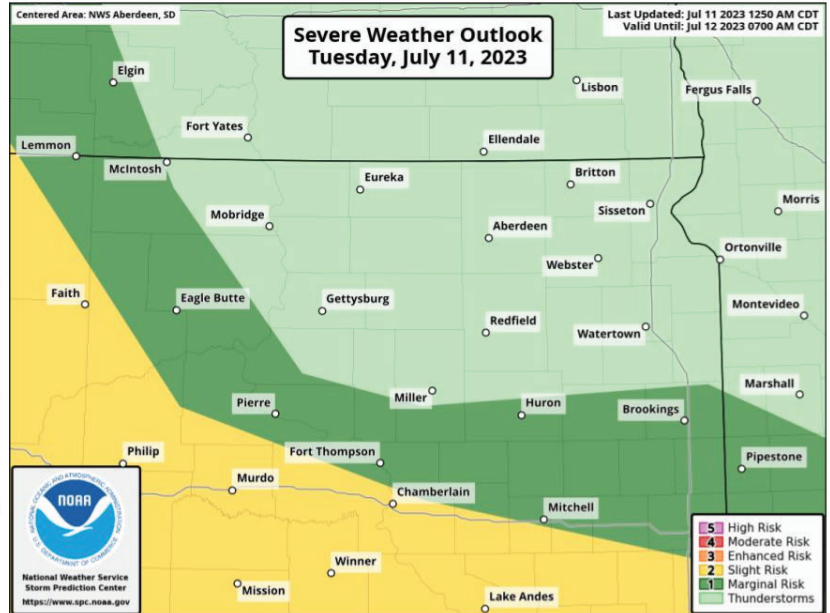
Dimes	Quarters	Golfball	Baseball
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Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph	60-70 mph	70-80 mph	> 80mph
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Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low	Low	Medium	High
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National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Scattered strong to severe storms are expected to develop later this afternoon across western portions of SD. These storms are forecast to shift east to southeast this evening into the early overnight. Best chances for seeing severe weather look to be confined to areas West River in parts of central and south central SD. Large hail and damaging winds will be the main threats.

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Today in Weather History

July 11, 1909: A deadly, estimated F2 tornado moved ESE across the Simpson Park section of Big Stone City in South Dakota. A bus was thrown from the road, and the driver was killed. Two homes and several barns were destroyed. As the tornado crossed the foot of Big Stone Lake, it tore apart a railroad yard and killed four of the 26 Armenian laborers who were living in box cars at Ortonville, Minnesota. Nineteen were injured.

July 11, 1981: Severe thunderstorms moved eastward across the entire length of the South Dakota along the northern portion of the state. Hail, with the largest up to nine inches in circumference, resulted in 100 percent crop loss, damage to numerous buildings and loss of livestock. Trees were stripped, and large limbs were broken. High winds also accompanied these storms. Storms lasted into the early morning hours on the 12. Thunderhawk in Corson County had estimated winds of 70 to 75 mph that destroyed a machine shop and seven metal grain storage bins. In and around Pollock, a silo was moved three feet off the foundation. Power and telephone lines were down. Rainfall measured 2.28 inches in two hours in Pollock.

1888 - Heavy snow reached almost to the base of Mt. Washington, NH, and the peaks of the Green Mountains were whitened. (David Ludlum)

1936: From July 5-17, temperatures exceeding 111 degrees in Manitoba and Ontario claimed 1,180 lives (mostly the elderly and infants) during the most prolonged, deadliest heat wave on record. Four hundred of these deaths were caused by people who drowned seeking refuge from the heat. In fact, the heat was so intense that steel rail lines and bridge girders twisted, sidewalks buckled, crops wilted and fruit baked on trees. Some record temperatures include; 112 degrees at St. Albans and Emerson, Manitoba, 111 at Brandon, Manitoba, 108 at Atikokan, Ontario, and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

1987 - Early morning thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 90 mph at Parkston, SD, and wind gusts to 87 mph at Buffalo, MN. Later in the day strong thunderstorm winds at Howard WI collapsed a circus tent injuring 44 persons. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain in southern Texas, with totals ranging up to 13 inches near Medina. Two men drowned when their pick-up truck was swept into the Guadalupe River, west of the town of Hunt. Ten cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Baltimore, MD, reported a record high reading of 102 degrees for the second day in a row. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from North Dakota to Indiana. Thunderstorms in North Dakota produced tennis ball size hail at Carson. Thunderstorms in Indiana produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Fort Wayne. Five cities in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region reported record high temperatures for the date, including Lakeland, FL, with a reading of 100 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990: The costliest hailstorm in U.S. history occurred along the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies. (Denver, Colorado): Softball-sized hail destroyed roofs and cars, causing more than \$600 million in total damage.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE OTHER SIDE

While driving over a beautiful mountain pass in North Carolina, my brother said to me, "Larry, I have never seen such beauty. The snowcapped peaks, the cascading waterfalls, the jagged rocks, and brilliant blue sky are more beautiful than any I have ever seen! I never expected to see such beauty anywhere."

"Oh," I said, "wait 'til you see the other side."

All of us are anxious to "see the other side." Some because our loved ones have gone on before us, and we are lonely. Others long to be free from endless suffering and relentless pain. Many are anxious and worried about problems that are never solved and seem to be tearing us into fragments. Many, however, because we want to see our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Paul encourages us to "Rejoice in our confident hope, be patient in trouble and keep on praying." In one verse he gives three commands to the Christian: We are to rejoice, remain patient and pray, knowing and believing that one day, "old things will pass away, and all things will be new" when we get to the "other side." What hope and happiness are ours because we are God's children. But until He calls us to be with Him, we must remain faithful!

Prayer: Lord, help us not to lose sight of the "other side" when the cares and concerns of life overwhelm us. May we be confident, remain patient, and be faithful. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:12



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.07.23

8 10 17 55 66 3

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$480,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 56 Mins 6
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.10.23

3 26 30 47 51 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$5,600,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 11
DRAW: Mins 6 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.10.23

6 15 32 34 39 1

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 26 Mins 6
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.08.23

6 14 26 31 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$144,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 26
DRAW: Mins 6 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.10.23

21 30 37 41 56 14

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 55
DRAW: Mins 7 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.10.23

2 24 34 53 58 13

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$725,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 55
DRAW: Mins 7 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor's staff prodded colleges and libraries to buy her books

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For colleges and libraries seeking a boldfaced name for a guest lecturer, few come bigger than Sonia Sotomayor, the Supreme Court justice who rose from poverty in the Bronx to the nation's highest court.

She has benefited, too — from schools' purchases of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of the books she has written over the years.

Sotomayor's staff has often prodded public institutions that have hosted the justice to buy her memoir or children's books, works that have earned her at least \$3.7 million since she joined the court in 2009. Details of those events, largely out of public view, were obtained by The Associated Press through more than 100 open records requests to public institutions. The resulting tens of thousands of pages of documents offer a rare look at Sotomayor and her fellow justices beyond their official duties.

In her case, the documents reveal repeated examples of taxpayer-funded court staff performing tasks for the justice's book ventures, which workers in other branches of government are barred from doing. But when it comes to promoting her literary career, Sotomayor is free to do what other government officials cannot because the Supreme Court does not have a formal code of conduct, leaving the nine justices to largely write and enforce their own rules.

"This is one of the most basic tenets of ethics laws that protects taxpayer dollars from misuse," said Kedric Payne, a former deputy chief counsel at the Office of Congressional Ethics and current general counsel for the Campaign Legal Center, a nonpartisan government watchdog group in Washington. "The problem at the Supreme Court is there's no one there to say whether this is wrong."

Supreme Court staffers have been deeply involved in organizing speaking engagements intended to sell books. That is conduct prohibited for members of Congress and the executive branch, who are barred under ethics rules from using government resources, including staff, for personal financial gain. Lower federal court judges are also instructed to not "lend the prestige of the judicial office to advance" their "private interests."

In a statement, the Supreme Court said it works with the justices and their staff to ensure they are "complying with judicial ethics guidance for such visits."

"When (Sotomayor) is invited to participate in a book program, Chambers staff recommends the number of books (for an organization to order) based on the size of the audience so as not to disappoint attendees who may anticipate books being available at an event," the court said.

The documents obtained by AP show that the justices' conduct spans their conservative-liberal split. Besides book sales, appearances by the justices were used in hopes of raising money at schools, which often invited major contributors to the events. Justices also lent the allure of their high office to partisan activity.

In 2019, as Sotomayor traveled the country to promote her new children's book, "Just Ask!," library and community college officials in Portland, Oregon, jumped at the chance to host an event.

They put in long hours and accommodated the shifting requests of Sotomayor's court staff. Then, as the public cost of hosting the event soared almost tenfold, a Sotomayor aide emailed with a different, urgent concern: She said the organizers did not buy enough copies of the justice's book, which attendees had to purchase or have on hand in order to meet Sotomayor after her talk.

"For an event with 1,000 people and they have to have a copy of Just Ask to get into the line, 250 books is definitely not enough," the aide, Anh Le, wrote staffers at the Multnomah County Library. "Families purchase multiples and people will be upset if they are unable to get in line because the book required is sold out."

It was not an isolated push. As Sotomayor prepared for commencement weekend at the University of

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California, Davis law school, her staff pitched officials there on buying copies of signed books in connection with the event. Before a visit to the University of Wisconsin, the staff suggested a book signing.

At Clemson University in South Carolina, school officials offered to buy 60 signed copies before a 2017 appearance; Sotomayor's staff noted that most schools order around 400. Michigan State University asked Sotomayor to come to campus and in 2018 spent more than \$100,000 on copies of her memoir, "My Beloved World," to distribute to incoming first-year students. The books were shipped to the Supreme Court, where copies were taken to her chambers by court workers and signed by her before being sent to the school.

Sotomayor, whose annual salary this year is \$285,400, is not alone in earning money by writing books. Such income is exempt from the court's \$30,000 restriction on outside yearly pay. But none of the justices has as forcefully leveraged publicly sponsored travel to boost book sales as has Sotomayor, according to emails and other records reviewed by the AP.

Such promotional efforts risk damaging the Supreme Court's public standing further by placing an individual justice above the institution itself, said J. Michael Luttig, a former federal appeals court judge who has pushed for the justices to adopt a formal code of conduct.

"I have never believed that Supreme Court justices should write books to supplement their judicial incomes," said Luttig, who was considered for the Supreme Court by President George W. Bush. "The potential for promotion of the individual justices over the Court at the reputational expense of the Court as an institution, as well as the appearance of such, is unavoidable."

Sotomayor's publisher, Penguin Random House, also has played a role in organizing her talks, in some cases pressing public institutions to commit to buying a specific number of copies or requesting that attendees purchase books to obtain tickets, emails show. The publisher has had several matters before the court in which Sotomayor did not recuse herself.

"Justice Sotomayor would have recused in cases in which Penguin Random House was a party, in light of her close and ongoing relationship with the publisher," the Supreme Court said in a statement. "An inadvertent omission failed to bring Penguin's participation in several cases to her attention; those cases ultimately were not selected for review by the Court. Chambers' conflict check procedures have since been changed."

A person close to Sotomayor, who insisted on anonymity to discuss the justice's book dealings, said that Sotomayor "has not and will not profit from sales" of her memoir beyond the \$3.1 million advance that she received and that doing so would "require purchases of hundreds of thousands of additional books — more than double the purchases to date."

Sotomayor, however, continues to earn royalties — at least \$400,000 since 2019 — from sales of her children's literature, including "Just Ask!," her second best-selling book, which was the promotional focus of the 2019 event held in Portland, emails and records show.

That summer, after an aide to Sotomayor first contacted Portland Community College to gauge its interest in hosting a book talk, officials at the Oregon school called it an "exciting possibility." Officials committed to spending \$1,000 to host the event. Co-host Multnomah County Library pledged an additional \$1,500.

Costs associated with the event spiked to more than \$20,000 by the time it was held in September 2019. Emails show Supreme Court staff, including Le, a longtime legal assistant to the justice and graduate of the community college, closely controlled the run-of-show, requesting the largest venue possible, while managing minor details such as the placement of stairs or approving the TV camera angles that would be used.

As the talk neared, Le shifted her focus to books, which were offered for sale online to those who obtained tickets to the free event.

"Can you please show me the screen where people can purchase books?" Le wrote library staffers as they prepared to make the tickets available. "Are you just placing Just Ask ... on the portal or all of the Justice's books?"

When the free tickets were quickly snapped up, she asked library officials to publicize that those who could not get tickets could still meet the justice if they purchased a book.

"Please also let them know that they can attend the signing line to meet the Justice even if they are not able to attend the event," Le wrote in an Aug. 26, 2019, email.

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A day later, she followed with another email, concerned that not enough of the people who got tickets had also purchased a book. Records indicate that the roughly 550 free tickets made available to the public (the rest were reserved for VIP guests) resulted in the advance purchase of only 28 books.

"Is there a reminder going out that people need to purchase a book at the event or bring a book to get into the signing line?" Le wrote. "Most of the registrants did not purchase books."

Still, when she found out event organizers had only purchased 250 copies of Sotomayor's book, she sent an email telling library officials that the quantity was "definitely not enough."

A library staffer emailed back, "Maybe you should communicate with (Sotomayor's publisher) and the book sellers about your concerns?"

A library spokesman, who was also included on the emails, declined to comment.

In its statement, the Supreme Court said judicial ethics guidance "suggests that a judge may sign copies of his or her work, which may also be available for sale" so long as there is "no requirement or suggestion that attendees are required to purchase books in order to attend."

"Justice Sotomayor's Judicial Assistant has worked with the Justice's publisher to ensure compliance with these standards, and at no time have attendees been required to buy a book in order to attend an event," the court statement read. "Asking whether attendees were reminded that they must either buy or bring a book in order to enter a signing line at an event would in no way conflict with the standard outlined above."

Some institutions that bought Sotomayor's books initiated the purchases on their own, raising the prospect of high-volume orders with the court as they extended the invitation to host her.

In 2018, Michigan State spent \$110,000 for 11,000 copies of "My Beloved World," to distribute to incoming first-year students after selecting it for an annual reading program with the East Lansing Public Library.

"Her biography is really just kind of, for lack of a better term, a rags-to-riches story. I mean, she came from very humble beginnings and became a Supreme Court justice," library director Kristin Shelley told the AP, explaining the book selection.

The books were shipped to the Supreme Court, scores of cartons at a time, to be signed by Sotomayor.

"Hello Supreme Court team: Good news!" a Penguin Random House worker emailed court staff. "The order that Anh and I have been waiting for from Michigan State University is in! They are going to be ordering a total of 11,004 HC (hard cover) copies. But don't panic. We will not be delivering 11,004 copies to the Supreme Court at one time."

When university officials mistakenly thought they might be missing 20 boxes of books they had ordered, Le expressed surprise, writing, "I literally prepped the boxes and had my aides count the books before signing. I even have a spreadsheet noting how many books were signed each day."

Other colleges have made similar purchases. The University at Albany in New York bought about 3,700 copies before a 2017 appearance. Stony Brook University in New York ordered roughly 3,900 copies in 2018 for use in a first-year reading program.

When the subject arose of how many Sotomayor books Clemson should purchase before a 2017 visit, school officials worried 60 might be too many to sign. Sotomayor's legal assistant reassured them it would not be a problem because "most institutions order in the ranges of 400 and up."

Other justices have benefited from similar arrangements. But how much they have made from individual schools or events is difficult to assess because the justices only report lump-sum earnings at year's end.

Justice Clarence Thomas has collected about \$1 million since 2006. Stephen Breyer, who retired in 2022, reported roughly \$700,000 in royalty income in the past two decades. Justice Neil Gorsuch has disclosed more than \$900,000 since his 2017 confirmation. Justice Amy Coney Barrett, who was confirmed in 2020, received a reported \$2 million advance for a forthcoming book. Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson signed a book deal, but the amount of her advance was not public.

In Sotomayor's case, her staff routinely brought up books in emails as trip details were discussed.

"Depending on quantity and if they get hardcover or paperback, she will sign them," Le told a professor at the UC Davis law school, which arranged to host her for commencement weekend in 2018. "She is signing over 11,000 for one school right now," Le added with a smiling emoji, apparently referencing

Michigan State's purchase.

The law school ultimately ordered 410 signed copies of "My Beloved World," after Le broached the idea of ordering signed copies. But one law school official took issue after a colleague relayed what he said was a question from Sotomayor's staff about setting up a book table during graduation festivities.

"I'm not sure this is a good idea, have we ever allowed other speakers to sell or offer their books (that we have purchased for guests)?" Kelley Weiss, the law school's head of marketing and communications, wrote to the dean. "I think having a table of her books could be out of place," she added. Weiss declined to comment to the AP.

Then planning took a turn. Weeks before the ceremony, Sotomayor fractured her shoulder and canceled her appearance. The school in turn canceled its \$6,500 book order and sought a refund.

Still, Sotomayor's office inquired to make sure.

"Is it for sure that UC Davis would like to move forward with canceling?" Le emailed. "I have the books on hold in storage and have not done anything with them."

In about a month, the cancellation was processed.

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Campus visits and travel by Supreme Court justices put them in the company of big money donors

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas headlined a 2017 program at McLennan Community College in Texas, his hosts had more than a speech in mind. Working with the prominent conservative lawyer Ken Starr, school officials crafted a guest list for a dinner at the home of a wealthy Texas businessman, hoping an audience with Thomas would be a reward for school patrons — and an inducement to prospective donors.

Before Justice Elena Kagan visited the University of Colorado's law school in 2019, one official in Boulder suggested a "larger donor to staff ratio" for a dinner with her. After Justice Sonia Sotomayor confirmed she would attend a 2017 question-and-answer session at Clemson University and a private luncheon, officials there made sure to invite \$1 million-plus donors to the South Carolina college.

The Associated Press obtained tens of thousands of pages of emails and other documents that reveal the extent to which public colleges and universities have seen visits by justices as opportunities to generate donations — regularly putting justices in the room with influential donors, including some whose industries have had interests before the court.

The documents also reveal that justices spanning the court's ideological divide have lent the prestige of their positions to partisan activity, headlining speaking events with prominent politicians, or advanced their own personal interests, such as sales of their books, through college visits.

The conduct would likely be prohibited if done by lower court federal judges. But the Supreme Court's definition of banned fundraising is so narrow — simply an event that raises more than it costs or where guests are asked for donations — that it does not account for soliciting contributors later while reminding them of the special access they were afforded.

"The justices should be aware that people are selling access to them," said University of Virginia law professor Amanda Frost, an ethics expert. "I don't think they are naive, but they certainly have been putting themselves in situations where people can credibly claim, 'I'm giving you access,' or 'I'm going to fundraise off my claimed closeness or access.' And that is a problem."

In a statement responding to questions, the Supreme Court said: "The Court routinely asks event orga-

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nizers to confirm that an event at which a Justice will speak is not a fundraiser, and it provides a definition of 'fundraiser' in order to avoid misunderstandings."

"The Court then follows up with event organizers to elicit further information as appropriate," the statement said. "The Court's practice has been useful: Justices have declined to be featured at events even though event organizers expressly told Chambers that the events were not fundraisers, following additional inquiry by the Court that confirmed them to be fundraisers."

Still, the revelations come at a fraught moment for the court, which by constitutional design settles disputes that set fundamental boundaries in American life. The court's integrity is being questioned because of concerns about ethics abuses by justices and polarizing court rulings, including last year's decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*. A 2022 survey put trust in the court at a 50-year low, with just 18% expressing a great level of confidence.

At the heart of some of the questions now being raised about the court is the fact that it operates without a formal code of conduct, leaving justices with no "common reference point," said retired federal Judge Jeremy Fogel, an appointee of President Bill Clinton.

"Without one, you don't have an agreed-to set of rules and it becomes a question of, 'Am I bothered by this?' or 'Is this OK with me?'" said Fogel, who led an agency within the federal judiciary tasked with educating judges on ethics matters. "That then gets refracted through a political lens and leads to questions of legitimacy. That's a real problem."

Lower court federal judges are generally barred from engaging in fundraising, political activity and "lending the prestige of judicial office" to advance a judge's own "private interests."

But Supreme Court justices are asked only to adhere to what Chief Justice John Roberts, in a statement signed by all nine members of the court, referred to in April as a set of "ethics principles and practices." The justices provide only a limited accounting of expenses—paid travel and sometimes neglect to disclose events altogether.

The court has long benefited from the presumption that the justices, who this year were paid \$285,400 — Roberts earned more — have chosen public service over far more lucrative opportunities.

But that perception has started to crack after reporting this year by news media exposed ethical lapses, including investigations by ProPublica showing that Thomas repeatedly accepted luxury vacations — including a \$500,000 trip to Indonesia in 2019 from Harlan Crow, a billionaire businessman, Republican donor and longtime friend.

The scrutiny has spurred calls for an ethics code and greater transparency for justices' travel. To fill in some of the information gaps, the AP used more than 100 public records requests to obtain details including identities of donors and politicians invited to private receptions as well as about perks for trips portrayed as academic.

Beyond public institutions, the AP also contacted more than 100 private schools, organizations and charities where the justices spoke, but those institutions are not subject to public records laws and most declined to provide details.

At least one justice, Sotomayor, seemed keenly aware of the peril of being in a setting with donors. Early in her Supreme Court tenure, she rejected a suggestion that she dine with major contributors to the University of Hawaii during a 2012 visit.

"No, the Justice will not do a private dinner at a 'club' with Mr. Boas who is a donor of the Law School," an aide wrote to school officials, referring to Frank Boas, a longtime benefactor.

"Canon 2(B) of the Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges provides that a judge 'should avoid lending the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others,'" the aide added. "The Justice is fastidious about following this guideline."

Before Sotomayor's 2017 visit to Clemson, her staff advised a preference against donors at a luncheon. But the invitation list nonetheless included guests who had given millions of dollars to the school — some of them posed for photos with the justice — and internal discussions in emails show officials viewed the visit as an opportunity to generate money for a university humanities board. That again shows the ways

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in which the court's narrow definition of fundraising has allowed the justices to be used to spur donations.

"We're hoping the visibility of this visit will drive awareness," Donna Dant, a senior development director, wrote a Clemson alumni relations official. "And ultimately, generate resources."

Brian O'Rourke, another alumni relations official, wrote: "When you say \$1M donors, please be sure to include our corporate donors at that level too." An English professor, Lee Morrissey, who helped organize the visit, commenting on the visit's higher-than-expected costs, described it as a 'takes money to make money' moment." Contacted later he said he did not mean that literally but rather was referring to the general prospect of greater attention for the humanities' program.

Asked about the event, Clemson spokesman Joe Galbraith told the AP in a statement that the event was not a fundraiser and that there were no "solicitations of donations requested in association with the visit."

Among the justices who are in demand, Thomas is very popular with conservatives. Officials at McLennan Community College saw him as having special appeal to a certain class of donors.

"I had a few other thoughts about people who might be appropriate to invite to the Clarence Thomas dinner, mainly because they are wealthy conservative Catholics who would align with Clarence Thomas and who have not previously given," Kim Patterson, the executive director of the McLennan Community College Foundation, wrote in an email.

In September 2017, Thomas visited Waco, Texas, to be interviewed by Starr, a longtime friend and a former independent counsel whose investigation of Clinton's sexual misconduct made him a household name in the 1990s.

Some school faculty were skeptical of the invitation, but plans moved forward, with the school scheduling a public interview, a book signing and two private dinners.

Starr's widow, Alice, defended the practice on the grounds that requests for donations were separate from the visit, though wealthy targets of the university's fundraising efforts were invited.

"It is not giving to the Clarence Thomas event," she said in a recent interview. "It is giving to the college at a later date because they were treated with courtesy and (invited) to a very special event. Every single college in America does that. And if they don't, they are not fundraising."

"Friendraising' is what it's called," she added. "And then you do the big ask hopefully later."

One of those friends, it was hoped, would be Crow.

"May Alice and I share this with Harlan Crow? As you well know, he'll want to connect with the Justice if at all possible," Ken Starr, who died last year, emailed a court official. (Crow and his wife declined the invitation). Crow did not respond to requests for comment.

The roughly 100 invitees included locally prominent business people, political leaders, lawyers and donors to the school and the GOP. Guests were shuttled aboard buses to the Mediterranean-style mansion of local businessman Clifton Robinson, which boasts 26 marble columns and sweeping views of Lake Waco. They dined on crab cake bites, beef tenderloin and citrus salmon, school records show.

The school ordered enough copies of Thomas' 2007 memoir, "My Grandfather's Son," for each couple, plus hundreds more for a signing after Thomas' lecture.

At the time of the event, Robinson served on the board of directors of Hilltop Holdings, a private equity company with a pending case in federal court. Last year, the Supreme Court declined to take up the case, a favorable outcome for National Lloyds Insurance Co., a Hilltop subsidiary that Robinson started.

Robinson said he sat next to Thomas at the dinner but never discussed the case. "I was just on the board. I have no idea about that," he said.

The day after the dinner, Thomas attended a more intimate meal with several school officials, the Starrs, Robinson, and a half-dozen other guests. The college declined to identify those people, citing guidance from the Texas attorney general's office that allows higher education institutions to withhold donors' names.

Thomas was far from alone in attending events where donors were invited.

As University of Colorado law school officials developed a dinner guest list before a 2019 Kagan visit, one organizer proposed a larger "donor to staff ratio" while a second said she was open to suggestions about which "VIP donors" the school "would like to cultivate relationships with."

A university spokesperson said in a statement that there were "no solicitations" connected to the event

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and that no gifts were made as a result of it.

Sometimes, a trip by a justice has included both traditional lecturing and mingling with donors. In January 2020, Thomas mixed a four-day teaching assignment at the University of Florida's law school with gatherings involving university donors and political figures.

The school arranged for its athletic association's private Embraer Phenom 300 jet to fly to Washington to ferry Thomas and his former law clerk Kathryn Mizelle, at a cost of \$16,800. In a statement, a university spokeswoman called the chartered flight "standard practice" for many invited speakers "for whom air travel is necessary."

Thomas and Mizelle taught a course on religion and the First Amendment and met with students. The justice also attended VIP events with school donors, according to agenda materials from the school.

Former Burger King CEO John Dasburg, a onetime university trustee, and his wife, Mary Lou, were among those included, school records show. The couple has collectively given about \$600,000 to Republican candidates for federal office.

Dasburg said that they attended at the invitation of the law school dean and that he asked Thomas to sign a book on First Amendment rights and used the occasion to discuss a dissenting opinion by Thomas that he admired — from a 2000 case upholding Colorado restrictions on protests outside abortion clinics.

Thomas and Mizelle, a 2012 graduate of the law school, extended their stay into the weekend to attend a gathering of a Florida branch of the Federalist Society, a conservative legal group whose deep-pocketed donors have helped orchestrate the Supreme Court's shift to the right.

In a crowded ballroom at a Disney World resort, tributes for Thomas were effusive. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who helped introduce Thomas and is now pursuing the Republican presidential nomination, called him the "greatest living justice." Afterward, Thomas and DeSantis dined at a steakhouse with conservative legal activist Leonard Leo, who has helped seat multiple conservative justices on the court, according to a person familiar with the dinner. The dinner was first reported by CNN.

That September, President Donald Trump nominated Mizelle to the federal bench, despite a rating of "not qualified" from an American Bar Association committee.

In 2014, Thomas visited the University of Texas at Tyler for a lecture and dinner sponsored by a group of donors to then-Republican Rep. Louie Gohmert, who in 2020 spearheaded a lawsuit that sought to empower Vice President Mike Pence to overturn the presidential election that Trump lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

Thomas posed for photographs with guests at a private reception before a dinner sponsored by Louise Herrington Ornelas, a major school donor. Among those invited were Gohmert, local oil executives and industry lawyers, and longtime Republican Party supporters.

"Justice Thomas was a wonderful speaker and helped us just by his presence," said Rodney Mabry, who was the school's president at that time, in an interview. "Through the dinner, he helped raise money."

Thomas was not alone in having a political tinge to some of his travel.

In September 2016, Sotomayor visited Colorado for a series of speeches and book events not listed on her financial disclosure, making it unclear who paid for her travel. A stop in Denver at Metropolitan State University was made at the behest of longtime friend Polly Baca, a Democratic activist, emails show.

Baca, a former Colorado state legislator and Democratic National Committee official, solicited \$15,000 in contributions from nonprofit groups, philanthropists, Democratic donors, law firms and corporations to help offset the \$30,000 cost.

The sponsors gained admission to a private reception with Sotomayor, where local dignitaries and school donors mingled. Baca said she did not recall raising money for the event.

There have been times when it seems that a justice gives the appearance of repaying a political favor.

Less than six months after Justice Neil Gorsuch was sworn in as Trump's first Supreme Court nominee, thanks in no small part to the efforts of then-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Gorsuch was featured at an event that organizers hoped would help eventually raise money for an academic center at the University of Kentucky law school honoring one of McConnell's closest friends, the late U.S. District Judge John Heyburn II.

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Looking to reach the initiative's \$3.5 million endowment goal, Martha Heyburn, the judge's widow and founder of the Heyburn Initiative, developed a fundraising document for potential donors that highlighted media coverage from an earlier appearance by Roberts and teased a forthcoming visit by Gorsuch.

The university "has not announced (publicly) that Justice Gorsuch will be the speaker, so please keep this information confidential," the document states.

University spokesman Jay Blanton said in a statement that the event was not a fundraiser and "that was not the intent of the events in any way."

After Gorsuch's public talk, the agenda called for Gorsuch and McConnell, R-Ky., to dine with a small private group before a reception at the university president's house.

Records show that among those present for the reception was a major Republican donor and owner of one of the nation's largest coal-mining companies, Joe Craft III, and his wife, Kelly, who would serve as Trump's ambassador to Canada and this year unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination for governor.

The couple has donated at least \$13.3 million to Republican candidates and causes at the federal level since 2010.

Craft was then mounting an aggressive effort to push Trump's Environmental Protection Agency to strip away some regulation of the industry. Last year, the Supreme Court's conservative majority issued a 6-3 ruling limiting the EPA's authority to curb carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.

The Crafts have donated millions of dollars to university programs. But Kelly Craft said the couple did not know Gorsuch or speak with him.

"I can assure you, there was nothing discussed," she said.

In its statement to the AP, the court said, "Justices exercise caution in attending events that might be described as political in nature, following guidance in the Code of Conduct which cautions judges against engaging in political activity. Merely attending an event where an elected official might also be in attendance — such as several of the events described in your email — does not necessarily render the event impermissibly political in nature."

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Book sales, a lure for money and more takeaways from the AP investigation into Supreme Court ethics

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a monthslong inquiry, which included reviewing tens of thousands of pages of documents from more than 100 public records requests, The Associated Press has examined what happens behind the scenes when Supreme Court justices travel to colleges and universities for lectures and other events.

The AP learned the identities of donors and politicians invited to events with justices, details about the perks that have accompanied the school visits and information about how school trips have helped advance book sales.

Some of the key takeaways:

BOOK SALES

The documents reveal how university visits are a convenient way for justices to sell their own books. That's especially true in the case of Justice Sonia Sotomayor, a prolific author who has kept the court's most active travel schedule over the past decade, according to the records reviewed by the AP.

Emails and other documents show that Supreme Court staff members have been directly engaged in facilitating book sales by asking schools how many copies they want to buy and by helping to arrange the

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purchase of mass quantities.

At a 2019 event jointly hosted by the Multnomah County Library in Oregon and Portland Community College, a Sotomayor aide told organizers that "250 books is definitely not enough" for a program with an expected 1,000 guests in which people would be required to have a copy to meet the justice for a signing after the event.

Michigan State University purchased 11,000 copies to be distributed to incoming first-year students. When Clemson University in South Carolina worried that 60 copies might be too many for Sotomayor to sign, a staffer reassured the school that "most institutions order in the ranges of 400 and up."

And before a scheduled visit to the law school at the University of California, Davis, for the 2018 commencement, the court staff proposed using the event as an opportunity to distribute books.

In a statement, a Supreme Court spokesperson said that staff members work to follow judicial ethics guidance and that "at no time have attendees been required to buy a book in order to attend an event."

"Schools have occasionally invited Justice Sotomayor to take part in a program in which they select a book for an entire school or a freshman class, and the Justice gives a book talk," the statement said. "When she is invited to participate in a book program, Chambers staff recommends the number of books based on the size of the audience so as not to disappoint attendees who may anticipate books being available at an event, and they will put colleges or universities in touch with the Justice's publisher when asked to do so."

A LURE FOR MONEY

Supreme Court justices insist that they cannot and do not participate in fundraising events. But the emails obtained by the AP show that the court's definition of a fundraiser — an event that raises more than it costs or where guests are asked for contributions — excludes much of the work that typically goes into persuading a wealthy donor to cut a check.

That's given schools wide latitude to court rich patrons.

For instance, ahead of a 2017 event with Justice Clarence Thomas, officials at McLennan Community College in Texas worked with the prominent conservative lawyer Ken Starr and his wife, Alice, to craft a guest list designed to reward school patrons and incentivize future contributions. In an interview, Starr's widow called it "friendraising."

In an email planning the event, the executive director of the college's foundation wrote that she had thoughts about whom to invite "mainly because they are wealthy conservative Catholics who would align with Clarence Thomas and who have not previously given."

Thomas isn't the only one whose status as a justice has been leveraged by schools eager to capitalize with donors. Before Justice Elena Kagan visited the University of Colorado's law school, one official suggested a "larger donor to staff ratio" for a 2019 dinner with her, emails show. Another event organizer said the organizer was "open to suggestions about which VIP donors to cultivate relationships with." A school spokesperson said the attendees weren't asked for any donations connected to the event.

Clemson University in South Carolina hosted Sotomayor for a 2017 session with students and for a private luncheon. One official said it was hoped the events, which included donors, would "ultimately generate resources" for the university's Humanities Advancement Board that played a lead organizing role. As university officials devised a guest list, an alumni relations official wrote: "When you say \$1M donors, please be sure to include our corporate donors at that level, too."

In a statement, a court spokesperson said it "routinely asks event organizers to confirm that an event at which a Justice will speak is not a fundraiser, and it provides a definition of 'fundraiser' in order to avoid misunderstandings." The spokesperson said justices have occasionally declined to attend events even after being told expressly that they were not fundraisers.

POLITICAL COMMINGLING

Visits to universities are promoted as academic in nature, but they also have facilitated encounters between justices and elected officials.

Months after he was seated on the Supreme Court, Justice Neil Gorsuch attended an event at the University of Kentucky with then-Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, hosted by a center to study the

judiciary named after one of McConnell's closest friends, a former federal judge.

In 2020, after teaching a weeklong course at the University of Florida's law school, Thomas extended his stay in the state to attend a gathering of the regional branch of the Federalist Society, where he was introduced with effusive praise by Gov. Ron DeSantis, with whom he also had a private dinner.

Thomas also attended a private dinner during a visit to the University of Texas at Tyler that was sponsored by a group of donors to then-Rep. Louie Gohmert. Six years later, Gohmert would spearhead a lawsuit that sought to empower Vice President Mike Pence to overturn the outcome of the 2020 presidential election that Donald Trump lost.

A court spokesperson said: "Justices exercise caution in attending events that might be described as political in nature, following guidance in the Code of Conduct which cautions judges against engaging in political activity. Merely attending an event where an elected official might also be in attendance — such as several of the events described in your email — does not necessarily render the event impermissibly political in nature."

NO ETHICS CODE

Some of the conduct revealed by the AP likely would run afoul of ethics rules that cover officials in other branches of government as well as lower federal court judges.

Lower court judges, for instance, are generally barred from engaging in fundraising, political activity and "lending the prestige of judicial office" to advance a judge's own "private interests." Supreme Court justices are asked only to adhere to what Chief Justice John Roberts referred to in April as a set of "foundational ethics principles and practices."

The information in this review comes at a time of plummeting confidence in the court, brought on in part by a succession of news media revelations about members of the court, including reports by ProPublica that Thomas repeatedly accepted luxury vacations, including a \$500,000 trip to Indonesia in 2019, and sold property to and accepted school tuition for a nephew from Harlan Crow, a billionaire businessman, Republican donor and longtime friend.

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Inside the AP's investigation into the ethics practices of the Supreme Court justices

By ERIC TUCKER and BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An Associated Press examination of the ethics practices of the U.S. Supreme Court relied on documents obtained from more than 100 public records requests to public colleges, universities and other institutions that have hosted the justices over the past decade.

Here's a look at how the reporting was done:

To conduct its review, the AP surveyed local news stories and social media and obtained data from ScotusTracker, a website that logged justices' activities, to develop a list of appearances over the past 10 years.

In late 2022 and early this year, the AP submitted records requests to the public institutions on that list, citing individual state statutes that require the disclosure of certain documents to the public.

The requests sought a broad range of information, including details about any contracts or riders for the appearances; transportation to and from events as well as food and lodging; the recording policy for the event; and any gifts or honorarium discussed or offered, including books.

The AP separately queried more than 100 private colleges, universities and charities that have also hosted justices or organized events for them, requesting that they provide the same information that was asked of public institutions. Some confirmed basic details of the visits, but few provided substantive information.

The AP cataloged the travel and perks afforded to the justices. The AP also compiled lists of guests, including donors and politicians, who were invited to private receptions with justices and vetted them wherever possible against information in federal court records, Federal Election Commission filings, online photo albums of events and other publicly available data.

The responses among public institutions varied widely. Some schools, including the University of Rhode Island, Ohio State University, Stony Brook University and the University of California, Davis, provided records free of charge. Some schools turned over thousands of pages of records, including George Mason University and the University of Kentucky.

McLennan Community College in Waco, Texas, produced 104 pages of records in March and then, following a \$110 payment, shipped by mail a box of blue folders containing hundreds more pages. A reporting trip was also taken there so that a journalist could observe firsthand the site of a dinner that the college organized for Justice Clarence Thomas.

In some instances, AP filed multiple requests with the same institution, either because the school asked that the initial request be substantially narrowed or because an initial response suggested that even more details might be available. In the case of the University of Texas at Tyler, for instance, the AP filed a follow-up request to obtain a guest list for a dinner with Thomas. A follow-up request was filed with the University of Mississippi for the cost of a flight that carried Justice Elena Kagan, Justice Antonin Scalia and Scalia's son and grandson in 2014.

Some institutions were less forthcoming. The AP went to the Illinois state attorney general to get a binding opinion directing the Chicago Public Library to produce documents related to a visit by Justice Sonia Sotomayor. Other schools, including the University of Arizona, have said their search for records remained ongoing after more than six months.

The AP did pay some schools for documents, including \$350 to the University of Utah; \$140 to Michigan State University; \$159.24 to the University of Minnesota; and roughly \$150 to the University of Mississippi.

But some schools responded to records requests with fee demands that the AP deemed unreasonable. The initial fee cited by the University of Georgia for processing two requests was \$18,800.50, though it was later reduced after the AP narrowed its request.

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Justices teach when the Supreme Court isn't in session. It can double as an all-expenses-paid trip

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For decades, the University of Hawaii law school has marketed its Jurist-In-Residence program to the Supreme Court as an all-expenses-paid getaway, with the upside of considerable "down time" in paradise.

The justices have enthusiastically participated.

"Your colleagues who were here most recently were Justices (Ruth Bader) Ginsburg, (Anthony) Kennedy, and (Stephen) Breyer, and I believe they all would recommend the experience highly," the law school's then-Dean Aviam Soifer wrote in a 2010 email trying to draw Justice Sonia Sotomayor to the school in Honolulu. "We will, of course, cover first-class airfare, excellent hotel accommodations, and all other travel expenses."

"Should we have hope of having the Justice here while the icy winds blow in Washington?" he wrote in another. In a follow-up before the justice's 2012 visit, he included the salutation "Warm (and yet comfort-

"To be clear, providing a full semester's worth of content in a compressed timeframe is a significant time commitment," said Ken Turchi, an associate dean for the law school, who called the program a "highly compelling opportunity."

Their contracts coincided with a significant expansion of the law school made possible through tens of millions of dollars in contributions from conservative donors, some of whom gave anonymously through George Mason's foundation.

A \$20 million contribution from an anonymous donor in 2016, which has been widely reported, was made contingent on renaming the school for Scalia, as well as hiring roughly a dozen new faculty members, according to records the school previously released. To ensure the school complied with the agreement, the donor and the school agreed that Leonard Leo, then an executive vice president of the Federalist Society, would serve as an overseer, records show. An additional \$10 million was contributed through the arrangement by the Charles Koch Foundation, which was founded by billionaire conservative donor Charles Koch.

Turchi said none of the donations that the school or its foundation has accepted were made contingent upon hiring the justices.

The university has "sole and absolute discretion to determine and carry out all selection, research, scholarship, teaching, and service at the school," Turchi said in an email. "While the school committed to increase our faculty and name the school, any suggestion that any donor or third party had oversight over who was hired is inaccurate and factually unfounded."

Since joining the faculty in 2018, Gorsuch has regularly taught in Padua, Italy, where George Mason officials paid for his airfare, which cost \$8,313 in 2022, and an apartment that cost \$5,359 to rent, records show. Side trips paid for by the school included trips to Bologna, a culinary destination city, as well as nearby Venice, known for its palazzos, architecture and canals.

In 2021, Gorsuch taught his course in Reykjavik, Iceland, where Justice Elena Kagan, nominated by President Barack Obama, joined him. Though Kagan taught for one day, the school covered the cost of her travel and lodging for her nearly weeklong stay.

Kavanaugh, meanwhile, taught outside London in 2019, staying near Runnymede, where the Magna Carta was signed, records show. Documents detailing the cost of the trip were not included in records provided by the school, many of which were redacted. After teaching from a western Pennsylvania resort at the height of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, Kavanaugh taught a short summer course at the school's Virginia campus, followed by a three-day course there in 2022, which paid \$16,895, records show.

But soon he resumed teaching abroad.

This year, Kavanaugh, as well as Justice Amy Coney Barrett, another Trump nominee, co-taught weeklong classes abroad through the University of Notre Dame's London Law Program.

Like other private schools that have hosted the justices abroad, Notre Dame is not subject to public records laws, and school officials declined to comment.

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Desperate Ukrainians take long and uncertain journey to escape Russian occupation

By SAMYA KULLAB and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — For Rima Yaremenko, the 5,000-kilometer (3,000-mile) odyssey to escape Russian occupation ended within sight of where it started. The 68-year old Ukrainian woman traversed three countries over six days only to settle across the river from her beleaguered hometown.

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She came a long way by bus through Russia, Latvia and Poland to be this close. From the Ukrainian-controlled city of Kherson, where she now lives, the faint outline of Oleshky is visible from a distance. But the community with a prewar population of 25,000 may as well be a world away.

Yaremenko lived under Moscow's rule for 15 months, putting up with the rumble of constant shelling just be near her beloved home and blooming garden. Then it was gone after the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in June triggered catastrophic flooding and reduced the property to clay.

She faced a tough choice: Endure homelessness as the war raged nearby or take the only way out — a long, circuitous and uncertain journey through Russia. "We didn't want to go, but once we were flooded, I decided there's nothing to stay for," she said.

Hundreds of others left, too, abandoning their water-logged homes to travel across vast sweeps of occupied land, past checkpoints that required nail-biting interrogations and through Russia's urban heartland, all to reach the borders of the European Union.

Now that they are beyond the reach of Russian authorities, the escapees offered rare firsthand accounts to The Associated Press of their lives under occupation and their harrowing escape from Kremlin-controlled territory. Some of them spoke on the condition that they be identified only by their first names because they still have relatives living in occupied territory.

As the two sides blamed each other for destroying the dam, water levels declined and thunderous artillery fire resumed. Fighting intensified along the Dnieper River, which marks the line between Kyiv and Moscow's battling armies. Russian allegations that Ukraine was responsible were disputed by an AP investigation.

The constant shelling proved too much for those already struggling with homelessness and access to drinking water. Most did not have the money to rebuild. Occupation authorities offered a mere 10,000 rubles (\$100) in compensation.

"My house was unlivable. Everything was covered in mud. The water pipes were broken and dirty. There was sewage," said Lana, 43, who left Oleshky on June 19 and arrived in Kherson a little over a week later. "It was impossible to breathe. We were suffocating."

Residents initially hoped a quick Ukrainian counteroffensive would free them. But the longer they remained, the more they feared pressure to acquire Russian passports.

"Although the water receded, the calamity persisted," said Yevhen Ryschuk, Oleshky's exiled mayor, who is in contact with residents.

The AP spoke to nine people who left Oleshky from June 13 to July 1. The only way out of the occupied part of the Kherson region was through Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014.

Travelers had to be processed in the administrative town of Armyansk, where phones are inspected, email passwords collected and those suspected of collaborating with Ukrainian forces interrogated or detained, in some cases never to be seen again.

Some are unable to pass simply because they lost their documents and have no money, said Nelly Isaeva, director of Helping to Leave, an organization that works remotely to aid Ukrainians who are trapped on the east bank and want to escape.

"Young people left, and pensioners stayed," said Nataliia Skakun, 54 who recently left Oleshky with her husband, Serhii, and resettled in Mykolaiv, in the Kherson region.

A woman who remains in Oelshky said life under occupation has become harder over time.

The Russians "began to act more harshly than before," she said, speaking on condition of anonymity out of fear for her safety. Russian soldiers now check the documents of locals, for example, when visiting the market.

For that reason, the woman and her family avoid leaving the house. Many people get by on the food that remains after others leave. "They give us their stocks," she said.

Most townspeople who fled to Crimea continued their journey through the Russian province of Rostov-on-Don to Moscow and eventually made it to either the Latvian or Lithuanian border. Many went on to Poland and crossed into Ukraine from there or stayed in refugee camps. AP also spoke to two people who traveled directly to Belgorod, which borders Ukraine's Sumy region.

In Armyansk, a 50-year-old woman named Alla was questioned: Do you support Russia's special military

operation? Do you have contacts in the Ukrainian government? Who do you think exploded the dam?

She thought carefully about how to answer.

Alla had stayed because her 74-year-old arthritis-stricken mother didn't want to go. Unable to bear it any longer, she took all the precautions she could by deleting potentially suspicious contacts and messages. She even told the Russian soldiers she was going to Simferopol, the capital of the Crimean Peninsula, and no further.

The last 15 months were the hardest of her life.

"Every day in Oleshky was a risk. Every day I thought about leaving, but I couldn't bring myself to make a decision. My mother is there, my house that we loved, that we dedicated most of our lives to build," she said.

A few months into occupation, the ruble was enforced as currency. Alla had to exchange her Ukrainian hryvnias for a 10 percent fee. The last time she tried to purchase diabetes medication at the hospital she was told to present Russian documents the next time.

She lost friends: Some accepted offers to acquire Russian passports and housing certificates to purchase apartments inside Russia. Two of Yaremenko's acquaintances did so too. "Our friends, for example, took the passports immediately. They say they feel it has become easier to live."

The flooding was the last straw. Scores of homes were damaged. Many buildings still standing are uninhabitable. The threat of water-borne disease loomed.

At the checkpoint, Alla looked up at the Russian soldier. I don't know who exploded the dam, she said. "I just want peace." He let her through.

At the Latvian border, she was taken aside again and questioned in a room where a pair of handcuffs hung on a chair. Why leave? They asked. Why not wait for compensation? Why not look for a house in Russia?

Then they said they knew she had left her mother behind. If she dared return for her, they would not let her pass a second time, they warned.

"It was psychological pressure," she said.

Those with a history of collaboration took greater measures to hide their past.

Yuri, 28, a former journalist, buried his press credentials and wiped his phone contacts. For months, he had been passing coordinates of Russian army movements to friends connected to Ukrainian forces.

In Oleshky, he had found work in a shawarma shop frequented by Russian soldiers, he said. "Every day you leave your house and don't know if you'll come back," he said.

To survive, he was polite and struck up conversation with the soldiers. Some told him they would fight for the territory until the end. Others said they wanted to go home. He pretended to sympathize.

He was let through in Armyansk. Like so many others, he headed to the one place he felt most at home. Across the river, in the city of Kherson, where Russian bombardment is constant.

"It's absurd in a way," he said with a laugh. Only a few weeks ago, he could see the Ukrainian-controlled city from his building under occupation. "It was just 20 minutes between Oleshky and Kherson. Now it's three days."

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine: <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

Olympic champion Caster Semenya wins appeal against testosterone rules at human rights court

By GERALD IMRAY AP Sports Writer

Double Olympic champion runner Caster Semenya won an appeal against track and field's testosterone rules on Tuesday when the European Court of Human Rights ruled she was discriminated against and there were "serious questions" about the rules' validity.

World Athletics, which enforces the regulations, said in reaction to the decision that its rules would remain in place, however, meaning there would not be an immediate return to top-level competition for

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the South African runner.

Semenya's case at the rights court was against the government of Switzerland, and not World Athletics itself, although the decision was still a major moment in throwing doubt on the future of the rules.

Semenya was legally identified as female at birth and has identified as female her entire life, but regulations introduced by track and field's governing body in 2019 forced her to artificially suppress her natural testosterone to be allowed to compete in women's competitions.

World Athletics says she has one of a number of conditions known as differences in sex development, which results in a natural testosterone level in the typical male range and which gives her an unfair advantage in women's competitions.

Semenya has been challenging the testosterone rules in the courts for years, but had previously lost an appeal at sport's highest court in 2019 and a second challenge against the rules at Switzerland's supreme court in 2020. That second rejection of her appeal was the reason why the Swiss government was the respondent in the European Court of Human Rights case.

The Strasbourg-based rights court ruled in Semenya's favor by a 4-3 majority of judges on the complaint of discrimination and noted she was denied an "effective remedy" against that discrimination through the two previous cases she lost at the Court of Arbitration for Sport and the Swiss supreme court.

Tuesday's ruling was in many ways a criticism of the 2019 decision by CAS. The sports court kept in place the rules that require Semenya and others with so-called differences in sex development conditions, or DSDs, to take birth control pills, or have hormone-blocking injections, or undergo surgery to be allowed to run at top competitions such as the Olympics and world championships.

The rules were initially enforced in certain events but were expanded and made stricter by World Athletics this year. Athletes such as Semenya were forced to lower their testosterone further if they wanted to run in any race.

The decision by the Switzerland-based CAS that rejected Semenya's first appeal had not properly considered important factors such as the side effects of the hormone treatment, the difficulties for athletes to remain in compliance of the rules, and the lack of evidence that their high natural testosterone actually gave them an advantage, the European rights court said.

An unfair advantage is the core reason why World Athletics introduced the rules in the first place.

The European rights court also found Semenya's second legal appeal against the rules at the Swiss supreme court should have led to "a thorough institutional and procedural review" of the rules, but that did not happen when that court also ruled against Semenya.

The government of Switzerland was ordered to pay Semenya 60,000 euros (\$66,000) in respect of costs and expenses by the European rights court.

Ultimately, the rules have sidelined Semenya since 2019 as she has refused to artificially suppress her natural hormone levels in order to run, and the European rights court noted the "high personal stakes" for Semenya in how the regulations interrupted her career and affected her "profession."

Tuesday's decision could force CAS and ultimately World Athletics to re-examine the regulations, although the path and timeline to a possible rollback of the rules is unclear.

In a statement, World Athletics said: "We remain of the view that the DSD regulations are a necessary, reasonable and proportionate means of protecting fair competition in the female category as the Court of Arbitration for Sport and Swiss Federal Tribunal both found, after a detailed and expert assessment of the evidence."

The 32-year-old Semenya is aiming to run at next year's Olympics in Paris. She was the 2012 and 2016 Olympic champion in the 800 meters but did not defend her title at the Tokyo Olympics because of the regulations.

NATO summit boosted by Turkey's decision to end opposition to Sweden's bid to join alliance

By CHRIS MEGERIAN, SEUNG MIN KIM and KARL RITTER Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — NATO opened its summit Tuesday with fresh momentum after Turkey withdrew its objections to Sweden joining the alliance, a step toward the unity that Western leaders have been eager to demonstrate in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The decision by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a significant move toward Sweden's membership and it will alleviate tension in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital. The deal was reached after days of intensive meetings, and it's poised to expand the alliance's strength in Northern Europe.

"Rumors of the death of NATO's unity were greatly exaggerated," Jake Sullivan, the U.S. national security adviser, told reporters triumphantly on Tuesday.

As part of the deal, Erdogan said he would ask Turkey's parliament to approve Sweden joining NATO. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, another holdout, is expected to take a similar step.

The outcome is a victory for President Joe Biden as well, who has touted NATO's expansion as an example of how Russia's invasion of Ukraine has backfired on Moscow. Finland has already become the 31st member of the alliance, and Sweden is on deck to become the 32nd. Both Nordic countries were historically nonaligned until the war increased fears of Russian aggression.

Because of the deal on Sweden's membership, "this summit is already historic before it has started," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

Biden expressed confidence in Sweden's path to finalizing its NATO membership as he met Tuesday with Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda. Biden also emphasized his commitment to transatlantic cooperation.

"Nothing happens here that doesn't affect us," he told Nauseda. During the meeting, Nauseda presented Biden with the Order of Vytautas the Great, the White House said. It's the highest award a Lithuanian president can bestow and Biden is the first U.S. president to receive it.

Biden and Erdogan were scheduled to meet Tuesday evening, and it was unclear how some of the Turkish president's other demands will be resolved. He has been seeking advanced American fighter jets and a path toward membership in the European Union. The White House has expressed support for both, but publicly insisted that the issues were not related to Sweden's membership in NATO.

"I stand ready to work with President Erdogan and Turkey on enhancing defense and deterrence in the Euro-Atlantic area," Biden said in a statement late Monday.

The phrasing was a nod to Biden's commitment to help Turkey acquire new F-16 fighter jets, according to an administration official who was not authorized to comment publicly.

The Biden administration has backed Turkey's desire to buy 40 new F-16s as well as modernization kits from the U.S. It's a move some in Congress, most notably Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez, D-N.J., have opposed over Turkey blocking NATO membership for Sweden, its human rights record and other concerns.

In Washington, Menendez said he was "continuing to have my reservations" on providing the fighter aircraft to Turkey. If the Biden administration could show that Turkey wouldn't use the F-16s belligerently against other NATO members, particularly its neighbor Greece, and meet other conditions, "then there may be a way forward," Menendez told reporters.

NATO leaders still have other big questions to address at the two-day summit, particularly Ukraine's desire to join NATO. The Baltic states — including Lithuania, which is hosting the event — have pushed for a strong show of support and a clear pathway toward membership for Ukraine.

The United States and Germany have resisted that, and Biden said last week that Ukraine wasn't ready to join. Members of NATO, he told CNN, need to "meet all the qualifications, from democratization to a whole range of other issues," a nod toward longstanding concerns about governance and corruption in Kyiv.

In addition, some fear that bringing Ukraine into NATO would serve more as a provocation to Russia than as a deterrence against aggression.

Stoltenberg wrote in Foreign Affairs on Monday that the alliance would "upgrade our political ties" by

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able) greetings from paradise.”

Teaching is encouraged as a way to demystify the nation’s highest court while exposing the justices to a cross-section of the public. For decades, they have traveled the globe during court recesses to lecture. It is a permissible practice so long their earnings are less than the court’s roughly \$30,000 cap on outside income.

In a statement responding to questions, the Supreme Court noted the \$30,000 figure and added that “teaching must be at an accredited educational institution or continuing legal educational program and must be approved in advance by the Chief Justice (or by the Associate Justices if it involves teaching by the Chief Justice).”

Documents obtained by The Associated Press through public records requests reveal that some all-expenses-paid trips — to Italy, Iceland and Hawaii, among others — are light on classroom instruction, with ample time carved out for the justices’ leisure.

“This is a level of luxury that most Americans will never see. And the fact that the justices are receiving it by virtue of their positions seems to be outside ethical bounds,” said Gabe Roth, the executive director of Fix the Court, a nonpartisan watchdog group dedicated to following the Supreme Court.

The particulars of these excursions are often shrouded from public view because the justices are only required to offer a sparse accounting on their annual financial disclosure forms.

But details obtained by the AP reveal that these trips, which would cost the justices thousands of dollars if paid out of pocket, are in some cases subsidized by anonymous donors to the schools whose motivations can be difficult to assess.

Dan Meisenzahl, a spokesman for the University of Hawaii, said the school is so isolated from the continental United States that offering first-rate accommodations to the justices is one way to ensure they will make the trip.

“As a public university in one of the most isolated places on Earth, our Jurist-In-Residence program would not be possible without our donors and we thank them for their support.” Meisenzahl said in a statement.

While locking in details before Justice Samuel Alito’s 2011 visit to Honolulu, a University of Hawaii law school official, Cyndi Quinn, promoted the program’s flexibility.

“We would like to propose a schedule that suits his preference (eg. time of day to start, other activities such as golf, snorkeling, hiking, cano(e) paddling, etc.) as well as activities and visits Mrs. Alito would prefer,” Quinn wrote Alito’s staff. “What I do recall is that Justice Alito would prefer starting his day after 10 am and leave some ‘down time’ for some much needed, no doubt, rest and relaxation?”

Besides Ginsburg, Kennedy, Alito and Breyer, Antonin Scalia and Sotomayor are the other justices who served on the court in the last decade and who participated in the program, which the local law firm Case Lombardi currently helps sponsor.

Emails and other records provided by the school show the justices often taught a handful of classes, met with local dignitaries and frequently dined — with the exception of Sotomayor — at private clubs or the private residences of prominent school donors. Sotomayor’s staff was adamant in emails to the school that she thought it inappropriate to be mingling with donors.

Hawaii is just one of the places where academics and tourism have been a draw.

Soon after being seated on the Supreme Court, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh joined the faculty of the Antonin Scalia School of Law at George Mason University in Virginia.

As required, they both reported their teaching contracts and compensation, which climbed to about \$25,000 a year. But the justices were not a regular presence at the school’s Arlington, Virginia, campus, which lies just across the Potomac River from the Supreme Court.

Instead, they were in classrooms in Italy, Iceland and England, according to emails and other documents, which show the public university also paid the justices’ travel and living expenses there.

Under the arrangement, Gorsuch and Kavanaugh, nominated to the court by President Donald Trump, each taught a roughly two-week-long summer course that largely limited hours of instruction to mornings, leaving them and their families ample time for leisure and exploration.

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forming a NATO-Ukraine Council, which would be "a platform for decisions and crisis consultation."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is expected to attend the summit on Wednesday and he and Biden were scheduled to meet, Sullivan said.

Stoltenberg reiterated that Ukraine will eventually become a member of NATO, a commitment first made in 2008 under President George W. Bush. The NATO chief did not outline more specifics.

However, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said NATO had agreed to forgo requiring a "membership action plan," a decision that he said "shortens our path to NATO."

Stoltenberg reiterated that point on Tuesday.

"Ukraine is much closer to NATO so I think the time has come to reflect that in other NATO decisions," he said.

Sullivan said allies were debating the "precise nature" of Ukraine's pathway to membership in the alliance. However, he promised that the summit would demonstrate how Putin's hopes for fractures within NATO will be unfulfilled.

"He has been disappointed at every turn," Sullivan said. "Vilnius will very much disappoint him."

Biden is on a five-day trip to Europe, with the NATO summit as its centerpiece.

The president spent Monday in the United Kingdom, where he met at Windsor Castle with King Charles III for the first time since he ascended to the throne. They discussed mobilizing financial support to combat climate change.

Biden also visited 10 Downing St. in London for talks with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. It was their sixth meeting, a reflection of close ties between the two countries.

After the NATO summit ends on Wednesday, Biden will travel to Helsinki to celebrate Finland's recent entry into NATO and meet with Nordic leaders.

Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani, Zeke Miller, Lisa Mascaro and Darlene Superville in Washington and Lorne Cook in Vilnius, Lithuania, contributed to this report.

Deadly flooding is hitting several countries at once. Scientists say this will only be more common

ISABELLA O'MALLEY, BRITTANY PETERSON and DREW COSTLEY Associated Press

Schools in New Delhi were forced to close Monday after heavy monsoon rains battered the Indian capital, with landslides and flash floods killing at least 15 people over the last three days. Farther north, the overflowing Beas River swept vehicles downstream as it flooded neighborhoods.

In Japan, torrential rain pounded the southwest, causing floods and mudslides that left two people dead and at least six others missing Monday. Local TV showed damaged houses in Fukuoka prefecture and muddy water from the swollen Yamakuni River appearing to threaten a bridge in the town of Yabakei.

In Ulster County, in New York's Hudson Valley and in Vermont, some said the flooding is the worst they've seen since Hurricane Irene's devastation in 2011.

Although destructive flooding in India, Japan, China, Turkey and the United States might seem like distant events, atmospheric scientists say they have this in common: Storms are forming in a warmer atmosphere, making extreme rainfall a more frequent reality now. The additional warming that scientists predict is coming will only make it worse.

That's because a warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, which results in storms dumping more precipitation that can have deadly outcomes. Pollutants, especially carbon dioxide and methane, are heating up the atmosphere. Instead of allowing heat to radiate away from Earth into space, they hold onto it.

While climate change is not the cause of storms unleashing the rainfall, these storms are forming in an atmosphere that is becoming warmer and wetter.

"Sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit can hold twice as much water as 50 degrees Fahrenheit," said Rodney Wynn, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Tampa Bay. "Warm air expands and cool air contracts. You can think of it as a balloon - when it's heated the volume is going to get larger, so therefore

it can hold more moisture.”

For every 1 degree Celsius, which equals 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit, the atmosphere warms, it holds approximately 7% more moisture. According to NASA, the average global temperature has increased by at least 1.1 degrees Celsius (1.9 degrees Fahrenheit) since 1880.

“When a thunderstorm develops, water vapor gets condensed into rain droplets and falls back down to the surface. So as these storms form in warmer environments that have more moisture in them, the rainfall increases,” explained Brian Soden, professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Miami.

Along Turkey’s mountainous and scenic Black Sea coast, heavy rains swelled rivers and damaged cities with flooding and landslides. At least 15 people were killed by flooding in another mountainous region, in southwestern China.

“As the climate gets warmer we expect intense rain events to become more common, it’s a very robust prediction of climate models,” Soden added. “It’s not surprising to see these events happening, it’s what models have been predicting ever since day one.”

Gavin Schmidt, climatologist and director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, said the regions being hit hardest by climate change are not the ones who emit the largest amount of planet-warming pollutants.

“The bulk of the emissions have come from the industrial Western nations and the bulk of the impacts are happening in places that don’t have good infrastructure, that are less prepared for weather extremes and have no real ways to manage this,” said Schmidt.

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

Israelis block highways in nationwide protests of government’s plan to overhaul judiciary

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli protesters blocked highways leading to Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv at the start of countrywide demonstrations Tuesday against the government’s planned judicial overhaul that has divided the nation.

The demonstrations came the morning after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s parliamentary coalition gave initial approval to a bill to limit the Supreme Court’s oversight powers, pressing forward with contentious proposed changes to the judiciary despite widespread opposition.

The legislation is one of several bills proposed by Netanyahu’s ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox allies. The plan has provoked months of sustained protests by opponents who say it is pushing the country toward authoritarian rule.

Anti-overhaul activists called for nationwide mass demonstrations throughout the day, including protests at Israel’s main international airport that could disrupt travel.

On Tuesday, 300 reservists from the military’s cyber unit signed a letter saying they would not volunteer for service, explaining the government has demonstrated “it is determined to destroy the state of Israel.”

“Sensitive cyber abilities with the potential for being used for evil must not be given to a criminal government that is undermining the foundations of democracy,” the letter said.

Police used a water cannon to clear protesters who blocked a main artery leading to Jerusalem. Officers arrested several others who had obstructed a highway next to the central city of Modiin. Demonstrators blocked a main highway in Haifa with a large banner reading “Together we will be victorious,” snarling traffic along the beachfront.

Police said 42 people were arrested for public disturbance during the protests.

Arnon Bar-David, head of the country’s national labor union, the Histadrut, threatened a possible general strike that could paralyze the country’s economy.

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"If the situation reaches an extreme, we will intervene and employ our strength," Bar-David said, calling on Netanyahu to "stop the chaos."

The Histadrut called a general strike in March as the government pushed the judicial overhaul legislation through parliament after weeks of protest. The move shut down large swaths of Israel's economy and helped contribute to Netanyahu deciding to freeze the legislation.

But he decided to revive it last month after talks with the political opposition aimed at finding a compromise collapsed.

Netanyahu's allies have proposed a series of changes to the Israeli legal system aimed at weakening what they say are the excessive powers of unelected judges. The proposed changes include giving Netanyahu's allies control over the appointment of judges and giving parliament power to overturn court decisions.

The Netanyahu government, which took office in December, is the most hard-line ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox in Israel's 75-year history. His allies proposed the sweeping changes to the judiciary after the country held its fifth elections in under four years, all of them seen as a referendum on Netanyahu's fitness to serve as prime minister while on trial for corruption.

Critics of the judicial overhaul say it will upset the country's fragile system of checks and balances and concentrate power in the hands of Netanyahu and his allies. They also say Netanyahu has a conflict of interest because he is on trial for charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes, all of which he has denied.

A wide swath of Israeli society, including reserve military officers, business leaders, LGBTQ+ people and members of other minority groups have joined the protests.

As Russia's war on Ukraine drags on, what is NATO and what is it doing to help?

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — With Russia's war on Ukraine in its 17th month, and Western countries sending increasingly hi-tech and long-range weapons and ammunition to help President Volodymyr Zelenskyy defend his country, it's easy to lose track of where NATO stands.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg — the top civilian official at the world's biggest security alliance — routinely praises allies for helping Ukraine's troops to fight back. But when he does, Stoltenberg is talking about individual member countries, not NATO as an organization.

As a NATO summit in Lithuania's capital begins Tuesday, here's a look at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and what it's doing to help Ukraine.

NATO'S SUPPORT NON-LETHAL ONLY

The 31-nation military alliance provides only non-lethal support to Ukraine: Fuel, combat rations, medical supplies, body armor, winter uniforms and equipment to counter mines, chemical and biological threats and drones.

NATO makes its decisions by consensus, and not all member countries agree on sending weapons. The alliance does not impose sanctions, although some of its members do through other organizations like the European Union.

FUTURE UKRAINE MEMBERSHIP

NATO is helping Ukraine's armed forces to modernize and shift from Soviet-era equipment and military doctrine to modern NATO gear to allow its army to work seamlessly with allied forces. NATO is also helping to strengthen Ukraine's defense and security institutions.

That assistance is designed to ensure that Ukraine can join NATO at some point in the future, well after the war is over. U.S. President Joe Biden and his counterparts — who are meeting for a summit in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius — have promised that the country will eventually gain membership.

NATO READINESS IN THE REGION

NATO's primary goal since Russia began building up its troops around Ukraine in 2021 has been to re-

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inforce its own territory, particularly the countries on its eastern flank — so near to Russia, Ukraine and Belarus — from Estonia in the north down to Romania on the Black Sea.

With the war now in its 17th month, NATO wants to deter Russian President Vladimir Putin from broadening the conflict to allied territory farther west.

Around 40,000 troops are on standby along the eastern flank. About 100 aircraft take to the skies in that territory on any given day, and a total of 27 warships are operating in the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas this month. Those numbers are set to rise.

Under new plans to be endorsed in Vilnius, NATO aims to have up to 300,000 troops ready to move to its eastern flank within 30 days. The plans divide its territory into three zones — the high north and Atlantic area, a zone north of the Alps, and another in southern Europe.

MEMBER COUNTRIES

The forces and materiel that NATO drums up for its own defense come from the member countries. NATO has no weapons of its own. The battleships, warplanes, missiles and potential pool of more than 3 million personnel are owned and supplied by member states, mostly at their own cost.

The only equipment NATO has is a fleet of early warning radar planes and some surveillance drones.

The NATO alliance, with its main headquarters in Brussels and military base in Mons, Belgium, is open to any European nation that wants to join and can meet the requirements and obligations. Finland entered in April, and its Nordic neighbor Sweden is on the cusp of joining its ranks.

The Soviet Union, during the Cold War, and Russia have been major preoccupations since the organization was founded in 1949, and in many ways remain the NATO's reason for being.

U.S.' DOMINANT PRESENCE

The United States is without doubt the biggest and most influential member. It spends more on its own military budget than all the others combined. It also pays almost a quarter of NATO's common funding for infrastructure and collectively owned equipment.

So, Washington has a big say in how things are run, and smaller allies long to train and work with U.S. forces because it gives them access to equipment and expertise that they cannot afford alone.

STOLTENBERG'S ROLE

The North Atlantic Council meets at ambassadorial level most weeks in Brussels, and less often at the ministerial and heads of state levels, and are chaired by Stoltenberg.

In essence, the former Norwegian prime minister runs the headquarters located near the Brussels airport, a sprawling, cavernous edifice that cost over 1 billion euros to build.

Stoltenberg does not order the allies around. His job is to encourage consensus and speak on their behalf publicly as a single voice representing all 31 members.

COMMON DEFENSE CLAUSE

On the ground, NATO has helped to keep peace in the Balkans and fought the Taliban-led insurgency in war-torn Afghanistan before the group took control of the country — the alliance's biggest-ever operation. It was launched after the United States triggered its "all for one and one for all" common defense clause in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

It is the only time the clause, known as Article 5, has been used. That security guarantee is the reason Finland and Sweden sought to join NATO and why Ukraine and other countries in Europe also want in.

Trump lawyers ask judge to postpone trial without setting a date in classified documents case

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Lawyers for former President Donald Trump are asking a judge to postpone his criminal trial without setting a new date as he stands accused of illegally hoarding classified documents at his Florida estate.

In a late Monday filing, Trump's defense attorneys said the case was "extraordinary," with a large volume of documents and footage to be reviewed as the former president leads the race for the Republican nomi-

nation to unseat President Joe Biden. They cited challenges to select jurors and concerns about whether he would get a fair trial if scheduled before the November 2024 election.

"The government's request to begin a trial of this magnitude within six months of indictment is unreasonable, telling, and would result in a miscarriage of justice," said the document filed by Chris Kise, one of Trump's lawyers.

The Justice Department had previously proposed to set the trial date for Dec. 11.

Earlier on Monday, Trump's lawyers filed paperwork saying they agreed with federal prosecutors to delay to next week a pretrial hearing that specifically discusses how classified information is handled in court.

The hearing to discuss the Classified Information Procedures Act had previously been set for Friday. But an attorney for Trump's valet Walt Nauta, who was charged alongside the former president, said he has another bench trial this week in Washington preventing him from appearing Friday in South Florida.

The attorneys said in their filing that they can appear at the pretrial conference to go over the 1980 law on July 18, adding they had also checked with U.S. attorneys on moving the date.

The judge in the case, U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon, still needs to agree to the new date.

Trump and Nauta were charged in a 38-count indictment with conspiring to hide classified documents at Mar-a-Lago from federal investigators. Both men have pleaded not guilty.

Trump has denied any wrongdoing and has slammed the prosecution as an effort to hurt his bid to reclaim the White House in 2024.

Search for children's remains continues at former Native American boarding school in Nebraska

By TRISHA AHMED and CHARLIE NEIBERGALL Associated Press

GENOA, Neb. (AP) — Amid a renewed push for answers, archeologists planned to resume digging Tuesday at the remote site of a former Native American boarding school in central Nebraska, searching for the remains of children who died there decades ago.

The search for a hidden cemetery near the former Genoa Indian Industrial School in Nebraska gained renewed interest after the discovery of hundreds of children's remains at Native American boarding school sites in the U.S. and Canada since 2021, said Dave Williams, the state's archeologist who's digging at the site with teammates this week.

The team hadn't found any remains by Monday afternoon, but the dig had only just begun.

"Where is the cemetery and how many people are buried there? It's the big question that's hanging in the air," said Alyce Tejral, a board member of the nearby Genoa U.S. Indian School Foundation Museum.

Genoa was part of a national system of more than 400 Native American boarding schools that attempted to assimilate Indigenous people into white culture by separating children from their families, cutting them off from their heritage and inflicting physical and emotional abuse.

Judi gaiashkibos, the executive director of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, whose mother attended the school in the late 1920s, has been involved in the cemetery effort for years. She said it's difficult to spend time in the community where many Native Americans suffered, but the vital search can help with healing and bringing the children's voices to the surface.

Williams, the archeologist, said finding the location of the cemetery and the burials contained within it may provide some peace and comfort to people who have suffered a long period of not knowing exactly what happened to their relatives who were sent to boarding schools and never came home.

The school, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) west of Omaha, opened in 1884 and at its height was home to nearly 600 students from more than 40 tribes across the country. It closed in 1931 and most buildings were long ago demolished.

Newspaper clippings, records and a student's letter indicate at least 86 students died at the school, usually due to diseases such as tuberculosis and typhoid, but at least one death was blamed on an accidental shooting.

Researchers identified 49 of the children killed but have not been able to find names for 37 students.

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The bodies of some of those children were returned to their homes but others are believed to have been buried on the school grounds at a location long forgotten.

As part of an effort to find the cemetery, last summer dogs trained to detect the faint odor of decaying remains searched the area and signaled they had found a burial site in a narrow piece of land bordered by a farm field, railroad tracks and a canal.

A team using ground-penetrating radar last November also showed an area that was consistent with graves, but there will be no guarantees until researchers finish digging into the ground, Williams said.

The process is expected to take several days.

If the dig reveals human remains, the State Archeology Office will continue to work with the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs in deciding what's next. They could rebury the remains in the field and create a memorial or exhume and return the bodies to tribes.

Last year, the U.S. Interior Department — led by Secretary Deb Haaland, a member of Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico and the first Native American Cabinet secretary — released a first-of-its-kind report that named hundreds of schools the federal government supported to strip Native Americans of their cultures and identities.

At least 500 children died at some of the schools, but that number is expected to reach into the thousands or tens of thousands as research continues.

Ahmed reported from Minneapolis. Scott McFetridge contributed from Des Moines, Iowa.

Rescuers brace for more rain as relentless storms flood Northeast, Vermont hit hard

By LISA RATHKE and JOHN MINCHILLO Associated Press

ANDOVER, Vt. (AP) — Swift water rescue teams and local officials across Vermont braced for more precipitation and flooding Tuesday after persistent heavy rains drenched the state and other parts of the Northeast, unleashing fast-moving waters that washed out roads, trapped residents in their homes and disrupted travel.

One person was killed in New York as she tried to leave her inundated house.

There have been no reports of injuries or deaths related to the flooding in Vermont, according to emergency officials. But dozens of roads were closed, including many along the spine of the Green Mountains. And the National Weather Service issued flash flood warnings and advisories for much of the state from the Massachusetts line north to the Canadian border.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said late Monday they expected two dams to release water overnight, causing "severe flooding" downstream likely to affect multiple towns.

Rescue crews from North Carolina, Michigan and Connecticut were among those helping to get to Vermont towns on Monday that had been unreachable since torrents of rain began belting the state, according to Mike Cannon of Vermont Urban Search and Rescue.

Swift water rescue teams in Vermont have done more than 50 rescues, mainly in the southern and central areas of the state, Vermont Emergency Management said Monday night.

"We have not seen rainfall like this since Irene," Vermont Gov. Phil said, referring to Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011. That storm killed six in the state, washed homes off their foundations and damaged or destroyed more than 200 bridges and 500 miles (805 kilometers) of highway.

What's different is that Irene lasted just about 24 hours, Scott said.

"This is going on. We're getting just as much rain, if not more. It's going on for days. That's my concern. It's not just the initial damage. It's the wave, the second wave, and the third wave," he said.

Flooding hit Vermont's state capital, with Montpelier Town Manager Bill Fraser estimating Monday night that knee-high waters had reached much of downtown and were expected to rise a couple more feet during the night.

Some people canoed to the Cavendish Baptist Church in Vermont, which had turned into a shelter while

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volunteers made cookies for firefighters working on rescues.

"People are doing OK. It's just stressful," shelter volunteer Amanda Gross said.

Vermont Rep. Kelly Pajala said she and about a half dozen others evacuated early Monday from a four-unit apartment building on the West River in Londonderry.

"The river was at our doorstep," said Pajala. "We threw some dry clothes and our cats into the car and drove to higher ground."

The slow-moving storm reached New England after hitting parts of New York and Connecticut on Sunday. Rainfall in certain parts of Vermont exceeded 8 inches (20 centimeters) by late Monday, and the National Weather Service in Burlington said more rain was forecast for Tuesday.

One of the worst-hit places was New York's Hudson Valley, where a woman identified by police as Pamela Nugent, 43, died as she tried to escape her flooded home in the hamlet of Fort Montgomery.

The flash flooding dislodged boulders that rammed into the woman's house and damaged part of its wall, Orange County Executive Steven Neuhaus told The Associated Press. Two other people escaped.

"She was trying to get through (the flooding) with her dog," Neuhaus said, "and she was overwhelmed by tidal wave-type waves."

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point was pounded with more than 8 inches (20.32 centimeters) of rain that sent debris sliding onto some roads and washed others out.

Officials say the storm has already wrought tens of millions of dollars in damage.

"Nine inches of rain in this community," New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said during a briefing on a muddy street in Highland Falls. "They're calling this a '1,000 year event.'"

As of Monday evening, several washed-out streets in Highland Falls remained impassable, leaving some residents stuck in their homes, according to Police Chief Frank Basile. The village police station itself was full of mud and leaves after being flooded with about 5 inches (13 centimeters) of water, Basile said.

Atmospheric scientists say destructive flooding events are spurred by storms forming in a warmer atmosphere, making extreme rainfall a reality. The additional warming that scientists predict is coming will only make it worse.

The storm also interrupted travel. There were hundreds of flight cancellations at Kennedy, LaGuardia and Newark airports and more than 200 canceled at Boston's Logan Airport, according to the Flightaware website. Amtrak temporarily suspended service between Albany and New York.

Troy Caruso, who owns a golf course, five restaurants and a motel in Ludlow, Vermont, said he's been checking the damage to his properties and in the town of about 800 people. A supermarket and shopping center were "wiped out," he said, as was a steakhouse and possibly a burger joint he owned.

"It's flooded beyond belief," Caruso said of the town, noting that the 10th hole of his golf course was underwater.

"We just got done cleaning up these properties, flowers planted, the whole nine yards," he said. "We are going to have to start all over again."

Minchillo reported from Highland Falls, New York. Kathy McCormack in Concord, New Hampshire; Michael Hill in Albany, New York; and Mark Pratt and Steve LeBlanc in Boston contributed.

Dig begins for the remains of children at a long-closed Native American boarding school

By TRISHA AHMED and CHARLIE NEIBERGALL Associated Press

GENOA, Neb. (AP) — In a remote patch of a long-closed Native American boarding school, near a canal and some railroad tracks, Nebraska's state archeologist and two teammates filled buckets with dirt and sifted through it as if they were searching for gold.

They're trying to find the bodies of children who died at the school and have been lost for decades, a mystery that archeologists aim to unravel as they dig in a central Nebraska field that was part of the sprawling campus a century ago.

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People toting shovels, trowels and even smaller tools are searching the unmarked site where ground-penetrating radar suggested a possible location for the cemetery of the Genoa Indian Industrial School.

Genoa was part of a national system of more than 400 Native American boarding schools that attempted to assimilate Indigenous people into white culture by separating children from their families and cutting them off from their heritage. And the discovery of more than 200 children's remains buried at the site of what was once Canada's largest Indigenous residential school has magnified interest in the troubling legacy both in Canada and the U.S. since 2021.

"For all those families with students who died here in Genoa and weren't returned home — and that information being lost for over 90 years now — it creates this perpetual cycle of trauma," Dave Williams, the state archeologist, said Monday.

Williams added, "Finding the location of the cemetery, and the burials contained within, will be a small step towards bringing some peace and comfort" to tribes after a long period of uncertainty where children were sent to boarding schools and never came home.

The school, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) west of Omaha, opened in 1884 and at its height was home to nearly 600 students from more than 40 tribes across the country. It closed in 1931 and most buildings were long ago demolished.

For decades, residents of the tiny community of Genoa, with help from Native Americans, researchers and state officials, have sought the location of a forgotten cemetery where the bodies of students are believed to be buried.

Judi gaiashkibos, the executive director of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, whose mother attended the school in the late 1920s, has been involved in the cemetery effort for years and planned to travel to Genoa on Monday. She said it's difficult to spend time in the community where many Native Americans suffered, but the vital search can help with healing and bringing the children's voices to the surface.

"It's an honor to go on behalf of my ancestors and those who lost their lives there and I feel entrusted with a huge responsibility," gaiashkibos said.

Newspaper clippings, records and a student's letter indicate at least 86 students died at the school, usually due to diseases such as tuberculosis and typhoid, but at least one death was blamed on an accidental shooting.

Researchers identified 49 of the children killed but have not been able to find names for 37 students. The bodies of some of those children were returned to their homes but others are believed to have been buried on the school grounds at a location long ago forgotten.

As part of an effort to find the cemetery, last summer dogs trained to detect the faint odor of decaying remains searched the area and signaled they had found a burial site in a narrow piece of land bordered by a farm field, railroad tracks and a canal.

A team using ground-penetrating radar last November also showed an area that was consistent with graves, but there will be no guarantees until researchers can dig into the ground, said Williams, the archeologist.

The process is expected to take several days.

"We're going to take the soil down and first see if what's showing up in the ground-penetrating radar are in fact grave-like features," Williams said. "And once we get that figured out, taking the feature down and determining if there are any human remains still contained within that area."

If the dig reveals human remains, the State Archeology Office will continue to work with the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs in deciding what's next. They could rebury the remains in the field and create a memorial or exhume and return the bodies to tribes, Williams said.

DNA could indicate the region of the country each child was from but narrowing that to individual tribes would be challenging, Williams said.

The federal government is taking a closer examination of the boarding school system. The U.S. Interior Department, led by Secretary Deb Haaland, a member of Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico and the first Native American Cabinet secretary, released an initial report in 2022 and is working on a second report

with additional details.

Ahmed reported from Minneapolis. Scott McFetridge contributed from Des Moines, Iowa.

This story has been corrected throughout to note that researchers determined more than 80 children died at the school, not that there are more than 80 bodies buried there.

A grand jury being seated Tuesday could decide whether Trump is charged over Georgia's 2020 election

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A grand jury being seated Tuesday in Atlanta will likely consider whether criminal charges are appropriate for former President Donald Trump or his Republican allies for their efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss in Georgia.

Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis has been investigating since shortly after Trump called Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger in early 2021 and suggested the state's top elections official could help him "find 11,780 votes," just enough needed to beat Democrat Joe Biden.

The 2 1/2-year investigation expanded to include an examination of a slate of Republican fake electors, phone calls by Trump and others to Georgia officials in the weeks after the 2020 election and unfounded allegations of widespread election fraud made to state lawmakers.

Willis, a Democrat, is expected to present her case before one of two new grand juries being seated Tuesday. She has previously suggested that any indictments would likely come in August.

Here's how that process would work:

WAIT. WASN'T THERE ALREADY A GRAND JURY IN THIS CASE?

Yes. About a year into her investigation, Willis took the unusual step of asking for a special grand jury. She said at the time that she needed the panel's subpoena power to compel testimony from witnesses who otherwise might not be willing to talk to her team. That special grand jury was seated in May 2022 and was released in January after completing its work.

It was essentially an investigative tool and didn't have the power to indict. Instead, it issued subpoenas and considered testimony from about 75 witnesses, as well as other evidence, before drafting a final report with recommendations for Willis.

While part of that report was made public in February, the judge overseeing the special grand jury said any recommendations on specific charges for specific people would remain secret for the time being. The panel's foreperson said in media interviews later that month that they recommended indicting numerous people, but she declined to name names.

Willis isn't bound by the special grand jury's recommendations.

WHO MIGHT WILLIS BE EYEING FOR POSSIBLE CHARGES?

Willis sent letters last summer warning certain people — including the state's fake electors and former New York mayor and Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani — that they could face charges in the case. Some of the fake electors have since reached immunity deals with Willis' team. While she hasn't said one way or the other whether she would seek charges against Trump, Willis has repeatedly said no one is above the law.

Willis is a fan of Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, and there have been hints she'll use it in this case. The RICO Act allows prosecutors to bring charges against multiple people that they believe committed separate crimes while working toward a common goal.

HOW COMMON ARE REGULAR GRAND JURIES?

Very. There are generally two grand juries seated in Fulton County in each two-month term of court. They usually meet every week — one on Mondays and Tuesdays and the other on Thursdays and Fridays. Their work takes place behind closed doors, not open to the public or to news media.

Grand jurors must be U.S. citizens who are at least 18 years old and must live in the county where they

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serve. Each grand jury is made up of 16 to 23 people and up to three alternates — at least 16 must be present for cases for the grand jury to hear any evidence or take any official action.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE CASE IS PRESENTED TO THE GRAND JURY?

Georgia law requires an indictment from a grand jury to prosecute someone in most felony cases — things like murder, aggravated assault, robbery and other crimes. When prosecutors present a case, they're trying to convince the grand jurors that there is probable cause that one or more people committed crimes and to get the grand jurors to sign off on bringing charges against them.

For each case, prosecutors read or explain the potential indictment and then call witnesses or present any other evidence. Any witnesses who testify must swear an oath to tell the truth.

Often in Georgia, the only witnesses the grand jury hears from are law enforcement officers, including investigators for the district attorney's office. They can tell the grand jurors what they've learned in their investigation, including what suspects or witnesses have said and what other evidence they have.

Members of the grand jury are allowed to question witnesses.

In general, a person who is named as a defendant on the potential indictment cannot be called to testify before the grand jury.

HOW DO GRAND JURY DELIBERATIONS WORK?

After the case has been presented, only members of the grand jury can be in the room for deliberations. They discuss the case and vote on whether to return a "true bill" or a "no bill." A "true bill" means the grand jurors have voted to indict because they think there is probable cause to believe that the person accused committed the alleged crimes. A "no bill" means the grand jurors don't believe the person committed the alleged crimes or there isn't enough evidence to indict.

At least 16 grand jurors must participate in the voting, and an indictment requires 12 of them to vote in favor of charges.

The grand juror oath in Georgia requires jurors to "keep the deliberations of the Grand Jury secret unless called upon to give evidence thereof in some court of law of this State."

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER GRAND JURORS VOTE?

If a grand jury votes to bring charges, the indictment must be presented in open court by the grand jury or the sworn grand jury bailiff in a courtroom where a judge and the clerk are present. Then it is filed in the clerk's office and is a public document. Soon after that, those charged will be booked and have their first court appearances.

If the grand jury votes against indicting anyone, prosecutors can present the case again to a different grand jury. But if two grand juries vote not to indict on the same charges, prosecutors generally cannot try again to get an indictment on those charges.

IF TRUMP IS INDICTED, CAN HE STILL RUN FOR PRESIDENT?

Yes. Neither an indictment nor a conviction would prevent Trump from running for or winning the presidency in 2024.

He has already been indicted twice this year in other cases. He faces 34 felony charges in New York state court accusing him of falsifying business records in a hush money scheme over allegations of extramarital sexual encounters. And he faces 37 felony charges in federal court in Florida accusing him of hoarding classified documents and refusing government demands to give them back.

In addition, a Justice Department special counsel is investigating his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election in multiple states, as well as the events leading up to the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

GOP confidence in 2024 vote count low after years of false election claims, AP-NORC poll shows

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

Few Republicans have high confidence that votes will be tallied accurately in next year's presidential contest, suggesting years of sustained attacks against elections by former President Donald Trump and his allies have taken a toll, according to a new poll.

The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll finds that only 22% of Republicans have high confidence that votes in the upcoming presidential election will be counted accurately compared to 71% of Democrats, underscoring a partisan divide fueled by a relentless campaign of lies related to the 2020 presidential election. Even as he runs for the White House a third time, Trump continues to promote the false claim that the election was stolen.

Overall, the survey finds that fewer than half of Americans — 44% — have “a great deal” or “quite a bit” of confidence that the votes in the next presidential election will be counted accurately.

While Democrats' confidence in elections has risen in recent years, the opposite is true for Republicans. Ahead of the 2016 election, 32% of Republicans were highly confident votes would be counted accurately — a figure that jumped to 54% two years later after Trump won the presidency.

That confidence level dropped to 28% a month before the 2020 election, as Trump signaled to voters that the voting would be rigged, and now sits at 22% less than 16 months before the next presidential election.

“I just didn't like the way the last election went,” said Lynn Jackson, a registered nurse from El Sobrante, California, who is a registered Republican. “I have questions about it. I can't actually say it was stolen -- only God knows that.”

Trump's claims were rejected by dozens of judges, including several he appointed. His own attorney general and an exhaustive review by The Associated Press found no evidence of widespread fraud that could have changed the results. Multiple reviews, audits and recounts in the battleground states where Trump disputed his loss confirmed Democrat Joe Biden's victory, including several overseen by Republican lawmakers.

Even so, Trump's attempts to explain his loss led to a wave of new laws in GOP-dominated states that added new voting restrictions, primarily by restricting mail voting and limiting or banning ballot drop boxes. Across the country, conspiracy theories related to voting machines have prompted many Republican-controlled local governments to explore banning machines from tallying votes in favor of hand counts.

The AP-NORC poll suggests that the persistent messaging has sunk in among a wide swath of the American public.

The survey found that independents — a group that has consistently had low confidence in elections — were also largely skeptical about the integrity of the 2024 elections. Just 24% have the highest levels of confidence that the votes will be counted accurately.

Chris Ruff, a 46-year-old unaffiliated voter from Sanford, North Carolina, said he lost faith in elections years ago, believing they are rigged to favor certain candidates. He also sees no difference between the two major parties.

“I don't vote at all,” he said. “I think it only adds credibility to the system if you participate.”

The conspiracy theories about voting machines, promoted through forums held around the country, also have taken a toll on confidence among Republicans even though there is no evidence to support them.

About four in 10 U.S. adults are highly confident that scanning paper ballots into a machine provides accurate counts. Democrats are about twice as confident in the process as Republicans — 63% compared to 29%. That marks a notable shift from a 2018 AP-NORC poll that found just 40% of Democrats were confident compared to 53% of Republicans.

Gillian Nevers, a 79-year-old retiree from Madison, Wisconsin, has worked as a poll worker and said she has confidence -- based on her experiences -- in the people who oversee elections.

“I have never seen any shenanigans,” said Nevers, who votes Democratic. “The claims are unfounded

and ridiculous. Because they are being so widely projected, I think they have a lot of people worried who I don't think should be."

The conspiracy theories have led to death threats against election officials and an exodus of experienced workers. The attacks against voting machines have been especially dispiriting for election officials because of the testing and audits they perform before and after elections to ensure votes are recorded accurately. All states except Alabama and Wisconsin reported using a method referred to as logic and accuracy testing to confirm that voting machines were tabulating votes correctly before the 2022 midterm elections, according to a report by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

In most jurisdictions, any challenged result also can be checked against the paper ballots.

James Grove, a 74-year-old retiree from Sharon, Pennsylvania, is among the minority of Republicans who are confident votes will be counted accurately next year and said he does not believe the 2020 election was stolen.

"I think most of the elections are run pretty honestly," said Grove, who backed Trump in 2016 and 2020. "There are Republican election watchers and Democratic ones. And do I think the 2020 election was crooked? No, I really don't."

Among other poll findings:

— Most Republicans — 62% — are opposed to allowing people to vote using mailed ballots without an excuse, compared to just 13% of Democrats. Roughly seven in 10 Democrats support no-excuse mail voting.

— Requiring a photo ID to cast a ballot receives broad bipartisan support. Seven in 10 U.S. adults would favor a measure requiring voters to provide photo identification, including 87% of Republicans and 60% of Democrats.

— A slim majority of Americans — 55% — support automatically registering adult citizens to vote when they get a driver's license or other state identification.

— Four in 10 U.S. adults say eligible voters being denied the right to vote is a major problem in U.S. elections, but about as many Americans say the same about people voting who are not eligible. The perceived significance of each issue varies by political party: 56% of Republicans call illegal voting a major problem in U.S. elections, compared to 20% of Democrats. At the same time, 53% of Democrats say eligible voters being unable to vote is a major problem, compared to 26% of Republicans.

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The poll of 1,220 adults was conducted June 22-26 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.9 percentage points.

Ukrainian minister says he fears Russia has 'no red lines' to prevent attacks on nuclear plant

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The catastrophic collapse of a dam in southern Ukraine has made Kyiv worried that Russia might stage an attack on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant to foment panic and quell Ukrainian advances on the frontline, Ukraine's energy minister said Monday.

Herman Halushchenko said the destruction of the dam while under Russian control in the Kherson region proved "there are no red lines" for Moscow. He said it warrants the level of alarm Ukraine's leadership has been raising in recent weeks of an alleged Russian ploy to attack the nuclear plant in a possible false flag operation.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy alleged last week, citing intelligence reports, that Russian troops placed "objects resembling explosives" atop several power units to "simulate" an attack. Drone

and satellite images obtained by the Associated Press showed unidentified white objects on the roof of the plant's fourth power unit, but Ukrainian leaders have so far been unable to provide further evidence.

While Russia accuses Ukraine of bombarding the Kakhovka dam, Kyiv blames Moscow for the attack on the dam in late May, which triggered a humanitarian crisis and caused widespread ecological devastation. An AP investigation found that Moscow had the means and motive to carry out the attack.

Halushchenko said he and Zelenskyy had raised alarms as early as October 2022 that the Russians could plant mines to blow up the Kakhovka dam.

"For many many people it sounded ridiculous ... and when it happened everybody understood that there are no red lines for them," he said in a sit-down interview with The Associated Press. "And of course it's all connected to the counter-offensive operation, and after Kakhovka, the one tool which they still have is Zaporizhzhia."

The nuclear plant was seized by Russia in March 2022, in the first weeks of the war in Ukraine, raising fears of a nuclear accident. Over the past year, Russia and Ukraine repeatedly accused each other of shelling the plant.

Ukraine's military intelligence has claimed for weeks, without providing evidence, that Russia is planning a "large-scale provocation" at the nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, in the southeast of the country.

Around the same time, Ukraine launched the early phase of its much anticipated counter-offensive last month and has reported steady advances along multiple directions of the 1,500 kilometer (930-mile) frontline. An incident at the plant could halt Ukraine's advance, Zelenskyy has said.

Ukrainian military intelligence reports have said that Russia placed mines on the roof of the nuclear plant, and put remote-controlled and regular anti-personnel mines in technical and machine rooms.

Image experts the AP spoke to could not identify the objects that have been seen on the roof.

Jeffrey Lewis, a professor at the Middlebury Institute and satellite image expert, said the objects appeared to be placed on the roof of the unit's turbine hall, and, if it turns out to be a bomb, is unlikely to cause serious damage to the reactor.

The Russians have cited security concerns in granting only limited access to officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency. The agency's Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said recently that the IAEA had recently gained access to more of the site, including the cooling pond and fuel storage areas.

The Ukrainians had said those areas were mined by the Russians, but the IAEA found they were not, Grossi said. The agency has not yet been given access to inspect the roof of the plant.

Halushchenko noted that the IAEA representatives were not able to access the entire site. "So the Russians allowed them to see only what they decided they could see, and that is the problem," he said.

Relentless rain causes floods in Northeast, prompts rescues and swamps Vermont's capital

By LISA RATHKE and JOHN MINCHILLO Associated Press

ANDOVER, Vt. (AP) — Rescue teams raced into Vermont on Monday after heavy rain drenched parts of the Northeast, washing out roads, forcing evacuations and halting some airline travel. One person was killed in New York's Hudson Valley as she tried to escape her flooded home.

Mike Cannon of Vermont Urban Search and Rescue said crews from North Carolina, Michigan and Connecticut were among those helping to get to towns that have been unreachable since torrents of rain belted the state. The towns of Londonderry and Weston were inaccessible, Cannon said, and rescuers were heading there to do welfare checks. Water levels at several dams were being closely monitored.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said late Monday they expected two dams to release water overnight, causing "severe flooding" downstream likely to affect multiple towns.

Flooding hit Vermont's state capital, with Montpelier Town Manager Bill Fraser estimating Monday night that knee-high waters had reached much of downtown and were expected to rise a couple more feet during the night. Montpelier had largely been spared during Tropical Storm Irene, which struck the region in 2011.

"For us, this is far worse than Irene. We got water but it went up and down. There were some base-

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ments flooded but it didn't last long," Fraser said, comparing this flooding to the Montpelier Ice Jams in 1992. "We are completely inundated. The water is way, way higher than it ever got during Irene."

During Irene, Vermont got 11 inches (28 centimeters) of rain in 24 hours. Irene killed six in the state, washed homes off their foundations and damaged or destroyed more than 200 bridges and 500 miles (805 kilometers) of highway.

There have been no reports of injuries or deaths related to the latest flooding in Vermont, according to state emergency officials. Roads were closed across the state, including many along the spine of the Green Mountains.

Some people canoed their way to the Cavendish Baptist Church in Vermont, which had turned into a shelter. About 30 people waited it out, some of them making cookies for firefighters who were working to evacuate and rescue others.

"People are doing OK. It's just stressful," shelter volunteer Amanda Gross said.

Vermont Rep. Kelly Pajala said she and about half dozen others had to evacuate early Monday from a four-unit apartment building on the West River in Londonderry.

"The river was at our doorstep," said Pajala. "We threw some dry clothes and our cats into the car and drove to higher ground."

The slow-moving storm reached New England in the morning after hitting parts of New York and Connecticut on Sunday. Additional downpours in the region raised the potential for flash flooding; rainfall in certain parts of Vermont had exceeded 7 inches (18 centimeters), the National Weather Service in Burlington said.

One of the worst-hit places was New York's Hudson Valley, where a woman identified by police as Pamela Nugent, 43, died as she tried to escape her flooded home in the hamlet of Fort Montgomery.

The force of the flash flooding dislodged boulders, which rammed into the woman's house and damaged part of its wall, Orange County Executive Steven Neuhaus told The Associated Press. Two other people escaped.

"She was trying to get through (the flooding) with her dog," Neuhaus said, "and she was overwhelmed by tidal wave-type waves."

Officials say the storm has already wrought tens of millions of dollars in damage. In New York, Gov. Kathy Hochul said at a news conference Monday the storm sent "cars swirling in our streets" and dumped a "historic" amount of rain.

"Nine inches of rain in this community," Hochul said during a briefing on a muddy street in Highland Falls. "They're calling this a '1,000 year event.'"

As of Monday evening, several washed-out streets in Highland Falls remained impassable, leaving some residents stuck in their homes but otherwise OK, Police Chief Frank Basile said in a telephone interview.

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey said there were reports of flooding in central and western Massachusetts and that state emergency management officials were in touch with local authorities.

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point was pounded with more than 8 inches (20.32 centimeters) of rain that sent debris sliding onto some roads and washed others out. Superintendent Lt. Gen. Steven W. Gilland said recently arrived new cadets and others at the historic academy on the Hudson River were safe, but that assessing the damage will take time.

Atmospheric scientists say destructive flooding events across the globe have this in common: Storms are forming in a warmer atmosphere, making extreme rainfall a reality right now. The additional warming that scientists predict is coming will only make it worse.

The storm also interrupted air and rail travel. There were hundreds of flight cancellations at Kennedy, LaGuardia and Newark airports and more than 200 canceled at Boston's Logan Airport in the last 24 hours, according to the Flightaware website. Amtrak temporarily suspended service between Albany and New York.

Swift water rescue teams in Vermont have done more than 50 rescues, mainly in the southern and central areas of the state, Vermont Emergency Management said Monday night.

Among the buildings flooded Monday was the Weston Playhouse in Weston, Vermont, which had been

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performing "Buddy -- The Buddy Holly Story" to sold-out audiences.

The Weston Theater Company's executive artistic director Susanna Gellert said the call was made at around 4 a.m. to evacuate 11 people associated with the production to higher ground and another 15 in nearby Ludlow. The three-floor playhouse, which had been damaged during Irene, was also flooded, with the dressing room and props room under water.

"As a theater, we were just starting to get back from the COVID shutdown," Gellert said. "To have this happen right now is painfully heartbreaking."

Cara Philbin, 37, of Ludlow, Vermont, was awakened by a neighbor early Monday and told to clear out of her second-floor apartment because the parking lot was already flooded.

"He told me me, 'You need to get out of here ... your car is going to float away, and I suggest you do not stay,'" said Philbin. The neighbor took her car keys and moved her car to a higher spot, while she called her parents and then drove to their home to ride out the storm, she said.

Ross Andrews and his wife were driving back home to Calais, Vermont, on Monday when he saw trucks parked at a 230-year-old dam with crews trying to keep it from failing. There were trees down everywhere.

"The interstate was closed right at our exit. Our road was closed right at our driveway. We managed to thread our way back just in the nick of time," he said.

Minchillo reported from Highland Falls, New York. Kathy McCormack in Concord, New Hampshire; Michael Hill in Albany, New York; and Mark Pratt and Steve LeBlanc in Boston contributed.

James Lewis, the suspect in the 1982 Tylenol poisonings that killed 7 in the Chicago area, has died

By MARK PRATT Associated Press

The suspect in the 1982 Tylenol poisonings that killed seven people in the Chicago area, triggered a nationwide panic, and led to an overhaul in the safety of over-the-counter medication packaging, has died, police said on Monday.

Officers, firefighters and EMTs responding to a report of an unresponsive person at about 4 p.m. Sunday found James W. Lewis dead in his Cambridge, Massachusetts, home, Cambridge Police Superintendent Frederick Cabral said in a statement. He was 76, police said.

"Following an investigation, Lewis' death was determined to be not suspicious," the statement says.

No one was ever charged in the deaths of seven people who took the over-the-counter painkillers laced with cyanide. Lewis served more than 12 years in prison for sending an extortion note to manufacturer Johnson & Johnson, demanding \$1 million to "stop the killing." He and his wife moved to Massachusetts in 1995 following his release. Listed numbers for his wife were not in service.

When Lewis was arrested in New York City in 1982 after a nationwide manhunt, he gave investigators a detailed account of how the killer might have operated. Lewis later admitted sending the letter and demanding the money, but he said he never intended to collect it. He said he wanted to embarrass his wife's former employer by having the money sent to the employer's bank account.

Lewis, who had a history of trouble with the law, always denied any role in the Tylenol deaths, but remained a suspect and in 2010 gave DNA samples to the FBI. He even created a website in which he said he was framed. Although the couple lived briefly in Chicago in the early 1980s, Lewis said they were in New York City at the time of the poisonings.

In a 1992 interview with The Associated Press, Lewis explained that the account he gave authorities was simply his way of explaining the killer's actions.

"I was doing like I would have done for a corporate client, making a list of possible scenarios," said Lewis. He called the killer "a heinous, cold-blooded killer, a cruel monster."

The FBI seized a computer and other items from Lewis' home in February 2009 after Illinois authorities renewed the investigation.

The FBI's Chicago office at the time cited "advances in forensic technology" and said it, along with the

Illinois State Police and local police departments, was conducting a "complete review of all evidence developed in connection" with the killings.

In a span of three days beginning Sept. 29, 1982, seven people — including a 12-year-old girl — who took cyanide-laced Tylenol in the Chicago area died, triggering a nationwide recall of the product. The poisonings led to the adoption of tamperproof packaging for over-the-counter medications.

Helen Jensen, a nurse who helped treat the first victims at a suburban Chicago hospital, said in a phone interview Monday with the AP she hoped Lewis' death would be a final coda to a tragedy that has haunted her for four decades. She also hoped it would bring victims' families some closure.

"His death is a conclusion. Not necessarily the conclusion everyone wanted," said Jensen, who is retired. "But it is an end. I'm 86 now. And I am glad I got to see the end before I die."

Jensen said she was the first to figure out that a bottle had been tampered with. Investigators laughed at her.

"I was a woman and I was a nurse," she said. "I understood the attitudes of that time. But I was proven right by the next day."

Jensen said Lewis, who she accepts was responsible, "changed the world because of what he did."

"We lost our innocence," she said. "We have become less trusting of everyone else. We can blame it all on him. ... He was a terrorist and we have suffered from his terror for 40 years."

Lewis had prior run-ins with the law.

In 1978, he was charged in Kansas City, Missouri, with the dismemberment murder of Raymond West, 72, who had hired Lewis as an accountant. The charges were dismissed because West's cause of death was not determined and some evidence had been illegally obtained.

He was convicted of six counts of mail fraud in a 1981 credit card scheme in Kansas City, accused of using the name and background of a former tax client to obtain 13 credit cards.

Lewis was charged in 2004 with rape, kidnapping and other offenses for an alleged attack on a woman in Cambridge. He was jailed for three years while awaiting trial, but prosecutors dismissed the charges on the day his trial was scheduled to begin after the victim refused to testify, the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office said at the time.

Police in 1983 described Lewis as a "chameleon" who lived in several states, used at least 20 aliases and held many jobs, including computer specialist, tax accountant, importer of Indian tapestries and salesman of jewelry, pharmaceutical machinery and real estate.

The lack of accountability in the case has long frustrated victims' families.

Monica Janus, who was 8 years old when three members of her family died after taking the tainted medication, told CBS Chicago in 2022 that she thought the investigation was "really sloppy."

Lewis' wife was out of town and contacted a neighbor when she could not get a hold of her husband, and the neighbor contacted police, Cabral said.

Associated Press Writer Michael Tarm in Chicago contributed to this report.

Northwestern fires coach Pat Fitzgerald after hazing allegations surface with football team

EVANSTON, Ill. (AP) — Northwestern fired coach Pat Fitzgerald on Monday amid a hazing scandal that called into question his leadership of the program and damaged the university's reputation after it mishandled its response to the allegations.

Fitzgerald's dismissal completed a rapid fall from grace for the former All-American linebacker, the star of the 1995 Northwestern team that won the Big Ten and played in the Rose Bowl after years of losing. The 48-year-old Fitzgerald had been firmly entrenched at his alma mater, an annual fixture on any list of college coaches with the most job security.

"The head coach is ultimately responsible for the culture of his team," Northwestern President Michael Schill wrote in an open letter to the university community. "The hazing we investigated was widespread

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and clearly not a secret within the program, providing Coach Fitzgerald with the opportunity to learn what was happening. Either way, the culture in Northwestern Football, while incredible in some ways, was broken in others."

Fitzgerald went 110-101 in 17 seasons as Northwestern's head coach. He led the Wildcats to Big Ten West championships in 2018 and 2020, plus five bowl victories. But they went 4-20 over his last two seasons.

Fitzgerald said in a statement provided to ESPN that he had instructed his attorney to "take the necessary steps to protect my rights in accordance with the law."

Schill wrote in his letter that athletic director Derrick Gragg will announce "the leadership for this upcoming football season" in the next couple days. The opener is Sept. 3 at Rutgers.

"I recognize that my decision will not be universally applauded, and there will be those in our community who may vehemently disagree with it," Schill wrote. "Ultimately, I am charged with acting in the best interests of the entire University, and this decision is reflective of that. The damage done to our institution is significant, as is the harm to some of our students."

Gragg was hired by Northwestern in June 2021. He got the job after Mike Polisky stepped down amid mounting criticism because he was named in a sexual harassment lawsuit against the Big Ten school by former Wildcats cheerleaders.

Fitzgerald had been serving a two-week suspension after the school said Friday that an investigation led by attorney Maggie Hickey of law firm ArentFox Schiff did not find "sufficient" evidence that the coaching staff knew about ongoing hazing — though there were "significant opportunities" to find out about it.

Schill, who was the president of the University of Oregon before taking over Northwestern in September, said in his Monday letter that the investigative report will remain confidential. But he wrote that, during the investigation, 11 current or former players acknowledged the hazing within the program.

"The hazing included forced participation, nudity and sexualized acts of a degrading nature, in clear violation of Northwestern policies and values," Schill wrote.

In his statement, Fitzgerald said Hickey's investigation reaffirmed that he had no knowledge of any hazing within the program.

"Last Friday, Northwestern and I came to a mutual agreement regarding the appropriate resolution following the thorough investigation by Ms. Hickey," he said. "This agreement stipulated a two-week suspension.

"Therefore, I was surprised when I learned that the president of Northwestern unilaterally revoked our agreement without any prior notification and subsequently terminated my employment."

After Northwestern announced its suspension for Fitzgerald, The Daily Northwestern published a story on Saturday detailing allegations from a former player who described specific instances of hazing and sexual abuse. The report also indicated that Fitzgerald "may have known that hazing took place."

That led Schill to write a letter to the university community in which he acknowledged focusing "too much on what the report concluded (Fitzgerald) didn't know and not enough on what he should have known." Schill went on to say that he planned to speak with university leadership, members of the board of trustees and leaders of the faculty senate to determine his next steps.

"Since Friday, I have kept going back to what we should reasonably expect from our head coaches, our faculty and our campus leaders," Schill wrote in Monday's letter. "And that is what led me to make this decision."

Because the six-month investigation was confidential, Schill said in Monday's letter that he learned many of the details recently. He spoke with the complainant on Sunday after talking to the student's parents on Friday.

Fitzgerald, who was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2008, was hired to coach his alma mater in 2006 after the sudden death of then-coach Randy Walker.

Many current and former players rushed to Fitzgerald's defense after the suspension was announced.

A letter circulated on social media, signed by "The ENTIRE Northwestern Football Team" without identifying an author, said that "throughout his tenure, Coach Fitzgerald has consistently prioritized the well-being and development of his players, and we stand behind him in his unwavering commitment to our team."

Before Fitzgerald's dismissal was announced by the school, The Daily Northwestern published a report

that had three former Northwestern players describing a “culture of enabling racism.”

The turmoil within the football program comes after the school unveiled plans in September to build a new Ryan Field. The plans call for a state-of-the-art facility featuring a reduced seating capacity and greater emphasis on the fan experience.

AP college football: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-football> and https://twitter.com/ap_top25

Russian mercenary leader Prigozhin’s commanders met Putin after short-lived mutiny, pledged loyalty

By The Associated Press undefined

Just five days after staging a short-lived rebellion, mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin’s commanders met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and pledged loyalty to the government, a senior government spokesman said Monday, the latest twist in a baffling episode that has raised questions about the power and influence both men wield.

The three-hour meeting took place June 29 and involved not only Prigozhin but commanders from his Wagner Group military contractor, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Putin gave an assessment of Wagner’s actions on the battlefield in Ukraine — where the mercenaries have fought alongside Russian troops — and of the revolt itself.

“The commanders themselves presented their version of what happened. They underscored that they are staunch supporters and soldiers of the head of state and the commander-in-chief, and also said that they are ready to continue to fight for their homeland,” Peskov said.

The confirmation that Putin met face-to-face with Prigozhin, who led troops on a march to Moscow last month to demand a military leadership change, was extraordinary. Though the Russian leader branded Prigozhin a traitor as the revolt unfolded and vowed harsh punishment, the criminal case against the mercenary chief on rebellion charges was later dropped.

Prigozhin has not commented on the Kremlin meeting, and his ultimate fate remains unclear, particularly since Monday’s announcement shows much is negotiated behind closed doors. He could still face prosecution for financial wrongdoing or other charges.

Monday’s announcement came as Russia’s Defense Ministry published a video featuring military chief Gen. Valery Gerasimov — who was one of the targets of Prigozhin’s rebellion. It was the first time Gerasimov has been seen since the revolt.

In the video, Gerasimov is seated at a table with his team, watching a video report from the chief of staff of Russia’s aerospace forces about a missile attack on Russian territory on Sunday. Gerasimov responds by calling for preemptive strikes against missile bases and for improvements in missile defenses.

The twin updates appeared to be another attempt by the Kremlin to show it’s in control after a turbulent period, and to reflect Putin’s delicate balance between condemning the biggest threat to his 23-year rule and the man behind it while not alienating a popular figure whose troops scored the biggest battlefield victory for Russia in the past year of the war.

Former Putin speechwriter Abbas Gallyamov told The Associated Press that Putin acknowledges Prigozhin’s patriotism and needs his forces on the front line, while Prigozhin needs Putin to ensure his freedom from prosecution. The two are negotiating as allies, with Prigozhin escaping punishment, Gallyamov said.

Prigozhin “emerged victorious from this rebellion,” Gallyamov said in a Zoom interview from Tel Aviv. “He has shown himself to be the master of the situation.”

Adding to the unusual nature of the meeting was that until very recently, Putin had denied any link between the state and Prigozhin’s forces. Mercenaries are illegal in Russia, but Wagner troops have fought for Russian interests around the globe and played a vital role in the capture of Bakhmut in the war’s longest and bloodiest battle. Putin has confirmed that Prigozhin’s companies operated under government contracts.

Throughout the war, Prigozhin has criticized decisions made by Russia’s top military brass, leading to tensions with the Kremlin that culminated in the June 24 mutiny.

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The rebellion severely weakened Putin's authority, even though Prigozhin claimed the uprising was not aimed at the president but at removing Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Gerasimov. Prigozhin called off his mutiny after a deal was brokered for him to go to Belarus.

Mark Galeotti, an author who heads the consulting firm Mayak Intelligence, said the delicate dance with Prigozhin is "a further compromise on Putin's part and reflects his unwillingness to take tough and ruthless personnel decisions."

"He is willing to see Ukrainians bombed by the dozen, but not confront any of the figures in his own circle," Galeotti wrote in *The Spectator*.

Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, predicted that some Russian observers would be stunned by the turn of events.

"When you look from the point of view of Russian elite, it's ridiculous," she told the AP. "It's just so unbelievable and just so shocking."

Days after the revolt, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said Prigozhin was in Belarus. But last week the president said the mercenary chief was in Russia while his troops remained in their camps.

Peskov said that during the June 29 meeting, Putin offered an "assessment" of Wagner's actions on the battlefield in Ukraine and "of the events of June 24." The president also "listened to the explanations of the commanders and offered them options for further employment and further use in combat," the Kremlin spokesman said.

A total of 35 people took part in the meeting, Peskov said. Putin has given options to Prigozhin's fighters: fight as part of the regular Russian army, retire from service or join Prigozhin in Belarus.

A NATO summit later this week in Lithuania is looking at how to crank up the pressure on Moscow after 16 months of war.

In other developments, a Russian airstrike on a school in southern Ukraine killed seven people as residents gathered to receive humanitarian aid, authorities said, with the governor of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region branding the attack "a war crime."

Gov. Yuriy Malashko said a guided aerial bomb caused an explosion Sunday at a school in Orikhiv, without providing evidence.

Overall, Russia fired on 10 settlements in the province over the course of a day, he said.

Moscow denies it targets civilian locations. Russia has been accused numerous times of doing so and committing other war crimes since the start of its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

In March, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Putin for war crimes, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine.

Investigations are also underway in Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The International Center for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, located in The Hague, is helping with those probes.

Ukraine has launched a counteroffensive to regain occupied land, and on Monday, the deputy defense minister, Hanna Maliar, reported progress.

She said the country's fighters had reclaimed 10.2 square kilometers (3.9 square miles) of territory in the south and four square kilometers (1.5 square miles) in the east in the past week. The gains, she said on Telegram, included the commanding heights of Bakhmut, where Prigozhin's forces declared control of the city in May. None of the claims could be independently verified.

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

Aretha Franklin's sons clash over her wishes in trial over dual wills

By ED WHITE Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) — Two sons of the late singer Aretha Franklin gave opposing opinions Monday about the Queen of Soul's final wishes, testifying in an unusual trial that will determine whether a 2014 handwritten document found in couch cushions will lead her estate.

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Franklin died in 2018 at age 76 without a formal, typewritten will, and five years later her legacy still is tied up in a suburban Detroit court after a niece found different sets of handwritten papers at her home.

The issue for a jury: Does a 2014 document count as a will under Michigan law? If so, it could trump a 2010 handwritten will that was found in a locked cabinet at the same time. The older version, however, was notarized and repeatedly signed by Franklin.

Ted White II, a son who played guitar during his mother's performances, favors the 2010 document.

"With all the time I spent working with her administratively ... every other document that she ever signed was something that was done conventionally and legally" and with assistance from a lawyer, White, 60, told the jury.

He, acknowledged, however that the 2010 will found at the same time in 2019 was also written by his mother's hand.

There are differences between the documents, though they both appear to indicate that Franklin's four sons would share income from music and copyrights.

Four large posters showing pages from the 2014 document were presented to the jury.

That version crossed out White's name as executor of the estate and named another son, Kecalp Franklin, in his place. Kecalp Franklin and grandchildren would get his mother's main home in Bloomfield Hills, which was valued at \$1.1 million when she died but is worth much more today.

Kecalp Franklin, 53, said he doesn't consider it unusual that important papers like a will would be discovered in the living room.

Asked by his attorney where Aretha Franklin often read mail, made important phone calls, signed documents and even slept, Kecalp Franklin repeatedly said, "on the couch."

A niece, Sabrina Owens, who managed the estate immediately after Franklin's death, did not appear in court Monday, but her testimony from a formal interview was read aloud. She explained how she was determined to search Franklin's house for critical records.

"She would use the kitchen and living room — that was about it," Owens said. "So when I got to the sofa, I lifted up that far right cushion and there was three notebooks there."

The jury will hear closing arguments Tuesday.

The last public accounting filed in March showed the estate had income of \$3.9 million during the previous 12-month period and a similar amount of spending, including more than \$900,000 in legal fees to various firms.

Overall assets were pegged at \$4.1 million, mostly cash and real estate, though Franklin's creative works and intellectual property were undervalued with just a nominal \$1 figure.

Follow Ed White on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/edwritez>

Sweden moves closer to NATO membership after a deal with the Turkish president

By KARL RITTER, LORNE COOK and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — Sweden's membership of NATO took a big step forward on Monday after Turkey agreed to remove one of the last major roadblocks in return for help in reviving Turkey's own chances of joining the European Union.

At talks in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, where U.S. President Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts are meeting for a two-day summit starting Tuesday, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan committed to put the Nordic country's accession protocol before Parliament "as soon as possible," the head of NATO said.

"This is an historic day because we have a clear commitment by Turkey to submit the ratification documents to the Grand National Assembly, and to work also with the assembly to ensure ratification," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters after a series of high-stakes meetings.

Sweden's NATO accession has been held up by objections from Turkey since last year. The Turkish parliament's ratification of the accession protocol is one of the last steps in the process.

Stoltenberg made the announcement after talks with Erdogan and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristers-

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son on the eve of a NATO summit in Lithuania.

"Today we took a very big step on the road toward complete ratification," Kristersson said.

There was no comment from Erdogan on the move, which many saw as linked in part to Turkey's demands on other issues, particularly Erdogan's desire for support for European Union membership from European leaders and for F-16 fighter jets from the United States.

It's unclear when the Nordic country's membership might be approved, but the agreement appears to have taken the issue off the agenda of the summit, which was meant to focus uniquely on the war in Ukraine and Kyiv's own membership aspirations.

In a statement, Biden welcomed the agreement and said he will work with Turkey "on enhancing defense and deterrence in the Euro-Atlantic area. I look forward to welcoming Prime Minister Kristersson and Sweden as our 32nd NATO Ally."

Biden's reference to enhancing Turkey's defense capability was a nod to Biden's commitment to help Turkey acquire new F-16s, according to a U.S. administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment.

The Biden administration has backed Turkey's desire to buy 40 new F-16s as well as modernization kits from the U.S. It's a move some in Congress, most notably Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez, D-N.J., have opposed over Turkey blocking NATO membership for Sweden, its human rights record, its relations with Greece and other concerns.

In Washington, however, Menendez said he was "continuing to have my reservations" on providing the planes to Turkey. If the Biden administration can show that Turkey wouldn't use the F-16s belligerently against other NATO members, particularly its neighbor Greece, "then there may be a way forward," Menendez told reporters.

In exchange for Turkey's help with NATO, Sweden has agreed to help unblock Turkey's progress towards joining the European Union, which has been on hold since 2018.

Stoltenberg said that Turkey's relationship with the EU was "not an issue for NATO, it's an issue for the European Union." But he told reporters that "what Sweden agreed today as an EU member was to support actively the efforts to reinvigorate Turkey's EU accession process."

Earlier Monday, Erdogan had warned that he would block Sweden's attempt to become the 32nd NATO ally unless European members of the military organization "pave the way" for Turkey to join the world's biggest trading bloc.

It was the first time that he had linked the two countries' aspirations in this way.

"Come and open the way for Turkey's membership in the European Union," Erdogan told reporters before flying to Vilnius. "When you pave the way for Turkey, we'll pave the way for Sweden, as we did for Finland."

Turkey was blocking Sweden's accession because Erdogan believes that Sweden has been too soft on Kurdish militants and other groups that he considers to be security threats.

On arriving in Vilnius, Erdogan first met with Kristersson, before breaking off for separate talks with European Council President Charles Michel.

Michel tweeted that he and Erdogan had "explored opportunities ahead to bring cooperation back to the forefront and re-energise our relations." Michel said he has tasked the European Commission to draw up a "report with a view to proceed in strategic and forward-looking manner."

Turkey first applied to join what is now the EU in 1987, but its membership talks have been at a standstill since 2018 due to democratic backsliding during Erdogan's presidency, concerns about the rule of law and rights abuses, as well as disputes with EU-member Cyprus.

Of the 31 NATO member countries, 22 are also members of the EU, like Sweden.

Stoltenberg and Kristersson said that Sweden would also help Turkey to improve its customs arrangements with the EU, and to try to obtain visa-free travel in Europe for its citizens. Turkey tried to achieve these goals in recent years but failed to meet the trading bloc's standards.

Earlier, Erdogan's office said he told Biden during a telephone call Sunday that Turkey wanted a "clear and strong" message of support for Turkey's EU ambitions from NATO leaders. The White House readout

of the Biden-Erdogan call did not mention the issue of Turkish EU membership.

Turkey's delaying tactics have irritated other NATO allies, including the United States. Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, confirmed Sunday that Biden and Erdogan had discussed Sweden's NATO membership, among other issues, and had agreed to meet in Vilnius for further talks.

Sullivan said the White House is confident Sweden will join the alliance.

"We don't regard this as something that is fundamentally in doubt. This is a matter of timing. The sooner the better," he said.

Previously non-aligned Sweden and Finland applied for NATO membership last year following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Finland joined in April following Turkish ratification.

Another key issue at the summit in Vilnius will be how to bring Ukraine closer to NATO without actually joining, and security guarantees Kyiv might need to ensure that Russia doesn't invade again after the war ends. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will join the summit in person on Wednesday.

Stoltenberg said the most important thing was to continue to support Ukraine's efforts to resist the Russian invasion.

"Unless Ukraine prevails, there is no membership issue to discuss at all," he said.

Fraser reported from Ankara, Turkey. AP White House reporter Chris Megerian in London and reporters Amer Madhani and Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.

Disgraced sports doctor Larry Nassar stabbed by another inmate at federal prison

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Disgraced sports doctor Larry Nassar, who was convicted of sexually abusing Olympic and college female gymnasts, was stabbed multiple times by another inmate at a federal prison in Florida that is experiencing staffing shortages.

The attack happened Sunday at United States Penitentiary Coleman, and Nassar was in stable condition on Monday, two people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

One of the people said Nassar had been stabbed in the back and in the chest. The two officers guarding the unit where Nassar was held were working mandated overtime shifts because of staffing shortages, one of the people said.

The people were not authorized to publicly discuss details of the attack or the ongoing investigation and spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity.

Nassar is serving decades in prison for convictions in state and federal courts. He admitted sexually assaulting athletes when he worked at Michigan State University and at Indianapolis-based USA Gymnastics, which trains Olympians. Nassar also pleaded guilty in a separate case to possessing images of child sexual abuse.

The federal Bureau of Prisons has experienced significant staffing shortages in the last few years, an issue thrust into the spotlight in 2019 when the convicted financier Jeffrey Epstein took his own life at a federal jail in New York.

An Associated Press investigation in 2021 revealed nearly one third of federal correctional officer positions were vacant nationwide, forcing prisons to use cooks, teachers, nurses and other workers to guard inmates. The staffing shortages have hampered the response to emergencies at other prisons, including suicides.

Other AP investigations have revealed sexual abuse and criminal conduct, among other problems, at the Bureau of Prisons — the Justice Department's largest agency, with more than 30,000 employees, 158,000 inmates and an annual budget of about \$8 billion.

The bureau's new leader, Colette Peters, was brought in last year to reform the crisis-plagued agency. She has vowed to reform archaic hiring practices and bring new transparency. But problems have persisted,

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as shown by the the recent suicide of Ted Kaczynski, known as the "Unabomber," at a federal lockup in North Carolina.

On Sunday, one of the officers in Nassar's unit was working a third straight day of overtime, each of them a 16-hour shift, one of the people familiar with the matter said. The other officer was on a second straight day of mandated overtime, the person said.

Rachael Denhollander, the first woman to publicly accuse Nassar, tweeted Monday that none of the women she spoke with are rejoicing that Nassar was attacked. "We're grieving the reality that protecting others from him came with the near-certainty we would wake up to this someday."

Another victim, Sarah Klein, said the stabbing forces her and others to relive their abuse and trauma "at the hands of Nassar and the institutions, including law enforcement, that protected him and allowed him to prey on children."

"I want him to face the severe prison sentence he received because of the voices of survivors. I absolutely do not support violence because it's morally wrong and death would be an easy out for Nassar," Klein said in an emailed statement.

More than 150 women and girls testified during the 2018 sentencing of Nassar, who molested athletes under the guise of medical treatment. Some of them testified that — over the course of more than two decades of sexual abuse — they had told adults, including coaches and athletic trainers, what was happening but that it went unreported.

More than 100 women, including Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles, collectively are seeking more than \$1 billion from the federal government for the FBI's failure to stop Nassar after agents became aware of allegations against him in 2015. He was arrested by Michigan State University police in 2016, more than a year later.

The Justice Department's inspector general said in July 2021 that the FBI made "fundamental" errors in investigating the sexual abuse allegations against Nassar and did not treat the case with the "utmost seriousness." More athletes said they were molested before the the FBI swung into action.

USA Gymnastics had conducted its own internal investigation, and the organization's then-president, Stephen Penny, reported the allegations to the FBI's field office in Indianapolis. But it took months before the bureau opened a formal investigation.

The FBI acknowledged conduct that was "inexcusable and a discredit" to America's premier law enforcement agency.

Michigan State, which was accused of missing chances over many years to stop Nassar, agreed to pay \$500 million to more than 300 women and girls who were assaulted by him. USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee made a \$380 million settlement.

In June 2022, the Michigan Supreme Court rejected a final appeal from Nassar. Attorneys for Nassar said he was treated unfairly in 2018 and deserved a new hearing, based on vengeful remarks by Ingham County Judge Rosemarie Aquilina, who called him a "monster" who would "wither" in prison like the wicked witch in "The Wizard of Oz."

The state Supreme Court said that Nassar's appeal was a "close question" and that it had "concerns" over the judge's conduct. But the court also noted that Aquilina, despite her provocative comments, stuck to the sentencing agreement worked out by lawyers in the case.

Sisak reported from New York.

The Associated Press receives support from the Public Welfare Foundation for reporting focused on criminal justice. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Kansas must stop changing trans people's sex listing on driver's licenses, judge says

By JOHN HANNA AP Political Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas must stop allowing transgender people to change the sex listed on their driver's licenses, a state-court judge ordered Monday as part of a lawsuit filed by the state's Republican attorney general.

District Judge Teresa Watson's order will remain in effect for up to two weeks, although she can extend it. But it's significant because transgender people have been able to change their driver's licenses in Kansas for at least four years, and almost 400 people had done it by the end of June. For now, Kansas will be among only a few states that don't allow any such changes.

The judge issued the order three days after Attorney General Kris Kobach sued two officials in Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly's administration. Kelly announced last month that the state's motor vehicles division would continue changing driver's licenses for transgender people so that their sex listing matches their gender identities.

Kobach contends that a law, which took effect on July 1, prevents such changes and requires the state to reverse any previous changes in its records. It defines "male" and "female" so that Kansas law does not recognize the gender identities of transgender, nonbinary or gender non-conforming people. The Republican-controlled Legislature enacted it over Kelly's veto.

Watson wrote in her brief order that for the motor vehicles division to keep making changes for transgender people would cause "immediate and irreparable injury." Driver's licenses remain valid for six years, and Watson noted Kobach's argument that licenses "are difficult to take back or out of circulation once issued."

"Licenses are used by law enforcement to identify criminal suspects, crime victims, wanted persons, missing persons and others," Watson wrote. "Compliance with state legal requirements for identifying license holders is a public safety concern."

Transgender Kansas residents have said in interviews that a mismatch between their identities and their driver's licenses can complicate getting through airport security, interacting with police or even using credit cards. Jenna Bellemere, a 20-year-old University of Kansas student, said a mismatch also outs transgender people like her during interactions with others, creating the possibility of harassment.

As for Watson and legislators who enacted the new law, Bellemere said, "Whether intentionally or not, they never seem to consider the experiences and needs of the transgender population of the state. It's frustrating."

Watson's order did not address how her directive might play out in transgender people's daily lives.

The governor's office said it was working on a response to the order. Kelly won her first term as governor in 2018 by defeating Kobach, who was then the Kansas secretary of state. He in turn staged a political comeback last year by winning the attorney general's race as she captured a second term — both of them by slim margins.

The governor's office has said attorneys at the division of vehicles' parent agency, the Kansas Department of Revenue, do not believe allowing transgender people to change their driver's licenses violates the new law.

Four times as many people a month have changed their driver's licenses this year than in previous years. Such changes accelerated in May and June as LGBTQ+ rights advocates encouraged people to do it ahead of the new law.

Taryn Jones, vice chair and lobbyist for the LGBTQ+ rights group Equality Kansas, acknowledged the concern that allowing the state to keep making changes would make it more difficult for law enforcement, but asked, "How many criminals are you having that are trans?"

Jones also said potential problems for law enforcement should be weighed against the harm to the mental health and safety of transgender people who don't have licenses that match their gender identities.

Even with a raft of measures targeting transgender people in statehouses across the U.S. this year, Kansas would be atypical for not allowing them to change sex or gender markers on birth certificates,

driver's licenses or either. Montana and Tennessee also have policies against changing either document, and Oklahoma has a policy against changing birth certificates.

Kobach has argued that the new Kansas law also prevents transgender people from changing the listing for their sex on their birth certificates, but the lawsuit he filed Friday doesn't address those documents. The settlement of a 2018 federal lawsuit requires Kansas to allow transgender people to change their birth certificates, and more than 900 people had done it by the end of June.

The new Kansas law defines a person's sex as male or female, based on the "biological reproductive system" identified at birth, applying that definition to any state law or regulation.

It also says that "important governmental objectives" of protecting people's privacy, health and safety justify single-sex spaces such as bathrooms and locker rooms. However, that part of the law contains no enforcement mechanism.

Follow John Hanna on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/apjdhanna>

Biden administration asks appeals court to block order limiting its contacts with social media

By KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The Biden administration asked a federal appeals court Monday to temporarily block a lower court's order limiting executive branch officials' discussions with social media companies about controversial online posts.

The request for an emergency stay was filed at the 5th U.S. District Court of Appeals shortly after U.S. District Judge Terry Doughty rejected an administration motion that he put his own July 4 order on hold. The order came in a lawsuit filed by Republican attorneys general in Louisiana and Missouri, as well as a conservative website owner and four individual critics of government COVID-19 policies.

The lawsuit claimed the administration, in effect, censored free speech by using threats of regulatory action or protection while pressuring companies to remove what it deemed misinformation. COVID-19 vaccines, legal issues involving President Joe Biden's son Hunter and election fraud allegations were among the topics spotlighted in the lawsuit.

Doughty was nominated to the federal bench by former President Donald Trump. His injunction blocked the Department of Health and Human Services, the FBI and multiple other government agencies and administration officials from meeting with or contacting social media companies for the purpose of "encouraging, pressuring, or inducing in any manner the removal, deletion, suppression, or reduction of content containing protected free speech."

Administration attorneys said in the motion filed at the 5th Circuit that Doughty's ruling was too broad and vague, and had the potential to chill government officials' speech on important matters. And they said Doughty failed to point to any evidence that the administration had made threats against social media companies to coerce them to take down posts.

"The district court identified no evidence suggesting that a threat accompanied any request for the removal of content. Indeed, the order denying the stay — presumably highlighting the ostensibly strongest evidence — referred to 'a series of public media statements,'" the administration said.

They asked that the 5th Circuit block Doughty's order while the case is pursued at the appeals court in New Orleans or, at minimum, grant a 10-day block of the order so the administration could prepare to go to the Supreme Court to seek a longer stay.

Earlier Monday, Doughty rejected administration requests that he stay his own order pending appeal.

"In essence," Doughty's Monday order said, "Defendants argue that the injunction should be stayed because it might interfere with the Government's ability to continue working with social-media companies to censor Americans' core political speech on the basis of viewpoint. In other words, the Government seeks a stay of the injunction so that it can continue violating the First Amendment."

Government lawyers have argued that the companies control their own policies regarding misinforma-

tion and that the lawsuit casts officials' comments on issues and policy as threats. The administration said Doughty's July 4 order was unclear about who in the executive branch it covers and what they can or cannot say about important topics discussed on social media platforms.

The order could cause "grave harm" by preventing the government from "engaging in a vast range of lawful and responsible conduct," government lawyers said in requesting the stay Thursday night.

Doughty order said the administration "seems to have assumed a role similar to an Orwellian 'Ministry of Truth.'" The order, which was to remain in effect pending further arguments in Doughty's court, was hailed by conservatives as a victory for free speech and a blow to censorship. But critics said the order and accompanying reasons, covering more than 160 pages, were broad, unclear and could chill government efforts to fight misinformation on important topics.

The criticisms were echoed in the government's Thursday night request for a stay. "The potential breadth of the entities and employees covered by the injunction combined with the injunction's sweeping substantive scope will chill a wide range of lawful government conduct relating to Defendants' law enforcement responsibilities, obligations to protect the national security, and prerogative to speak on matters of public concern," the government's motion said.

The lawsuit's plaintiffs countered with a weekend filing opposing a stay. Among the arguments are that the July 4 injunction carves out exemptions allowing officials to contact social media companies about postings involving criminal activity or public safety threats; national security threats; election-related issues including voter suppression attempts, voting infrastructure threats and illegal campaign contributions; and saying officials can continue "exercising permissible public government speech promoting government policies or views on matters of public concern."

Biden and King Charles III zero in on generational challenge of climate change

By SEUNG MIN KIM, JILL LAWLESS and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WINDSOR, England (AP) — President Joe Biden and King Charles III, two leaders who waited decades to reach the pinnacle of their careers, used their first meeting in those roles Monday to zero in on the generational challenge of climate change, prodding private companies to do more to bolster clean energy in developing countries.

The meticulously choreographed gathering at Windsor Castle injected substance into the type of encounter between president and monarch that historically has been more about ceremony. After the arrival formalities, Biden and Charles participated in a climate-focused roundtable with officials from the financial and philanthropic sectors. John Kerry, the U.S. envoy on climate, also attended.

The 74-year-old Charles, who was crowned in May, has long fought to protect wildlife and battle climate change. Biden, for his part, identified climate change as one of the four crises he was determined to confront as president. He signed a sweeping legislative package last year that includes nearly \$375 billion in climate-related incentives.

Biden, 80, last had formal talks with Charles, then prince, at the COP26 U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland, in November 2021. The U.S. president also attended the state funeral of Charles's mother, Queen Elizabeth II, in September as well as a reception for heads of state at Buckingham Palace the night before the service. Biden did not attend Charles's coronation, sending first lady Jill Biden instead.

Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, said the president has "huge respect" for the king's commitment on the climate issue in particular. He said Charles has been a "clarion voice" on climate and "someone who's mobilized action and effort."

Biden and Charles made sure to show off their still-developing friendship and warmth during the ceremonial arrival at Windsor Castle, outside London. After they shook hands, Biden put his hand on Charles's arm, then on the king's back as they approached a viewing platform to inspect an honor guard. They appeared relaxed and cordial — a contrast to more formal encounters between past U.S. presidents and British royalty. Biden and Charles discussed climate, China and shared stories from the past during their

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visit, according to Sullivan.

The views of the late Queen Elizabeth II on politics and political issues were a closely guarded secret, and her meetings with world leaders were almost entirely ceremonial. Charles spent his decades as heir to the throne expressing opinions on issues from architecture to the environment, and has continued to take a keen interest in climate change now that he is king. However, neither he nor Biden spoke publicly at Windsor Castle.

Biden's royal visit was paired with his sixth meeting with the British prime minister since Rishi Sunak took office. The two discussed a range of global issues, including the war in Ukraine. Both nations are among the most stalwart defenders of Kyiv, and the United Kingdom has pushed the White House to take more aggressive steps in providing military aid to Ukraine.

Following his meetings with Charles and Sunak, Biden flew to Vilnius, Lithuania, for the annual NATO summit. Discussion about the war in Ukraine is expected to be front-and-center over two days of talks that begin Tuesday.

His talks with Charles were meant to highlight the so-called enduring "special relationship" between the U.S. and the U.K. When Biden declined to attend Charles's coronation, he promised the king in a phone call that he would visit soon.

Biden's meeting with Sunak at the prime minister's residence at 10 Downing St. included discussion about the U.S. president's decision this week to provide Ukraine with cluster munitions, a weapon that more than two-thirds of the members of the NATO military alliance have barred for their potential threat to civilian life.

Biden has said that providing the bombs — which open mid-air and release smaller "bomblets" across a broad swath of land — was a "difficult decision" but he noted that the Ukrainians are running out of ammunition and that the weapons were necessary for them to continue to fight Russian forces.

"It took me a while to be convinced to do it," Biden said in a CNN interview broadcast as he flew to London. "But the main thing is, they either have the weapons to stop the Russians ... from stopping the Ukrainian offensive through these areas, or they don't. And I think they needed them."

Sunak, for his part, has distanced himself from the U.S. decision. The prime minister's spokesman said the leaders spoke Monday about Britain's opposition to the use of cluster munitions.

"The first thing to say is this was a difficult choice for the U.S. that has been forced on them by Russia's war of aggression," said Sunak's spokesman, Max Blain. "As the prime minister said over the weekend, the U.K. is a state party to the convention on cluster munitions. They discussed the commitments the U.K. has under that convention both not to produce or use cluster munitions and to discourage their use."

The U.S. is not a party to that agreement. Sunak stressed over the weekend that Britain will "continue to do our part to support Ukraine against Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion, but we've done that by providing heavy battle tanks and most recently long-range weapons, and hopefully all countries can continue to support Ukraine."

Sunak told Biden during their meeting that he understood that providing the cluster munitions was a difficult decision for Biden, and that he recognized the U.S.'s rationale for doing so, according to a White House official who was granted anonymity to discuss a private conversation.

Sullivan also played down the disagreement over cluster munitions, saying, "I think you will find Prime Minister Sunak and President Biden on the same page strategically on Ukraine, in lockstep on the bigger picture of what we're trying to accomplish and as united as ever — both in this conflict and writ large."

And as the leaders met over tea in the 10 Downing St. garden on Monday, they continued to project that face of unity.

"We've only been meeting once a month," Biden joked as he declared the relationship between the U.S. and U.K. was "rock solid." Sunak added that their countries are "two of the firmest allies in that alliance."

Associated Press writer Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

As temperatures soared in Europe last year, so did heat-related deaths, study finds

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Scientists say crushing temperatures that blanketed Europe last summer may have led to more than 61,000 heat-related deaths, highlighting the need for governments to address the health impacts of global warming.

In their study, published Monday in the journal *Nature Medicine*, researchers examined official mortality figures from 35 European countries and found a marked increase in deaths between late May and early September last year compared with the average recorded over a 30-year period.

The increase in heat-related deaths was higher among older people, women and in Mediterranean countries, they found. But the data also indicated that measures taken in France since a deadly heatwave two decades ago may have helped prevent deaths there last year.

"In the pattern of summer mean temperatures in Europe during the summer of 2022, we don't see borders," said co-author Joan Ballester of the Barcelona Institute for Global Health. The highest temperatures were recorded across a swath of the southwestern Europe, from Spain to France and Italy.

"But when we look at the heat related mortality, we start to see borders," Ballester told *The Associated Press*. While France had 73 heat-related deaths per million inhabitants last summer, Spain's rate was 237 and Italy's was 295, the study found.

"Possibly France drew lessons from the experience of 2003," he said.

France's warning system includes public announcements with advice on how to stay cool and encouraging people to drink water and avoid alcohol.

Not all of the heat-related deaths calculated across Europe last summer were linked to climate change. Some would have occurred even if summer temperatures had stayed in line with the long-term average. But there is no doubt that the intense heat in 2022 — which saw numerous European records tumble — led to higher mortality rates, as other studies on heat deaths have also shown.

The authors calculated that there were over 25,000 more heat-related deaths last summer than the average from 2015 to 2021.

Without appropriate prevention measures, "we would expect a heat-related mortality burden of 68,116 deaths on average every summer by the year 2030," the authors said. They forecast that figure would rise to over 94,000 by 2040 and more than 120,000 by mid-century.

Governments in Spain and Germany recently announced new measures to address the effects of hot weather on their populations. In Switzerland, a group of seniors is citing the danger posed to older women by intense heat in a court case seeking to force the the government to take tougher climate action.

One difficulty for researchers is that heat-related deaths are often happening in people with pre-existing conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, said Matthias an der Heiden of Germany's Robert Koch Institute, who was not involved in the study. This means that heat is not the underlying cause of deaths and therefore not recorded in the cause of deaths statistics. This can cloak the significant impact that heat has on vulnerable people, with up to 30% more deaths in certain age groups during periods of hot weather.

"The problem is going to get more acute due to climate change and medical systems need to adjust to that," he said.

An der Heiden also noted that the *Nature* study estimated almost double the number of heat deaths in Germany last year than his institute. While the discrepancy can be explained by the different threshold values for heat used, it indicates the need for a more detailed description of heat-related mortality that distinguishes between moderate and intensive heat, he said.

According to co-author Ballester, the impact of heat depends greatly on the overall health of the population, particularly with regard to heart and lung disease.

Other measures, already being implemented in countries such as France, include raising awareness about the dangers of high temperatures and identifying individuals who need special attention during heatwaves, he said.

"These are cheap, cost effective measures," said Ballester.

He dismissed the suggestion that rising temperatures around the globe could, on balance, be beneficial due to fewer deaths during the winter months, noting the manifold risks posed to human civilization by rapid climatic change.

"In my opinion and the opinion of all the climate scientists, the less the climate is modified, the better," said Ballester. "That's why it's so important that we start, as soon as possible, mitigating climate change and reducing vulnerability."

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

Ukraine tops NATO summit agenda along with defense plans, Sweden's membership and Belarus fears

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — Russia's war in Ukraine will top the agenda when U.S. President Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts hold a summit in Lithuania's capital over two days starting Tuesday.

They are expected to focus on ensuring that Ukraine has support as long as the conflict continues, how to bring the country even closer to NATO without actually joining, and security guarantees Kyiv might need to ensure that Russia doesn't invade again after the war ends.

The leaders meeting in Vilnius are set to endorse new defense plans in case Russian President Vladimir Putin tries to broaden Moscow's war beyond Ukraine and westward into allied territory. They also weigh defense spending, and how to boost their budgets as aid to Ukraine eats into national military coffers.

Sweden's accession to the 31-nation alliance is up for discussion, too, as Turkey delays the Scandinavian country's entry into the world's biggest security organization.

UKRAINE'S NATO MEMBERSHIP

The biggest item on NATO's agenda is what to do about Ukraine. U.S. President George W. Bush led the charge in 2008, promising that Ukraine would become a member one day.

Now, the country is trying to fend off a full-scale invasion by NATO's old foe Russia. The West believes that Ukraine is standing up for its interests, and countries are pouring in billions in aid, economic and military support.

NATO isn't ready to start membership talks with Ukraine yet. But it is helping to train and modernize its armed forces and security institutions to ensure that the country can take its place among NATO's ranks after the war is over. The summit will see a new forum for consultations created — the NATO-Ukraine Council.

SECURITY GUARANTEES

It's not really a topic for NATO — more for individual allies — but it's set to dominate talks in Vilnius.

NATO and its Western partners are discussing ways to protect Ukraine after the war from a future invasion. NATO membership offers ironclad "all for one, one for all" protection, but the 31 countries must agree unanimously on letting Ukraine in, and they're not united on this.

Failing that, major allies like the U.S., U.K., France and Germany could pledge to shield the country from another attack. NATO and the European Union would back that military protection with more money and other aid.

It's unlikely that any conclusions will be drawn in Vilnius, but the summit is an important moment for leaders to flesh out what those guarantees might look like.

SWEDEN'S NATO MEMBERSHIP

Nearly all allies, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Sweden say the country has done enough to join the military alliance. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan doesn't agree, and he aims to steal the summit spotlight.

Sweden has given up a history of military neutrality to seek protection under NATO's security umbrella. It has changed its anti-terror laws and lifted an arms embargo on Turkey to assuage Erdogan's concerns.

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To no avail.

The long-time Turkish leader used the issue during election campaigning last month. He's also seeking upgraded F-16 fighter jets from the U.S., and Sweden could be leverage.

DEFENSE SPENDING

This is a perennial issue. The U.S. routinely flails its allies for failing to spend enough on their defense budgets. With money, arms and ammunition being poured into Ukraine, the need to boost national military budgets is a no-brainer.

The allies agreed in 2014 to move toward spending 2% of their gross domestic product on defense within a decade. The 2024 deadline approaches.

In Vilnius, the leaders will agree to make 2% the floor — that is, the least they should be spending — rather than the ceiling.

REGIONAL DEFENSE PLANS

NATO is conducting the biggest revamp of its defense plans since the Cold War in case Putin decides to widen the conflict outside Ukraine.

Right now, around 40,000 troops are on standby from Estonia in the north down to Romania on the Black Sea. About 100 aircraft take to the skies each day, and 27 warships are operating in the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas.

Those numbers are set to rise. Under new defense plans, NATO aims to have up to 300,000 troops available to move to its eastern flank within 30 days. The plans divide its territory into three zones — the high north and Atlantic area, a zone north of the Alps, and another in southern Europe. The top-secret documents lay out which countries and what equipment should defend any area under threat.

BELARUS

It's not on the agenda, but NATO hopes that Belarus, Lithuania's big neighbor, and Russia's main backer, will play no surprise role in the summit or the war in Ukraine.

Belarus lies just 35 kilometers (22 miles) from Vilnius. Wagner mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin was offered refuge there. The jury is out on how many of his fighters might join him.

"We have seen some preparations for hosting large groups of soldiers in Belarus. So far, we haven't seen them going to Belarus," Stoltenberg said Friday.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko also said last month that his country has received Russian tactical nuclear weapons. He's warning that he would order their use to protect his country.

NATO officials think he's bluffing. But it's quite possible that Putin will resume his nuclear saber-rattling again as the leaders gather in Vilnius.

Families with transgender kids are increasingly forced to travel out of state for the care they need

By ARLEIGH RODGERS and MICHAEL GOLDBERG Associated Press/Report for America

CHICAGO (AP) — On an early morning in June, Flower Nichols and her mother set off on an expedition to Chicago from their home in Indianapolis.

The family was determined to make it feel like an adventure in the city, though that wasn't the primary purpose of the trip.

The following afternoon, Flower and Jennilyn Nichols would see a doctor at the University of Chicago to learn whether they could keep Flower, 11, on puberty blockers. They began to search for medical providers outside of Indiana after April 5, when Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb signed a law banning transgender minors from accessing puberty blockers and other hormone therapies, even after the approval of parents and the advice of doctors.

At least 20 states have enacted laws restricting or banning gender-affirming care for trans minors, though several are embroiled in legal challenges. For more than a decade prior, such treatments were available to children and teens across the U.S. and have been endorsed by major medical associations.

Opponents of gender-affirming care say there's no solid proof of purported benefits, cite widely discredited

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research and say children shouldn't make life-altering decisions they might regret. Advocates and families impacted by the recent laws say such care is vital for trans kids.

On June 16, a federal judge blocked parts of Indiana's law from going into effect on July 1. But many patients still scrambled to continue receiving treatment.

Jennilyn Nichols wanted their trip to Chicago to be defined by happy memories rather than a response to a law she called intrusive. They would explore the Museum of Science and Industry and, on the way home, stop at a beloved candy store.

Preserving a sense of normalcy and acceptance, she decided — well, that's just what families do.

Families in Indiana, Mississippi and other states are navigating new laws that imply or sometimes directly accuse them of child abuse for supporting their kids in getting health care. Some trans children and teens say the recent bans on gender-affirming care in Republican-led states send the message that they are unwelcome and cannot be themselves in their home states.

For parents, guiding their children through the usual difficulties of growing up can be challenging enough. But now they are dealing with the added pressure of finding out-of-state medical care they say allows their children to thrive.

In the Nichols family alone, support took many forms as they traveled to Chicago: a grandmother who pitched in to babysit Flower's 7-year-old brother, Parker, while their father Kris worked; a community of other parents of trans kids who donated money to make the trip more comfortable.

"What transgender expansive young people need is what all young people need: They need love and support, and they need unconditional respect," said Robert Marx, an assistant professor of child and adolescent development at San José State University. Marx studies support systems for LGBTQ+ and trans people aged 13 to 25. "They need to feel included and part of a family."

In Indiana, rancorous legislative debates, agitated family relationships and exhaustive efforts to find care have drawn families to the support group GEKCO, founded by Krisztina Inskeep, whose adult son is transgender. Attendance at monthly meetings spiked after the state legislature advanced bills targeting trans youth, she said.

"I think most parents want to do best by their kids," Inskeep said. "It's rather new to people, this idea that gender is not just a binary and that your kid is not just who they thought at birth."

The perceptions of most parents, Marx said, don't align neatly with the extremes of full support or rejection of their kids' identities.

"Most parents exist in a kind of gray area," Marx said. "Most parents are going through some kind of developmental process themselves as they come to understand their child's gender."

On June 13, Flower and Jennilyn set off on their trip, unsteady but hopeful. They brought a care plan from Indiana University's Riley Children's Hospital, the Hoosier State's only gender clinic.

At the time, the pair worried whether Chicago providers could meet their request for full-time support or as a backup if Indiana's ban went on hold. They considered whether they could make the drive every three months, the necessary interval between Flower's puberty blockers.

The decision for Flower to start puberty blockers two years ago wasn't one the family took lightly.

Jennilyn recalled asking early on whether her daughter's gender expression was permanent. She wondered if she had failed as a mom, especially while pregnant — was it an incorrect food? A missed vitamin?

Ultimately she and Kris dismissed those theories, ungrounded in science, and listened to their daughter, who recalled the euphoria of wearing princess dresses at an early age. Flower cherished a Little Red Riding Hood cape and felt certain of her identity from the start.

"I remember that I really disliked my name," Flower said of her birth name. "This is just like who I am. It's all that I have a memory of."

Conversations between Flower and her mother are often marked by uncommon candor, as when discussing early memories together at an Indianapolis park.

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"Before I knew you and before I walked this journey with you," Jennilyn told her, "I would not have thought that a kid would know they were trans or that a kid would just come out wired that way. I always thought that that was something adults figured out, and so there were times that it was really scary because I didn't know how the world would accept you. I didn't know how to keep you safe."

Now, Jennilyn said, her worries have shifted to Flower's spelling skills and how she'll navigate crushes. Flower, for her part, appreciates being heard. She said she and her parents make medical decisions together because, "of course, they can't decide on a medicine for me to take."

"At the same time, you can't pick a medicine that we can't afford to pay for or that, you know, might harm you," Jennilyn responded.

"That's what I really like about her," Flower said, of her mother. "She leaves a lot of my life up to me."

In Mississippi, a ban on gender-affirming care became law in the state on Feb. 28 — prompting a father and his trans son to leave the state at the end of July for Virginia. There, he can keep his health care and continue to see doctors.

"We are essentially escaping up north," said Ray Walker, 17.

Walker lives with his mother, Katie Rives, in a suburb of Jackson, the state capital. His parents are divorced, but his father also lived in the area. Halfway through high school, Walker is an honors student with an interest in theater and cooking. He has a supportive group of friends.

When Mississippi Republican Gov. Tate Reeves signed the bill banning hormone therapy for anyone younger than 18, he accused "radical activists" of pushing a "sick and twisted ideology that seeks to convince our kids they're in the wrong body."

The state's largest hospital halted hormone treatments for trans minors months before Reeves signed the ban. That hospital later closed its LGBTQ+ clinic.

After that clinic stopped offering its services, Walker and other teenagers received treatment at a smaller facility in another city, but those services ended once the ban took effect.

As access to gender-affirming care dwindled and was later outlawed, Walker's father, who declined to be interviewed, accepted a job in Virginia, where his son could keep his health care. Walker plans to move in with his father this month. Rives, however, is staying in Mississippi with her two younger children.

Walker's memories of the anguished period when he started puberty at 12 still haunt him. "My body couldn't handle what was happening to it," he said.

After a yearslong process of evaluations, then puberty blockers and hormone injections, Walker said his self-image improved.

Then the broad effort in conservative states to restrict gender-affirming care set its sights on Mississippi. The path toward stability that Walker and his family forged had narrowed. It soon became impassable.

"I was born this way. It's who I am. I can't not exist this way," Walker said. "We were under the impression that I still had two years left to live here. The law just ripped all of that up. They're ripping our lives apart."

The family sees no alternative.

"Mississippi is my home, but there are a lot of conflicting feelings when your home is actively telling you that it doesn't want you in it," Walker said.

As Walker's moving date approaches, Rives savors the moments the family shares together. She braces for the physical distance that will soon be between them. Her two younger sons will lose Ray's brotherly presence in their daily lives.

She still feels lucky.

"We know that's an incredibly privileged position to be in," Rives said of her son moving to Virginia. "Most people in Mississippi cannot afford to just move to another state or even go to another state for care."

Flower, initially dispirited by the debates at the Indiana Statehouse, brightened after her parents took her to her first Pride march on June 10 in Indianapolis.

She tied a transgender pride flag around her shoulders and covered her pink shirt in every rainbow

heart-shaped sticker she could find. She gripped a sign that read: "She belongs."

Her favorite activities are often less inflected with politics than her status as a soon-to-be teenager. She's a Girl Scout who enjoys catching Pokemon with her brother. Before the trip, she zipped around an Indianapolis park on a pink scooter, her hair tangled by the wind.

Prior to entering Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, Flower used a women's bathroom. At a diner in the city, she ordered a mint chocolate chip milkshake and a vegan grilled cheese. Jennilyn created an itinerary to make their experience as joyful and uncomplicated as possible.

"First of all, we're going to be able to chill at the hotel in the morning," Flower said. "Second of all, there's a park nearby that we can have a lot of fun in. Third of all, we might have a backup plan, which is really exciting. And fourth of all: Candy store!"

The doctor's appointment the following day, initially intimidating, soon gave them another reason to celebrate: If care was not available in Indiana, they could get it in Chicago.

"Indiana could do whatever the hell they're going to do," Jennilyn said, "and we can just come here."

Arleigh Rodgers reported from Chicago and Indianapolis. Michael Goldberg reported from Jackson. Rodgers and Goldberg are corps members for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

How many Russians have died in Ukraine? Data shows what Moscow hides

By ERIKA KINETZ Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Nearly 50,000 Russian men have died in the war in Ukraine, according to the first independent statistical analysis of Russia's war dead.

Two independent Russian media outlets, Mediazona and Meduza, working with a data scientist from Germany's Tübingen University, used Russian government data to shed light on one of Moscow's closest-held secrets — the true human cost of its invasion of Ukraine.

To do so, they relied on a statistical concept popularized during the COVID-19 pandemic called excess mortality. Drawing on inheritance records and official mortality data, they estimated how many more men under age 50 died between February 2022 and May 2023 than normal.

Neither Moscow nor Kyiv gives timely data on military losses, and each is at pains to amplify the other side's casualties. Russia has publicly acknowledged the deaths of just over 6,000 soldiers. Reports about military losses have been repressed in Russian media, activists and independent journalists say. Documenting the dead has become an act of defiance; those who do so face harassment and potential criminal charges.

Despite such challenges, Mediazona and the BBC's Russian Service, working with a network of volunteers, have used social media postings and photographs of cemeteries across Russia to build a database of confirmed war deaths. As of July 7, they had identified 27,423 dead Russian soldiers.

"These are only soldiers who we know by name, and their deaths in each case are verified by multiple sources," said Dmitry Treshchanin, an editor at Mediazona who helped oversee the investigation. "The estimate we did with Meduza allows us to see the 'hidden' deaths, deaths the Russian government is so obsessively and unsuccessfully trying to hide."

To come up with a more comprehensive tally, journalists from Mediazona and Meduza obtained records of inheritance cases filed with the Russian authorities. Their data from the National Probate Registry contained information about more than 11 million people who died between 2014 and May 2023.

According to their analysis, 25,000 more inheritance cases were opened in 2022 for males aged 15 to 49 than expected. By May 27, 2023, the number of excess cases had shot up to 47,000.

That surge is roughly in line with a May assessment by the White House that more than 20,000 Russians had been killed in Ukraine since December, though lower than U.S. and U.K. intelligence assessments of

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overall Russian deaths.

In February, the U.K. Ministry of Defense said approximately 40,000 to 60,000 Russians had likely been killed in the war. A leaked assessment from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency put the number of Russians killed in action in the first year of the war at 35,000 to 43,000.

"Their figures might be accurate, or they might not be," Treshchanin, the Mediazona editor, said in an email. "Even if they have sources in the Russian Ministry of Defense, its own data could be incomplete. It's extremely difficult to pull together all of the casualties from the army, Rosgvardia, Akhmat battalion, various private military companies, of which Wagner is the largest, but not the only one. Casualties among inmates, first recruited by Wagner and now by the MoD, are also a very hazy subject, with a lot of potential for manipulation. Statistics could actually give better results."

Many Russian fatalities - as well as amputations - could have been prevented with better front-line first aid, the U.K. Ministry of Defense said in an intelligence assessment published Monday. Russia has suffered an average of around 400 casualties a day for 17 months, creating a "crisis" in combat medical care that is likely undermining medical services for civilians in border regions near Ukraine, the ministry said.

Independently, Dmitry Kobak, a data scientist from Germany's Tübingen University who has published work on excess COVID-19 deaths in Russia, obtained mortality data broken down by age and sex for 2022 from Rosstat, Russia's official statistics agency.

He found that 24,000 more men under age 50 died in 2022 than expected, a figure that aligns with the analysis of inheritance data.

The COVID-19 pandemic made it harder to figure out how many men would have died in Russia since February 2022 if there hadn't been a war. Both analyses corrected for the lingering effects of COVID on mortality by indexing male death rates against female deaths.

Sergei Scherbov, a scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria, cautioned that "differences in the number of deaths between males and females can vary significantly due to randomness alone."

"I am not saying that there couldn't be an excess number of male deaths, but rather that statistically speaking, this difference in deaths could be a mere outcome of chance," he said.

Russians who are missing but not officially recognized as dead, as well as citizens of Ukraine fighting in units of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk republics, are not included in these counts.

Kobak acknowledged that some uncertainties remain, especially for deaths of older men. Moreover, it's hard to know how many missing Russian soldiers are actually dead. But he said neither factor is likely to have a huge impact.

"That uncertainty is in the thousands," he said. "The results are plausible overall."

Asked by the Associated Press on Monday about the Meduza and Mediazona study, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said during a conference call with reporters he wasn't aware of it as the Kremlin had "stopped monitoring" Meduza. Peskov also refused to comment on the number of deaths mentioned in the study, saying only that "the Defense Ministry gives the numbers, and they're the only ones who have that prerogative."

Meduza is an independent Russian media outlet that has been operating in exile for eight years, with headquarters in Riga, Latvia. In April 2021, Russian authorities designated Meduza a "foreign agent," making it harder to generate advertising income, and in January 2023, the Kremlin banned Meduza as an illegal "undesirable organization."

Moscow has also labeled independent outlet Mediazona as a "foreign agent" and blocked its website after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

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Dasha Litvinova contributed to this report from Tallinn, Estonia.

Extreme flooding overwhelms New York roadways and kills 1 person

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Heavy rain spawned extreme flooding in New York's Hudson Valley that killed at least one person, swamped roadways and forced road closures on Sunday night, as much of the rest of the Northeast U.S. braced Monday for potentially punishing rains.

As the storm moved east, the National Weather Service extended flash flood warnings into Connecticut, including the cities of Stamford and Greenwich, before creeping into Massachusetts. Forecasters said some areas could get as much as 5 inches (12 centimeters) of rain.

In New York's Hudson Valley, rescue teams found the body of a woman in her 30s who drowned after being swept away while trying to evacuate her home, Orange County Executive Steven Neuhaus told WABC-TV. Officials were waiting for the medical examiner's office to arrive, he said.

"There's a major flash flood. Major washouts were all around where her house is," Neuhaus said. "So I could definitely see where she was trying to get out to safety, but did not make it, got swept away."

The force of the flash flooding dislodged boulders, which rammed the woman's house and damaged part of its wall, Neuhaus told The Associated Press. Two other people escaped.

"Her house was completely surrounded by water," he said.

"She was trying to get through (the flooding) with her dog," he added, "and she was overwhelmed by tidal-wave type waves."

The extent of the destruction from the slow moving storm, which pounded the area with up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain, won't be known until after sunrise, when residents and officials can begin surveying the damage. But officials said the storm had already wrought tens of millions of dollars in damage.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul confirmed to WCBS radio that several people were missing and one home was washed away.

The rains have hit some parts of New York harder than others, but officials said communities to the east of the state should brace for torrential rains and possible flash flooding.

Officials urged residents in the line of the storm to stay off the roads.

"The amount of water is extraordinary and it's still a very dangerous situation," Hochul said.

"We'll get through this," she said, but added "it's going to be a rough night."

The governor declared a state of emergency Sunday for Orange County, about 60 miles (96 kilometers) north of New York City. She later extended the state of emergency to Ontario County in western New York, southeast of Rochester.

"We are in close communication with local officials and state agencies are participating in search and rescue efforts," she said.

The state deployed five swift-water rescue teams and a high-axle vehicle to help with rescues in flooded areas.

Some video posted on social media showed the extent of flooding, with streams of brown-colored torrents rushing right next to homes, and roadways washed away by fast-moving cascading flows.

West Point, home to the U.S. Military Academy, was severely flooded. Officials worry some historic buildings might have water damage.

The National Weather Service issued flash flood warnings across parts of southeastern New York, describing it as "life threatening," as well as warnings in northeastern New Jersey.

By Monday, "a considerable flood threat with a high risk of excessive rainfall" was expected across much of New England, NWS said in a tweet. Intense rain may be especially strong in Vermont, where Gov. Phil Scott declared a state of emergency Sunday, and northeastern New York.

Showers and thunderstorms in New York City could lead to flash flooding, the National Weather Service New York tweeted.

The city's emergency notification system tweeted that the heavy rain could cause "life-threatening flooding to basements" and instructed residents Sunday to "prepare now to move to higher ground if needed."

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State Route 9W was flooded, and the Palisades Interstate Parkway became so drenched that parts of it were closed, the New York State Police said in a statement. The police asked the public to avoid the parkway.

Golden reported from Seattle.

Today in History: Alexander Hamilton's fatal duel with Aaron Burr

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 11, the 192nd day of 2023. There are 173 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 11, 1804, Vice President Aaron Burr mortally wounded former Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton during a pistol duel in Weehawken, New Jersey. (Hamilton died the next day.)

On this date:

In 1798, the U.S. Marine Corps was formally re-established by a congressional act that also created the U.S. Marine Band.

In 1859, Big Ben, the great bell inside the famous London clock tower, chimed for the first time.

In 1864, Confederate forces led by General Jubal Early began an abortive invasion of Washington, D.C., turning back the next day.

In 1914, Babe Ruth made his Major League baseball debut, pitching the Boston Red Sox to a 4-3 victory over Cleveland.

In 1955, the U.S. Air Force Academy swore in its first class of cadets at its temporary quarters at Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado.

In 1972, the World Chess Championship opened as grandmasters Bobby Fischer of the United States and defending champion Boris Spassky of the Soviet Union began play in Reykjavik, Iceland. (Fischer won after 21 games.)

In 1979, the abandoned U.S. space station Skylab made a spectacular return to Earth, burning up in the atmosphere and showering debris over the Indian Ocean and Australia.

In 1989, actor and director Laurence Olivier died in Steyning, West Sussex, England, at age 82.

In 1991, a Nigeria Airways DC-8 carrying Muslim pilgrims crashed at the Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, international airport, killing all 261 people on board.

In 1995, the U.N.-designated "safe haven" of Srebrenica (sreh-breh-NEET'-sah) in Bosnia-Herzegovina fell to Bosnian Serb forces, who then carried out the killings of more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys.

In 2006, eight bombs hit a commuter rail network during evening rush hour in Mumbai, India, killing more than 200 people.

In 2020, President Donald Trump wore a mask during a visit to a military hospital; it was the first time he had been seen in public with one.

Ten years ago: In a potential setback for George Zimmerman, the jury at the neighborhood watch captain's second-degree murder trial in Sanford, Florida, was given the option of convicting him on the lesser charge of manslaughter in the shooting of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. (Zimmerman ended up being acquitted of all charges.) Tens of thousands of workers across Brazil walked off their jobs in a mostly peaceful nationwide strike, demanding better working conditions and improved public services in Latin America's largest nation.

Five years ago: At a NATO summit in Brussels, President Donald Trump declared that a gas pipeline venture had left Germany's government "captive to Russia," and questioned the necessity of the NATO alliance. John Schnatter, the founder of Papa John's, resigned as chairman of the board of the pizza chain, and apologized for using a racial slur during a conference call in May. Porn star Stormy Daniels was arrested at an Ohio strip club, accused of touching and being touched by patrons in violation of state law; prosecutors dropped the charges hours later, saying the law had been improperly applied.

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One year ago: President Joe Biden revealed the first image from NASA's new space telescope, the farthest humanity had ever seen in both time and distance, closer to the dawn of the universe and the edge of the cosmos. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree expanding a fast-track procedure to give Russian citizenship to all Ukrainians, part of an effort to expand Moscow's influence in war-torn Ukraine. The Biden administration told hospitals they "must" provide abortion services if the life of the mother is at risk, saying federal law on emergency treatment guidelines preempts state laws in jurisdictions banning the procedure without any exceptions.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Susan Seaforth Hayes is 80. Singer Jeff Hanna (Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) is 76. Ventriloquist-actor Jay Johnson is 74. Actor Bruce McGill is 73. Actor Stephen Lang is 71. Actor Mindy Sterling is 70. Actor Sela Ward is 67. Reggae singer Michael Rose (Black Uhuru) is 66. Singer Peter Murphy is 66. Actor Mark Lester is 65. Jazz musician Kirk Whalum is 65. Singer Suzanne Vega is 64. Rock guitarist Richie Sambora (Bon Jovi) is 64. Actor Lisa Rinna is 60. Rock musician Scott Shriner (Weezer) is 58. Actor Debbe (correct) Dunning is 57. Actor Greg Grunberg is 57. Wildlife expert Jeff Corwin is 56. Actor Justin Chambers is 53. Actor Leisha Hailey is 52. Actor Michael Rosenbaum is 51. Pop-rock singer Andrew Bird is 50. Country singer Scotty Emerick is 50. Rapper Lil' Kim is 49. U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona is 48. Actor Jon Wellner is 48. Rapper Lil' Zane is 42. Pop-jazz singer-musician Peter Cincotti is 40. Actor Serinda Swan is 39. Actor Robert Adamson is 38. Actor David Henrie is 34. Actor Connor Paolo is 33. Former tennis player Caroline Wozniacki is 33. R&B/pop singer Alessia Cara is 27.