

Groton Daily Independent

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“By leaving your comfort zone behind and taking a leap of faith into something new, you find out who you are truly capable of becoming.”

Author Unknown

Friday, Oct. 6

Senior Menu: BBQ pork riblet on bun, potato salad, mixed vegetables, tropical fruit.

School Breakfast: Biscuits

School Lunch: Pizza, corn.

Saturday, Oct. 7

Thrift Store open, 10 a.m. to 1 pm.

State Soccer Semifinal at Groton: Groton Area vs. Sioux Falls Christian at 4 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 8

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; dedicate chapel area and youth room; No Sunday school; Potluck brunch, 10:30 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship 9 a.m.; worship at Zion, 11 a.m.

United Methodist: NO Sunday school; Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Finance committee budget meeting, 11:30 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.

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

Groton Daily Independent
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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

World in Brief

the Bears from 1965 until 1973, representing the team off the field for decades.

President Joe Biden has come under fire from lawmakers across the aisle after his administration said it was allowing the construction of the border wall. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez called it a "cruel policy" and urged Biden to "reverse course."

Extreme weather events led to 43.1 million displacements of children between 2016 and 2021, or roughly 20,000 child displacements per day, a new UNICEF analysis found. Floods and storms accounted for 95% of the displacements.

At least 100 people have been killed, and about 200 others were injured in drone strikes at a Syrian military academy in Homs city, one of the deadliest attacks on the army that has been fighting a civil war for over a decade.

Taylor Swift's Eras Tour concert film is breaking records even before it hits cinemas on Oct. 13. Its distributor, AMC, said that advance ticket sales for the movie surpassed \$100 million worldwide.

The Philippines has placed all its commercial airports on heightened alert after an anonymous warning that bombs could go off on planes headed out of Manila, including to several tourist hotspots, its civil aviation authority said.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, a Russian attack on the village of Hroza, south-east of Kharkiv, has killed at least 51 people who were at the funeral of a local resident, Ukraine said. Kharkiv regional Head Oleh Synyehubov called the attack one of the "bloodiest crimes" that killed 20% of the village's population..

TALKING POINTS

"The military risks the Ukrainians face are obvious—what's ahead of them will be difficult and costly but can be made easier with more—and more capable—weapons. What the Ukrainians don't know how to calculate is the political risk—the possibility that somehow, Western governments after much help and much supportive rhetoric, will decide it's actually better to let Putin have much of what he wants," he added. "A year ago, that idea would have seemed incomprehensible to most Western leaders, but now?" Stephen Sestanovich, who previously served as U.S. ambassador-at-large for the countries of the former Soviet Union, told Newsweek as only limited gains were won so far in a months-long Ukrainian counteroffensive.

What to Watch in the Day Ahead

The nonfarm payrolls report will be released at 8:30 a.m. ET and markets will be watching for indications of any labor market strength. Nonfarm payroll is expected to rise by 170,000 jobs in September after rising by 187,000 in August. The employment rate is likely to inch lower to 3.7% from 3.8%.

European leaders are expected to discuss the prospects of including the war-torn country of Ukraine in the 27-nation European Union as they meet on the second day for a summit in Spain. The leaders pledged their unwavering support for Ukraine yesterday..

Former President Donald Trump has thrown his "complete and total endorsement" behind Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan's bid for Speaker of the House, saying he would be a "great" Speaker.

The 2023 Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to Iranian human rights activist Narges Mohammadi for her "fight against the oppression of women." Mohammadi has been imprisoned in her home country since 2021.

Chicago Bears and NFL legend Dick Butkus has died at the age of 80, the team has announced. Butkus played for

Fjeldheim finishes off Milbank with an ace serve



Coach Chelsea Hanson has been sweeping in the brooms as the Tigers continue to have clean sweep wins in volleyball. She was presented with a broom for the clean sweep over Mobridge-Pollock and one for the clean sweep over Milbank. A clean sweep is winning the C, JV and Varsity matches. She was awarded a larger broom for the Milbank match as the Tigers did not lose a set in those three matches. (Photo by Tina Kosel)

Anna Fjeldheim had game winning ace serve in the third set as Groton Area toppled Milbank in volleyball action Thursday in Groton.

Groton dominated the match as Milbank had the lead just once the entire night and there were six ties in the evening. Milbank used all six of their timeouts while Groton Area used one.

The Tigers jumped out to an 8-1 lead in the first set and went on to win, 25-17. The Tigers had a 3-0 lead in the second set before Milbank took the lead at 4-3 and 5-4 before the Tigers went on a seven point run to take an 11-5 lead. The Tigers went on to win, 25-15. The third set was close, but Milbank never led; however, the Bulldogs did tie the set at two, nine and 19 before Groton Area went on to win, 25-22.

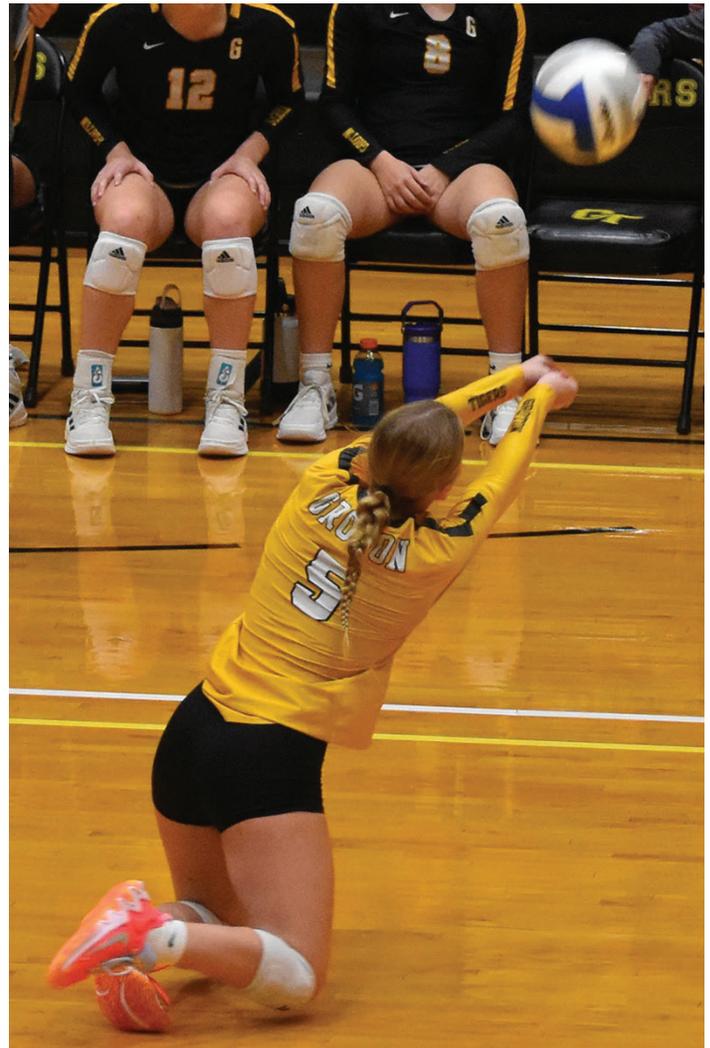


Anna Fjeldheim
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Fjeldheim had a double-double on the night with 11 kills (24 of 26), 14 digs and was 10 of 10 in serving with three ace serves. Chesney Weber was 22 of 28 in attacks with nine kills, had five digs and one ace serve. Sydney Leicht had 17 digs, six kills, three assists and one ace serve. Carly Guthmiller had 18 digs, was 19 of 19 in serving with six ace serves and had a kill. Rylee Dunker had six kills, one ace serve, one block and one dig. Emma Kutter was 11 of 11 in attacks with five kills, had two assisted blocks and one dig. Elizabeth Flihs had 30 assists, seven digs, one kill and two assisted blocks. Jaedyn Penning had three digs and was nine of nine in serving with two ace serves.



Carly Guthmiller
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Elizabeth Flihs and Anna Fjeldheim
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Rachel Schulte led Milbank with 12 kills while Skler Skogg had 10 kills and two assisted blocks, Shaylee Schuchard had three assisted kills, Clarie Snaza had a kill and two assisted blocks, Isabella Anderson had a block and a kill and Addison Krause had a kill and the only Milbank ace serve in the match.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bary Keith at Harr Motors, BK Custom Ts & More, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency and Locke Electric. Justin Hanson and Ryan Tracy provided the color commentary of the match.

Groton Area, now 12-4, will host Britton-Hecla on Monday. Milbank is now 14-8. Groton Area is closing in on Roncalli for the number one spot in Region 1A.

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Sydney Leicht
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Groton Area won the junior varsity match by identical scores of 25-17. Jaedyn Penning led Groton Area with eight kills and four ace serves, Taryn Traphagen had five kills and two ace serves, Kella Tracy had five kills and an ace serve, Talli Wright had five kills, Liby Althoff had three kills, Sydney Locke had a kill and an ace serve and Faith Traphagen had a kill and a block.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by fans of Jaedyn Penning. Ryan Tracy provided the color commentary of the match.



Emma Kutter
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Laila Roberts
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Groton Area made it a clean sweep with a C match win of set scores of 25-10 and 25-9. Emerlee Jones had 10 kills and an ace serve, Taryn Traphagen had three ace serves and three kills, McKenna Tietz had five kills, Avery Crank had four ace serves and a kill, Ashlyn Warrington had five ace serves, Liby Althoff had two ace serves and a kill, Teagan Hanten had two kills, Hannah Sandness had two ace serves and Brenna Imrie had an ace serve.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by fans of Emerlee Jones with Ryan Tracy providing the color commentary of the match.

The seventh graders won their match, 25-16 and 25-11. The eighth graders lost their match, 11-25, 25-12 and 11-15.

Region 1A Volleyball Standings

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	<u>PTS</u>
1	 Aberdeen Roncalli	11	3	.786	44.000
2	 Groton Area	12	4	.750	43.688
3	 Milbank	14	8	.636	41.636
4	 Sisseton	7	10	.412	39.824
5	 Redfield	8	12	.400	39.350
6	 Webster Area	8	12	.400	38.900
7	 Tiospa Zina	6	15	.286	37.429
8	 Waubay/Summit	0	17	.000	34.059

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Katie Kesterson's children helped with the picking of the pumpkins: Emery, Rylan and Kayson. (Photo courtesy April Abeln)

Picking pumpkins for the Pumpkin Fest



April Abeln and Topper Tastad have worked hard over the years in organizing the Pumpkin Fest. Eight years ago, Peggy Locke had come up with the idea of having something for the kids and it has become a hit in the community ever since. It takes many volunteers to pull this event off.. (Photo courtesy April Abeln)



These pumpkins are all for the Eighth Annual Pumpkin Fest! Thank you to all these pumpkineers and John & Gail Zeck for their hard work in making this happen! Pictured here are Topper Tastad, Dacey Kampa, Joe Foertsch, Lexie Locke, April Abeln, Lennox Locke, Axel Abeln, Travis McGannon, Val Baker, Deb McKiver, Gail Zeck, Carson Zeck, Grady Zeck, Jessie Zeck, Katie Kampa and Dane Kampa. (Photo courtesy April Abeln)

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Over 1,000 pumpkins were picked Thursday evening at the John and Gail Zeck farm. The pumpkins will be used for the Pumpkin Fest on October 14th in Groton. (Photo courtesy April Abeln)



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Groton Chamber of Commerce October 4, 2023

12pm City Hall

- Individuals present: Kellie Locke, Christine Hilton, Katelyn Nehlich, Carol Kutter, April Abeln, and Topper Tastad
- Minutes from the previous meeting were approved on a motion by Locke and seconded by Nehlich. All members voted aye.
- Treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$32,051.58. \$1,589 is currently in the Chamber Bucks account. The report was approved by Abeln and seconded by Hilton. All members voted aye.
- Small business resource guides were received from the U.S. Small Business Administration.
- Jennifer Benthin was the winner of the shirt drawing at Family Fun Fest.
- Motion by Nehlich and seconded by Abeln to move forward with Tastad's bench restoration project for Main Street. All members voted aye. Costs are estimated at \$1500 for 10 benches. Tastad asked for volunteers to help with the project. Later it was suggested perhaps the GHS class could assist.
- It was decided not to organize park bathroom fundraising.
- An ad for Pumpkin Fest is currently running on Dakota Broadcasting and our November/December ad will be printed in the GDI this month.
- Motion by Nehlich and seconded by Locke to boost our Fall shirts orders on Facebook on November 1st for 2 weeks for \$50. All members voted aye. Chamber members are encouraged to place their orders by October 6th if they would like to be included in the pre-order.
- Stamps will need to be purchased for our 2024 dues notices. The Groton Independent will do printing and Kutter will prepare letter. It was mentioned we could include shirt order forms to encourage sales. Members will prepare mailings at the November 1st meeting.
- Abeln will contact Geffdog for window clings. Our current shirt design will be used in possible black and white format. It was discussed and said that the quantity ordered should be reduced.
- Motion by Locke and seconded by Nehlich to award \$500 scholarships to (3) 2024 GHS graduates this year. All members voted aye.
- Abeln submitted a donated services application to JVT to continue to receive sponsorship of internet at the Hwy 12 electronic sign.
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to donate a tumbler and \$25 in Chamber Bucks to the FEZ-tival of Trees. All members voted aye.
- Motion by Nehlich and seconded by Abeln to donate \$200 to BIO Girls. All members voted aye.
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to donate \$200 to the Groton Community Thanksgiving event. All members voted aye.
- A donation to Snow Queen was tabled until event details are established.
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to donate \$50 in Chamber Bucks to the Wage Memorial Library tour of homes event. All members voted aye.
- Motion by Locke and seconded by Hilton to donate \$200 to Santa Day. All members voted aye.
- A business welcome with MGGQ Consulting LLC- Jackie Krueger will be scheduled. Cassie's Confectionology still needs to be welcomed as well.
- Next Meeting: November 1, 2023, at City Hall at 12:00pm (BYOL).
- Upcoming events
- 10/08/2023 Party in the Park (soccer fundraiser)
- 10/13/2023 Lake Region Marching Band Festival
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2023 UMC Trunk or Treat
- 11/01/2023 Chamber Meeting
- 11/10-12/2023 Front Porch 605 Christmas at the Barn 10am-5pm each day



Jensen named NSU Homecoming Queen

GHS Graduate Kayla Jensen was named homecoming royalty for Northern State University Thursday night. Clayton Randall was named homecoming king while Kayla Jensen was named homecoming queen. (Photo from NSU

Facebook Page)

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

October 10, 2023 – 7:00 AM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of September 11, 2023 school board meeting as drafted or amended.
2. Approval of September 2023 District bills for payment.
3. Approve Open Enrollment #24-21 and #24-22.
4. Approve Open Enrollment #24-23.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Program Overview Presentations
 - a. **Mathematics**...E. Swenson, J. Carson, G. Kjellsen
 - b. **Social Sciences**...S. Wanner, S. Thorson
3. Approval of September 2023 Financial Report, Custodial Accounts, and Investments.
4. Approval of September 2023 School Lunch Report.
5. Approval of September 2023 School Transportation Report.
6. Continued Discussion Regarding Potential School District FY2025 Opt-Out.
7. Continued Discussion Regarding 1969 HS Gymnasium Renovation.
8. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Consider request and conditions for wrestling practice cooperative with Doland School District.
2. Approve \$160 contribution to send school attorney, Rodney Freeman, to Education Law Association annual meeting.
3. Approve request from James Valley Thunder for use of GHS Arena, Gym for summer 2024.

ADJOURN

Living Without Anger By Bryan Golden

The "benefits" of anger are many. Stress, anxiety, diminished judgment, reduced productivity, poor digestion, sleeplessness, elevated blood pressure, negative impact on relationships, unhappiness, and attraction of negative situations can all be yours just by being angry.

Anger repels people, destroys relationships, creates problems, intensifies problems, causes regret, burns bridges, and dissolves solutions.

Anger doesn't have to manifest itself via your behavior to be destructive. Anger that is internalized can be just as damaging. A fundamental misconception is that people, events or circumstances make you angry.

Anger is a chosen reaction to your environment. As you allow anger to become a conditioned response, a downward spiral develops. Habitual anger feeds itself and increases in intensity over smaller and smaller matters. Without vigilance, resistance to anger diminishes and it becomes automatic behavior when faced with adversity.

Anger does not serve you. Regardless of your reasons for being angry, anger never resolves problems; it makes them worse. You can learn to manage and eliminate anger. To do so requires a recognition, understanding and acceptance of several things.

First, you and you alone are responsible for your emotions and behavior. No one has the power to make you angry. You create your own anger. Second, you must identify what arouses anger within you.

Some common causes of anger are: injustice, hurt, frustration, annoyances, being treated unfairly, being taken advantage of, a threat of loss, experiencing a loss, plans don't materialize as expected, regret over the past, people don't behave as expected or a situation that is out of your control.

Do you engage in behavior that evokes anger in others? You can become angry in response to someone else's anger and someone else may become angry in response to your anger. Anger is a vicious cycle that will rapidly escalate unless diffused by one or both parties involved.

There is no way to eliminate those things that make you angry. But you can manage your reaction so that anger doesn't take hold. Through a thorough understanding of what makes you angry, you can preplan alternative strategies for responding.

If you feel angry, don't make any decisions or take any action until you allow the anger to subside. If you act while angry, there is a high probability that you will say or do something that you will regret.

As soon as you find yourself starting to become angry, identify the specific circumstances you are reacting to. Without understanding the cause, you can not diffuse the anger and it will most likely get worse out of frustration.

Once you have identified the source of your anger, determine if there is any action you can take which can rectify the situation to the benefit of all. Revenge, punishment, mistreatment of others or self-pity does not qualify. The past can't be changed and must be accepted. The only decision you have to make is what to do now to move forward.

Anger, once it takes hold, needs a certain amount of time to subside. As you practice anger management techniques, the amount of time needed will decrease substantially. The ideal is to condition yourself to eliminate the anger stage completely.

Anger can be managed, controlled and eliminated. Anger is a habit that develops over time. Changing any habit takes desire and effort. The more determined you are to change, the more rapid will be the results.

Living without anger will make you happier, healthier, and more pleasant to be around.

Bryan is the author of "Dare to Live Without Limits." Contact Bryan at Bryan@columnist.com or visit www.DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com Copyright 2023 Bryan Golden

Natural Gas Generators on the Climate Police Watch List

New York, California lead the way with new climate change policies and regulations.

by ESG University

Environmental Social Governance

A proposed Consumer Product Safety Commission rule limits the amount of carbon monoxide a product can emit, with the commission admitting that 95 percent of portable gas generators on the market cannot comply with its new standard.

As a result, industry leaders say, the rule will prompt widespread generator shortages, as manufacturers only have six months to design generators that meet the proposed regulation. That process normally takes years, Portable Generator Manufacturers' Association executive director Susan Orenga told the press.

Natural gas generators have long been a crucial source of power across the United States, but recent developments in environmental consciousness and health concerns have prompted significant changes in regulations.

In this article, we delve into the history of natural gas generator regulations in the U.S., including the discussions about banning natural gas appliances.

The Early Days: A Dependable Energy Source

Natural gas generators have been a reliable and widely used energy source for decades. They provided efficient electricity generation, heating, and cooking capabilities to millions of households and businesses.

However, special interest groups have concerns about their environmental impact and health risks began to surface in the early 21st century.

Rising Environmental and Health Concerns

In recent years, concerns about harmful indoor air pollutants emitted by gas generators and appliances gained traction. Organizations like the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission considered regulating gas stoves due to health concerns from indoor air pollution.

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has been exploring the possibility of regulating gas stoves due to concerns related to indoor air pollution and its impact on health. This consideration arises from a growing number of studies indicating that gas stoves emit pollutants that can irritate the human airways and exacerbate respiratory problems.

This regulatory consideration is significant as it highlights the need to strike a balance between the convenience and popularity of gas stoves and the health implications arising from their use. While the gas industry argues that gas stoves are a minor source of indoor air pollutants, the CPSC's power and influence underscores the importance of addressing these concerns to protect public health.

Moreover, there were discussions about banning natural gas appliances, particularly in California and New York.

New York's Bold Move

New York became the first state to take a definitive step in addressing these concerns. In May 2023, the state passed a law that effectively bans natural gas stoves in most new homes and buildings by as early as 2026.

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The significance of this law lies in its commitment to reducing carbon emissions and promoting cleaner energy sources. This move aligns with the state's broader efforts to combat climate change and improve indoor air quality.

New York's decision also sends a clear message to other states and jurisdictions about transitioning to "energy-efficient" alternatives despite European communities who have gone down a similar path and are having serious energy issues.

This New York Move underscores the a sense of urgency from government officials to remove natural gas appliances, particularly in the context of new construction.

This bold action by New York sets a precedent for future regulations and initiatives aimed at reducing reliance on fossil fuels and promoting sustainable energy solutions.

The National Perspective

Contrary to some misconceptions, the Biden administration clarified that it is not attempting to ban existing gas stoves.

However, should the Biden administration finalize its rule, natural gas generators could become difficult to obtain. The commission's rule prohibits manufacturers from stockpiling non-compliant generators prior to the rule's enactment.

Beyond the Consumer Product Safety Commission, President Joe Biden's Energy Department has unveiled a slew of environmental regulations to fight climate change. The department says its proposed gas stove rule, for example, would effectively ban half of all models on the U.S. market from being sold.

The department has also proposed or finalized energy efficiency rules targeting washing machines, refrigerators, and lightbulbs. "Collectively," the department said in February, "these energy actions ... support President Biden's ambitious clean energy agenda to combat the climate crisis."

The Future of Gas Generators

As the United States grapples with environmental and health concerns related to natural gas generators, the nation finds itself at a crossroads. Striking a balance between energy efficiency, consumer choice, and environmental responsibility will shape the future of natural gas generator regulations in the country.

Currently, the U.S. is experiencing a significant shift in natural gas generator regulations driven by special interests, environmental and public health concerns.

New York and California's pioneering ban on natural gas and the ongoing discussions at the federal level highlight the evolving landscape of energy regulations in the country.



Sharp drop in building permits points to stagnation in South Dakota housing market

By Stu Whitney

South Dakota News Watch

South Dakota's housing market is showing signs of stagnation, with a sharp dip in building permits revealing a reluctance of potential buyers to construct new homes.

Building permits issued in South Dakota in the second quarter of 2023 were down 37% from the previous year, said Aaron Scholl, assistant professor of economics at Northern State University in Aberdeen. That's more than twice the amount of downturn reported nationally (15.1%) and reflects a sharp turn from South Dakota's building boom of 2020-2022.

The trend will likely filter down to demand for existing properties, as high interest rates make homeowners think twice about selling and having to enter the market themselves, said Scholl, who described the scenario as a "wedge between aspiring homeowners and homeowners who locked in

— “ —
When I sort of gaze into my crystal ball and try to see where the housing sector is going to be for the next year or two, it's not great.

” —
Jared McEntaffer, CEO
of the Dakota Institute



historically low rates.”

The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage is 7.31% – the highest since 2000 – as the Federal Reserve uses rate hikes to try to control inflation. The mortgage rate was under 3% for much of 2020 and 2021 as the economy stalled during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It's making people think twice as to whether they want to go back into the market and deal with those higher rates,” said Scholl, who published a recent study for the Dakota Institute, an economic research and analysis organization in Sioux Falls.

“If you give up being a homeowner, you still have to find somewhere else to live, and rental prices are being driven up as well. It's a balancing act deciding whether to dip your foot in the seller's market when some of those seller advantages are dwindling.”

For Paul Stenholtz, who put his central Sioux Falls house on the market in September, the timing seemed right. He's partially retired and his wife died in 2017, so he wants to live somewhere warmer to be near his goddaughter and her family.

At 69 years old, it became tougher to maintain the 2,000-square-foot house, and Stenholtz hopes to find a buyer. He also plans to keep an apartment in Sioux Falls.

“There are still circumstances that are causing people to move,” said Brandon Martens, a Sioux Falls real estate agent and former president of the South Dakota Realtors Association. “They're just paying more attention to what those circumstances are and making them more thought out.”

Hot Sioux Falls market cooling

In Sioux Falls, there were 6,042 building permits issued from January through September 2023, down one-third from the same period in 2022 (9,075). The total value of permits issued dropped from \$1.72

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billion during the 2022 period to \$880 million in 2023.

Listing prices for houses continue to rise in South Dakota, against the national trend. But there are signs of a slowdown, with prices forecasted to rise only 2.2% in the fourth quarter of 2023 after increases of 17.5% in 2022 and 10.6% in the first quarter of 2023.

Martens said the numbers show the housing market leveling off after the "anomaly" period of 2020-22, when post-pandemic stimulus money kickstarted the economy.

In some cases, he said, year-over-year declines are misleading because the market is reverting to a place volume-wise "where we should have been in the first place."

"But there are definitely people in the Realtor world that are struggling right now," Martens added. "They're trying to find out where that next buyer or seller is coming from just because the market has shifted so much in the last couple of years."

Home prices remain high: 'New normal out there'

Scholl's study in Dakota Outlook, a quarterly publication of the Dakota Institute, noted how South Dakota's still-high listing prices despite deceleration in new construction "underscores the unique nature of South Dakota's housing landscape."

Median list prices spiked 17.5% from 2021 to 2022 in the state, compared with 5.2% nationally. But the arc has leveled off somewhat, with year-over-year growth of 10.6% in the first quarter of 2023 and 7.3% in the second quarter, with a fourth-quarter projection of 2.2%.

Jared McEntaffer, CEO of the Dakota Institute, noted that South Dakota tends to lag behind national housing cycles. The state's median list prices were below the national norm from 2018-2020 and then saw prices skyrocket last year. But it appears the downturn has arrived.

Nationally, list prices declined 3.1% year-to-year in the second quarter of 2023.

"When I sort of gaze into my crystal ball and try to see where the housing sector is going to be for the next year or two, it's not great," said McEntaffer, a former economics professor at Penn State University.

"We had so much rapid price growth that it's going to be hard for that to unwind very quickly. Expectations are very anchored at higher price levels, and people that are in their homes are not going to want to lower the prices. There's a new normal out there."

Access to housing an ongoing, major concern

The lack of housing affordability, keeping marginal homebuyers from the market, is potentially troubling for a state with a rising population.

South Dakota ranked fifth in percentage of population growth (1.5%) among U.S. states between July 1, 2021, and July 1, 2022, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly four times higher than the national growth rate of 0.4%.

That trend could put the state's total population above 1 million residents as early as 2030.

"Access to affordable housing is part of this," said Scholl. "If we see these listing prices and the housing market sustained and building permits falling, that translates into the rental market, which affects government budgets and the resources that are devoted to help individuals that have a tough living situation."

First-time home buyers, meanwhile, are facing the realization that they might not be able to afford the dream house they envisioned, at least not the first time around.

"There are some who are saying, 'OK, so this is just going to be our first house, not our forever house,'" said Martens. "Maybe they stay for three to five years, which used to be the average. They look at it as a stepping stone, not a forever standing stone."

— This article was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a non-profit journalism organization located online at sdnewswatch.org.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Grandmother seeks answers after Taser use against 12-year-old Native American girl

Details scarce on Wagner incident depicted in social media video

BY: JOHN HULT - OCTOBER 5, 2023 5:17 PM

WAGNER — A grandmother wants answers after a video showing a Wagner police officer using a Taser on her 12-year-old granddaughter circulated online.

The Wagner Police Department has offered no details on the situation in the video, which was shared at 5:45 a.m. on Sept. 20 and has now been viewed more than 14,000 times on Facebook.

As the video begins, Eli Kuhlman and another officer are seen struggling with the Native American girl at K's Qwik Stop, with each holding one of her arms.

Kuhlman steps back and fires his Taser at the child. Another female who'd been standing between the officers during the struggle catches the girl as she falls forward.

As the officers put her in handcuffs, she screams, "What the f— is wrong with you guys! I'm a f—ing 12-year-old!"

The girl's grandmother, Roderica Rouse, said the officers appeared during a fight the girl said was started by older girls who'd jumped her.

"When I saw that, I was so shocked," said Rouse. "She's just a little girl. I just cried."

Her granddaughter was taken to the hospital in Wagner and released shortly thereafter, Rouse said. She wants to know why the officer felt it necessary to use a Taser on the girl.

"My main concern is to know why he did that," Rouse said.

It's unclear from the video how the 12-year-old might have been involved in the altercation. The video doesn't offer any insight into the situation that played out before filming began.

Wagner officials have offered little insight.

Wagner City Attorney Beau Barrett told South Dakota Searchlight that the city did not forward the case to the state Division of Criminal Investigation for review, a common practice in use-of-force incidents, but one that only commences with a request from a local department.

The city is in the process of conducting an internal investigation into the incident, Barrett said.

"We still don't have everything we need to complete our investigation," he said.

Barrett said he could not offer further details.

Wagner Police Chief Damon Griffith declined to comment on the situation, declining to release the date, time or nature of the call. Charles Mix County State's Attorney Steve Cotton also declined to offer details on the outcome of the altercation because it involves a juvenile.

Libby Skarin, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota, said in a statement that the use of Tasers in situations involving young children is concerning.

Tasers fire electrodes that attach to a person's clothing or skin, typically rendering them temporarily immobile.

There are no statistics on their use gathered at a statewide level, but there have been other situations in which the devices have been used in situations involving young children. Ten years ago, for example, the Pierre Police Department defended the use of the device against an 8-year-old the police chief said had been threatening to harm herself.

"All too often, Tasers are used preemptively against citizens who do not present an imminent safety threat," Skarin said. "There are far too many instances in which officers have impulsively deployed Tasers

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against children, pregnant women and the mentally ill, even though the victims posed no real danger to either the officers or anyone else. It is incumbent upon the police department to examine an officer's use of force against a child and to ensure that vulnerable kids are safe from unwarranted and shocking uses of force."

It's not the first time Officer Kuhlman's behavior has drawn the attention of the public. The first incident took place in 2016, a few months after his provisional hire date with the Wagner department but before he was certified as a South Dakota law enforcement officer. In that situation, the Yankton Sioux Tribe decried his actions toward a 64-year-old man who'd been speeding to see his ailing mother at a nursing home in Wagner. Kuhlman had used a stun gun to incapacitate the man and pulled him to the ground.

The man, Raymond Cournoyer, filed a federal lawsuit against Kuhlman and the department over the incident, which left Cournoyer bloodied and kept him from seeing his mother before she died.

The case was later dismissed by U.S. District Judge Roberto Lange, who noted that officers have qualified immunity against excessive force claims in most situations. Lange noted that Cournoyer had not mentioned anything about the reason he'd been speeding and ignoring officer commands.

It's unclear from the video if Kuhlman was aware of the age of the girl he encountered at the Wagner convenience store late last month before she announced her age.

More broadly, Charles Mix County, which includes Wagner, has seen several conflicts between its Native American population and law enforcement. Recently, the death of Robert "Berta" Enoch in the Charles Mix County Jail drew a hearing on officer misconduct before the Law Enforcement Standards and Training Commission.

Enoch was hiding out in a drug house on tribal land in the days leading up to his death. He was taken into custody in Lake Andes on a Monday morning and died within hours.

Enoch's friends and family say the death, attributed to an overdose, could have been prevented had sheriff's deputies responded to the signs of overdose-related distress he'd exhibited while incarcerated in the jail in Lake Andes. The sheriff's deputy was cleared of misconduct on the grounds he hadn't been trained in how to recognize those signs.

Charles Mix County includes the lands of the Yankton Sioux Tribe. Calls and emails to tribal leadership on the Taser incident have not been returned.

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

Regents request control of whistleblower hotline; Noem says 'no planned changes'

Executive director of university system addresses topics from governor's May letter

BY: SETH TUPPER - OCTOBER 5, 2023 2:55 PM

RAPID CITY — The board that oversees South Dakota's public universities has requested control over the governor's whistleblower hotline for higher education, but the Governor's Office said there are "no planned changes."

News of the request came from Jeff Partridge, a member of the Board of Regents, during a meeting Thursday on the South Dakota Mines campus in Rapid City.

"We're hoping that will be heard and received as far as us taking that over in the near future," he said.

Gov. Kristi Noem's chief of communications, Ian Fury, provided the following written statement to South Dakota Searchlight later Thursday afternoon.

"The whistleblower hotline has been extremely effective to make sure that concerns are heard and hopefully addressed by the Board of Regents," the statement said. "There are no planned changes in how the hotline is being administered at this time. The Governor's Office will continue to run the whistleblower hotline and make sure it serves the people of South Dakota and our kids and grandkids."

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The Governor's Office manages the hotline and passes information to the universities. Partridge said the universities could manage the hotline in a more timely, efficient and effective manner, because they already have staff and offices accustomed to fielding complaints and requests for help.

Noem launched the hotline in May to "help keep our institutions accountable," she said at the time in a letter to the regents. The letter also said higher education is in "a state of crisis" because "many states have allowed liberal ideologies to poison their universities and colleges."

The letter called on the regents to raise graduation rates, remove all references to preferred personal pronouns in school materials, prohibit drag shows on university campuses, cut costs to increase affordability for students, and require a course in American history, among other suggestions.

Regents Executive Director Nathan Lukkes addressed some of those topics during Thursday's meeting.

Depression, pronouns, drag shows, civics

Regarding complaints to the hotline that have "got some public attention," Lukkes said that in some instances, "as we've dug into things even with information coming directly from the individuals complaining, we found that the allegations as initially represented simply weren't accurate."

Lukkes said a hotline caller falsely alleged that Black Hills State University in Spearfish encouraged students at orientation to take anti-depression medications known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs.

"As it turns out, SSRIs were never actually mentioned during the orientation," Lukkes said.

On preferred pronouns, Lukkes said the board has an established position and guidance.

"We do not require preferred pronouns, nor should we or our staff be putting students on the spot asking them to say their preferred pronouns," Lukkes said. "But to be clear, we also do not prohibit the use of preferred pronouns if students so choose."

The board approved a new policy on minors last spring in response to criticism about a drag show at South Dakota State University in Brookings that was promoted by a student group as "kid friendly." The policy does not ban drag shows, but bars non-student youth from attending programs that include "content that is patently offensive to prevailing community standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable material for minors."

Lukkes cited an upcoming event at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion as evidence that the policy is working.

"That event is advertised as 'may contain mature content, and is for attendees 18 or over,'" Lukkes said, "just as the board intended."

Shifting to controversies about the content of classroom education, Lukkes recommended, and the board approved, changing a global citizenship and diversity course in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at SDSU from a required to an optional course for students in the college. Lukkes also announced an exploration of a potential civics literacy graduation requirement for the university system, with a goal of presenting a proposal to the board in December.

"In the end, we all benefit from an informed and engaged citizenry," Lukkes said.

Sexual violence concerns, gun policies

The topic of sexual violence arose twice during the meeting. Lukkes addressed complaints about a sexual violence training video used at SDSU, saying he'd reviewed it and "would not categorize the video as graphic or highly sexual."

Later, Regent Tim Rave discussed "several reports in the media about sexual assaults on campus."

Rave said the regents "have spoken with the presidents about this at length," and "everything that can be done to protect students is currently in place."

"I would personally call on all state's attorneys to prosecute folks that are deserving to the fullest extent of the law," Rave said, "and make sure that these kids know that it's wrong. You don't sexually assault someone, and we're not going to tolerate it."

Some South Dakota Mines students aired further safety concerns during the public comment portion of the meeting. A contingent of students came to the meeting holding signs bearing pro-gun rights slogans,

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and some asked the board for policy changes that would allow them to carry guns on campus.

Annaliese Wollman, a Mines senior, said hundreds of students signed a petition supporting the effort. Without the right to carry guns, she said, "students are left defenseless to everyday dangers on campus."

The regents took no action, but Rave thanked the students for their civility and Lukkes expressed a willingness to meet with them.

"I'm more than happy to sit down and have an engaged, productive conversation to hear your issues and concerns and figure out what options may or may not be available moving forward," Lukkes said.

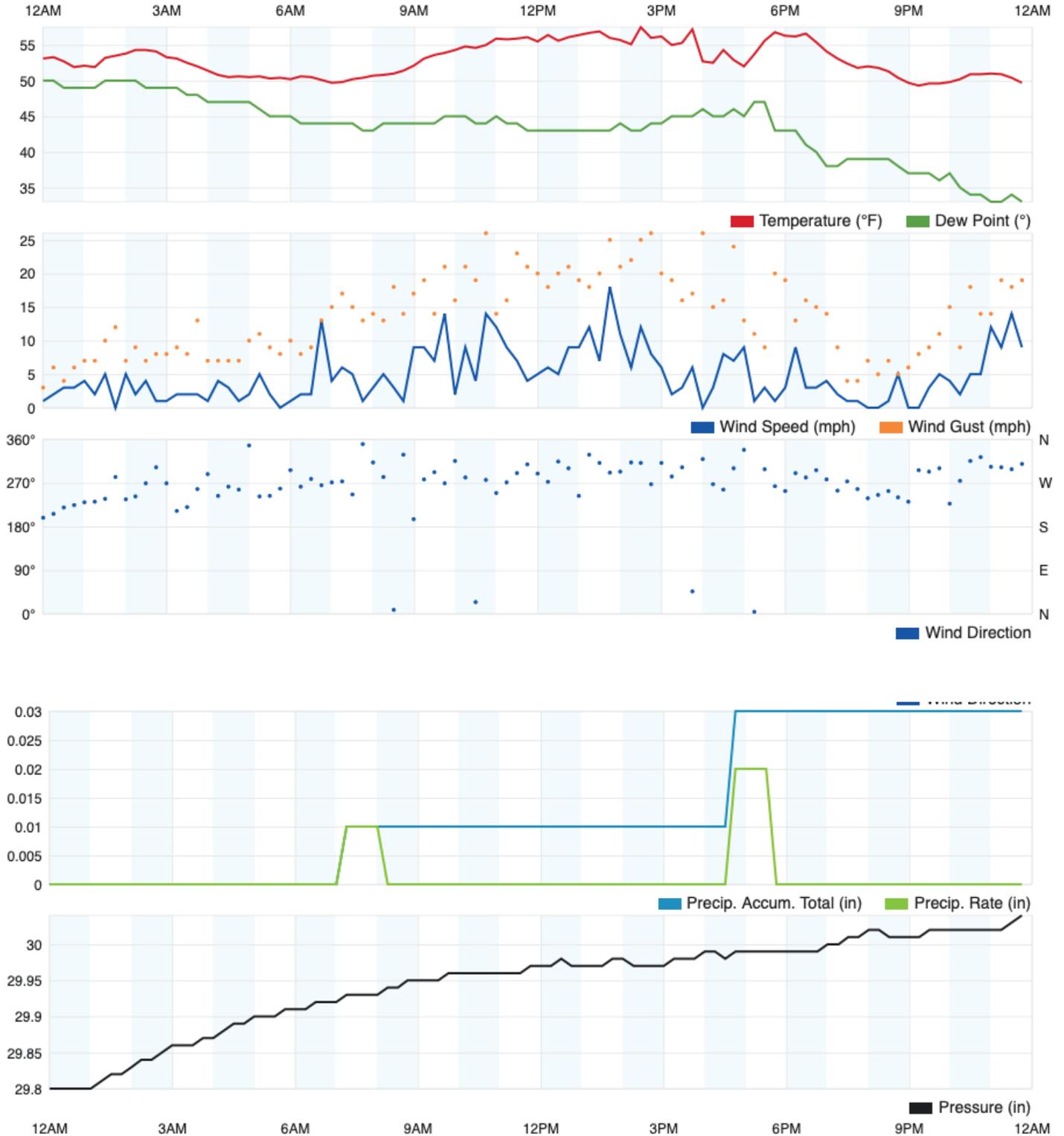
EDITOR'S NOTE: This story has been updated since its original publication with the addition of a statement from the governor's chief of communications.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Fri Oct 6	Sat Oct 7	Sun Oct 8	Mon Oct 9	Tue Oct 10	Wed Oct 11	Thu Oct 12
50°F	58°F	60°F	56°F	57°F	59°F	53°F
29°F	39°F	34°F	33°F	36°F	39°F	41°F
NW	SW	NNW	NNE	ESE	E	NE
28 MPH	13 MPH	15 MPH	9 MPH	10 MPH	11 MPH	12 MPH
						10%



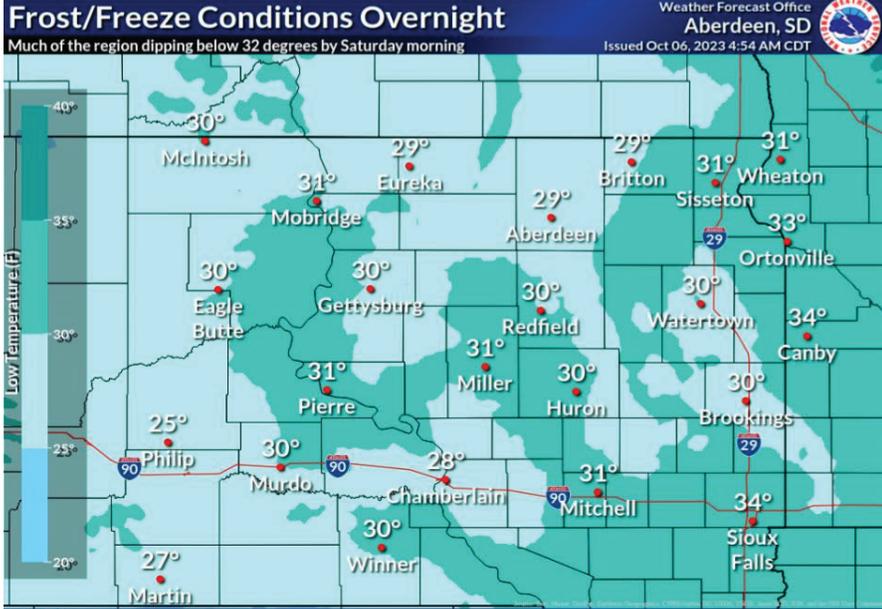
Cold Conditions Settling in Tonight!

October 6, 2023
5:40 AM

Remaining windy today

Frost/Freeze Conditions Overnight

Much of the region dipping below 32 degrees by Saturday morning



Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD
Issued Oct 06, 2023 4:54 AM CDT

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast

	10/6 Fri					10/7 Sat
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am
Aberdeen	45	37	31	25	14	12
Britton	41	37	35	28	16	12
Brookings	40	38	35	29	17	10
Chamberlain	41	38	33	28	10	7
Clark	41	36	31	26	17	14
Eagle Butte	46	36	29	23	12	10
Ellendale	46	39	32	26	14	12
Eureka	43	37	31	26	15	10
Gettysburg	43	38	31	25	14	12
Huron	40	38	32	26	13	10
Kennebec	44	40	36	28	13	10
McIntosh	45	33	30	25	12	10
Milbank	36	36	33	28	20	15
Miller	41	36	30	24	14	12
Mobridge	41	35	28	24	14	8
Murdo	45	38	33	26	13	10
Pierre	40	35	30	24	12	7
Redfield	43	36	31	25	14	12
Sisseton	40	38	35	29	21	16
Watertown	41	37	36	29	20	14
Webster	44	39	36	30	21	16
Wheaton	36	33	32	28	22	17




www.weather.gov/abr

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Windy conditions will persist today, especially during the morning into early afternoon as colder air continues filtering into the region. Although, winds will slowly diminish during the mid to late afternoon hours, eventually becoming light after midnight.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 58 °F at 2:28 PM

Low Temp: 49 °F at 9:05 PM

Wind: 28 mph at 1:49 PM

Precip: : 0.03

Day length: 11 hours, 29 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 91 in 1993

Record Low: 19 in 2012

Average High: 65

Average Low: 38

Average Precip in Oct.: 0.47

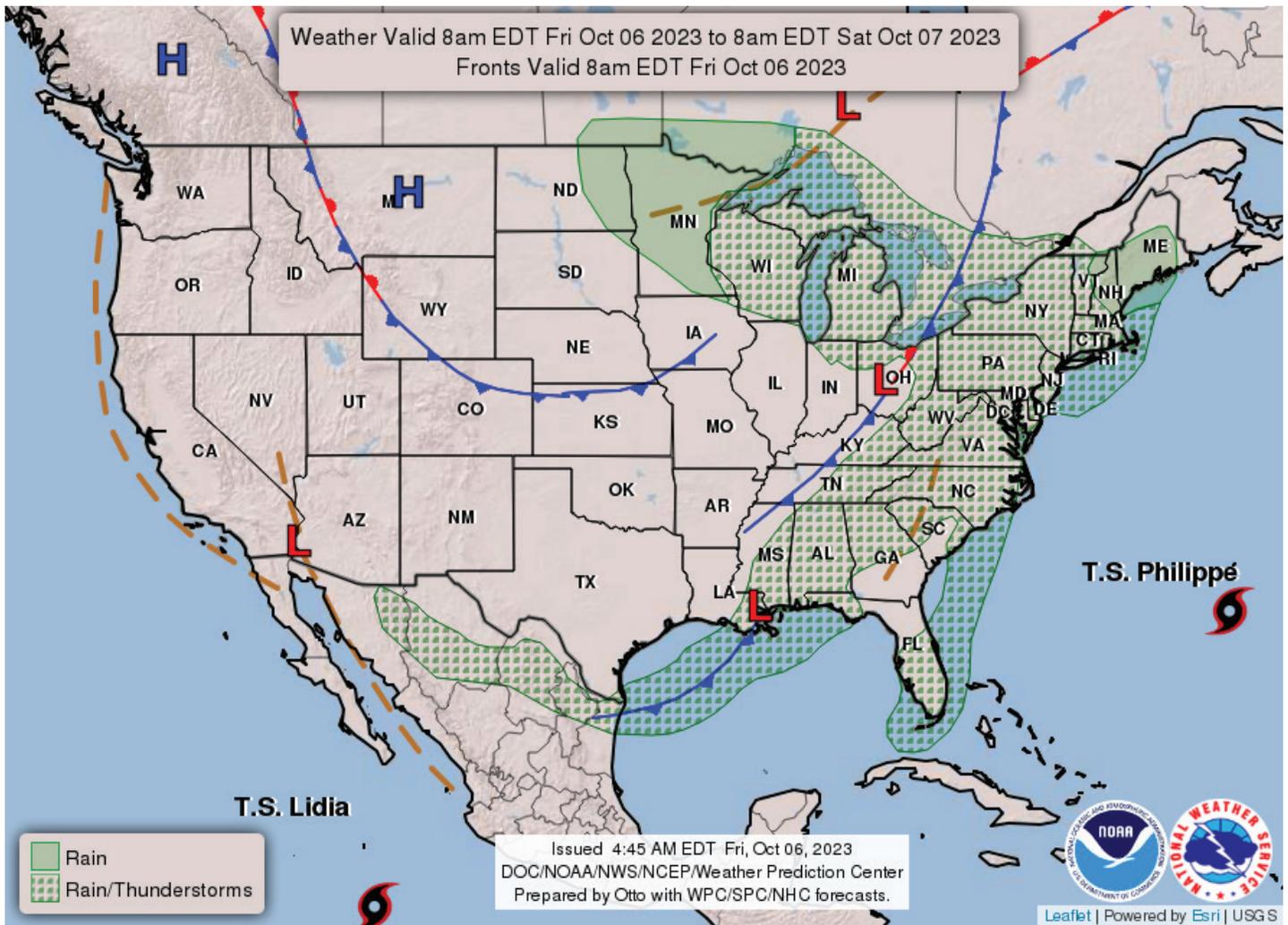
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.06

Average Precip to date: 18.80

Precip Year to Date: 21.83

Sunset Tonight: 7:05:28 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:36:48 AM



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Today in Weather History

October 6, 1994: During the late afternoon hours, a small tornado traveled for 3 miles along an intermittent path east of Browns Valley, damaging several buildings on a local farmstead. Another tornado touched down east of Wilmot, South Dakota, in Roberts County. The tornado was on the ground for eight miles and destroyed several small farm buildings, a garage, damaged farm machinery, blew down a grain bin, and uprooted several trees. Several hogs were killed when their shed was destroyed, and minor damage was done to some homes. The tornado drove a 6-foot long 1x6 piece of lumber through the center of a large tree limb.

1836 - A second early season snowstorm produced eleven inches at Wilkes Barre PA and 26 inches at Auburn NY. All the mountains in the northeastern U.S. were whitened with snow. (David Ludlum)

1952: Sleet fell at several locations, making it the earliest documented winter precipitation in Arkansas.

1967: A Canadian weather record one-day rainfall of 19.3 inches falls at Brynnor Mines at Ucluelet.

1981: The Netherlands' fourth-worst aircraft accident (at the time) occurred on this day. At 5:09 PM, the crew noted heavy rainfall in thunderstorms on the weather avoidance radar and received clearance to avoid this area. At 5:12 pm, the aircraft entered a tornado, which caused the right-wing to separate from the plane. All 17 occupants of the plane perished in the accident.

1984 - The temperature at Honolulu, Hawaii, reached 94 degrees to establish an all-time record at that location. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - A tropical wave, later to become Tropical Storm Isabel, struck Puerto Rico. As much as 24 inches of rain fell in 24 hours, and the severe flooding and numerous landslides resulting from the rain claimed about 180 lives. (Storm Data)

1987 - The western U.S. continued to sizzle. Afternoon highs of 85 degrees at Astoria OR, 101 degrees at Tucson AZ, and 102 degrees at Sacramento CA, equalled October records. It marked the fourth time in the month that Sacramento tied their record for October. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cool Canadian air prevailed across the central and eastern U.S. Toledo OH reported a record low of 27 degrees. Limestone ME received an inch of snow. Warm weather continued in the western U.S. Boise ID reported a record high of 87 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Temperatures soared into the 90s across southern Texas. Afternoon highs of 93 degrees at Houston, and 96 degrees at Austin and Corpus Christi, were records for the date. Beeville was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon high of 101 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2010: A significant severe weather event struck northern Arizona with at least eight confirmed tornadoes. This event will go down in history as the most tornadoes to hit Arizona in a single day. An EF2 tornado was on the ground for 34 miles, ranking as the longest-tracked tornado in Arizona history.

2016: Around a half dozen tornadoes struck Kansas, including an EF-2 and EF-3 in Saline County.

2016: The center of Category 4 Hurricane Matthew passed within 100 miles of Miami, Florida.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

"A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE"

Here it comes again: "The fear of the Lord!"

How many times do we need to be reminded?

Certainly, one more time. And then, one more time. And after that, one more time - again and again. We quickly forget this truth whenever we believe we have any strength.

Most of us are not only forgetful, but quite often convince ourselves that we can do it "on our own" when life seems to be "trouble free" and "good again." Perhaps that's why those "eight words" appear together so often in Scripture. In a preceding verse Solomon said that "the fear of the Lord will be a secure fortress" - a place where we will find a powerful refuge and our safety will be as certain as God Himself.

But, again, one more time, there is more. "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death," wrote Solomon on behalf of God. What a wonderful promise to those who had gone without water and experienced drought and lost cattle and crops. We may fear many things, but God is the fountain of life that never runs dry. Not only is He the fountain of life, but the only source that provides refreshing, clear, clean water to quench our thirst and restore our souls daily.

How very sad for those who refuse to drink from "the fountain of life" and choose to turn to the "fun things of life." What may appear satisfying and gratifying is often a trap and cannot quench one's thirst. Only "He can lead us to those still waters," restore our souls and give us eternal life. This invitation is available to all.

But life begins and ends with "The fear of the Lord."

Prayer: Lord, we bow before You with grateful hearts and ask for Your mercy, grace, and forgiveness. May we will always approach You with grateful hearts. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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
- 08/10/2023 Family Fun Fest, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/08/2023 Family Fun Fest 3:30-5:30pm
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/09-10/2023 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 09/10/2023 Emmanuel Lutheran Church Sunday School Rally 9:00am
- 09/10/2023 7th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 4-6pm
- 09/15/2023 Homecoming Parade
- 10/13/2023 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes, Live & Silent Auctions at Olive Grove Golf Course 4pm-close
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.03.23

3 19 32 39 59 24

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$350,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 21 Mins 17
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.04.23

4 5 8 26 42 8

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,550,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 36
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.05.23

15 23 30 40 41 9

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 51 Mins 17
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.04.23

9 17 18 19 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 51
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.04.23

12 30 39 64 67 22

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 20
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.04.23

9 35 54 63 64 1

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$1,400,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 20
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Thursday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Britton-Hecla, 25-14, 28-26, 25-20
Avon def. Bridgewater-Emery, 25-23, 25-22, 21-25, 26-24
Belle Fourche def. Douglas, 26-24, 21-25, 28-26, 25-18
Bison def. McLaughlin, 25-21, 21-25, 25-22, 25-22
Brandon Valley def. Yankton, 25-19, 25-21, 25-22
Canistota def. Howard, 25-13, 25-21, 25-21
Canton def. Garretson, 25-15, 28-26, 26-24
Centerville def. Scotland, 25-18, 25-20, 25-17
Deuel def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-16, 25-12, 25-17
Dupree def. Jones County, 21-25, 25-20, 17-25, 25-23, 15-10
Edgemont def. Sioux County, Neb., 20-25, 25-21, 25-20, 25-15
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Deubrook, 26-24, 25-20, 25-21
Estelline/Hendricks def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-12, 25-16, 25-16
Flandreau Indian def. Santee, Neb., 25-0, 25-0, 25-0
Florence def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-9, 25-18, 25-15
Florence/Henry def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-9, 25-18, 25-15
Gayville-Volin High School def. Menno, 25-22, 25-17, 25-16
Great Plains Lutheran def. Langford, 25-21, 26-24, 25-23
Groton Area def. Milbank, 25-17, 25-15, 25-22
Hamlin def. Sisseton, 25-12, 25-23, 20-25, 25-21
Herreid/Selby Area def. North Central Co-Op, 25-15, 25-21, 25-21
Lemmon High School def. New Underwood, 25-6, 25-9, 25-15
Madison def. Dakota Valley, 26-24, 25-23, 25-20
McCook Central/Montrose def. West Central, 25-27, 25-23, 23-25, 25-18, 15-12
Miller def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-17, 21-25, 25-16, 14-25, 15-11
Mobridge-Pollock def. Winner, 25-22, 25-10, 25-17
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Chamberlain, 25-8, 25-16, 25-18
Northwestern def. Faulkton, 25-22, 25-18, 25-13
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. DeSmet, 25-17, 25-13, 23-25, 25-18
Platte-Geddes def. Gregory, 25-22, 25-12, 25-17
Rapid City Christian def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-5, 25-6, 25-9
Redfield def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-12, 25-21, 25-16
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-19, 25-20, 21-25, 25-22
Sioux Falls Christian def. Southwest Minnesota Christian, Minn., 25-9, 25-21, 25-12
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Tea Area, 25-16, 25-13, 25-18
Spearfish def. Sturgis Brown, 25-13, 25-11, 25-14
Stanley County def. Colome, 25-23, 25-11, 25-18
Wall def. Custer, 25-15, 25-14, 25-13
Hay Springs Triangular=
Hay Springs, Neb. def. Lakota Tech, 25-11, 25-23, 25-17

PREP FOOTBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 21, Webster 6
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 30, Pine Ridge 22
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 45, Sioux Falls Washington 0

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

US government agrees to help restore sacred Native American site destroyed for Oregon road project

By CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The U.S. government has agreed to help restore a sacred Native American site on the slopes of Oregon's Mount Hood that was destroyed by highway construction, court documents show, capping more than 15 years of legal battles that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a settlement filed with the high court Thursday, the U.S. Department of Transportation and other federal agencies agreed to replant trees and aid in efforts to rebuild an altar at a site along U.S. Highway 26 that tribes said had been used for religious purposes since time immemorial.

Members of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde said a 2008 project to add a turn lane on the highway destroyed an area known as the Place of Big Big Trees, which was home to a burial ground, a historic campground, medicinal plants, old-growth Douglas Firs and a stone altar.

Carol Logan, an elder and member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde who was a plaintiff in the case, said she hopes the settlement would prevent the destruction of similar sites in the future.

"Our sacred places may not look like the buildings where most Americans worship, but they deserve the same protection, dignity, and respect," Logan said in a statement shared by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which represented the plaintiffs in their lawsuit.

The defendants included the Department of Transportation and its Federal Highway Administration division; the Department of the Interior and its Bureau of Land Management; and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The Federal Highway Administration and the Department of the Interior declined to comment on the settlement.

In court documents dating back to 2008 when the suit was filed, Logan and Wilbur Slockish, who is a hereditary chief of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, said they visited the site for decades to pray, gather sacred plants and pay respects to their ancestors until it was demolished.

They accused the agencies involved of violating, among other things, their religious freedom and the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires tribal consultation when a federal project may affect places that are on tribal lands or of cultural or historic significance to a tribe.

Under the settlement, the government agreed to plant nearly 30 trees on the parcel and maintain them through watering and other means for at least three years.

They also agreed to help restore the stone altar, install a sign explaining its importance to Native Americans and grant Logan and Slockish access to the surrounding area for cultural purposes.

Economic spotlight turns to US jobs data as markets are roiled by high rates and uncertainties

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Job growth in the United States has remained resilient for the past 2 1/2 years even after high inflation flared and the Federal Reserve jacked up interest rates at the fastest pace in four decades.

The September jobs report that the Labor Department will issue Friday will show just how much of

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that durability remains. Additional threats to the economy have emerged in recent weeks, including much higher long-term interest rates, rising energy prices, the resumption of student loan payments, widening labor strikes and the ongoing threat of a government shutdown.

Economists have forecast that employers added 163,000 jobs last month, a solid increase, though down sharply from the pace earlier this year, when the economy was adding an average of 310,000 jobs a month in the first quarter. The unemployment rate is expected to drop to 3.7%, near a 50-year low, from 3.8% in August.

A growing body of evidence, though, suggests that the job market is cooling — something Fed officials would like to see. A slower pace of hiring eases pressure on employers to offer higher pay to find and keep employees, which, in turn, can help cool inflation. Businesses often raise their prices to cover their higher labor costs.

Fewer Americans are quitting their jobs after a surge in resignations in the aftermath of the pandemic. Most people quit to take other jobs with higher pay, so the decline in quitting indicates that workers now see fewer available opportunities elsewhere.

And while the government reported a jump in open jobs in August, other measures, like those compiled by the job listings website Indeed, showed little change in that month and a steady decline in job vacancies for more than a year.

Yet the job market has been so strong for so long that a slowdown, as long as it remains gradual, would still keep it at healthy levels. The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits, which tends to track the pace of layoffs, has remained persistently low. Many companies are reluctant to shed workers after having found it difficult to staff up again after the 2020 pandemic recession ended with a quick and robust recovery.

And surveys by the Institute for Supply Management, a trade group of purchasing managers, found that both manufacturing and services companies kept adding jobs last month. Among banks, restaurants, retailers and other service sector companies, hiring accelerated in September compared with August, according to the ISM.

Friday's jobs report comes at a time when the Fed is scrutinizing every piece of economic data to determine whether it needs to raise its key rate once more this year or instead just leave it elevated well into next year. After 11 hikes beginning in March 2022, the Fed's benchmark rate stands at a 22-year high of roughly 5.4%. The central bank's rate increases have led to much higher borrowing costs for consumer and businesses across the economy.

On the one hand, Fed officials, including Chair Jerome Powell, have stressed that inflation remains too far above their 2% target and that another rate hike might be needed to reduce it to that level. At the same time, several Fed policymakers have underscored that they want to be careful not to raise borrowing rates so much as to trigger a deep recession.

One of them, Mary Daly, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, said Thursday that a slower pace of hiring could help persuade the Fed not to hike again this year.

"If we continue to see a cooling labor market and inflation heading back to our target, we can hold interest rates steady and let the effects of policy continue to work," Daly said in remarks to the Economic Club of New York.

After a period in the spring when traders seemed to expect the Fed to reverse course and cut interest rates soon, the financial markets have increasingly recognized that the central bank will keep its key rate elevated well into 2024. That's one reason why the yield on the 10-year Treasury note has surged since July, reaching a 16-year high this week before slipping to 4.7% Thursday.

The 10-year yield is a benchmark rate for other borrowing costs, including mortgages, auto loans and business borrowing. The average rate on a fixed 30-year mortgage jumped to nearly 7.5% this week, the highest level in 23 years. The higher yield has, in turn, punished stocks. The S&P 500 stock index has tumbled 7.2% since late July.

The surge in longer-term rates coincides with other threats to the economy, from higher gas prices and

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this week's resumption of student loan payments to the autoworkers' strike and the risk of a government shutdown next month, all of which could leave consumers with less money to spend to power the economy.

The economy's growth in the current October-December quarter could slow to an annual rate as low as a 0.7%, Goldman Sachs has estimated, sharply below a roughly 3.5% pace in the July-September quarter.

Jailed Iranian activist Narges Mohammadi wins the Nobel Peace Prize for fighting women's oppression

OSLO, Norway (AP) — Imprisoned activist Narges Mohammadi, who has campaigned for women's rights, democracy and against the death penalty in Iran for years, won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday.

Mohammadi, 51, has done her work despite facing numerous arrests and spending years behind bars for her activism.

"This prize is first and foremost a recognition of the very important work of a whole movement in Iran with with its undisputed leader, Nargis Mohammadi," said Berit Reiss-Andersen, the chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee who announced the prize in Oslo. "The impact of the prize is not for the Nobel committee to decide upon. We hope that it is an encouragement to continue the work in whichever form this movement finds to be fitting."

Mohammadi's most recent incarceration began when she was detained in 2021 after she attended a memorial for a person killed in nationwide 2019 protests sparked by an increase in gasoline prices. She's been held at Tehran's notorious Evin Prison, whose inmates include those with Western ties and political prisoners.

Reiss-Andersen said Mohammadi has been imprisoned 13 times and convicted five times. In total, she has been sentenced to 31 years in prison.

She is the 19th woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize and the second Iranian woman, after human rights activist Shirin Ebadi won the award in 2003.

Mohammadi was behind bars for the recent protests over the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody. That sparked one of the most intense challenges ever to Iran's theocracy. More than 500 people were killed in a heavy security crackdown while over 22,000 others were arrested.

From behind bars, Mohammadi contributed an opinion piece for The New York Times.

"What the government may not understand is that the more of us they lock up, the stronger we become," she wrote.

There was no immediate reaction from Iranian state television and other state-controlled media. Some semiofficial news agencies acknowledged Mohammadi's win in online messages, citing foreign press reports.

Before being jailed, Mohammadi was vice president of the banned Defenders of Human Rights Center in Iran. She has been close to Ebadi, who founded the center.

In 2018, Mohammadi, an engineer, was awarded the 2018 Andrei Sakharov Prize.

PEN America, which advocates for freedom of speech and earlier this year gave Mohammadi its PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write Award, applauded the win.

The choice "is a tribute to her courage and that of countless women and girls who have poured out into the streets of Iran and faced down one of the world's most brutal and stubborn regimes, risking their lives to demand their rights," PEN America CEO Suzanne Nossel said in a statement.

The Nobel Prizes carry a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (about \$1 million). Winners also receive an 18-carat gold medal and diploma at the award ceremonies in December.

The winner of the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize is chosen by a panel of experts in Norway from a list of just over 350 nominations.

Last year's prize was won by human rights activists from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, in what was seen as a strong rebuke to Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Belarusian counterpart and ally.

Other previous winners include Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama, Mikhail Gorbachev, Aung San Suu Kyi and the United Nations.

Unlike the other Nobel prizes that are selected and announced in Stockholm, founder Alfred Nobel decreed

that the peace prize be decided and awarded in Oslo by the five-member Norwegian Nobel Committee. The independent panel is appointed by the Norwegian parliament.

The peace prize is the fifth of this year's prizes to be announced. A day earlier, the Nobel committee awarded Norwegian writer Jon Fosse the prize for literature. On Wednesday, the chemistry prize went to U.S. scientists Moungi Bawendi, Louis Brus and Alexei Ekimov.

The physics prize went Tuesday to French-Swedish physicist Anne L'Huillier, French scientist Pierre Agostini and Hungarian-born Ferenc Krausz. Hungarian-American Katalin Karikó and American Drew Weissman won the Nobel Prize in medicine on Monday.

Nobel's season ends next week with the announcement of the winner of the economics prize, formally known as the Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

Icy flood that killed at least 41 in India's northeast had been feared for years

By ASHOK SHARMA and SIBI ARASU Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Hundreds of rescuers dug through slushy debris and fast-flowing, icy water Friday in a search for survivors after a glacial lake overflowed and burst through a dam in India's Himalayan north, a disaster that many had warned was possible for years.

The flood began in the early hours of Wednesday, when water overflowed a mountain lake with enough force to break through the concrete of a major hydroelectric dam downstream. It then poured into the valley below, where it killed at least 41 people and forced thousands to flee their homes.

Police said that 22 of the dead were found kilometers (miles) downriver in West Bengal state, while 100 people are still missing.

It wasn't clear what triggered the flood. Experts pointed to intense rain, and a 6.2 magnitude earthquake that struck nearby Nepal on Tuesday afternoon, as possible contributors.

The deadly flood was the latest to hit northeast India in a year of unusually heavy monsoon rains. Nearly 50 people died in flash floods and landslides in August in nearby Himachal Pradesh state, and record rains in northern India killed more than 100 people over two weeks in July.

The design and placement of the 6-year-old Teesta 3 dam, the largest in Sikkim state, were controversial from the time it was built, part of an Indian push to expand hydropower energy.

Local activists argued that extreme weather caused by climate changes makes dam-building in the Himalayas too dangerous, and warned that the dam's design didn't include enough safety measures.

A report compiled by the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority in 2019 had identified the lake the Teesta 3 dam was built to contain as "highly vulnerable" to flooding that could cause extensive damage to life and property in downstream areas, warning of the risk of flash floods that could break through dams.

The dam's operator, and local agencies responsible for dam safety, did not respond to requests for comment Friday.

A 2021 study by researchers in India, the United States and Switzerland warned that a catastrophic flood was becoming more likely as melting glaciers caused water levels in the lake to rise.

The Teesta 3 hydropower project, built on the Teesta River, took nine years and cost \$1.5 billion to construct. The project was capable of producing 1,200 megawatts of electricity — enough to power 1.5 million Indian homes — and began operation in 2017.

"Despite being the biggest project in the state, there were no early warning systems installed even though the glacier overflowing was a known risk," said Himanshu Thakkar of the non-governmental organization South Asian Network for Rivers, Dams and People.

According to a release from India's National Disaster Management Agency Friday, they plan to set up early warning systems for real-time alerts at most of India's 56 known at-risk glacial lakes.

Thakkar said authorities failed to apply the lessons from a 2021 dam breach in Himalayan state of Uttarakhand that killed 81 people, allowing an "eerily similar" disaster to occur.

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"We knew that this was coming," said Gyatso Lepcha, general secretary of Affected Citizens of Teesta, an environmental organization based in Sikkim. "The same can happen with other dams also," he wrote, in a statement that called for a safety review of all dams in the state.

Disasters caused by landslides and floods are common in India's Himalayan region during the June-September monsoon season. Scientists say they are becoming more frequent as global warming contributes to the melting of glaciers there.

Despite the risks, the Indian government has approved hundreds of new hydroelectric dams to be built across the Himalayan region. To meet ambitious clean energy goals, it aims to increase India's hydroelectric dam output by half, to 70,000 megawatts, by 2030.

But the growing frequency and intensity of extreme weather, driven in part by climate change, puts many of these dams and the people living downstream from them at risk. A 2016 study found that over a fifth of the 177 dams built close Himalayan glaciers could fail if glacial lakes burst, including the dam in Sikkim.

In 2021, the Indian federal government passed a dam safety law that requires operators and local governments to plan for emergencies, but the Teesta-3 dam is not listed as being monitored for safety by India's chief dam regulator, the Central Water Commission.

Last month, dam breaches caused by Storm Daniel caused devastating damage to the city of Derna in Libya.

More than 2,000 people were rescued after Wednesday's floods, the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority said in a statement, adding that state authorities set up 26 relief camps for more than 22,000 people impacted by the floods.

One soldier was previously reported missing was rescued, and the bodies of seven have been found, state police said.

Eleven bridges in the Lachan Valley were washed away by the floodwaters, which also hit pipelines and damaged or destroyed more than 270 houses in four districts, officials said.

The army said it was providing medical aid and phone connectivity to civilians in the areas of Chungthang, Lachung and Lachen, and local media reported that said the army was erecting temporary bridges to bring food to affected areas.

Funerals held in Syria for dozens of victims killed in deadliest attack in years

By ALBERT AJI Associated Press

HOMS, Syria (AP) — Family members of some of the victims of a deadly drone attack on a crowded military graduation ceremony that killed scores gathered outside a military hospital in the central city of Homs on Friday to collect the bodies of their loved ones, who died in one of Syria's deadliest single attacks in years.

Thursday's strike on the Homs Military Academy killed 89 people, including 31 women and five children, and wounded as many as 277, according to the health ministry. The death toll could rise as some of the wounded are in critical condition. Syria announced a three-day state of mourning starting Friday.

Fearing retaliation from the government, religious authorities in areas held by the opposition in northern Syria said Friday prayers will not be held in mosques and called on people to pray at home instead "out of concern for the safety of Muslims."

Syria's military said in a statement Thursday that drones laden with explosives targeted the ceremony packed with young officers and their families as it was wrapping up. Without naming any particular group, the military accused insurgents "backed by known international forces" for the attack and said "it will respond with full force and decisiveness to these terrorist organizations, wherever they exist."

The attack is likely to lead to a wave of violence in the country's northwest, where front lines have been relatively calm since Russia and Turkey, who support rival sides in the country's conflict, reached a cease-fire in March 2020 ending a three-month Russian-backed government offensive against insurgents.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for Thursday's attack as Syria endures its 13th year of conflict that has killed half a million people.

Overnight, Syrian troops pounded the last major rebel-held region in parts of Idlib and Aleppo provinces, killing at least three people and wounding more than 15 in the town of Daret Azeh, according to the opposition's Syrian Civil Defense, also known as White Helmets.

In Homs, hundreds of people, many of them dressed in black and weeping, gathered outside the Abdul-Qader Shaqfa Military Hospital where the bodies of 30 victims in coffins draped with Syrian flags were put in ambulances to be taken to their hometowns for burial.

Army Lt. Ibrahim Shaaban came to collect the body of his fiancée, Raneem Quba, 23, who was killed along with her father, Mohammed, and younger sister, Rima, while attending the graduation of her brother, Lt. Hussein Quba.

"I feel that my back was broken," Shaaban said, holding back his tears while standing by her coffin. "She was not only a fiancée, but a mother, a sister and a friend."

Legislator Bassam Mohammed said targeting a place where civilians are present "is a terrorist criminal act," and that the attackers intended to inflict large numbers of casualties.

Syrian Defense Minister Gen. Ali Abbas was present Friday outside the hospital, where he comforted the families of victims. An opposition war monitor reported Thursday that Abbas had left the graduation ceremony shortly before the attack.

One of the survivors, Lt. Jaafar Mohammed, 23, said he was taking some photos with relatives by the platform and something suddenly exploded in front of them.

"I was thrown to the ground," said Mohammed, who suffered an arm injury. He said his brother was killed and his father and younger brother were also injured.

Syria's crisis started with peaceful protests against President Bashar Assad's government in March 2011 but quickly morphed into a full-blown civil war after the government's brutal crackdown on the protesters. The tide turned in Assad's favor against rebel groups in 2015, when Russia provided key military backing to Syria, as well as Iran and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

Stricter state laws are chipping away at sex education in K-12 schools

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A dozen state or county agencies have parted ways with tens of thousands of dollars in federal grants meant to help monitor teenagers' sexual behaviors and try to lower rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The withdrawals reflect a shift in many states that is further complicating and polarizing sex education in K-12 schools as some Republican-led legislatures more strictly regulate when and what students learn about their bodies. The new laws are part of a broad push to fortify "parents' rights" and strike LGBTQ+ content from the classroom, core themes that have flooded the campaign for the GOP presidential nomination.

Experts are concerned students won't reliably learn about adolescence, safe sexual activity or relationship violence, topics they say are especially important since sexually transmitted diseases rose after the pandemic and access to abortion is increasingly restricted.

Anne-Marie Amies Oelschlager, a pediatric and adolescent gynecologist at Seattle Children's Hospital, said a trained, trusted adult is critical for young people to get good information versus other, less trustworthy sources like social media.

"When we stop talking about these things or ... try to push things under the rug, we just increase risk," she said.

Fewer teens are sexually active, a 2021 government survey showed, but federal data that year also suggest teens and young adults made up half of all people with STDs. For the youngest generations, the language about sex is evolving.

This year, lawmakers passed bans on teaching human sexuality before fourth grade in Indiana and sexual reproduction or sexual intercourse before fifth grade in Arkansas. In Kentucky, educators can't teach sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases before sixth grade, and parents must provide consent for older

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students. A handful of states require parents to opt in to instruction instead of opting out.

In Florida, materials about reproductive health, human sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases for any grade must be approved by state officials. A letter from the state agency indicates curriculum was due for review by the end of September.

Advocates for comprehensive sex education say the restrictions in early education may prevent kids from getting age-appropriate foundational knowledge that they build on each year, said Alison Macklin, director of policy and advocacy at the progressive sex education organization SIECUS.

"You were never going to teach a first grader a trigonometry lesson, right?" she said. "But they have to have foundational knowledge in first grade to be able to get to that in high school."

"Sex education is exactly the same," Macklin continued, suggesting young people aren't prepared for puberty if they haven't already learned "foundational things like correct terminology for body parts."

Puberty for girls begins between ages 8 to 13 and typically two years later for boys. To comply with the new law in Kentucky, for example, the state's education agency advised schools eliminate fifth-grade lessons on puberty and reproductive body parts.

The consensus was sex education in elementary school "wasn't necessary or appropriate in any context," said David Walls, executive director of The Family Foundation, a Christian organization in Kentucky that advocated for the law.

Many parents disagree with the boundaries around what is considered age appropriate by sex ed advocates, he said, particularly when it comes to gender identity and "the idea that biological sex is not an immutable characteristic."

The law "sets a base level of protection for parents to be able to be the ones that can review the curriculum and make a decision as to whether that's something they'd like their child to participate in," Walls said.

There is federal guidance for developing evidence-based and age-appropriate sexual health curricula, but state laws and local implementation run the gamut.

Twenty-eight states require sex education, and 35 require HIV education, according to tracking by the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights. Most states require any instruction on sex or disease prevention to include abstinence, and most states allow parents to opt out.

While many states have curtailed sex education, others have codified comprehensive and inclusive standards. Massachusetts, for example, recently announced new sexual health education guidelines, which were last updated in 1999.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services award millions of dollars for programs designed, in part, to track teen behavior and teach abstinence and contraception with the goal of creating safe environments and preventing pregnancy and diseases.

Idaho's Division of Public Health said it no longer administered the HHS grant for personal responsibility education programs, or PREP, as of July 1 after lawmakers did not approve the spending during the legislative session.

New Hampshire withdrew from PREP funding after a five-member Republican-led council that approves contracts repeatedly blocked funding in 2022. However, PREP funding doesn't necessarily disappear if a state's officials reject it; instead, it can be awarded directly to local organizations, which is now the case in New Hampshire.

A different grant is provided by the CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health for a biennial youth survey. Since March 2022, six states have discontinued the agreement to conduct the survey: Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Iowa and South Carolina. Some of those states also have new laws restricting schools' ability to administer surveys.

Four Florida counties encompassing parts of the Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville and Miami metro areas also withdrew from another CDC grant to expand student health resources and education.

The CDC will "always promote the best available science," said Kathleen Ethier, director of the agency's Division of Adolescent and School Health. The agency said it is committed to collecting data revealing youth health challenges and recommending evidence-based programs addressing them.

Ethier said there is always a "disconnect" between their recommendations and state and local policies,

but she is less focused on any given health class “than the whole school environment.”

“I worry any time educators don’t feel able to thoughtfully answer young people’s questions,” Ethier said.

Teenagers’ curiosity drives Teen Health Mississippi, a organization that trains educators and offers supplemental programs for parents and teens.

About a quarter of the state’s counties work with the nonprofit and the state’s health agency to implement an “abstinence-plus” program, an option schools have to teach about contraception in addition to the now-permanent requirement to teach abstinence.

Hope Crenshaw, the organization’s director, said low percentage of counties suggests “a lot of young people aren’t getting that information and many of them are getting it based on their zip code.”

“Young people want information to protect themselves,” Crenshaw said.

Kayla Smith is among them. The 18-year-old freshman at the University of Mississippi volunteered to be a youth advocate with Teen Health Mississippi, engaging her peers and answering their questions.

The topic of sex in Mississippi is “taboo,” Smith said. She remembers just one optional day of sex education in middle school.

“I wanted to learn information about healthy relationships, contraceptive options,” she said. Instead, she believes abstinence-only curriculum is “withholding information about those important details that can help people make safe and informed health choices.”

Donald Trump endorses Jim Jordan to succeed Kevin McCarthy as House speaker

By JILL COLVIN and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Donald Trump is officially backing Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, the pugnacious House Judiciary Committee chairman and longtime Trump defender, to succeed Kevin McCarthy as House speaker.

“Congressman Jim Jordan has been a STAR long before making his very successful journey to Washington, D.C., representing Ohio’s 4th Congressional District,” Trump wrote on his Truth Social site shortly after midnight Friday. “He will be a GREAT Speaker of the House, & has my Complete & Total Endorsement!”

The announcement came hours after Texas Rep. Troy Nehls said Thursday night that Trump had decided to back Jordan’s bid and after Trump said he would be open to serving as interim leader himself if Republicans couldn’t settle on a successor following McCarthy’s stunning ouster.

Trump, the current GOP presidential front-runner, has used the leadership vacuum on the Hill to further demonstrate his control over the Republican Party. House Republicans are deeply fractured and some have been asking him to lead them — a seemingly fanciful suggestion that he also promoted after inflaming the divisions that forced out McCarthy as speaker.

Trump had been telling people in recent days that he preferred Jordan for the post, according to two Republicans familiar with his thinking and granted anonymity to discuss it. But it was unclear whether he intended to announce it before Nehls’ tweet.

“Just had a great conversation with President Trump about the Speaker’s race. He is endorsing Jim Jordan, and I believe Congress should listen to the leader of our party,” Nehls wrote late Thursday on X, formerly known as Twitter.

In an interview later with The Associated Press, Nehls, who had been encouraging Trump to run for the post himself, said the ex-president instead wanted Jordan.

“After him thinking about it and this and that ... he said he really is in favor of getting behind Jim Jordan,” Nehls said. “He believes Jim Jordan is right for the job.”

Jordan is one of two leading candidates maneuvering for speaker along with Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana. Both are trying to lock in the 218 votes required to win the job and need the support of both the far-right and moderate factions of the party. It’s unclear whether Trump’s endorsement will force Scalise, the current GOP majority leader, out of the race, or if either can reach the threshold.

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Indeed, Nehls said that if no current candidate succeeds in earning the support needed to win, he would once again turn to Trump. "Our conference is divided. Our country is broken. I don't know who can get to 218," he said in the interview.

Trump earlier in the day had been in talks to visit Capitol Hill next week ahead of a speakership vote that could happen as soon as Wednesday, according to three people familiar with the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of an official announcement. Trump confirmed the trip to Fox News Digital and said he would travel Tuesday to meet with Republicans.

The trip would have been Trump's first to the Capitol since leaving office and since his supporters attacked the building in a bid to halt the peaceful transition of power on Jan. 6, 2021. Trump has been indicted in both Washington and Georgia over his efforts to overturn the results of the election, which he lost to President Joe Biden.

Nehls, however, said it was unlikely Trump would make the trip following the endorsement.

Jordan is one of Trump's biggest champions on the Hill and has been leading the investigations into prosecutors who have charged the former president. He was also part of a group of Republicans who worked with Trump to overturn his defeat ahead of Jan. 6.

Scalise has also worked closely with Trump over the years.

One of the people familiar with the planning had cautioned earlier Thursday that, if Trump did go ahead with the visit, he would be there to talk with Republican lawmakers and not to pitch himself for the role.

Still, Trump continued to stoke speculation, telling Fox News Digital Thursday that he would accept a short-term role as speaker — for anywhere from 30 to 90 days — if another candidate doesn't have the votes to win.

"I have been asked to speak as a unifier because I have so many friends in Congress," he told the outlet. "If they don't get the vote, they have asked me if I would consider taking the speakership until they get somebody longer-term, because I am running for president."

In a social media post earlier in the day, he added that he "will do whatever is necessary to help with the Speaker of the House selection process, short term, until the final selection of a GREAT REPUBLICAN SPEAKER is made - A Speaker who will help a new, but highly experienced President, ME, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

The Republican conference is filled with members generally supportive of Trump, but whether they'd back him to serve as speaker remained to be seen. The role is a demanding position — effectively running the Capitol and dealing with hundreds of lawmakers — and requires an attention to the arcane details of legislating that Trump showed little interest in even when he was president.

While he is dominating his GOP presidential rivals, Trump is also still traveling to early primary states to campaign and has been spending much of his time focused on the four criminal indictments and several civil cases he is facing.

While there is no requirement that a person be elected to the House to serve as speaker, every one of the 55 speakers the House has elected has been a member of the chamber. From time to time, lawmakers have thrown their votes to those outside of Congress, often as a protest against the candidates running.

Trump helped McCarthy win the speakership in January after 15 rounds of voting. But he exhorted Republicans to impeach Biden and to reject deals that McCarthy negotiated. Last month, he urged the right flank to support a government shutdown if Republicans did not win deep spending cuts, declaring on social media that the GOP "lost big on Debt Ceiling, got NOTHING, and now are worried that they will be BLAMED for the Budget Shutdown. Wrong!!! Whoever is President will be blamed, in this case, Crooked (as Hell!) Joe Biden!"

McCarthy ultimately moved to keep the government open for 45 days without the cuts demanded by hard-right conservatives. Rep. Matt Gaetz, a Florida Republican and longtime Trump ally, cited that decision as reason to move to depose the speaker.

Among those who had pushed Trump for speaker was Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a longtime Trump ally who didn't vote to remove McCarthy. She posted on X that she believed "he would take the job."

Nehls, the Texas Republican who was among the first to promote Trump for the job, said before his

Thursday evening conversation with Trump that he'd been contacted "by multiple Members of Congress willing to support and offer nomination speeches for Donald J. Trump to be Speaker of the House."
"Next week," he wrote on X, "is going to be HUGE."

Who might replace McCarthy as House speaker? What are Republicans already demanding for their vote?

By STEPHEN GROVE, FARNOUSH AMIRI and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For Republicans, it's a question with no clear answer: Who becomes House speaker after Kevin McCarthy?

It's not at all certain that any of the GOP candidates will be able to round up enough votes — 218, if all lawmakers are present and voting — to ascend to one of the most powerful positions in government, second in line to the presidency.

Two longtime party stalwarts and hard-liners, Majority Leader Steve Scalise of Louisiana and House Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan of Ohio, have begun making their case through phone calls and texts to colleagues.

With the House trying to pick a new leader as soon as next week, others are waiting in the wings, including Oklahoma Rep. Kevin Hern, who as chair of the Republican Study Committee leads the largest faction of Republicans in the chamber.

McCarthy's chaotic election as speaker in January took 15 punishing rounds and left him in a weakened position that contributed to his unprecedented downfall. Now, top Republicans want party members to work it out behind closed doors before a floor vote.

"Look, just like in January where you had all the circus on the House floor, I think this is circus-like and chaotic right now," said Rep. Garret Graves, R-La. "It just doesn't make sense."

Republicans on Tuesday plan to kick off the process, in private, at an evening forum where candidates can address their colleagues. Republicans would vote on an endorsement, with only a majority tally needed. But a decision could be delayed.

Former President Donald Trump, the front-runner for the GOP nomination in 2024, endorsed Jordan on his Truth Social platform just after midnight Friday. Trump had been in talks to visit Capitol Hill next week, most likely for that candidate forum, according to three people familiar with the discussions who spoke on the condition of anonymity before an official announcement.

The real contest could come as soon as Wednesday when the House next convenes. But that attempt to elect a speaker could easily be delayed if there is no consensus choice by then.

Democrats will also vote, but Republicans have a slim majority and hold the power to choose the next speaker. Don't expect a crossover or nonpartisan candidate.

A look at the lawmakers vying to be speaker and the demands they are already facing from some Republicans:

Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana

Scalise, now the top-ranking Republican in the House, is seen as an ardent conservative. He would be a logical pick for many Republicans. He brings years of experience in leadership. Scalise was majority whip from 2014-2018 and minority whip from 2019-2022.

He is dealing with multiple myeloma, a form of blood cancer, and undergoing chemotherapy treatment. The toll of the treatments has been obvious as he makes his way around the Capitol. That is raising questions for some about whether Scalise can take on the demanding role of speaker, which usually entails a nearly nonstop schedule of fundraisers and campaign events.

But Scalise has a reputation as a fighter and has told reporters he feels great. He was shot and suffered an injury to his hip in 2017 when an attacker fired on lawmakers on a baseball field in Alexandria, Virginia. Scalise endured lengthy hospitalizations, multiple surgeries and a painful rehabilitation.

"I firmly believe this Conference is a family. When I was shot in 2017, it was Members of this Conference

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who saved my life on that field," he wrote in a letter announcing his bid for speaker.

Both moderate Republicans, such as Texas Rep. Tony Gonzales, and far-right lawmakers, including Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz, have spoken favorably about the potential of Scalise leading the House, creating the possibility that his candidacy could unite the party's feuding factions.

Looming large over the race for speaker is a possible endorsement from Trump.

Scalise has hewed closely to Trump's lies about the presidential election being stolen from him, and was among the 147 Republicans who voted against certifying Democrat Joe Biden's election win.

He's also long faced scrutiny over a 2002 speech to a Louisiana gathering of white nationalists — a decision that in 2014 Scalise said he was misinformed about and regretted.

Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio

Jordan, a founder of the House Freedom Caucus, is likely to be the favored choice of the hard-line conservatives now driving the Republican Conference. The Judiciary Committee's leader has played a key role in Republicans' impeachment inquiry of Biden.

The Ohio Republican, first elected in 2007, had tried to help McCarthy's ultimately doomed effort to hold Republicans together. Jordan had been a key McCarthy advocate since Republicans regained the majority.

Jordan, 59, was also one of Trump's closest allies when Trump was president. Trump even awarded Jordan the Presidential Medal of Freedom five days after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

"I feel like I can unite the conservative voters across the country and reach out to the moderates in our conference as well," Jordan told reporters Wednesday.

He is leading the push against the "weaponization" of the Justice Department, which has brought several cases against Trump. Jordan was one of Trump's chief defenders on the Judiciary Committee during Trump's two impeachments.

Perhaps most significantly, Jordan worked closely with Trump and White House aides in the weeks and days before the Capitol riot, strategizing about how Congress could help Trump overturn his loss to Biden. Jordan also refused to comply with subpoena from the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack as lawmakers tried to gather more information about his role.

Jordan once coached wrestling at Ohio State, and former wrestlers said in 2018 that he turned a blind eye to complaints that a now-dead team doctor was sexually abusing the athletes. Jordan has denied those allegations.

Rep. Kevin Hern, R-Okla.

Hern leads the Republican Study Committee, the largest conservative group in the House, and has a reputation as a policy-focused lawmaker.

Compared with Scalise and Jordan, Hern, 61, has not been in the House for long, elected in 2018. But he points to his experience in the business world — he made millions as a McDonald's franchisee and was part of its national leadership team — as an asset.

"I think you have to have a different set of skill sets," Hern told reporters this week. He added: "Strife is something that's common when you have people working together and finding common solutions for it takes experience."

During the January speaker contest, Hern was one of the alternatives nominated by holdout conservatives as an alternative to McCarthy.

Hern was one of the 147 Republicans to vote against certifying the 2020 election.

Republicans are digging in for a long contest to choose a speaker. Democrats are uniting around Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York as their choice for speaker, just as they did in January.

Several far-right Republicans have pointed out that the speaker does not have to be a House member and suggested naming Trump or one of his close allies to the job. Such a move would be without precedent, and Trump has made it clear he's focused on winning the presidency.

What demands are Republicans making to the candidates?

One of the many factors that led to McCarthy's downfall was the multitude of promises — some seemingly conflicting and contradictory — that he was forced to make as he tried to pass legislation and hold together the party's narrow majority. So the promises made by the next speaker will be closely watched.

Gaetz singlehandedly set in motion McCarthy's ouster by filing a "motion to vacate" under a change to House rules. Some Republicans say the one-person threshold was a grave mistake and want the rule set at a higher number before the next speaker takes charge.

But changing House rules in the middle of a session could prove a tall order and hard to accomplish without Democratic support.

Other hard-line Republicans are readying their demands as well. Some were eyeing steep spending cuts as well as targeting some federal agencies and officials, including defunding special counsel Jack Smith's prosecutions of Trump.

Whales and dolphins in American waters are losing food and habitat to climate change, US study says

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Whales, dolphins and seals living in U.S. waters face major threats from warming ocean temperatures, rising sea levels and decreasing sea ice volumes associated with climate change, according to a first-of-its-kind assessment.

Researchers with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration examined more than 100 stocks of American marine mammal species and found more than 70% of those stocks are vulnerable to threats, such as loss of habitat and food, due to the consequences of warming waters. The impacts also include loss of dissolved oxygen and changes to ocean chemistry.

The scientists found large whales such as humpbacks and North Atlantic right whales were among the most vulnerable to climate change, and that other toothed whales and dolphins were also at high risk.

The study, published last month in the journal PLOS ONE, is evidence that the way the U.S. manages whales and dolphins needs to adapt in the era of climate change, advocates for marine mammals said.

The news is bleak, but the assessment also is the first to look solely at marine mammal stocks managed by the U.S. and the results can help inform federal ocean managers about how to safeguard the vulnerable animals, said Matthew Lettrich, a biologist and lead author of the study.

"As the climate's changing, we're seeing some of the effects already, and some of our marine mammal populations are more vulnerable to those changes than others," Lettrich said. "Based on this study, we see a good proportion are highly and very highly vulnerable."

The researchers studied marine mammals living in the western North Atlantic ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. The animals are managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service, the arm of the federal government responsible for stewardship and protection of marine resources.

The scientists looked at the animals' degree of exposure to climate change and sensitivity and capacity to adapt to it. They found 72% of the stocks were highly or very highly vulnerable to climate change, with a little less than half falling in the "very high" category.

The warming ocean primarily harms marine mammals by altering their ability to find food and reduces their amount of suitable habitat, the study said.

However, the scientists said changes to ocean temperature and chemistry also can change sound transmission. That can affect the sonar-like echolocation marine mammals such as dolphins use to communicate and hunt. Climate change "must be considered to adequately manage species," the study states.

The NOAA study is significant because it's the first to look broadly at U.S. marine mammals and attempt to predict their resiliency to climate change, said Regina Asmutis-Silvia, a biologist with Massachusetts-based Whale and Dolphin Conservation who was not involved in the study.

The whales will benefit from the study if the information is used to implement laws protecting them, Asmutis-Silvia said.

"The U.S. is one of the most data-rich countries when it comes to marine mammals, and those data should be driving what are arguably some of the world's strongest laws to protect marine mammals," she said. "However, data are meaningless without the political will to implement management measures."

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The impact of climate change on whales around the world has grown as a subject of scientific inquiry in recent years. Many studies about whales and climate change look only at a single species or a narrower geographic area, said Laura Ganley, a research scientist with the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium in Boston.

But the way climate change affects the giant animals is global in nature, so the broader approach is helpful, she said.

Many scientists have said the vanishing right whale that lives off New England in the summer is made more vulnerable by changes to its food availability caused by warming waters. But climate change also clearly affects less-studied species, Ganley said.

"This isn't just impacting North Atlantic right whales or bottlenose dolphins. This is impacting most stocks in the United States, and not just the ones in the Caribbean Sea or the Gulf of Maine," said Ganley, who was not involved in the study.

Climate change also could affect the distribution and behavior of marine mammals, the study states.

Whales such as the right whale, which travels north every year from the waters off Georgia and Florida, migrate hundreds of miles annually to breed and feed. Many also migrate across international boundaries, which could require new kinds of cooperation between countries. That is true of seals with large populations in the U.S. and Canada, such as the gray seal, the study says.

The federal government has tried numerous methods in recent years to try to protect declining whale species, including implementing new restrictions on commercial fishing and new vessel speed restrictions. Whales are vulnerable to entanglement in fishing gear and collisions with large ships, and scientists have said both threats are made more severe by warming waters because ocean changes cause whales to move outside of protected zones.

Safeguarding whales during the era of climate change will require ocean managers to plan for a future in which whale habitats are potentially less suitable due to the warming waters, said Gib Brogan, campaign manager with environmental group Oceana.

"This study provides guidance on how managers could prioritize species that are most vulnerable to climate effects and give these species the attention that they need," Brogan said. "If we are going to preserve biodiversity, including marine mammals, ocean managers need to explicitly account for current and future changes in the ocean as they consider ways to conserve marine life."

Dick Butkus, fearsome Hall of Fame Chicago Bears linebacker, dies at 80

By ANDREW SELIGMAN AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — A photo of Dick Butkus sneering behind his facemask filled the cover of Sports Illustrated's 1970 NFL preview, topped by the headline, "The Most Feared Man in the Game." Opponents who wound up on the business end of his bone-rattling hits could testify that wasn't an exaggeration.

Butkus, a middle linebacker for the Chicago Bears whose speed and ferocity set the standards for the position in the modern era, died Thursday, the team announced. He was 80.

According to a statement released by the team, Butkus' family confirmed that he died in his sleep at his home in Malibu, California.

Butkus was a first-team All-Pro five times and made the Pro Bowl in eight of his nine seasons before a knee injury forced him to retire at 31. He was the quintessential Monster of the Midway and was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1979, his first year of eligibility. He is still considered one of the greatest defensive players in league history.

"Dick Butkus was a fierce and passionate competitor who helped define the linebacker position as one of the NFL's all-time greats. Dick's intuition, toughness and athleticism made him the model linebacker whose name will forever be linked to the position and the Chicago Bears," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement. "We also remember Dick as a long-time advocate for former players, and players at all levels of the game."

A moment of silence honoring Butkus was held before the Bears played at the Washington Command-

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ers on Thursday night.

Trading on his image as the toughest guy in the room, Butkus enjoyed a long second career as a sports broadcaster, an actor in movies and TV series, and a sought-after pitchman for products ranging from antifreeze to beer. Whether the script called for comedy or drama, Butkus usually resorted to playing himself, often with his gruff exterior masking a softer side.

"I wouldn't ever go out to hurt anybody deliberately," Butkus replied tongue-in-cheek when asked about his on-field reputation. "Unless it was, you know, important ... like a league game or something."

Butkus was the rare pro athlete who played his entire career close to home. He was a star linebacker, fullback and kicker at Chicago Vocational High who went on to play at the University of Illinois. Born on Dec. 9, 1942 as the youngest of eight children, he grew up on the city's South Side as a fan of the Chicago Cardinals, the Bears' crosstown rivals.

But after being drafted in the first round in 1965 by both the Bears and Denver Broncos (at the time, a member of the now-defunct American Football League), Butkus chose to remain in Chicago and play for NFL founder and coach George Halas. The Bears also added future Hall of Fame running back Gale Sayers to the roster that year with another first-round pick.

"He was Chicago's son," Bears chairman George McCaskey, Halas' grandson, said in a statement. "He exuded what our great city is about and, not coincidentally, what George Halas looked for in a player: toughness, smarts, instincts, passion and leadership. He refused to accept anything less than the best from himself, or from his teammates."

Butkus inherited the middle linebacker job from Bill George, a Hall of Famer credited with popularizing the position in the NFL. In 1954, George abandoned his three-point stance in the middle of the defensive line and started each play several paces removed, a vantage point that allowed him to watch plays unfold and then race to the ball.

Butkus, however, brought speed, agility and a scorched-Earth attitude to the job that his predecessors only imagined. He intercepted five passes, recovered six fumbles and was unofficially credited with forcing six more in his rookie year, topping it off with the first of eight straight Pro Bowl appearances. But his reputation as a disruptor extended well past the ability to take away the football.

Butkus would hit runners high, wrap them up and drive them to the ground like a rag doll. Playboy magazine once described him as "the meanest, angriest, toughest, dirtiest" player in the NFL and an "animal, a savage, subhuman." Descriptions like that never sat well with Butkus. But they were also hard to argue.

Several opponents claimed Butkus poked them in the face or bit them in pileups, and he acknowledged that during warmups, "I would manufacture things to make me mad." When the Detroit Lions unveiled an I-formation against the Bears at old Tigers Stadium, Butkus knocked every member of the "I" — the center, quarterback, fullback and halfback — out of the game.

And he didn't always stop there. Several times Butkus crashed into ball carriers well past the sidelines. More than once he pursued them onto running tracks surrounding the field and even into the stands.

"Just to hit people wasn't good enough," teammate Ed O'Bradovich said. "He loved to crush people."

Despite those efforts, the Bears lost plenty more games during his tenure than they won, going 48-74-4. Dealing with tendon problems that began in high school, Butkus suffered a serious injury to his right knee during the 1970 season and had preventive surgery before the next one. He considered a second operation after being sidelined nine games into the 1973 season.

When a surgeon asked him "how a man in your shape can play football, or why you would even want to," Butkus announced his retirement in May 1974.

Soon after, Butkus sued the Bears for \$1.6 million, contending he was provided inadequate medical care and owed the four years of salary remaining on his contract. The lawsuit was settled for \$600,000, but Butkus and Halas didn't speak for five years.

Butkus, like Sayers, never reached the postseason. The Bears won the 1963 championship and by the time they made the playoffs again in 1977, Butkus and Sayers were long gone.

The Bears climbed back to the top in the 1985 season with their lone Super Bowl championship. But they have been back to the title game only one time since. Butkus couldn't understand why.

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"There's no reason why we can't or shouldn't be in the run all the time," he said at the Bears' 100th anniversary celebration in June 2019. "I know you've got those draft choices or whatever when you finish first all the time. How can you explain New England being up there all these years. That's not right. The Bears should be the ones."

After leaving football, Butkus became an instant celebrity. He appeared in "Brian's Song" in 1971 and a dozen feature films over the next 15 years, as well as the sitcoms "My Two Dads" and "Hang Time." He also returned to the Bears as a radio analyst in 1985, and replaced Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder on CBS' "The NFL Today" pregame show in 1988.

Through the Butkus Foundation, he helped establish a program at a Southern California hospital to encourage early screenings to detect heart disease. He promoted a campaign to encourage high school athletes to train and eat well and avoid performance-enhancing drugs.

The foundation oversees the Butkus Award, established in 1985 to honor college football's best linebacker. It was expanded in 2008 to include pros and high school players.

"Dick had a gruff manner, and maybe that kept some people from approaching him, but he actually had a soft touch," McCaskey said.

The Pro Football Hall of Fame lowered its flags to half-staff in Butkus' honor.

"Playing in an era when middle linebacker became one of the game's glamour positions — and several of Dick's contemporaries also would end up in the Pro Football Hall of Fame — his name most often was cited first as the epitome of what it took to excel at the highest level," Hall of Fame President Jim Porter said in a statement.

Butkus is survived by his wife, Helen, and children Ricky, Matt and Nikki. Nephew Luke Butkus has coached in college and the NFL, including time with the Bears.

Pennsylvania's Democratic governor, a rising political star, crosses partisan school choice divide

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — In the partisan politics of education funding, the "school choice" movement has pressed states for decades to send taxpayer money to private and religious schools and long had to concentrate its efforts on states where a Republican governor was an ally.

That suddenly changed over the summer.

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro — a first-term Democrat seen by his party as a rising star nationally — forcefully put his weight behind a Republican-backed proposal to send \$100 million to families for private school tuition and school supplies.

Shapiro would later back down in the face of House Democratic opposition, but his support has raised Pennsylvania's profile in the national voucher debate and given advocates optimism that the program will eventually become law.

With the backing of a major GOP campaign donor and now Shapiro, a private-school product whose near-landslide win in the battleground state has fueled talk of his national political prospects, vouchers are at the forefront of the state's political agenda.

A win for voucher advocates would mark an evolution in traditional alliances on school choice politics and could set Shapiro apart from other Democratic contenders emerging on the national scene. Previously, Democratic governors who had backed school choice measures had done so in compromise deals with Republican-controlled legislatures.

The signal Shapiro sent came through loud and clear to supporters of the program.

"What made Shapiro unique is his desire to lead on it," said Robert Enlow, president and CEO of the Indianapolis-based EdChoice.

Vouchers have long been viewed in stark partisan terms: Democrats and public school allies say they drain critical resources from public schools. Republicans and school choice advocates say they give freedom to families who may not like their local public schools.

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At \$100 million in a state where public schools spend more than \$35 billion a year, the Pennsylvania proposal was viewed by some as largely symbolic. But both sides say its passage in Pennsylvania would open the door to a larger program eventually.

As many as 16 states have voucher programs, according to groups that study the programs, and they vary in size, with some becoming widely available after big expansions in the past year.

To some, Shapiro's support should be viewed as a potential presidential candidate in 2028 positioning himself as a moderate who bridges political divides.

"I see that he understands the political value of school choice, and I thought, 'My goodness, he's going to pave his way to the White House by embracing this particular issue,'" said Matthew Brouillette, a prominent voucher advocate in Pennsylvania.

Public views about vouchers are complicated — and do not necessarily reflect the partisan divide in statehouses, or even the usual assumptions.

The school choice movement has long been a coalition of Roman Catholic school advocates, libertarians and private school boosters, as well as Black educational empowerment proponents — giving the cause traction with some big-city Democratic lawmakers.

An AP-NORC poll last year found that Americans are divided — 39% favor, 37% oppose — on whether to give low-income parents tax-funded vouchers they can use to help pay for tuition for their children to attend a private or religious school instead of public schools.

Democrats were similarly divided.

"It's a nuanced picture in terms of public attitudes that don't totally follow partisan divides that are seen across other issues," said Christopher Borick, director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion.

The division reflects similar polls over the past two decades — but support drops when people are told vouchers siphon money from public schools.

Shapiro insists he only supports a voucher program that doesn't do that — something public school advocates dispute, saying every voucher dollar could have gone to public schools.

The voucher debate in Pennsylvania came at a particularly charged time: a court had ruled only months earlier that the state's system of school funding had for decades unconstitutionally discriminated against the poorest districts.

That had motivated public school advocates and Democrats to demand billions more for the poorest public schools, a quest that Shapiro has said he supports.

Shapiro's familiarity with private schools, meanwhile, is borne of experience. He attended a private Jewish school, his children attend the same school and his father is on the school's board.

But some observers connect his interest in vouchers to the influence of Jeffrey Yass, a securities trading billionaire who is one of the GOP's top national donors and the biggest donor to Republican campaigns in Pennsylvania.

School choice is Yass' top issue in Pennsylvania.

"In Shapiro's case, I think it demonstrates the long arm and pocketbook of Jeff Yass," said Charlie Gerow, a Republican operative and marketing consultant.

Yass' campaign donations in Pennsylvania filter through groups that put \$13 million into supporting a would-be Republican rival to Shapiro who nonetheless lost in last year's GOP primary. Yass did not ultimately support the GOP nominee whom Shapiro beat.

Shapiro has received a relatively tiny sum from those groups: at least \$135,000 out of nearly \$90 million he's reported raising for races for governor and attorney general since 2015.

But even if Yass never gives another dime to Shapiro's campaigns, keeping Yass on the sidelines may also be a potent strategy to weaken Republican opponents.

Shapiro first broke ranks with Democrats last year when, during his campaign for governor, he said he supported the Republican-sponsored voucher bill.

Still, as governor, Shapiro didn't talk about vouchers until June, while in the midst of intense closed-door budget talks. During an appearance on Fox News, he was asked about the voucher proposal and said

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"every child of God deserves a shot."

"And one of the best ways we can guarantee their success is making sure every child has a quality education," Shapiro said.

Those fluent in the history of school vouchers could think of no other Democratic governor who had embraced them.

"The last prominent Democrat to really champion school vouchers was like in Milwaukee in 1990," said Joshua Cowen, a Michigan State University professor of education policy, referring to a Democratic state lawmaker in Wisconsin. "Every other champion in state government for these programs has come from the Republican Party."

Within days, Shapiro had struck a budget agreement with Senate Republicans that included the \$100 million voucher program — blindsiding Democratic lawmakers, teachers' unions, public school advocates and school boards.

The budget deal, however, fell far short of what Democratic lawmakers had sought for public schools, adding fodder to their argument that vouchers drain resources from public schools.

"We weren't prepared to have this conversation when we have this massive problem here," said House Education Committee Chairman Peter Schweyer, D-Lehigh.

Teachers' unions — some of Shapiro's strongest supporters in his campaign for governor — mustered support against the proposal from across labor, including AFSCME, SEIU, the AFL-CIO and building and construction trades.

In the end, House Democratic opposition prompted Shapiro to agree to veto the \$100 million program from wider budget legislation — drawing angry recriminations from Republicans and school choice allies.

Yass, in a letter published by The Wall Street Journal, accused Shapiro of flip-flopping, siding with "radical education activists," throwing poor children "under the bus" and "cowering before his union financiers."

The episode has left an uneasy feeling among both voucher opponents and advocates. In an interview last month with WURD radio in Philadelphia, Shapiro shrugged off the fallout.

"I recognize that there are some in my party that don't agree with that," Shapiro said, "but my view is we've got to be working to empower parents to put their kids in the best possible position to succeed."

EU summit to look at changes the bloc needs to make to welcome Ukraine, others as new members

By RAF CASERT and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

GRANADA, Spain (AP) — A day after pledging Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy their unwavering support, European Union leaders on Friday will face one of their worst political headaches on a key commitment — how and when to welcome debt-laden and battered Ukraine into the bloc.

The 27-nation EU has said since the start of Russia's invasion in February 2022 that at the end of the war it would work steadfastly on "lasting unity" that would eventually translate into Ukraine's membership in the wealthy bloc.

For a nation fighting for its very survival, that moment cannot come quickly enough. For the bloc itself, that remains to be seen.

On Friday, the leaders will assess "enlargement" as they call it at their informal summit in southern Spain's Granada. Beyond Ukraine, several western Balkan nations and Moldova are also knocking with increasing impatience at the door.

In his summit invitation letter, EU Council President Charles Michel asked the leaders "critical questions, such as: What do we do together? How do we decide? How do we match our means with our ambitions?"

That has already proven difficult enough for the current members, especially with decades-old rules still on the books that were thought out for a dozen closely knit nations. At the time, deciding by unanimity and veto rights were still considered workable procedures, and money was still relatively easy to come by.

The thought of adding a half dozen nations much poorer than almost all current members has several already grabbing for the hand brake.

Michel believes that new member countries should be welcomed in by 2030. Last month, the presidents of Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Albania also said that enlargement should happen "not later than 2030."

But EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has insisted that "accession is merit-based." She says the progress these countries make in aligning their laws with EU rules and standards should dictate the pace of membership, rather than some arbitrary deadline. The bureaucratic pace of aligning with thousands of EU rules can sometimes take well over a half dozen years.

Ukraine and Moldova were officially granted EU candidate status earlier this year — an unusually rapid decision for the EU and its go-slow approach to expansion, prompted by the war in Ukraine.

At the same time, the EU's leaders also agreed to recognize a "European perspective" for another former Soviet republic, Georgia.

Serbia and Montenegro were the first western Balkan countries to launch membership negotiations, followed by Albania and Macedonia last year. Bosnia and Kosovo have only begun the first step of the integration process.

EU officials fear Russia could try to destabilize the Balkans, which went through a bloody war in the 1990s, and thus shift world attention from its aggression in Ukraine. Russia's Balkan ally Serbia has refused to join EU sanctions against Moscow, although Belgrade says it respects Ukrainian territorial integrity.

One key date is already set for Ukraine: In December, the EU nations will decide whether to open full-on accession talks.

Ex-treasurer for Rep. George Santos pleads guilty to conspiracy, tells of bogus loan and fake donors

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The ex-treasurer for U.S. Rep. George Santos pleaded guilty Thursday to a fraud conspiracy charge and implicated the indicted New York Republican in a scheme to embellish his campaign finance reports with a fake loan and fake donors.

Nancy Marks, who was a close aide to Santos during his two congressional bids, entered the plea at a federal courthouse on Long Island, where she was a longtime political operative and bookkeeper for multiple candidates.

Speaking to the judge, Marks briefly outlined a scam she said was intended to hoodwink Republican Party officials into throwing their support behind Santos, who at the time had lost an earlier race for Congress and was struggling to get financial support for a second run.

To impress party leaders, she said, Santos submitted bogus campaign finance reports falsely saying he had loaned his campaign \$500,000 even though in reality he didn't have that kind of money and the loan didn't exist. The fake loan made Santos look way richer than he really was, and also helped him hit fundraising thresholds needed to qualify for backing from a national GOP committee.

Reading from a prepared statement, Marks also said she had provided the Federal Elections Commission with a fake list of people who had supposedly given large donations to the campaign. Prosecutors said the list included the names of multiple members of Santos' and Marks' families.

"The donors, who are real people, didn't give me permission to use their names," Marks said in court. Her plea agreement comes with a recommendation that she serve 3 1/2 years to 4 years in prison.

Outside the courthouse, Marks' lawyer said that while his client had not formally entered into a cooperation agreement with prosecutors, she would be willing to testify against Santos if asked.

"If we get a subpoena we'll do the right thing," said the attorney, Ray Perini. He said Santos had "mentally seduced" his client.

"There's a manipulation involved that had to do with her family and the death of her husband," Perini said, declining to elaborate. "There were lies told."

Any such testimony could be a severe blow to the congressman, who faces a separate 13-count federal indictment alleging he duped donors, embezzled money from his campaign, lied in financial disclosures

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submitted to Congress about being a millionaire and received unemployment funds when he wasn't eligible. He has defied calls to resign.

An attorney for Santos, Joseph Murray, attended the court hearing and said afterward that he expected Marks was cooperating with the government. A congressional spokesperson for Santos declined to comment.

Prosecutors didn't charge Santos in the criminal complaint against Marks, but they described him as a "co-conspirator."

Marks resigned as Santos' treasurer amid growing questions about his campaign finances and revelations he had fabricated much of his life story.

After his election, news reporters revealed that Santos had made up stories about where he went to college and where he worked, telling people he was a Wall Street dealmaker with a real estate portfolio when he was actually struggling financially had faced eviction from multiple apartments. Santos also lied about his heritage, saying he was Jewish when he wasn't.

Santos, a first-term congressman, has acknowledged embellishing his resume, but has accused people of overreacting.

Previously, he sought to pin the blame for his unexplained finances on Marks, who he claims "went rogue" without his knowledge.

Marks had not previously been charged. Thursday marked her first appearance in court.

A key behind-the-scenes figure in Long Island Republican politics, Marks built a business as a treasurer and consultant to dozens of local, state and federal candidates. Her most high-profile client besides Santos was former U.S. Rep. Lee Zeldin of New York, an ally of Donald Trump. She was Zeldin's bookkeeper when he unsuccessfully ran for governor in 2022.

Marks had faced scrutiny over Santos' unusual campaign filings, including a series of \$199.99 expenses, just below the legal limit for disclosure.

While Santos has admitted fabricating key parts about his purported background as a wealthy, well-educated businessman, questions remain about what he did for work. Reporters had questioned the source of more than \$700,000 he initially claimed to have loaned his campaign.

Besides being responsible for keeping Santos' campaign books and handling his regulatory filings, Marks had unusual business ties to Santos, according to public records.

In 2021, she was listed as being a member of a political consulting firm incorporated in Florida, whose other members included Santos' company and people who had formerly been affiliated with an investment company that had been shut down by the Securities and Exchange Commission over allegations that it was a Ponzi scheme.

When Santos was indicted, Marks wasn't mentioned by name in court filings. But the indictment described an unnamed political consultant who it said had helped dupe donors who gave money that they thought was going to the campaign but was instead siphoned off for Santos' personal use.

Marks is the second person besides Santos to face charges in connection with the campaign. In August, a former Santos fundraiser, Sam Miele, was indicted on federal charges that he impersonated the then-chief of staff to GOP Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, who at the time was the House minority leader.

Miele pleaded not guilty. His attorney, Kevin Marino, had predicted that his client would be exonerated at trial.

Biden administration is resuming deportation flights for Venezuelan migrants as arrivals grow

By MARK STEVENSON, MICHAEL BALSAMO and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The Biden administration will resume deporting Venezuelan migrants, the largest single group encountered at the U.S.-Mexico border last month, back to their economically troubled country as their arrivals continue to grow.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, speaking in Mexico City Thursday, cited the new

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measure as one of the "strict consequences" the Biden administration is pairing with the expansion of legal pathways for asylum seekers.

"Our two countries are being challenged by an unprecedented level of migration throughout our hemisphere," Mayorkas said, referring to Mexico.

The repatriation flights are expected to begin shortly, said two U.S. officials, though they did not provide specific details on when the flights would begin taking off. The officials were not authorized to disclose details of the government's plan and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The resumption of deportation flights comes not long after the administration increased protected status for thousands of Venezuelans who had previously arrived to the U.S., they must have entered the country before July 31 of this year to be eligible for temporary protected status.

In making the recent expansion of protections official, President Joe Biden's administration said just this week that it had determined that "extraordinary and temporary conditions continue to prevent Venezuelan nationals from returning in safety."

Mayorkas on Thursday addressed the contrast with the announcement just days later of more deportations, saying "we have made a determination it is safe to return Venezuelan nationals who arrived in the United States subsequent to July 31 and do not have a legal basis to remain here."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who led a U.S. delegation to Mexico, added that "we have an ironclad commitment to provide protection for those who qualify. That remains paramount in everything we're doing."

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service criticized the move to resume deportations noting the apparent contradiction with the expansion of temporary protected status.

"Returning thousands of Venezuelans to the same unimaginably dangerous conditions they just fled is a profoundly problematic policy for the world's humanitarian leader to adopt," the organization's CEO Krish O'Mara Vignarajah said in a statement.

Administration officials would not discuss details about how frequently deportation flights would be going to Venezuela or describe how Venezuela agreed to accept back their citizens except to say that, like other countries around the world, the U.S. has long encouraged Venezuela to accept back its nationals. Cuba, another U.S. adversary, announced earlier this year that it would begin accepting Cuban deportees but there has only been one flight a month.

The U.S. had been returning some Venezuelans via commercial flights, but in relatively small numbers and through third countries.

In Venezuela, the government said it had reached an agreement with U.S. officials for a safe and orderly repatriation.

"Venezuelan migration in recent years is a direct result of the application of unilateral coercive measures and a blockade of our economy," Venezuela's foreign ministry said via X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. It said the government would support repatriated Venezuelans.

The U.S. move is the latest effort to deal with swelling numbers of migrants as the administration comes under increasing pressure from Republicans and mayors from the president's own party to do more to slow arrivals.

The announcement came as Blinken and other top Biden administration officials met with their counterparts in Mexico City on security issues.

Blinken discussed migration flows with Mexico Foreign Affairs Secretary Alicia Bárcena, as well as foreign ministers from Panama and Colombia, Wednesday. Talks continued Thursday, including meetings by Blinken and U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland with López Obrador.

Bárcena said Thursday that some 10,000 migrant encounters were registered at the U.S.-Mexico border on Wednesday.

"We are going to continue taking forceful actions, including continuing some efforts we already have in relation to assisted returns, coordinating the dismantling of trafficking networks and human trafficking," Bárcena said.

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Blinken said the U.S. government is working to support those efforts.

"We're taking steps to aid the most vulnerable, those most vulnerable to organized crime, training nearly 200 Mexican immigration officials to better screen, identify and assist potential human trafficking victims," Blinken said.

"The scale of this challenge demands that we redouble our efforts, that we do more to increase legal migration ... more to address root causes and more to deter irregular migration humanely," Blinken said.

López Obrador said Thursday during his daily news briefing that Mexico has reiterated in talks its position that there should be investment to spur development in the countries that migrants leave.

"The people don't abandon their towns because they want to, but rather out of necessity," the president said. He also criticized the Biden administration's announcement Wednesday that it waived 26 federal laws in South Texas to allow border wall construction. López Obrador had previously praised Biden for not building more border wall during his presidency.

In August, the U.S. Border Patrol made 181,509 arrests at the Mexican border, up 37% from July but little changed from August 2022 and well below the more than 220,000 in December, according to figures released in September.

The U.S. has tried to get Mexico and countries farther south to do more. In April, the U.S., Panama and Colombia announced a campaign to slow migration through the treacherous Darien Gap dividing Colombia and Panama. But migration through the jungle has only accelerated and is expected to approach some 500,000 people this year - the vast majority from Venezuela.

Venezuelans were stopped 25,777 times the first 17 days of September, up 63% from the same period a month earlier, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection figures released by López Obrador. Those included some people admitted for scheduled asylum appointments, but the vast majority were illegal entries.

Venezuela plunged into a political, economic and humanitarian crisis over the last decade, pushing at least 7.3 million people to migrate and making food and other necessities unaffordable for those who remain.

The vast majority who fled settled in neighboring countries in Latin America, but many began coming to the United States in the last three years.

Deportation flights had been paused in part because the U.S. has few diplomatic relations with the nation.

U.S. and Mexican officials also discussed efforts aimed at combating the trafficking of the deadly synthetic opioid fentanyl.

Mexican officials continued to explain with some difficulty López Obrador's blanket assertion — false according to available evidence and the U.S. government — that Mexico does not produce fentanyl.

Bárcena, the foreign relations secretary, said "there is no contradiction, chemical precursors are not produced in Mexico." It was tacit admission that Mexican cartels import precursors, mainly from China, and process them chemically into fentanyl. But since the entire chemical process is not carried out in Mexico the government maintains that fentanyl is not produced here.

U.S. officials highlighted the recent extradition of Ovidio Guzmán López, a son of former Sinaloa cartel leader Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, to the U.S. on drug trafficking charges as a sign of cooperation between the two governments.

Millions of children are displaced due to extreme weather events. Climate change will make it worse

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL and CAMILLE FASSETT Associated Press

Storms, floods, fires and other extreme weather events led to more than 43 million displacements involving children between 2016 and 2021, according to a United Nations report.

More than 113 million displacements of children will occur in the next three decades, estimated the UNICEF report released Friday, which took into account risks from flooding rivers, cyclonic winds and floods that follow a storm.

Some children, like 10-year-old Shukri Mohamed Ibrahim, are already on the move. Her family left their

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home in Somalia after dawn prayers on a Saturday morning five months ago.

The worst drought in more than 50 years scorched the once-fertile pastures the family relied on, leaving them barren. So, bundling only a few clothes and some utensils into sacks, they moved to a camp in the capital Mogadishu, where Ibrahim, who dreams of being a doctor, is now going to school for the first time. That's a plus, but the camp lacks proper shelter and sanitation, and food is scarce.

"We need something that can protect us from the heat during the day and the cold at night," Ibrahim said.

The miseries of long, drawn-out disasters like droughts are often underreported. Children had to leave their homes at least 1.3 million times because of drought in the years covered by the report — more than half of them in Somalia — but this is likely an undercount, the report said. Unlike during floods or storms, there are no pre-emptive evacuations during a drought.

Worldwide, climate change has already left millions homeless. Rising seas are eating away at coastlines; storms are battering megacities and drought is exacerbating conflict. But while catastrophes intensify, the world has yet to recognize climate migrants and find formal ways of protecting them.

"The reality is that far more children are going to be impacted in (the) future, as the impacts of climate change continue to intensify," said Laura Healy, a migration specialist at UNICEF and one of the report's authors.

Nearly a third, or 43 million of the 134 million times that people were uprooted from their homes due to extreme weather from 2016-21 included children. Nearly half were forced from their homes by storms. Of those, nearly 4 of the 10 displacements were in the Philippines.

Floods displaced children more than 19 million times in places like India and China. Wildfires impacted children 810,000 times in the U.S. and Canada.

Data tracking migrations because of weather extremes typically don't differentiate between children and adults. UNICEF worked with a Geneva-based nonprofit, the International Displacement Monitoring Center, to map where kids were most impacted.

The Philippines, India and China had the most child displacement by climate hazards, accounting for nearly half. Those countries also have vast populations and strong systems to evacuate people, which makes it easier for them to record data.

But, on average, children living in the Horn of Africa or on a small island in the Caribbean are more vulnerable. Many are enduring "overlapping crises" — where risks from climate extremes are compounded by conflict, fragile institutions and poverty, Healy said.

Leaving home subjects children to extra risks.

During unprecedented flooding of the Yamuna River in July in the Indian capital New Delhi, churning waters washed away the hut that was home to 10-year-old Garima Kumar's family.

The waters also took her school uniform and her school books. Kumar lived with her family on sidewalks of the megacity and missed a month of school.

"Other students in the school teased me because my house had been flooded. Because we don't have a permanent home," Kumar said.

The floodwaters have receded and the family began repairing their home last month — a process Garima's mother Meera Devi said they are having to do over and over again as floods are becoming more common. Her father, Shiv Kumar, hasn't had any work for over a month. The family's only income is the mother's \$2 daily earnings as a domestic helper.

Children are more vulnerable because they are dependent on adults. This puts them at the risk of being exploited and not having protections, said Mimi Vu, a Vietnam-based expert on human trafficking and migration issues who wasn't involved with the report.

"When you're desperate, you do things that you normally wouldn't do. And unfortunately, children often bear the brunt of that because they are the most vulnerable and they don't have the ability to stand up for themselves," she said.

Vietnam, along with countries like India and Bangladesh, will likely have many children uprooted from their homes in the future, and policymakers and the private sector need to ensure that climate and energy

planning takes into account risks to children from extreme weather, the UNICEF report said.

In estimating future risks, the report did not include wildfires and drought, or potential mitigation measures. It said vital services like education and health care need to become "shock-responsive, portable and inclusive," to help children and their families better cope with disasters. This would mean considering children's needs at different stages, from ensuring they have opportunities to study, that they can stay with their families and that eventually they can find work.

"We have the tools. We have the knowledge. But we're just not working fast enough," Healy said.

Trump lawyers seek dismissal of DC federal election subversion case, arguing presidential immunity

By ERIC TUCKER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawyers for Donald Trump asked a judge Thursday to dismiss the Washington federal election subversion case against him, arguing the Republican is immune from prosecution for actions they say were taken in his official role as president.

The motion amounts to the most pointed attack yet by defense lawyers on the federal case charging Trump with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden. It tees up a fight over the scope of presidential power, forcing courts to wrestle with whether the actions Trump took in his failed bid to remain in office fell within his duties as commander-in-chief or whether they strayed far outside his White House responsibilities and are subject to prosecution.

"Breaking 234 years of precedent, the incumbent administration has charged President Trump for acts that lie not just within the 'outer perimeter,' but at the heart of his official responsibilities as President," the defense motion states. "In doing so, the prosecution does not, and cannot, argue that President Trump's efforts to ensure election integrity, and to advocate for the same, were outside the scope of his duties."

The presidential immunity argument had been foreshadowed for weeks by defense lawyers as one of multiple challenges they intended to bring against the indictment.

Special counsel Jack Smith's team is expected to vigorously contest the motion. It is not clear when U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan might rule, but potentially protracted arguments over the motion — including an expected appeal if she denies the request — could delay the case as courts step into what defense lawyers described an unsettled question.

The Supreme Court has held that presidents are immune from civil liability for actions related to their official duties. But Trump's lawyers noted in their motion that no court has addressed the question of whether that immunity shields a president from criminal prosecution, hinting that the defense will likely fight the issue all the way to the nation's highest court.

"In addressing this question, the Court should consider the Constitution's text, structure, and original meaning, historical practice, the Court's precedents and immunity doctrines, and considerations of public policy," they wrote.

Prosecutors appeared to anticipate the immunity argument, writing in the indictment that though political candidates are permitted to challenge their election losses and to even falsely claim victory, Trump's actions strayed far beyond what is legally permissible in the run-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, when pro-Trump rioters stormed the building to disrupt the counting of electoral votes.

In their motion, defense lawyers argue that the actions that form the basis of the indictment, including urging the Justice Department to investigate claims of voter fraud and pressing state officials on the administration of elections, cut to the core of Trump's responsibilities as commander-in-chief.

The Justice Department has held that sitting presidents cannot be prosecuted. The motion Thursday seeks to ensure that same protection to a former president for actions taken while in office, asserting that no prosecutor since the beginning of American democracy has had the authority to bring such charges.

"Every action of the Defendant charged in the indictment occurred while he was still in office as President of the United States, and, according to the prosecution, all concerned a federal government function," Trump's lawyers wrote. "Given the all-consuming nature of the Presidency, these facts alone strongly sup-

port the notion that the indictment is based solely on President Trump's official acts."

They contend that Trump's tweets and public statements about fraud in the election and Vice President Mike Pence's role in the certification were directly related to his assertion that the election's outcome was tainted by fraud and that the Justice Department and certain states had failed to adequately investigate it.

And they say meetings detailed in the indictment with Justice Department officials also fall within his official duties because he was urging his agency "to do more to enforce the laws that it is charged with enforcing."

Prosecutors alleged a broad range of criminal conduct in a four-count indictment issued Aug. 1, accusing Trump of conspiring with a half-dozen allies to pressure state officials to alter the results of their elections; enlist slates of fake electors in battleground states who could falsely claim that Trump had won; and persuade Pence to shirk his duty to certify the vote count before Congress.

The indictment says Trump knew the claims he was pushing about election fraud were false but did so anyway in an effort to undermine the integrity of the democratic process. But Trump's lawyers say "the president's motivations are not for the prosecution or this Court to decide."

Trump's lawyers also argue his 2021 impeachment trial acquittal bars his prosecution, saying the Constitution suggests presidents can only be criminally charged in cases where they are impeached and convicted by the Senate.

"President Trump was acquitted of these charges after trial in the Senate, and he thus remains immune from prosecution. The Special Counsel cannot second-guess the judgment of the duly elected United States Senate," his lawyers wrote.

The case, one of four Trump is facing, is currently set for trial on March 4, 2024.

His lawyers have separately sought the dismissal of a New York state case charging him with falsifying business records in connection with hush money paid to a porn actress who alleged an extramarital affair with Trump years earlier.

In court papers made public late Wednesday, Trump's lawyers accused prosecutors of reviving a so-called "zombie case" to interfere with his comeback campaign for the White House and argued that Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat, only brought the case because of politics.

Defense lawyers also sought late Wednesday to postpone until after the 2024 presidential election the trial in a separate criminal case in Florida charging him with illegally hoarding classified documents.

Voter rolls are becoming the new battleground over secure elections as amateur sleuths hunt fraud

By MORGAN LEE and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — A group has been impersonating government officials, harassing New York residents at their homes and falsely accusing them of breaking the law, state officials have warned.

But what sounds like a scam aimed at people's pocketbooks is actually part of a shakedown with a much different target: voters.

State prosecutors have sent a cease-and-desist order to a group called New York Citizens Audit demanding that it halt any "unlawful voter deception" and "intimidation efforts."

It's the type of tactic that concerns many state election officials across the country as conservative groups, some with ties to allies of former President Donald Trump and motivated by false claims of widespread fraud in 2020, push to access and sometimes publish state voter registration rolls, which list names, home addresses and in some cases party registration. One goal is to create free online databases for groups and individuals who want to take it upon themselves to try to find potential fraud.

The lists could find their way into the hands of malicious actors and individual efforts to inspect the rolls could disenfranchise voters through intimidation or canceled registrations, state election officials and privacy advocates warned. They worry that local election offices may be flooded with challenges to voter registration listings as those agencies prepare for the 2024 elections.

John Davisson, director of litigation at the Electronic Privacy Information Center, said the concern reflects

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the competing interests over voter data – a need to protect voter rolls from cybersecurity attacks against the desire to make them accessible so elections are transparent.

“It’s not surprising that this is a battleground right now,” he said.

Baseless claims of widespread voter fraud are part of what’s driving the efforts to obtain the rolls, leading to lawsuits over whether to hand over the data in several states, including Maine, New Mexico and Pennsylvania.

In New York, a warning from the state elections board preceded the cease-and-desist letter from the state attorney general’s office. Voters in 13 counties had been approached at their homes in recent weeks in an apparently coordinated effort by people impersonating election officials, in some cases wielding phony IDs, the board said. Residents were confronted about their voter registration status and accused of misconduct.

In one instance, people wearing identification badges accused a woman at her Glens Falls home of committing a crime by apparently being registered to vote in two counties, said Warren County spokesman Don Lehman. But the woman had already filed to change her registration and canvassers were apparently using out-of-date information, he said.

“She was quite shaken by the whole thing,” Lehman said. “She did nothing nefarious at all. Either these people don’t understand that or understand how the process works, but it seems like they were quite accusatory.”

State prosecutors found no evidence that any of the those contacted had committed voter fraud or any other type of crime, they said in their warning letter.

NY Citizens Audit emailed a statement that dismissed as “absurd” concerns that its canvassers might have impersonated an official or harassed anyone. Instead, the group urged election officials to investigate “each of these millions of suspected illegal registrations.”

“We train our people to do legal canvassing, and if ever verified, voter intimidation would be completely unacceptable and against our policy,” NY Citizens Audit Director Kim Hermance said in the statement.

One of the most ambitious groups, the Voter Reference Foundation, was founded after the 2020 presidential election by Republican Doug Truax of Illinois with a goal of posting online lists from every state. The VoteRef.com database so far includes information from 32 states and the District of Columbia and is run by Gina Swoboda, a former organizer of Trump’s 2020 campaign in Arizona.

A federal trial is scheduled to start later this month over the group’s fight to access and use New Mexico’s voter registration list.

The group also sued Pennsylvania, which refused to hand over the information and said that publishing it would put every registered voter at greater risk of identity theft or misuse of their information, said the state’s Office of Open Records.

Truax declined to speak to The Associated Press, but has said in a statement on the Pennsylvania case that, “We have a crisis of confidence in America when it comes to election results, and the answer is more transparency, not less.”

The head of elections in New Mexico, Democratic Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver, fears many voters might withdraw from registration lists as personal data is posted online. Her office cites email inquiries about how to cancel voter registrations during a short-lived canvassing effort by election activists last year in southern New Mexico.

“Voters can and should expect a reasonable amount of privacy,” said Toulouse Oliver, a Democrat. “What Voter Reference is doing is saying, ‘If you have doubts about the election and who is registered to vote and who is voting, here is every voter’s information. Go out and figure it out for yourself whether these people are real.’”

The Voter Reference Foundation argues that federal law is on its side, citing public disclosure provisions of the National Voter Registration Act that require states to make a “reasonable” effort to keep the registration lists free of people who died or moved away. The foundation also invokes free speech and due-process rights.

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Nearly every state prohibits the use or transfer of the lists for commercial purposes, while several confine access to political candidates, parties for campaign purposes and some government activities.

In March, New Mexico banned the transfer or publication of voter data online, with felony penalties and possible fines of \$100 per voter.

Virginia data was removed from VoteRef.com after Republicans and Democrats united last year to ban online publication of registrations.

In Maine, an ongoing legal dispute over privacy and the use of voter lists is pitting state election regulators against a conservative-backed group that has been highlighting and litigating what it says are shortcomings in election systems for a decade. It has assembled voter rolls from multiple states.

The state historically provided voter registration lists to candidates and political parties before being sued in 2019 for failing to provide its voter list to the Public Interest Legal Foundation. In 2021, Maine's governor signed a bill allowing the voter registration lists to be turned over to additional organizations, but with a stipulation that no voter names could be published in a way that compromises privacy.

The restrictions interfere with comparing lists across states, said the group's president, J. Christian Adams, whose case against the state is scheduled for legal arguments Thursday at a Boston federal appeals court. Adams, a Republican, served on a commission Trump convened after his 2016 win to investigate voter fraud. The commission was disbanded without any finding of widespread fraud.

Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows, a Democrat, said residents sharing details about voters, including addresses, is a bad idea.

"In an era of conspiracies and lies about our elections, integrity of voter information is hugely important," she said. "We want to make sure that no voters are targeted or harassed or threatened because of their decision to register and cast a ballot."

'Prophet of Doom' who wounded 10 in New York City subway shooting is sentenced to life in prison

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A man who sprayed a New York City subway car with bullets during rush hour, wounding 10 people and sparking a citywide manhunt, was sentenced Thursday to life in prison after several of his victims tearfully and angrily recounted their ongoing trauma.

Frank James, 64, pleaded guilty earlier this year to terrorism charges in the April 12, 2022, mass shooting aboard a Manhattan-bound train. He received a life sentence on 10 counts and 10 years for an 11th count of discharging a firearm during an act of violence.

Three of his victims spoke in court of the physical and emotional pain they continue to experience more than a year after the attack in a packed subway car. They described the panic and the splattered blood on the train, and how they used their own clothes as tourniquets to stanch the bleeding from victims' wounds.

"I have not been able to make sense of it," said a young man identified as B.K. At times his voice cracked as he spoke and his eyes turned glassy from tears.

Another victim, a 51-year-old man identified as L.C., told the court he had post-traumatic stress disorder and thoughts of suicide.

L.C., who said he worked for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority at the time of the shooting, bought an e-bike to avoid riding trains. When he regained his confidence and returned to the subway, he relived the horror of the shooting upon seeing a man wearing a vest similar to the one James had worn.

"I immediately thought of you, Frank James," the victim said, his voice booming with anger.

Another victim, who later identified himself as Fitim Gjeshi, 21, began to share his own story with words of forgiveness — "I don't blame him. He needs help." — then began to sob.

"I can't do this," he said, walking out of court. He later returned to hear the judge sentence James.

During his own 15-minute address to the court, James expressed contrition for his actions but criticized the country's mental health system, saying it had failed especially people of color like him.

But he said his was not a "sob story."

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"I alone am responsible and no one else for that attack," he said. He added that his violence was not due to animus toward any race or sexual orientation.

Reading from a handwritten statement, he recalled reading a news article about a young Black man who died in a subway car after being put in a chokehold by another rider who later said he was concerned about his erratic behavior and saw him as a threat. He was referring to the case of Jordan Neely, a Michael Jackson impersonator who became homeless and by most accounts was suffering from mental illness.

"People keep criminalizing the people who need help," he said, adding that Neely was one such person who "was screaming out for help."

U.S. District Court Judge William Kuntz was unconvinced, telling James that what he did was "pure evil."

Prosecutors had asked for the life sentence, saying James spent years carefully planning the shooting in order to "inflict maximum damage."

James' attorneys had asked for a reduced sentence of 18 years, saying he didn't intend to kill anyone and citing his mental illness.

Disguised as a construction worker on the day of the shooting last year, James waited until the train was between stations, denying his targets a chance to flee. Then he ignited multiple smoke bombs and unleashed a barrage of bullets from a 9 mm handgun at panicked riders.

The attack, carried out as the train pulled into a station in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, wounded victims ranging in age from 16 to 60.

As emergency responders tended to the victims, James walked calmly out of the subway station and vanished. Authorities searched for him for more than a day. They identified James as a suspect relatively quickly, using a key to a rented moving van left behind on the bloodied subway car. He was eventually arrested in Manhattan's East Village after calling a police tip line to turn himself in.

The attack stunned New Yorkers, heightened anxiety about safety in the transit system and prompted local officials to add additional surveillance cameras and police to the trains.

Before the shooting, James, who is Black, posted dozens of videos online under the moniker "Prophet of Doom," ranting about race, violence, his struggles with mental illness and a host of unnamed forces he claimed were out to get him.

When James pleaded guilty to the terrorism charges earlier this year, he said he only intended to cause serious bodily injury, not death.

His attorney, Mia Eisner-Grynberg, had suggested that while James may have initially planned to kill people, he changed his mind in the heat of the moment.

She referenced the defendant's abusive childhood in the Bronx and his ongoing struggles with both alcoholism and paranoid schizophrenia.

Prosecutors, however, said the trajectory of the bullets showed that James aimed at the "center mass" of riders for maximum lethality. They said James only stopped firing his semi-automatic Glock pistol because the gun jammed.

Trump's penthouse value estimate boosted by millions due to his fame, execs testify in fraud trial

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's corporate executives once boosted the estimated worth of his Trump Tower penthouse by \$20 million partly because of the value of his celebrity, according to trial testimony Thursday.

Another \$100 million hike in the estimate was based on a single email from a real estate broker, who hadn't commissioned an appraisal, didn't inspect the triplex and was told it was three times its actual size.

From a witness stand, former Trump Organization controller Jeffrey McConney shed light Thursday on calculations central to Trump's New York civil business fraud trial.

New York Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit alleges the former president conspired with top executives to exaggerate his wealth and deceived lenders and others. Trump denies any wrongdoing.

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In pretrial testimony, the former president said that people who did business with him were given ample warning not to trust the statements, and that he never thought that the documents “would be taken very seriously.” He described the financial statements as more a “compilation of properties” than a true representation of their value, saying some numbers were “guesstimates.”

But McConney’s testimony came with evidence that the documents were integral to some of Trump’s loan deals. In letters shown in the court, McConney told a bank that he was providing Trump’s 2015 and 2016 financial statements as required under the conditions of a loan for his Seven Springs estate north of New York City.

To figure the penthouse value, Trump executives combed through real estate listings, looking only for the highest-priced similar apartments, McConney testified.

And the \$100 million increase in 2012?

“I’m basing that on the email from Kevin,” McConney said, referring to real estate agent Kevin Sneddon. The broker had offered a quick estimate based on an asking price for a similar triplex in a Trump-owned building elsewhere in Manhattan – an apartment that ultimately sold for only 40% of the asking price.

The next year, McConney tacked on another \$20 million, upping the estimated value of Trump’s penthouse to \$200 million. He said the change was based partly on a Trump real estate executive’s suggestion that the apartment’s celebrity connection warranted a higher price.

McConney also acknowledged making his own calculations, instead of relying on the numbers in a bank appraisal, to increase the stated worth of Trump’s Wall Street office building by \$227 million.

Those and other asset valuations went onto Trump’s financial statements, which in turn went to banks, insurers and others. James calls that “persistent and repeated fraud.”

Trump says James, a Democrat, is just trying to damage his 2024 presidential campaign. He’s leading the Republican field.

Trump himself didn’t attend the proceedings Thursday, after choosing to be there — and avail himself of the news cameras waiting outside — for the three prior days.

McConney reasoned that there was no “right way” to determine valuations and that it was appropriate to calculate the value of Trump’s apartment based on asking prices instead of sales prices as appraisals do.

Judge Arthur Engoron said: “I think any high school student knows the right way.”

McConney, who worked at the Trump Organization from 1987 until February, also testified at the company’s criminal tax fraud trial last year. Granted immunity from prosecution, the ex-controller admitted breaking the law to help fellow executives avoid taxes on company-paid perks, including by filing false tax returns.

The company was convicted. Trump himself wasn’t charged in that case.

McConney’s appearance Thursday followed days of testimony from two accountants who worked on the financial statements.

James’ legal team sought to demonstrate that Trump and his company had complete control over the preparation of the statements, with the outside accountants relying on information from the company. The defense tried to show that if there were problems, they were accountant Donald Bender’s fault.

Bender, who prepared the statements for years, insisted Thursday that he asked Trump Organization executives for all required documents but didn’t always get them. He said he learned about some missing appraisals only during Manhattan prosecutors’ investigation into Trump’s business practices.

Defense lawyer Jesus M. Suarez asked why Bender didn’t notice the appraisals’ absence earlier.

“I asked them for appraisals,” Bender said. “They represented they gave me everything I needed.”

The non-jury trial concerns allegations of conspiracy, insurance fraud and falsifying business records. James is seeking \$250 million in penalties and a ban on Trump doing business in New York.

Engoron ruled on some other claims before the trial, finding that Trump did engage in fraud by inflating his assets’ worth on the statements.

The ruling, which Trump appealed Wednesday, calls for dissolving the limited liability companies that control Trump Tower and some other prominent holdings and having a receiver operate them. If the ruling is upheld, Trump would lose his authority over choosing tenants, hiring or firing employees and other

key decisions regarding those properties.

Engoron on Thursday ordered both sides to submit names of potential receivers by Oct. 26. Engoron also told the defendants to give a court-appointed monitor, retired federal Judge Barbara Jones, advance notice of any attempts to create new entities to "hold or acquire the assets" of a company that's being dissolved under the ruling.

Along with the civil lawsuit, Trump is also fighting a series of criminal cases. He has pleaded not guilty to charges of plotting to overturn his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, illegally hoarding classified documents and falsifying business records related to hush money paid on his behalf.

Trump's lawyers asked a judge in a filing late Wednesday to dismiss the hush money case in a New York court, calling the prosecution a "discombobulated package of politically motivated charges marred by legal defects." Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office said it would respond in court papers due next month.

In Washington, Trump's attorneys filed Thursday to try to get the federal election subversion case thrown out, claiming that his actions were part of his presidential role so not subject to prosecution. Federal prosecutors are expected to contest that argument.

US shoots down armed Turkish drone after it came too close to US troops in Syria

By TARA COPP, LOLITA C. BALDOR and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon said Thursday the U.S. military shot down an armed Turkish drone that came within 500 meters (yards) of American troops in northeastern Syria, in a rare use of force by one NATO member against another.

Air Force Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary, called it a "regrettable incident" and said U.S. troops were forced to go to bunkers for safety as Turkey bombed targets nearby.

Both Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and the new Joint Chiefs chairman, Gen. CQ Brown, spoke with their Turkish counterparts quickly after the incident to emphasize the value they place on their relationship with Turkey — but also the need to avoid any similar incidents in the future and ensure the safety of U.S. personnel.

The decision to shoot down an ally's armed drone "was made out due diligence and the inherent right of self-defense to take appropriate action to protect U.S. forces," Ryder said, adding that "we have no indication that Turkey was intentionally targeting U.S. forces."

U.S. officials earlier told The Associated Press the shutdown was ordered after more than a dozen calls to Turkish military officials stating that U.S. forces were on the ground in the area and that the U.S. military would take action to protect them if the drone didn't leave. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details of a sensitive military incident.

Ryder said U.S. forces observed Turkish drones doing airstrikes around Hassakeh at about 7:30 a.m. local time, and some strikes were inside a so-called American "restricted operating zone" just a kilometer (about a half mile) from U.S. troops. He said a bit later a Turkish drone re-entered the restricted area "on a heading toward where U.S. forces were located."

Commanders determined it was a threat and U.S. F-16 fighter jets shot it down around 11:40 a.m., Ryder said, adding that no U.S. forces were injured.

The incident occurred on the same day as a drone attack killed at least 80 people in government-controlled Homs, Syria, where explosive-laden drones were detonated during a military graduation ceremony attended by young officers and their families. An additional 240 people were injured, according to Syria's health ministry.

Syria's military blamed insurgents "backed by known international forces," without naming any particular group, and threatened to respond with "full force."

Syria has been in a civil war for more than a decade, and the country is split into areas controlled by the Syrian government led by President Bashar al-Assad; al-Qaida-linked militants and Turkish-backed

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opposition fighters in the northwest; and Kurdish forces in the northeast that the U.S. partners with to conduct missions against the Islamic State group. So far, the war has killed half a million people, wounded hundreds of thousands and left many parts of the country destroyed.

Typically, the U.S. and Turkish militaries, which are NATO allies, work in close coordination in conducting air maneuvers. But Turkey considers the Kurdish forces that work with the American troops to be aligned with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

The U.S. has about 900 troops in Syria conducting missions to counter Islamic State group militants.

There was no immediate comment from Turkey on the shooting of the drone.

The country's state-run Anadolu Agency reported, however, that the Turkish intelligence service, MIT, carried out an operation against the PKK and the Kurdish militia group in Syria, which is known as People's Defense Units, or YPG. The report said the Turks struck suspected arms and ammunition depots and buildings believed to have been used by the groups' "sabotage" teams. It did not provide further details on the operation.

On Wednesday, Turkey had carried out airstrikes in Iraq and Syria against Kurdish militant targets following a suicide attack outside Turkey's interior ministry building earlier this week.

In a press conference following the attack, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said Turkish intelligence officials have established that the two assailants arrived from Syria, where they had been trained. He said Turkey would now target facilities in Syria and Iraq belonging to the PKK or YPG.

Thursday's incident risks adding to longstanding tensions between Turkey and the United States, even though Turkey is a strategically important ally and NATO member. U.S. officials and lawmakers have criticized Turkey's human rights record and its delays in agreeing to Sweden's membership in NATO. Turkey has been frustrated by U.S. delays in approving 40 new F-16 fighter jets as well as kits to upgrade its existing fleet.

Ryder told reporters that the U.S. stands "firmly with our NATO ally Turkey and the Turkish people in their fight against the PKK."

The U.S. has designated the PKK as a "foreign terrorist organization" but has declined to make a similar determination regarding the YPG, which have been a key partner of the U.S. in the fight against the Islamic State group in northern Syria. The U.S. does not believe the YPG represent a threat to Turkey.

As recently as Wednesday, the State Department said there was no change in how the U.S. regards the YPG.

In 2016, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan accused the U.S. of supporting a failed coup attempt against his government. The U.S. has flatly rejected the claims but has also refused to extradite the leader of the group Erdogan claims was behind the attempt, cleric Fetullah Gulen, who lives in exile in Pennsylvania.

Russian strike on cafe kills 51, Ukrainian officials say, as Zelenskyy seeks more Western support

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

HROZA, Ukraine (AP) — A Russian rocket blast turned a village cafe and store in eastern Ukraine into rubble Thursday, killing at least 51 civilians in one of the deadliest attacks in the war in months, according to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other top officials in Kyiv.

Rescuers searched for survivors in the remains of the only cafe in the village of Hroza. Body parts were strewn across a nearby children's playground that was severely damaged by the strike. Cellphones were collected and put in a courtyard nearby, waiting to be claimed. Occasionally, one of them rang, lighting up a shattered screen.

Around 60 people, including children, were attending a wake at the cafe when the missile hit, Ukrainian officials said.

Zelenskyy, attending a summit of about 50 European leaders in Spain to drum up support from Ukraine's allies, denounced the strike as a "demonstrably brutal Russian crime" and "a completely deliberate act of terrorism."

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According to preliminary information from Kyiv, the village was hit by an Iskander missile.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre called the strike "horrifying" and said it demonstrated why the United States is doing everything it can "to help the brave people of Ukraine to fight for their freedom, to fight for their democracy."

Hroza, which had a population of about 500 before the war, is in the northeastern Kharkiv region and was seized by Russia early in the war before being recaptured by Ukraine in September 2022. It's only 30 kilometers (19 miles) west of Kupiansk, a key focus of the Russian military effort. Zelenskyy visited the area Tuesday to meet with troops and inspect equipment supplied by the West.

Dmytro Nechvolot told The Associated Press he was looking for his 60-year-old father, who attended the wake for a soldier from Hroza who died last year but who was reburied after being identified by DNA. Nechvolot kept walking up to his father's red car, which was still parked nearby, while waiting for confirmation that he had been killed.

"I have lost a man I looked up to, a beloved father, and an unforgettable grandfather," he said.

On Thursday, Zelenskyy was at a summit of the European Political Community in Granada, Spain, where he asked for more Western support, saying that "Russian terror must be stopped."

"Russia needs this and similar terrorist attacks for only one thing: to make its genocidal aggression the new norm for the whole world," he said in a statement posted on his Telegram channel. "Now we are talking with European leaders, in particular, about strengthening our air defense, strengthening our soldiers, giving our country protection from terror. And we will respond to the terrorists."

"The key for us, especially before winter, is to strengthen air defense, and there is already a basis for new agreements with partners," he told the group, which was formed in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Heeding Zelenskyy's cry, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Germany will supply Ukraine with another Patriot missile air defense system. He expects Russia will again target crucial infrastructure and cities across Ukraine in the winter months.

"This is what is now needed the most," Scholz said after meeting Zelenskyy, according to the German news agency dpa.

Last winter, Russia targeted Ukraine's energy system and other vital infrastructure in a steady barrage of missile and drone attacks, triggering continuous power outages across the country. Ukraine's power system has shown a high degree of resilience and flexibility, but there have been concerns that Russia will again ramp up its strikes on power facilities as winter draws near.

Zelenskyy noted that the Granada summit will also focus on "joint work for global food security and protection of freedom of navigation" in the Black Sea, where the Russian military has targeted Ukrainian ports after Moscow's withdrawal from a U.N.-sponsored grain deal designed to ensure safe grain exports from the invaded country's ports.

The U.K. Foreign Office cited intelligence suggesting that Russia may lay sea mines in the approaches to Ukrainian ports to target civilian shipping and blame it on Ukraine.

"Russia almost certainly wants to avoid openly sinking civilian ships, instead falsely laying blame on Ukraine for any attacks against civilian vessels in the Black Sea," it said, adding that the U.K. was working with Ukraine to help improve the safety of shipping.

Speaking in Granada, Zelenskyy emphasized the need to preserve European unity in the face of Russian disinformation and to remain strong amid what he described as a "political storm" in the United States.

Asked if he was worried that support for Ukraine could falter in the U.S. Congress, the Ukrainian president stressed that his visit to Washington last month made him confident of strong backing by both the Biden administration and Congress.

Zelenskyy called for more air defense systems, more artillery weapons and shells, and more long-range missiles and drones for Ukrainian soldiers, as well as other forms of support and security guarantees to help protect Europe from potential aggression by Moscow.

Earlier Thursday, Russia targeted Ukraine's southern regions with drones. Ukraine's air force said the

country's air defenses intercepted 24 out of 29 Iranian-made drones that Russia launched at the Odesa, Mykolaiv and Kirovohrad regions.

Andriy Raykovych, head of the Kirovohrad regional administration, said an infrastructure facility in the region was struck and emergency services were deployed to extinguish a fire, but there were no casualties.

In other Russian attacks in the past day, two civilians were killed by shelling in the southern city of Kherson and one died after a strike on the city of Krasnohorivka in the eastern Donetsk region. At least eight people were wounded, according to Ukraine's presidential office.

A Russian strike on a hospital in the city of Beryslav in the Kherson region ravaged the building and wounded two medical workers, according to the regional administration chief, Oleksandr Prokudin.

Ukraine, in turn, has struck back at Russia with regular drone attacks across the border.

In Russia's Kursk region that borders Ukraine, Gov. Roman Starovoit said Ukrainian drone attacks resulted in power cuts in several areas. He also said Ukrainian forces fired artillery at the border town of Rylsk, wounding a resident and damaging several houses.

Joel Embiid decides to play for USA — not France — in Paris Olympics

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Joel Embiid will wear red, white and blue in Paris next summer — not rouge, blanc and bleu.

The NBA's reigning MVP and scoring champion has told USA Basketball that, after more than a year of deliberating, he has picked the Americans over France as his team for the Paris Olympics.

The Philadelphia 76ers' star let USA Basketball managing director Grant Hill know his mind was made up and then made the decision public on Thursday. And one of the reasons Embiid cited in what had him pick the U.S.: His son is American.

"I've been here for such a long time," Embiid said in Fort Collins, Colorado, where the 76ers are having training camp — and where Embiid met with Hill this week. "For the past few years, every decision I've made has been based on just family. My family, my son, and having the chance to represent a country like the U.S., with my son being born here ... I love my home country, but I really wanted to play in the Olympics."

France had given Embiid an Oct. 10 deadline for deciding on his Olympic plans. Embiid said he appreciated the interest the French showed in him.

"I was trying to take my time as much as possible," Embiid said. "It was kind of made hard by the deadline. But I'm happy with it."

USA Basketball does not plan to name its team until the spring of 2024, but if healthy, Embiid would seem certain to have one of the 12 spots on the squad that will be coached by Golden State's Steve Kerr with assistants Erik Spoelstra of Miami, Tyronn Lue of the Los Angeles Clippers and Mark Few of Gonzaga.

"It's exciting for USA Basketball that Joel Embiid wants to represent the United States," Hill said. "Joel and I have had several conversations about his goals and I'm looking forward to continuing that dialogue knowing that one of those goals is to represent USA Basketball next summer in Paris. As I've said before, I'm looking forward to the process of building the 2024 USA Basketball Men's National Team roster over the next several months."

No player has been officially named to the team at this point.

"The stronger the team, the better," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich, who coached the Americans at the 2019 World Cup and then to gold at the Tokyo Games, said Thursday when told of Embiid's decision. "International competition is tough. ... That's great for us."

The U.S. will try for a fifth consecutive gold medal at Paris next summer. Embiid joins a long list of top NBA players who are hoping or planning to play for the U.S. next summer, including Stephen Curry, Kevin Durant, LeBron James, Bam Adebayo, Devin Booker and many more.

"You want to play with great players," Embiid said. "But I didn't think about that at all."

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Adebayo had a simple reaction when he heard the Embiid news: "We're looking stacked," he said at Miami's training camp in Boca Raton, Florida.

James was succinct when he heard the news at Los Angeles Lakers' camp: "Great. Big time," he said, grinning when told by reporters there.

Embiid became a U.S. citizen last year and could have also chosen to play for France — or even Cameroon, his homeland, if it qualified for the Paris Games. Cameroon will be among 24 teams playing for the final four spots in the 12-nation Olympic field next summer; the U.S., France, World Cup champion Germany, Serbia, Canada, Australia, Japan and South Sudan have already qualified for Paris.

Embiid said again Thursday that it was difficult to choose between his three options.

"I wouldn't have made this decision if I wasn't ready," said Embiid, who said he now wants to focus on Philadelphia's season and not continually hear questions about his Olympic plans.

It is a massive recruiting win for the Americans. Embiid was a rarity, an international basketball free agent — since he had never been part of a senior national team and holds multiple passports, which meant he had multiple options.

France — the reigning Olympic silver medalists, after losing to the U.S. in the final at the Tokyo Games played in 2021 — had pitched Embiid on the prospects of joining a frontcourt that will likely include Rudy Gobert and Victor Wembanyama next summer, and until Embiid revealed a year ago that he had obtained U.S. citizenship it was widely expected that he would play for the host nation at the Paris Games.

"I guess we'll see him in Paris," Gobert said at a news conference in Abu Dhabi on Thursday, after his Minnesota Timberwolves played a preseason game there against the Dallas Mavericks. "I'm happy for him. As long as he does what makes him happy and he follows his heart, that's what matters. I think it's definitely something that they needed. They needed a dominant big man. So, they're definitely going to have a good roster next summer."

Embiid was born in Cameroon and has held French citizenship. He has spent essentially his entire basketball life in the U.S.; he went to high school in Florida, played college basketball at Kansas and has been with the 76ers for the entirety of his NBA career.

The six-time NBA All-Star and five-time All-NBA selection has averaged 27.2 points in his career, winning his first scoring title by averaging a then-career-best 30.6 points in 2021-22 and winning his second straight scoring crown by averaging 33.1 points this past season. He won the MVP vote by a sizable margin, getting 73 of the 100 first-place votes to claim the crown over Denver's Nikola Jokic and Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo.

Drone attack kills 80 and wounds 240 at a packed Syrian military graduation ceremony, official says

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB and ALBERT AJI Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A drone attack hit a crowded military graduation ceremony Thursday in the Syrian city of Homs, killing 80 people and wounding 240, the health minister said, in one of the deadliest recent attacks on an army that's been fighting a civil war for more than a decade.

The strike killed civilians, including six children, as well as military personnel, and there were concerns the death toll could rise as many of the wounded were in serious condition, Health Minister Hassan al-Ghabash said.

Syria's military said in an earlier statement that drones laden with explosives targeted the ceremony packed with young officers and their families as it was wrapping up. Without naming any particular group, the military accused insurgents "backed by known international forces" of the attack and said "it will respond with full force and decisiveness to these terrorist organizations, wherever they exist."

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack as Syria endures its 13th year of conflict.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "expressed deep concern" about the drone attack in Homs as well as reports of retaliatory shelling in northwest Syria, his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said. Guterres condemned all violence and called for a nationwide cease-fire, the spokesperson added.

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The military did not provide any casualty numbers, but Syria's state television said the government announced a three-day state of mourning starting Friday. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, and the pro-government Sham FM radio station reported the strikes earlier.

Syria's crisis started with peaceful protests against President Bashar Assad's government in March 2011 but quickly morphed into a full-blown civil war after the government's brutal crackdown on the protesters. The tide turned in Assad's favor against rebel groups in 2015, when Russia provided key military backing to Syria, as well as Iran and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

So far, the war has killed half a million people, wounded hundreds of thousands and destroyed many parts of the country. It has displaced half of Syria's prewar population of 23 million, including more than 5 million who are refugees outside Syria.

Although most Arab governments have restored ties with the government in Damascus, Syria remains divided, with a northwest enclave under the control of al-Qaida-linked militants from the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group and Turkish-backed opposition fighters. The country's northeast is under control of U.S.-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

The city of Homs is deep in government-held territory, far from front lines where government and rebel forces routinely skirmish.

After the drone attack, Syrian government forces shelled villages in Idlib province, in the northwest. At least 10 civilians were wounded in the towns of Al-Nayrab and Sarmin east of Idlib city, according to opposition-held northwestern Syria's civil defense organization known as the White Helmets. Government forces continue to shell other areas in the enclave.

The Syrian army shelled another village in the region earlier Thursday before the drone attack over Homs, killing at least five civilians, activists and emergency workers said. The shelling hit a family house on the outskirts of the the village of Kafr Nouran in western Aleppo province, according to the White Helmets.

A woman and four of her children were killed, according to the Observatory. Nine other members of the family were wounded, it said.

The vast majority of around 4.1 million people residing in northwestern Syria live in poverty, relying on humanitarian aid to survive. Many of them are Syrians, internally displaced by the war from other parts of the country.

In northeastern Syria, local authorities said Turkish drone attacks struck Hassakeh and Qamishli provinces Thursday, hitting oil production facilities, electrical substations and a dam. A statement from the local Kurdish authorities said six members of their security forces and five civilians were killed.

Meanwhile, three U.S. officials told The Associated Press that a U.S. F-16 fighter jet shot down a Turkish drone Thursday that came too close to their positions in Hassakeh after it had been dropping bombs in nearby areas. The U.S. has about 900 troops in Syria conducting missions to counter Islamic State group militants.

Turkey didn't immediately comment on the strikes but Ankara said the main Syrian Kurdish militia is allied with Turkey's outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has led an insurgency against Turkey since 1984 that has killed tens of thousands of people. Ankara has declared the PKK a terrorist group.

Syrian Kurdish forces were a major U.S. ally in the war against the militant Islamic State group, which was defeated in Syria in March 2019.

Hand grenade fragments were found in the bodies of victims in Prigozhin's plane crash, Putin claims

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that hand grenade fragments were found in the bodies of people who died in the Aug. 23 crash of mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin's plane.

Experts investigating the crash found no indication the private jet had suffered an "external impact," he said. Prigozhin and two of his top lieutenants of the Wagner private military contractor were among the

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10 people killed when the jet came down as it flew from Moscow to St. Petersburg.

There was no way to independently verify Putin's statement.

A preliminary U.S. intelligence assessment concluded that an intentional explosion caused the crash, and Western officials have pointed to a long list of Putin foes who have been assassinated. The Kremlin called allegations he was behind the crash as an "absolute lie."

A Russian investigation was launched but no findings have been released. Moscow rejected an offer from Brazil, where the Embraer business jet was built, to join the inquiry.

While Putin noted the probe was still ongoing and stopped short of saying what caused the crash, his statement appeared to hint the plane was brought down by a grenade explosion.

Prigozhin's aborted rebellion in June marked the most serious challenge to Putin, who has been in power for more than two decades. The crash came two months to the day after the rebellion's start.

Putin also noted that while investigators haven't tested the remains for alcohol and drugs, 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of cocaine was found during searches at Prigozhin's office in St. Petersburg following the mutiny — an apparent attempt to denigrate the mercenary chief.

After his death, Putin described Prigozhin, 62, as "a man of difficult fate" who had "made serious mistakes in life."

Prigozhin owed his fortune to his ties with the Russian leader dating to the early 1990s and was dubbed "Putin's chef" for the lucrative Kremlin catering contracts.

The Wagner Group military contractor that he created has been active in Ukraine, Syria and several African countries and counted tens of thousands of troops at its peak. It played a key role in the fighting in Ukraine, where it spearheaded capture of the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut in May after months of bloody combat.

In the June 23-24 rebellion, Prigozhin said it was intended to oust the Defense Ministry's leadership that he blamed for mistakes in pressing the fighting in Ukraine. His mercenaries took over Russia's southern military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don and then rolled toward Moscow before abruptly halting the mutiny under a deal that offered them amnesty from prosecution. The mercenaries were given a choice to retire from the service, move to Belarus or sign new contracts with the Defense Ministry.

Last week, Putin met with one of Wagner's top commanders to take charge of "volunteer units" fighting in Ukraine in a sign that the Kremlin intends to keep using the mercenaries after Prigozhin's death.

Putin said Thursday that several thousand Wagner troops have signed contracts with the Defense Ministry.

The average long-term US mortgage rate surges to 7.49%, its highest level since December 2000

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The cost of financing a home surged again this week as the average long-term U.S. mortgage rate climbed to its highest level since December 2000, further dimming the affordability outlook for many would-be homebuyers.

The average rate on the benchmark 30-year home loan rose to 7.49% from 7.31% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 6.66%.

Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners refinancing their home loan, also increased. The average rate rose to 6.78% from 6.72% last week. A year ago, it averaged 5.90%, Freddie Mac said.

High rates can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers, limiting how much they can afford in a market already out of reach for many Americans. They also discourage homeowners who locked in rock-bottom rates two years ago from selling. The average rate on a 30-year mortgage is now more than double what it was two years ago, when it was just 2.99%.

The combination of elevated rates and low home inventory has worsened the affordability crunch by keeping home prices near all-time highs even as sales of previously occupied U.S. homes have fallen 21% through the first eight months of this year versus the same stretch in 2022.

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Home loan applications fell to the lowest level since 1995 last week, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association. At the same time, the median monthly payment listed on home loan applications has been rising. It was \$2,170 in August, up 18% from a year earlier.

"Several factors, including shifts in inflation, the job market and uncertainty around the Federal Reserve's next move, are contributing to the highest mortgage rates in a generation," said Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist. "Unsurprisingly, this is pulling back homebuyer demand."

This is the fourth consecutive week that mortgage rates have moved higher. The weekly average rate on a 30-year mortgage has remained above 7% since mid-August and is now at the highest level since Dec. 8, 2000, when it averaged 7.54%.

Mortgage rates have been climbing along with the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing loans. The yield has surged in recent weeks amid worries that the Federal Reserve is likely to keep its main interest rate at a high level for a long time in its bid to lower inflation.

The central bank has already pulled its main interest rate to the highest level since 2001 in hopes of extinguishing high inflation, and it indicated last month it may cut rates by less next year than earlier expected.

The threat of higher rates for longer has pushed Treasury yields to heights unseen in more than a decade. On Tuesday, the yield on the 10-year Treasury jumped to 4.80%, its highest level since 2007. It has since eased back and was at 4.71% in midday trading Thursday. It was at roughly 3.50% in May and just 0.50% early in the pandemic.

"The gap between the yield on the 10-year Treasury and the rate on a 30-year fixed rate mortgage has been around 3 percentage points, so as the Treasury yield approaches 5%, an 8% mortgage rate does not seem unlikely," said Lisa Sturtevant, chief economist at Bright MLS.

While mortgage rates don't necessarily mirror the Fed's rate increases, they tend to track the yield on the 10-year Treasury note. Investors' expectations for future inflation, global demand for U.S. Treasuries and what the Fed does with interest rates can influence rates on home loans.

Further evidence points to footprints in New Mexico being the oldest sign of humans in Americas

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

New research confirms that fossil human footprints in New Mexico are likely the oldest direct evidence of human presence in the Americas, a finding that upends what many archaeologists thought they knew about when our ancestors arrived in the New World.

The footprints were discovered at the edge of an ancient lakebed in White Sands National Park and date back to between 21,000 and 23,000 years ago, according to research published Thursday in the journal *Science*.

The estimated age of the footprints was first reported in *Science* in 2021, but some researchers raised concerns about the dates. Questions focused on whether seeds of aquatic plants used for the original dating may have absorbed ancient carbon from the lake — which could, in theory, throw off radiocarbon dating by thousands of years.

The new study presents two additional lines of evidence for the older date range. It uses two entirely different materials found at the site, ancient conifer pollen and quartz grains.

The reported age of the footprints challenges the once-conventional wisdom that humans didn't reach the Americas until a few thousand years before rising sea levels covered the Bering land bridge between Russia and Alaska, perhaps about 15,000 years ago.

"This is a subject that's always been controversial because it's so significant — it's about how we understand the last chapter of the peopling of the world," said Thomas Urban, an archaeological scientist at Cornell University, who was involved in the 2021 study but not the new one.

Thomas Stafford, an independent archaeological geologist in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who was not involved in the study, said he "was a bit skeptical before" but now is convinced.

"If three totally different methods converge around a single age range, that's really significant," he said.

The new study isolated about 75,000 grains of pure pollen from the same sedimentary layer that contained the footprints.

"Dating pollen is arduous and nail-biting," said Kathleen Springer, a research geologist at the United States Geological Survey and a co-author of the new paper. Scientists believe radiocarbon dating of terrestrial plants is more accurate than dating aquatic plants, but there needs to be a large enough sample size to analyze, she said.

The researchers also studied accumulated damage in the crystal lattices of ancient quartz grains to produce an age estimate.

Ancient footprints of any kind — left by humans or megafauna like big cats and dire wolves — can provide archaeologists with a snapshot of a moment in time, recording how people or animals walked or limped along and whether they crossed paths. Animal footprints have also been found at White Sands.

While other archeological sites in the Americas point to similar date ranges — including pendants carved from giant ground sloth remains in Brazil — scientists still question whether such materials really indicate human presence.

"White Sands is unique because there's no question these footprints were left by people, it's not ambiguous," said Jennifer Raff, an anthropological geneticist at the University of Kansas, who was not involved in the study.

The Biden administration says it is using executive power to allow border wall construction in Texas

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — The Biden administration announced they waived 26 federal laws in South Texas to allow border wall construction on Wednesday, marking the administration's first use of sweeping executive power to pave the way for building more border barriers — a tactic used often during the Trump presidency.

The Department of Homeland Security posted the announcement on the U.S. Federal Registry with few details outlining the construction in Starr County, Texas, which is part of a busy Border Patrol sector seeing "high illegal entry." According to government data, about 245,000 illegal entries have been recorded in this region during the current fiscal year.

"There is presently an acute and immediate need to construct physical barriers and roads in the vicinity of the border of the United States in order to prevent unlawful entries into the United States in the project areas," Alejandro Mayorkas, the DHS secretary, stated in the notice.

The Clean Air Act, Safe Drinking Water Act and Endangered Species Act were some of the federal laws waived by DHS to make way for construction that will use funds from a congressional appropriation in 2019 for border wall construction. The waivers avoid time-consuming reviews and lawsuits challenging violation of environmental laws.

Although no maps were provided in the announcement, a previous map shared during the gathering of public comments shows the piecemeal construction will add up to an additional 20 miles (32 kilometers) to the existing border barrier system in the area.

"The other concern that we have is that area is highly erosive. There's a lot of arroyos," said Starr County Judge Eloy Vera, the highest-elected official in the county, pointing out the creeks cutting through the ranchland and leading into the river.

Starr County is home to about 65,000 residents spread over about 1,200 square miles (3,108 square kilometers) that includes ranchland and part of the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Environmental advocates say structures will run through public lands, habitats of endangered plants and animal species like the ocelot, a spotted wild cat.

"A plan to build a wall through will bulldoze an impermeable barrier straight through the heart of that habitat. It will stop wildlife migrations dead in their tracks. It will destroy a huge amount of wildlife refuge land. And it's a horrific step backwards for the borderlands," Laiken Jordahl, a southwest conservation advocate for the Center for Biological Diversity, said Wednesday afternoon.

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During the Trump administration, about 450 miles (724 kilometers) of barriers were built along the southwest border between 2017 and January 2021. Texas Governor Greg Abbott renewed those efforts as part of his ongoing immigration enforcement from the state level after the Biden administration initially halted them at the start of his presidency.

The DHS decision on Wednesday contrasts the Biden administration's posturing when a proclamation to end the construction on Jan. 20, 2021 stated, "building a massive wall that spans the entire southern border is not a serious policy solution."

U.S. Customs and Border Protection had no immediate comment.

The announcement prompted political debate by the Democratic administration facing an increase of migrants entering through the southern border in recent months, including thousands who entered the U.S. through Eagle Pass at the end of September.

"A border wall is a 14th century solution to a 21st century problem. It will not bolster border security in Starr County," U.S. Representative Henry Cuellar said in a statement. "I continue to stand against the wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars on an ineffective border wall."

Political proponents of the border wall said the waivers should be used as a launching pad for a shift in policy.

"After years of denying that a border wall and other physical barriers are effective, the DHS announcement represents a sea change in the administration's thinking: A secure wall is an effective tool for maintaining control of our borders," Dan Stein, president of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, said in a statement. "Having made that concession, the administration needs to immediately begin construction of wall across the border to prevent the illegal traffic from simply moving to other areas of the border."

Russia has tested a nuclear-powered missile and could revoke a global atomic test ban, Putin says

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia has successfully tested an experimental nuclear-powered cruise missile, President Vladimir Putin said Thursday, while also warning that the country's parliament could revoke its ratification of a treaty banning nuclear tests.

In a speech at a forum of foreign policy experts, Putin announced that Russia has effectively completed the development of the Burevestnik cruise missile and the Sarmat heavy intercontinental ballistic missile and will work on putting them into production.

"We conducted the last successful test of the Burevestnik nuclear-powered global-range cruise missile," he said without elaborating. His statement was the first announcement of a successful test of the Burevestnik, which translates as "Storm Petrel." It was first mentioned by Putin in 2018.

Little is known about the Burevestnik, which was code-named Skyfall by NATO, and many Western experts have been skeptical about it, noting that a nuclear engine could be highly unreliable.

It is believed to be able to carry a nuclear warhead or a conventional one, and potentially could stay aloft for a much longer time than other missiles and cover much more distance, thanks to nuclear propulsion.

When Putin first revealed that Russia was working on the weapon in his 2018 state-of-the-nation address, he claimed it would have an unlimited range, allowing it to circle the globe undetected by missile defense systems.

Many observers have remained skeptical, arguing such a weapon could be difficult to handle and pose an environmental threat. The U.S. and the Soviet Union worked on nuclear-powered rocket engines during the Cold War, but they eventually shelved the projects, considering them too hazardous.

The Burevestnik reportedly suffered an explosion in August 2019 during tests at a Russian navy range on the White Sea, killing five nuclear engineers and two servicemen and resulting in a brief spike in radioactivity that fueled fears in a nearby city.

Russian officials never identified the weapon involved, but the U.S. said it was the Burevestnik.

Russia has reportedly used the Arctic Novaya Zemlya archipelago where the Soviet Union last tested a nuclear weapon to build facilities for testing the Burevestnik.

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In the speech, Putin noted the United States has signed but not ratified the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban, while Russia has signed and ratified it. He argued that Russia could “mirror the stand taken by the U.S.”

“Theoretically, we may revoke the ratification,” he said.

Putin’s statement comes amid widespread concerns that Russia could move to resume nuclear tests to try to discourage the West from continuing to offer military support to Ukraine after the Kremlin sent troops into the country. Many Russian hawks have spoken in favor of resuming the tests.

Putin said that while some experts have talked about the need to conduct nuclear tests, he hasn’t yet formed an opinion on the issue.

“I’m not ready to say yet whether it’s necessary for us to conduct tests or not,” he said.

Russia’s defense doctrine envisages a nuclear response to an atomic strike or even an attack with conventional weapons that “threaten the very existence of the Russian state.” That vague wording has led some Russian experts to urge the Kremlin to sharpen it, in order to force the West to take the warnings more seriously.

One of them, Sergei Karaganov, a top Russian foreign affairs expert who advises Putin’s Security Council, has argued that Moscow should ramp up its nuclear threats to “break the will of the West” or even launch a limited nuclear strike on NATO allies in Europe if the West fails to stop supporting Ukraine.

Responding Wednesday to Karaganov’s question about possible changes in the Russian nuclear doctrine, Putin responded that he doesn’t see any reason for that.

“There is no situation in which anything would threaten Russian statehood and the existence of the Russian state,” he said. “I think that no person of sober mind and clear memory could have an idea to use nuclear weapons against Russia.”

The Nobel literature prize goes to Norway’s Jon Fosse, who once wrote a novel in a single sentence

By DAVID KEYTON, MIKE CORDER and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Norwegian writer Jon Fosse, whose work tackles birth, death, faith and the other “elemental stuff” of life in spare Nordic prose, won the Nobel Prize for Literature on Thursday for writing that prize organizers said gives “voice to the unsayable.”

The novelist and playwright said the prize was recognition of “literature that first and foremost aims to be literature, without other considerations” — an ethos expressed in dozens of enigmatic plays, stories and novels, including a seven-book epic made up of a single sentence.

Fosse’s work, rooted in his Norwegian background, “focuses on human insecurity and anxiety,” Anders Olsson, chair of the Nobel literature committee, told The Associated Press. “The basic choices you make in life, very elemental stuff.”

One of his country’s most-performed dramatists, Fosse said he had “cautiously prepared” himself for a decade to receive the news that he had won.

“I was surprised when they called, yet at the same time not,” the 64-year-old told Norwegian public broadcaster NRK. “It was a great joy for me to get the phone call.”

WHY DID THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE GO TO JON FOSSE?

The author of 40 plays as well as novels, short stories, children’s books, poetry and essays, Fosse was honored “for his innovative plays and prose, which give voice to the unsayable,” according to the Swedish Academy, which awards the prize.

Fosse has cited the bleak, enigmatic work of Irish writer Samuel Beckett — the 1969 Nobel literature laureate — as an influence on his sparse, minimalist style.

Edmund Austigard, executive officer of Fosse’s publisher, Samlaget, said the author described his work as “slow writing and reading literature.”

“It’s not a type of literature that you bring to the beach and read in an hour or two,” he said. “It’s a type of literature ... that invites you into a unique world and invites you to stay there for a while.”

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WHAT IS THE NYNORSK LANGUAGE?

While Fosse is the fourth Norwegian writer to get the literature prize, he is the first in nearly a century and the first who writes in Nynorsk, one of the two official written versions of the Norwegian language. It is used by just 10% of the country's 5.4 million people, according to the Language Council of Norway, but completely understandable to users of the other written form, Bokmaal.

Guy Puzey, senior lecturer in Scandinavian Studies at the University of Edinburgh, said Bokmaal is "the language of power, it's the language of urban centers, of the press." Nynorsk, by contrast, is used mainly by people in rural western Norway.

"So it's a really big day for a minority language," Puzey said.

Norway's culture minister, Lubna Jaffery, told news agency NTB that it was "a historic day for the Nynorsk language and Nynorsk literature."

Norway's Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson received the prize in 1903, Knut Hamsun was awarded it in 1920 and Sigrid Undset in 1928.

In recognition of his contribution to Norwegian culture, in 2011 Fosse was granted use of an honorary residence in the grounds of the Royal Palace.

WHAT DID JON FOSSE WRITE?

His first novel, "Red, Black," was published in 1983, and his debut play, "Someone is Going to Come," in 1992.

His work "A New Name: Septology VI-VII" — described by Olsson as Fosse's magnum opus — was a finalist for the International Booker Prize in 2022. The final volume in a seven-novel exploration of life, death and spirituality contains no sentence breaks.

His other major prose works include "Melancholy;" "Morning and Evening," whose two parts depict a birth and a death; "Wakefulness;" and "Olav's Dreams."

His plays, which have been staged across Europe and in the United States, include "The Name," "Dream of Autumn" and "I am the Wind."

Fosse has also taught writing — one of his students was best-selling Norwegian novelist Karl Ove Knausgaard — and consulted on a Norwegian translation of the Bible.

HOW DID JON FOSSE REACT TO THE NEWS?

Mats Malm, permanent secretary of the academy, reached Fosse by telephone to inform him of the win. He said the writer, who lives in the western city of Bergen, was driving in the countryside and promised to drive home carefully.

"I stand here and feel a little numb, but of course very happy for the great honor," Fosse told Norway's TV2.

The Nobel Prizes carry a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (\$1 million) from a bequest left by their creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel. Winners also receive an 18-carat gold medal and diploma at the award ceremonies in December.

SHOULD I HAVE HEARD OF JON FOSSE?

Though his books have been translated into dozens of languages and his plays produced around the world, Fosse is what some critics might see as a classic, safe Nobel choice: A highbrow European man with little name recognition beyond small literary circles.

The prize has long faced criticism that it is too focused on European and North American writers of style-heavy, story-light prose. It's also male-dominated, with just 17 women among its 119 laureates, including last year's winner French author Annie Ernaux.

Others point out that the prize has gone in recent years to a strong mix of authors with both critical acclaim and robust sales, such as Kazuo Ishiguro, Mario Vargas Llosa and Alice Munro. And the most populist choice by the committee — 2016 laureate Bob Dylan — also sparked plenty of controversy and debate about whether his lyrics rose to the level of literature.

Publisher Austigard said Fosse's slow prose could be "just what we need and just what people are looking for" in a frenetic world.

"It's birth, it's love, it's death. It's about what it means to be a human being."

Trump's lawyers seek to postpone his classified documents trial until after the 2024 election

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawyers for former President Donald Trump have asked a judge to postpone his classified documents trial until after next year's presidential election, saying they have not received all the records they need to review to prepare his defense.

The trial on charges of illegally hoarding classified documents, among four criminal cases the Republican former president is facing, is currently scheduled for May 20, 2024, in Florida.

In a motion filed late Wednesday, Trump's lawyers urged U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon to push back the trial until at least mid-November 2024. The presidential election is set for Nov. 5, 2024, with Trump currently leading the GOP field in the months before the primary season.

The defense lawyers argued that a postponement was necessary because of scheduling conflicts — another federal trial is scheduled for March 2024 in Washington, and one of Trump's attorneys, Christopher Kise, is also representing him in an ongoing civil fraud trial in New York — and because of what they say are delays in obtaining and reviewing the classified records cited in special counsel Jack Smith's indictment.

"The Special Counsel's Office has not provided some of the most basic discovery in the case," said the motion from Kise and another Trump attorney, Todd Blanche. "Given the current schedule, we cannot understate the prejudice to President Trump arising from his lack of access to these critical materials months after they should have been produced."

The defense lawyers said they have access to only a "small, temporary facility" in Miami to review classified documents, an arrangement that they say has slowed the process.

Prosecutors with the special counsel last week suggested that the Trump team was seeking unreasonable delays in the case. Though they acknowledged a "slightly longer than anticipated timeframe" for certain procedural steps, the prosecutors said it was false to accuse them of delaying the production of evidence in the case.

They said some of the delays were beyond their control and were due in part to the fact that defense lawyers had lacked the "necessary read-ins to review all material" provided by the government.

The Justice Department says it has so far provided about 1.28 million pages of unclassified documents and has turned over the majority of classified evidence that it anticipates producing. By Friday, prosecutors said, they will provide much of the remaining outstanding classified evidence.

"This production will include certain materials that Defendants have described as outstanding, including audio recordings of interviews and information related to the classification reviews conducted in the case," prosecutors wrote.

The indictment accuses Trump of illegally retaining at his Palm Beach, Florida, estate, Mar-a-Lago, reams of classified documents taken with him after he left the White House in 2021 and then repeatedly obstructing government efforts to get the records back. He has pleaded not guilty and has denied any wrongdoing.

The defense lawyers say Trump's two co-defendants in the case, his valet Walt Nauta and Mar-a-Lago property manager Carlos De Oliveira, are joining in the request.

Thousands of US workers are on strike yesterday. Here's a rundown of major work stoppages happening now

NEW YORK (AP) — It's been a big year for labor organizing in the U.S. And from auto production lines to Hollywood, all eyes are on strikes taking the world of work by storm.

The boiling point we're seeing today comes amid soaring costs of living and rising inequality, including growing pay gaps between workers and top executives. Now, thousands of workers who were asked to make sacrifices during the pandemic even as corporate profits soared are asking for better pay and protections — and walking off the job if progress isn't made in heated contract negotiations.

At least 453,000 workers have participated in 312 strikes in the U.S. this year, according to Johnnie Kallas,

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a Ph.D. candidate and the project director of Cornell University's Labor Action Tracker. This year's work stoppages have spread across multiple industries — including transportation, entertainment and hospitality.

Here's a rundown of some of the largest strikes taking place in the U.S. today.

75,000 Kaiser Permanente workers walk off the job

In the health care sector, a major strike kicked off this week — with some 75,000 Kaiser Permanente workers walking off the job Wednesday in multiple states. Strikers include licensed vocational nurses, home health aides and ultrasound sonographers, as well as technicians in the radiology, X-ray, surgical, pharmacy and emergency departments.

The Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, which represents about 85,000 of the health system's employees nationally, approved a strike for three days in California, Colorado, Oregon and Washington, and for one day in Virginia and Washington, D.C.

Back in August, unions representing Kaiser workers asked for a \$25 hourly minimum wage, as well as increases of 7% each year in the first two years and 6.25% each year in the two years afterward. Union members say understaffing is boosting the hospital system's profits but hurting patients, and executives have been bargaining in bad faith during negotiations.

Company executive Michelle Gaskill-Hames defended Kaiser — saying its practices, compensation and retention are better than its competitors. Kaiser has proposed minimum hourly wages of between \$21 and \$23 next year depending on the location.

Kaiser is one of the country's larger insurers and health care system operators, serving nearly 13 million people. The Oakland, California-based nonprofit said its 39 hospitals, including emergency rooms, will remain open during the picketing, though appointments and non-urgent procedures could be delayed. Doctors are also not participating in the strike, and Kaiser said it was bringing in thousands of temporary workers.

UAW strike nears 3-week mark, with 25,000 on the picket lines

In an unprecedented labor campaign against three major car companies, some 25,000 auto workers have joined picket lines in recent weeks

The United Auto Workers' targeted strikes against General Motors, Stellantis and Ford began at select factories after the union's contract with the companies expired in mid-September — and have grown to a total of five vehicle assembly plants and 38 parts warehouses since.

UAW President Shawn Fain has announced strike expansions on each of the past two Fridays, citing a lack of what the union says is meaningful progress, but it's unclear how much that will continue as the strike nears its 3-week mark.

A person with direct knowledge of the talks told The Associated Press Wednesday that progress was reported at all three companies, with some offers being exchanged. Another said there was more movement in talks with Jeep maker Stellantis and less at Ford and General Motors. Neither wanted to be identified because they aren't authorized to speak publicly about the bargaining.

Fain will update members on the negotiations again Friday. The union is seeking 36% general wage increases over four years, as well as a 32-hour week with 40 hours of pay, the restoration of traditional defined-benefit pensions for new hires and a return of cost-of-living pay raises, among other benefits.

The companies, however, fear that raising their labor costs could make their vehicles more expensive than those manufactured by Tesla or foreign automakers with U.S. factories where workers are paid less. Tensions have also risen amid layoffs impacting thousands of workers, with the auto makers saying some factories are running short on parts because of the strike.

Striking Hollywood actors resume talks with studios

Hollywood was taken by storm this summer with a historic dual strike from the unions representing writers and actors — bringing much of production to a halt.

After five months on the picket lines, the writers strike was declared over after their union approved a contract agreement with studios last week. Meanwhile, actors are still on strike — but a shot at cutting their own deal is finally on the horizon.

The Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists began negotiations Monday with the same group of major studios and streaming services, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Televi-

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sion Producers, for the first time since they joined writers on the picket lines on July 14. The two sides resumed talks Wednesday.

With similar sticking points to the writers, actors and their employers have been divided on issues of pay, the use of artificial intelligence and self-taped auditions. SAG-AFTRA leaders said they would look closely at the gains and compromises of the writers' deal, but emphasized that their demands would remain the same as they were when the strike began.

The two sides said in a joint statement that "several executives" from studios would be in on the talks, without providing names.

Southern California hotel workers' rolling strikes

Thousands of hotel workers in Southern California have staged staggered walkouts over recent months. Union leaders are calling for better wages, improved health care, higher pension contributions, better safety protections and less strenuous workloads, among other benefits.

Members of Unite Here Local 11 overwhelmingly voted in favor of authorizing a strike back in June. After contracts expired at more than 60 hotels — including properties owned by major chains such as Marriott and Hilton — cooks, room attendants, dishwashers, servers, bellmen and front desk agents began picketing outside major hotels in Los Angeles and Orange counties at the start of July.

During the staggered strikes, workers have also called for solidarity and a boycott of hotels in the Los Angeles area. According to United Here Local 11's website, the rolling walkouts surpassed the 100th strike mark last month.

While walkouts continue at dozens of hotels, two companies have made agreements with the union to date. On Friday, United Here Local 11 said that Biltmore Los Angeles had reached a tentative contract agreement — joining Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites, which averted walkouts with a June deal promising higher pay and increased staffing levels.

Kevin McCarthy's ouster as House speaker could cost the GOP its best fundraiser heading into 2024

By WILL WEISSERT and BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kevin McCarthy spent years raising mountains of Republican campaign cash, flying around the country to recruit top candidates in key districts and painstakingly building political relationships as he worked his way toward becoming speaker of the House.

Now that he's been ousted from the post after less than nine months, some in the GOP are wondering if anyone can take his place as a fundraising dynamo and party builder.

The House isn't scheduled to vote on who could replace McCarthy until at least next week with all legislative work suspended as the chamber navigates a situation never before seen in the nation's history. In the meantime, House Republicans have no clear leader heading into next year's election as they cling to a razor-thin majority.

"Nobody can raise money like him," said Rep. Kelly Armstrong, R-N.D. "And no matter who is the next speaker of the House, none of them can do what Kevin McCarthy did."

The National Republican Congressional Committee, the GOP's House campaign arm, postponed its upcoming fall gala in Dallas that McCarthy was supposed to headline. The committee said McCarthy helped it raise more than \$40 million during the last election cycle and \$20-plus million so far this cycle.

The totals were even higher for a McCarthy-aligned super PAC, the Congressional Leadership Fund, which said that it and its associated nonprofits had raised about \$645 million under McCarthy. That included about \$215 million for the 2020 election, roughly \$350 million during last year's midterm races and around \$80 million so far this cycle.

The leadership fund will shift its alignment to follow the new House speaker once one is elected. Paul Ryan replaced fellow Republican John Boehner in 2015. The GOP retained House control the following year when Donald Trump was elected president.

"Speaker McCarthy has fundamentally altered House elections for Republicans through his recruitment

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efforts, his unmatched fundraising prowess, and his ability to inspire and generate confidence among donors," Congressional Leadership Fund President Dan Conston said in a statement. "While this is an obvious loss for the House, CLF remains laser-focused on our mission of holding radical Democrats accountable, protecting our vulnerable incumbents, and expanding the House Republican majority."

As speaker and in his prior years leading the Republicans in the minority, McCarthy was viewed by many as less of a legislator and more of a political tactician who found strong Republican candidates and raised enough money to get them elected and to bolster the national party.

McCarthy visiting a district could often be a major draw, juicing fundraiser proceeds, though that's a role any new House speaker can grow into.

A bigger test for the next speaker is whether they will be able to raise the same kind of sums as McCarthy for the party's outside groups, which every year pour millions of dollars into advertising in key races, unburdened by contribution limits for individual campaigns.

"That's where McCarthy has crushed it," said Cam Savage, a longtime Republican strategist who works on House races. "He did the heavy lifting for the Congressional Leadership Fund."

During the 2022 midterms, Republicans underperformed national expectations and eked out a House majority so narrow that McCarthy needed an unprecedented 15 rounds of voting to claim the speakership in January. McCarthy had to remain close to Trump, who is now the front-runner in the party's 2024 primary, and balance the interests of moderates and hard-right members alike. He ultimately couldn't.

The revolt against him featured eight Republicans teaming with House Democrats to vote McCarthy out of the speakership. Ironically, McCarthy had campaigned for some of those who eventually helped strip him of the post he'd worked so long to obtain.

"A lot of them, I helped get elected, so I probably should have picked somebody else," McCarthy joked at a press conference after being forced out.

He may still prove a force in 2024 races. McCarthy has so far suggested that he'll continue to bolster the GOP nationally, saying, "My goals have not changed, my ability to fight is just in a different form."

"I intend to make sure that we gain and keep the majority in the next cycle as well," he said.

Holding the House already looked tough since the current majority includes 18 GOP members representing districts that Joe Biden won in 2020. Especially critical could be Republican-held districts in McCarthy's native California, which Democrats were already targeting and could get even more competitive without the clout that comes with the state having one of its own as speaker.

"After this week's chaotic episode, House Republicans have basically upgraded to a Disney fast-pass in their never-ending roller coaster ride to the radical right," said Viet Shelton, a spokesman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the party's House campaign arm.

House members in both parties said that what happens next will depend greatly on whether the former speaker endorses his eventual successor. That's because aligning the GOP's various fundraising mechanisms to the new speaker will likely go far smoother if McCarthy supports his replacement.

"It's going to be a challenge," said Marty Obst, who worked for Trump's 2020 campaign and has raised money with McCarthy in the past. "The transition is going to be fairly bumpy."

But other Republicans aren't lamenting his departure. McCarthy noted during his valedictory press conference that he got a text message from a former opponent of one of the eight Republicans who voted against him, Rep. Nancy Mace of South Carolina.

"I did text him because he did dump \$3 million into that run to defeat me," said Katie Arrington, who lost to Mace in a 2022 primary. "He wasted money."

Arrington, who was backed by Trump in her challenge to Mace, questioned the notion of the speaker being the House majority's chief campaigner.

"Why is Kevin McCarthy running around recruiting people, giving them money, picking winners and losers out of Washington?" Arrington asked. "That is the problem with Washington — the elites think that they know better."

Bedbugs are making France anxious ahead of the 2024 Summer Olympics

By ELAINE GANLEY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — They creep, they crawl, they feast on your blood as you sleep. They may travel in your clothes or backpacks to find another person worth dining on — on the subway, or at the cinema. Bedbugs go where you go, and they have become a nightmare haunting France for weeks.

The government has been forced to step in to calm an increasingly anxious nation that will host the Olympic Games in just over nine months — a prime venue for infestations of the crowd-loving insects.

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne called a meeting of ministers for Friday to tackle the bedbug crisis. The country's transport minister, Clement Beaune, met this week with transportation companies to draw up a plan for monitoring and disinfecting — and to try to ease what some have called a national psychosis inflamed by the media.

"There is no resurgence of cases," Beaune said, telling reporters that 37 cases reported in the bus and Metro system and a dozen others on trains proved unfounded — as did viral videos on social media of tiny creatures supposedly burrowing in the seat of a fast train.

Still, bedbugs have plagued France and other countries for decades. The insects the size of an apple seed that neither jump nor fly get around as easily as people travel from city to city and nation to nation, and they have become increasingly resistant to insecticides. If that's not enough to make you itchy: Bedbugs can stay alive for a year without a meal.

Without any blood, "they can slow their metabolism and just wait for us," said Jean-Michel Berenger, an entomologist who raises bedbugs in his lab in the infectious diseases section of the Mediterranee University Hospital in Marseille. The carbon dioxide that all humans give off "will reactivate them ... and they'll come back to bite you."

For now, Berenger said, this much is certain: "Bedbugs have infested the media."

Yet bad dreams are most often fed by a touch of reality.

More than one household in 10 in France was infested with bedbugs between 2017 and 2022, according to a report by the National Agency for Health and Food Safety. The agency relied on a poll by Ipsos to query people on a topic that many prefer to avoid discussing because they fear going public with a bedbug problem will stigmatize them.

But silence is a mistake, experts say. No social category is immune to finding bedbugs in their clothing, blankets or mattresses.

"It's not at all a hygiene problem. The only thing that interests (bedbugs) is your blood," said Berenger, the entomologist. "Whether you live in a dump or a palace, it's the same thing to them."

Business is booming for companies that eradicate the little brown insects, a process that often starts with detection by dogs trained to sniff out the special odor that bedbugs give off. If an infestation is confirmed, technicians move in to zap the area with super hot steam. Heat and cold are enemies of bedbugs. One French government recommendation for victims is to put well-wrapped clothes in the freezer.

Kevin Le Mestre, director of Lutte Antinuissible, said his company is getting "dozens and dozens" of calls. In the past, he said, people often didn't react, even to bites.

"Now, as soon as they spot a bite, they don't ask themselves whether it really comes from bedbugs or not. They call us straight away," said a pest control technician for the company, Lucas Pradalier, as he disinfected a Paris apartment. A sniffer dog detected bedbugs in a baseboard and between floorboards.

The French public began moving into panic mode about a month ago after reports of bedbugs at a Paris movie theater. Videos began popping up on social networks, showing little insects on trains and buses.

Now, both Socialists and centrists of President Emmanuel Macron's party want to propose bills to fight bedbugs. Far-left lawmaker Mathilde Panot recently brought a vial of bedbugs to the Parliament to chastise the government for, in her view, letting the creatures run rampant.

Bedbugs, an age-old curse on humans, seemingly disappeared with treatment by harsh, now-banned insecticides. They made a reappearance in the 1950s, especially in densely populated cities like New York.

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And they travel the world thanks to commerce and tourism.

That adds up to a bedbug challenge for the Paris Olympics starting in July.

"All human population movements are profitable for bedbugs because they go with us, to hotels, in transport," said Berenger.

Beaune, the transport minister, is hopeful that steps can be taken to ease the public's fear. But, he conceded, "It's hell, these bedbugs."

Today in History: October 6

Syria, Egypt launch Yom Kippur War with attack on Israel

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Oct. 6, the 279th day of 2023. There are 86 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 6, 1973, war erupted in the Middle East as Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel during the Yom Kippur holiday, starting a nearly three-week conflict that would become known as the Yom Kippur War.

On this date:

In 1536, English theologian and scholar William Tyndale, who was the first to translate the Bible into Early Modern English, was executed for heresy.

In 1927, the era of talking pictures arrived with the opening of "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson, a feature containing both silent and sound-synchronized sequences.

In 1928, Chiang Kai-shek became president of China.

In 1939, in a speech to the Reichstag, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler spoke of his plans to reorder the ethnic layout of Europe — a plan that would entail settling the "Jewish problem."

In 1976, President Gerald R. Ford, in his second presidential debate with Democrat Jimmy Carter, asserted that there was "no Soviet domination of eastern Europe."

In 1979, Pope John Paul II, on a week-long U.S. tour, became the first pontiff to visit the White House, where he was received by President Jimmy Carter.

In 1981, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was shot to death by extremists while reviewing a military parade.

In 2003, American Paul Lauterbur and Briton Peter Mansfield won the Nobel Prize for medicine for discoveries that led to magnetic resonance imaging.

In 2010, the social networking photo app Instagram was launched by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger.

In 2014, the Supreme Court unexpectedly cleared the way for a dramatic expansion of gay marriage in the United States as it rejected appeals from five states seeking to preserve their bans, effectively making such marriages legal in 30 states.

In 2017, the board of directors of The Weinstein Co. said movie mogul Harvey Weinstein was on indefinite leave from the company he founded amid an internal investigation into sexual misconduct allegations against him.

In 2018, in the narrowest Senate confirmation of a Supreme Court justice in nearly a century and a half, Brett Kavanaugh was confirmed by a 50-48 vote; he was sworn in hours later.

In 2020, President Donald Trump, recovering from COVID-19, tweeted his eagerness to return to the campaign trail and said he still planned to attend an upcoming debate with Democrat Joe Biden in Miami; Biden said there should be no debate as long as Trump remained COVID positive. (The debate would be canceled.)

In 2022, a former police officer facing a drug charge burst into a daycare center in Thailand, killing at 36 people, most of them preschoolers, in the deadliest rampage in the nation's history.

Today's Birthdays: Broadcaster and writer Melvyn Bragg is 84. Actor Britt Ekland is 81. The former leader

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of Sinn Fein (shin fayn), Gerry Adams, is 75. Singer-musician Thomas McClary is 74. Musician Sid McGinnis is 74. Rock singer Kevin Cronin (REO Speedwagon) is 72. Rock singer-musician David Hidalgo (Los Lobos) is 69. Pro Football Hall of Famer Tony Dungy is 68. Actor Elisabeth Shue is 60. Singer Matthew Sweet is 59. Actor Jacqueline Obradors is 57. Country singer Tim Rushlow is 57. Rock musician Tommy Stinson is 57. Actor Amy Jo Johnson is 53. Actor Emily Mortimer is 52. Actor Lamman (la-MAHN') Rucker is 52. Actor Ioan Gruffudd (YOH'-ihn GRIH'-fihth) is 50. Actor Jeremy Sisto is 49. Actor Brett Gelman is 47. R&B singer Melinda Doolittle is 46. Actor Wes Ramsey is 46. Actor Karimah Westbrook is 45. Singer-musician Will Butler is 41. Actor Stefanie Martini is 33.