

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 1 of 79

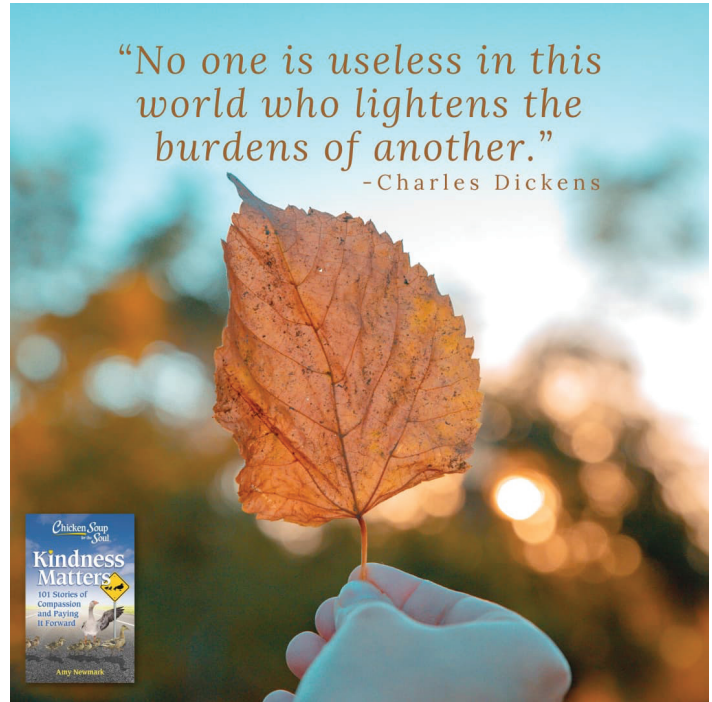
- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [1- Dog License Ad](#)
- [2- Newsweek Bulletin](#)
- [2- Volleyball team journey comes to an end](#)
- [3- GHS Interns Series: Karsyn Jangula](#)
- [4- All Over Roofing Ad](#)
- [4- Frosty Clue](#)
- [5- Groton Legion Turkey Party Ad](#)
- [6- City Council Meeting Story](#)
- [8- Legion Auxiliary hold November meeting](#)
- [9- Service Notice: Douglas Ehrenberg](#)
- [9- South Dakota Arts Column](#)
- [10- Weekly Round\[s\] Up](#)
- [11- Conde National League](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: Federal agency threatens funding reduction over South Dakota's lax pipeline safety enforcement](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: Lawmakers vote to ditch free fishing, state park entry for Mother's Day, Father's Day](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: Ban on added flavors in medical pot products shot down by legislative panel](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: SD's Johnson votes with majority to censure Tlaib over Israel remarks](#)
- [17- Weather Pages](#)
- [21- Daily Devotional](#)
- [22- 2023 Community Events](#)
- [23- Subscription Form](#)
- [24- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [25- News from the Associated Press](#)

Coming up

Wednesday, Nov. 8

- United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; UMYF Food Drive at GHS, 6 p.m.
- St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.
- GHS Fall Food Drive, 6 p.m.
- Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
- Senior Menu: Tator tot hot dish, green beans, grape juice, pineapple tidbits, whole wheat bread.
- School Breakfast: French toast.
- School Lunch: Super nachos

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



2024 DOG LICENSES DUE BY 12/29/2023

Fines start January 1, 2024



Spayed/Neutered dogs are \$5 per dog, otherwise \$10 per dog
Proof of rabies shot information is RE-REQUIRED!!

Email proof to city.
kellie@nvc.net, fax to
(605) 397-4498 or bring a copy to City Hall!!
Please contact City Hall as soon as possible if you no longer have a dog(s) that were previously licensed!

Questions call (605) 397-8422

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

no appearance by Donald Trump once again. The debate begins at 8 p.m. ET. (Find out how to watch)

Israeli Forces in Gaza: The Israeli military said its forces are "in the heart of Gaza City" as the war enters its second month.

Wildfire Emergency: A large wildfire in Shenandoah National Park has breached containment lines and spread, leading Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin to declare a state of emergency as it covers 2,800 acres, including 670 acres within the park.

Australia's network outage: Millions of Australians were left without mobile and internet services after the country's second-largest telecommunications provider was hit with an outage.

War in Ukraine: Online videos show the aftermath of a Ukrainian HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System) missile attack on the partially Russian-occupied eastern Donetsk region, which reportedly killed six people at a Russian drone training center.

Volleyball team journey comes to an end

Lennox put the breaks on Groton Area's winning streak of 13 matches and stop Groton's progress to the state tournament this year with a 3-1 in the SoDak 16 match played Tuesday in Watertown.

The Groton Area volleyball program had a very successful season, finishing with a 20-5 record, the best ever, and it's only the second time that the netters have hit the 20 win mark.

Coach Chelsea Hanson said Lennox is a good team and they have the height at the net. "They were like 6 feet across the net," she said.

Lennox won the first set, 25-22. It was tied 10 times with six lead changes. Lennox scored seven straight points to take the 20-14 lead. The Tigers went flat in the second set as Lennox jumped out to a 19-5 lead en route to a 25-11 win. Groton Area caught the fire in the third set, challenging the Orioles all the way to the finish line and beyond. The third set was tied 18 times and there were nine lead changes before the Tigers pulled out the 27-25 win. Lennox jumped out to an early fourth set lead and won the set, 25-18.

Sydney Leicht was 33 of 42 in attacks with nine kills and she had 15 digs. Chesney Weber had seven kills, was 16 of 16 in serving with four ace serves and had one assisted block. Anna Fjeldheim was 31 of 41 in attacks with seven kills. Rylee Dunker was 16 of 19 in attacks with six kills and had one assisted block. Elizabeth Fliehs had 26 assists, 17 digs and three kills. Jaedyn Penning had three kills. Carly Guthmiller was 14 of 14 in serves with one ace serve and had 33 digs. Emma Kutter had one kill and one solo kill.

Dani Highum led the Orioles with 16 kills, two ace serves and two blocks. Libby Kranz had nine kills, one block and one ace serve. Ryan Hanssen had eight kills and one block. Lillian Meyer had seven ace serves. Ella Grengs had five kills, one block and one ace serve and Addison Martz had four kills and a block.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Avantara of Groton, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, BaseKamp Lodge, Bierman Farm Services, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle AG, Groton American Legion Post #39, Groton Chamber of Commerce, Groton Chiropractic Clinic, Groton Dairy Queen, Groton Ford, Ken's Food Fair, Lori's Pharmacy, Love to Travel with Becah Fliehs, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc., MJ's Sinclair, Professional Management Services, S & S Lumber & Hardware Hank, Spanier Harvesting & Trucking, The Meathouse and the Weismantel Agency of Columbia.

GHS Interns Series

Jangula interns with Fishbach in first grade

by Dorene Nelson

Karsyn Jangula, a senior at Groton Area High School, is interning with Caitlyn Fishbach in the first grade.

"I'm in FCCLA and am busy outside of school with my two jobs," Jangula explained. "I work part-time at Anchor's Away, a lodge and resort located on Richmond Lake. My other job is at Allevery, a family entertainment center in Aberdeen that offers many different activities, such as laser tag, mini bowling, bumper cars, wall climbing, and a playground."

"My college plans are tentative at this point," she admitted. "Right now I'm planning to attend Lake Area Technical College in Watertown. I would like to become an occupational therapy assistant (OTA)."

"As an OTA I'll be working with individuals of all ages, making my experience here in the elementary school very helpful," Jangula admitted.

"After I receive my degree, I hope to go to schools in the area and help the little kids with their various physical problems and other issues."

"My favorite part about this internship is being with the children," she said. "Sometimes it is hard to get them to listen to me though!"

Karsyn is the daughter of Jerrad Jangula and Carla Sperry.



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 4 of 79



RAISING THE ROOFING STANDARDS,
ALL OVER YOUR TOWN!
FREE HAIL STORM ESTIMATES!

605.759.0000
1205 6TH AVE SW SUITE 2, ABERDEEN, SD 57401

ALL OVER ROOFING

Frosty is Back!!!

Please check the Groton Daily Independent for daily clues as to who the Groton Area Mystery Frosty is. The unveiling of Frosty will take place at the Groton Area Snow Queen and Talent Contest on Sunday, November 26th at 4:00pm. The Groton Chamber voted to gift Snow Queen \$100 in Chamber Bucks for the winner of the Mystery Frosty competition.



2023 Frosty Clues

I....

8.) Play(ed) the trumpet

Groton Post No. 39 American Legion

Annual Turkey Party

Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023

Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Groton Legion Post Home, 10 N. Main.

Turkey, Ham and Bacon
to be given away

FREE ADMISSION

**DOOR
PRIZE!**

Lunch served
by Auxiliary



Groton council looks at salary increases, budget requests by Elizabeth Varin

Groton officials are deciding where to invest in the community.

The City Council reviewed budget requests, along with items not included in the 2024 budget.

Some items budgeted for include two new computers for the library computer lab, an AED machine for the swimming pool, summer salary increases due to the state minimum wage increase and a new payload five-year lease. In addition, city staff will receive not only a cost-of-living pay rate increase, but also an hourly rate increase based on how many years they've been with the city.

Employees who have worked for the city for ten years or more will receive a \$1.50 per hour pay increase, while those who have worked for the city for less than ten years will receive a 75 cent per hour pay increase. That is in addition to a 3.2 percent cost-of-living increase for the 13 city employees.

Initially, Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich proposed a cost-of-living increase as well as a \$2 increase for employees who have worked for the city for more than 20 years, a \$1.50 increase for those who have worked for the city for more than 15 years, a 75 cent increase for those who have worked for the city for one to five years and a 50 cent increase for those who have worked for the city between six months and one year.

"It's being a little bit more fair in the sense that ... 44 years, that's dedication," Heinrich said, referring to Public Works Coordinator Terry Herron's years with the city. "You're basically incentivizing people to stay here."

The other option discussed was a blanket 8 percent wage increase. Mayor Scott Hanlon brought up that while some would receive a bigger increase based on years of service to the city, with the blanket increase others, like Heinrich, would see a bigger wage increase.

"But I don't want the 8 percent," Heinrich told the council. "I want to incentivize the employees."

That year-of-service raise would have to be adjusted in the future, though, Heinrich said.

After an executive session discussion, the council approved the 3.2 percent cost-of-living increase as well as the \$1.50 increase for those with 10 or more years of service and 75 cents for those with less than 10 years of service to the city.

There were a number of noteworthy red-lined items from the 2024 budget requests.

Installation of a handicap accessible door at City Hall was not included as a grant funding source may become available if the city's library becomes accredited.

A new electric metering system will be put on hold as the city looks into combined water and electric meters.

The city also held back on allocating \$50,000 in 2024 for a new concession stand at the baseball complex. Discussion a few weeks ago including splitting up the city's share of funding for a new concession stand between the 2024 and 2025 budgets.

However, the baseball/softball foundation told some council members via an email that the foundation's \$100,000 portion was a one-time offer that the city didn't take, said Councilman Brian Bahr. They chose to spend that money on a different project at the baseball complex.

Councilwoman Karyn Babcock asked if the foundation plans to apply for another grant for the project, to which Councilman Kevin Nehls replied, not likely.

"(The grant administrators) shot it back so fast, I don't think it's going to go anywhere," he said. "We did originally say we'd do \$50,000 in 2024 and \$50,000 in 2025, but I don't see how we can do that with a sewer project coming up."

Councilman Jon Cutler proposed making it a three-year project instead and funding \$35,000 in the 2024 budget.

Councilman Bahr said before moving forward with the concession stand project, he'd like to see where the park bathroom safe room project goes. The park gets used nine months out of the year, as compared to only summer use at the baseball complex.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 7 of 79

"Baseball is a great thing for the city. I see that," he said. "But a lot more people use the park."

The money appropriated at Tuesday's meeting isn't set in stone, and it can be shifted before the second reading of the appropriation ordinance, which is scheduled for Nov. 21.

Sewer system issues rear up during budget talks

How should the city move forward with its wastewater system?

That's a question that may be answered by a study proposed to start next year.

Ken Hier with IMEG asked the council whether it would like the engineering firm to draw up a contract to study the current system to see where the city should invest funds into. The results would help city officials decide what projects to pursue and see what funding options may be available. The process of study, funding, design and construction could take the city into 2027 depending on how much work there is.

Wastewater Superintendent Dwight Zerr added he hopes it will be sooner, possibly with an updated lift station in the future for the city.

However, Hier cautioned about moving forward too quickly.

"I would hate to see you move forward a little bit prematurely," he said. "There are some project areas you could get started on right now, ...but I think we want to study that whole thing and re-evaluate all that to see where you're at."

The city is already having issues with its wastewater system, Zerr said. And federal officials are pushing for fines to be enforced more frequently.

The study, "it's a start," he said. "We'll discuss that and see what we can come up with. It's going to get to the point where we're going to have to ... I'm getting to the point of not meeting inspection."

The city received a warning letter this past year for two emergency discharges made, Zerr said. Instances like that could lead to a \$10,000 fine from the government for each emergency discharge.

Councilman Brian Bahr asked if moving forward with the study and potential wastewater system improvements would keep the city within compliance.

"That would be the goal," Hier responded. "It's likely they're not going to let you keep going along and continue what you're doing."

Later in the meeting, Mayor Scott Hanlon asked which was a more pressing issue: having adequate pipes for wastewater or having a place for that water to go.

Zerr said both are issues the city needs to improve.

"It goes hand-in-hand," he said. "It's getting to the point where we're going to have to do a study and get something going. We'll have to talk about it and see what we're going to do."

Final sections of street improvement discussed

The council reviewed estimates for street improvements on the west side of Groton.

Two estimates were presented at Tuesday's meeting for work on Fourth Avenue between Lincoln Street and Highway 37, Lincoln Street from Third Avenue to Fifth Avenue and Washington Street from Third Avenue to Fifth Avenue. The first estimate included excavation and gravel base construction costs, while the second would build onto that by adding curb, gutter and asphalt paving to the six-block area.

The excavation and gravel base would cost an estimated \$552,097, while the curb, gutter and asphalt pavement would cost an estimated \$578,114. There would be other options that may help cut down on some costs, like doing all the work on a three-block area one year, followed by the final three-block area the next year.

Mayor Hanlon cautioned the council to keep in mind some in that area don't want curb and gutters added.

Councilwoman Shirley Wells said, "If they want a nice road, you need curb and gutter."

- City officials are looking into a new vendor for the city website. One options discussed at Tuesday's meeting would be to contract with Apptegy, a company that builds school and municipality websites and apps. Currently the city's website is hosted by James Valley Telecommunications for free. Apptegy would charge \$10,400 for the set up and first year, followed by a yearly charge of \$6,900. The Chamber of Com-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 8 of 79

merce may assist in the initial setup costs, said Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich. The move to Apptegy would streamline the process of updating the public on news from the city, he said. Councilwoman Karyn Babcock added that a new website would lessen confusion for the public. Apptegy currently hosts the Groton Area School District website and app.

- The city is accepting applications for skating rink employees. Applications are due by 5 p.m. Dec. 4.
- City offices will be closed Friday in observance of Veterans Day.
- Discussion about the Groton City Park safe room/bathroom facility was postponed to the council's Oct. 21 meeting.

Legion Auxiliary hold November meeting

Acting president Lori Giedt opened the November meeting with eight members present. The Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble were recited by all members. Lori placed Department correspondence on the table for all members to read and then she read a thank you note from Ft. Meade VA hospital for our gift shop donation. All members were asked to sign Veteran Day cards.

In old business, Lori read through the list of workers for the Turkey Party which is on Saturday, November 11. All members are reminded to get your cake walk goodies to the Legion hall by 5:30. Next, Jan Seibel and Tami Zimney reported on work being completed for the Veterans Day Program. Two veterans went into Mr. Wanner's junior classroom this year too share their military service stories. Nine junior and senior students from Groton Area School are getting their stories ready to share on November 10 at 2 PM in the arena. Five veterans will be honored this year. Then Meri Erickson reported on veterans and the Pantry. We decided to help our veterans and our community by donating money for Thanksgiving and then donating food to the Pantry this year. Meri Erickson and Jan Seibel will co-chair this event. For Christmas, we are going to gift money for hair cuts to our nursing home veterans. Jan Seibel will chair this. Lastly, Meri Erickson asked about the "Give 10" program. All members or the unit can give 10 of something to the school/education. An example would to give 10 sets of pencils, 10 books, or give 10 minutes of supervision on the playground. All members are encouraged to contact Meri when they "Give 10" so she can report on it.

In new business: Wendy Cooper reported that she turned in \$609.11 in grocery receipts to the school for the month of October. Please keep your grocery receipts from Ken's or Kessler's and turn them in to Wendy so we can help the school earn money. Lori went through the reading of draping our charter for our deceased member, Marge Overacker. Jan Seibel asked about a youth in Groton that saved a person from drowning. Tami Zimney will look into this Youth Hero program.

We decided to have our next monthly meeting on February 12 at 6 PM, instead of March 4, in order to get ready for the Spring District Four meeting which our Legion Post 39 and Auxiliary are hosting on Sunday, March 3. Wendy will serve supper.

All members are asked to get your 2024 dues paid as soon as you can to membership chair, Jan Seibel, and she will be available at the Turkey Party to collect your dues instead of mailing them to her. Senior member dues are \$31 and junior dues are \$5.50.



Service Notice: Douglas Ehrenberg

Memorial Services for Douglas Ehrenberg, 81 will be held 10 a.m., Saturday, November 25, 2023 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Groton. Rev. Jeremy Yeadon will officiate. Inurnment with military honors will be at Sunset Memorial Gardens, Aberdeen. Doug passed away November 4, 2023 at Hospice of the Valley in Glendale, Arizona surrounded by family.

The arts have a \$363 million impact in South Dakota

By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

The arts change lives, from elementary schools to senior citizen centers and for people in every walk of life—the arts truly benefit us all. And the arts also transform economies, according to a new study of South Dakota's nonprofit arts and culture industry. Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6), an economic and social impact study conducted by Americans for the Arts, documents \$363 million in economic activity generated in 2022 across South Dakota.

This economic activity—\$63.7 million in spending by nonprofit arts and culture organizations and \$299.3 million in event-related spending by their audiences—generated nearly \$52 million in local, state and federal government revenue and supported 6,054 full-time jobs. Spending by arts and culture audiences also includes local merchants, restaurants and lodging facilities, a value-add that few other industries can compete with.

Our state has always understood the value of cultural attractions and creative enterprises to drive our economy. South Dakota's creative community contributes in so many ways, reaching beyond our monumental sculptures into the heart of each community. This comprehensive study quantifies the impact of our arts industry in a way that dramatically illustrates its importance to us all.

The audience survey portion of the South Dakota analysis illustrates the overwhelming appreciation of arts and cultural opportunities in our state. 91% of respondents mentioned a sense of community or neighborhood pride in arts offerings, while 88% would feel a sense of loss if cultural opportunities were not available. 87% said arts attendance was a way of ensuring that creative activities and venues are preserved for future generations.

While an understanding of that economic impact of the sector is critical to its future, the true power of the arts is the social impact within our communities. Our arts venues and opportunities are shining examples of accessibility and inclusivity. We have so much to be proud of in South Dakota's creative community!



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 10 of 79



**October 30 -
November 5, 2023**

It was another busy week out in Washington. We got to work and passed three of our 12 appropriation bills through the Senate. Each of the 12 bills covers a different subject area that corresponds with a subcommittee of the Senate Ap-

propriations Committee, and this past week, we passed the bills covering Agriculture, Military Construction/VA, and Transportation/Housing & Urban Development. While that's only 25 percent of the job, and there's still more work to be done, we're closer to funding the government beyond November 17 than we were the week before. In between working on the appropriation bills, we've been busy taking meetings, hosting more artificial intelligence (AI) forums and attending hearings. We're ready for another busy week! Here's my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakotans I visited with: This past week, I had the opportunity to welcome 176 of our newest American citizens at a naturalization ceremony held in Fort Pierre. It was an honor to be one of the first to congratulate them on becoming a citizen of the United States of America.

Meetings this past week: Charles Scharf, CEO of Wells Fargo; Charlie Cook, political analyst and author; and Chris Waller, member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. We also had our Senate Bible Study. Our verse this week was Proverbs 22:6.

I hosted two more AI insight forums this past week with my bipartisan AI working group, which I lead with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Senator Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Senator Todd Young (R-Ind.). The first forum of the week focused on the intersection of AI and the workforce. Most notably, Dr. José-Marie Griffiths, President of Dakota State University, joined us to talk about AI's impact on our universities and the cyber industry. You can read more about this forum and view a full list of panelists here.

Our second forum of the week focused on "high impact" areas, with panelists from industries most affected by the increasing presence of AI. This included leaders from AI development companies, financial institutions and academia. We're appreciative of everyone who takes the time to come and visit with us as we look to the future of AI and how it impacts every aspect of our lives.

This past week, I also went to the White House with the AI working group to meet with President Biden about his AI Executive Order issued on October 30. While I appreciate the president's initiative in taking action on AI, the executive order is overly broad and could stifle AI innovation. For America to compete with China and our global adversaries, we need to make it easier to build businesses here, not harder. AI should not be a partisan issue. There is an opportunity for Congress to act in a bipartisan fashion to create policies and invest in America's future in a way that will make AI work for all Americans, help advance scientific progress and strengthen our global stature.

Headline of the week: South Dakota beef industry sees potential in small, local meat plants – South Dakota News Watch

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 11 of 79

Letter to IHS: This past week, I led the South Dakota and North Dakota congressional delegations in sending a letter to Indian Health Service (IHS) Director Roselyn Tso urging IHS to expand access to outside health care services in both states. Specifically, we asked them to complete a feasibility study on implementing a Purchased and Referred Care Delivery Area to all counties in both states. You can read more about this and read the full letter here.

Votes taken: 19 – several of these were on amendments to our appropriation bills, which I mentioned in last week's Round[s] Up. We also voted on a few nominees to executive positions within the Department of Defense, including Gen. David Allvin to be Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force.

Hearings: I attended two hearings this week – one was in the Select Committee on Intelligence. The other was in the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. We held a hearing on financial protections for veterans and service members, and I had the opportunity to give an opening statement while serving as ranking member. You can watch a clip of that here.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Aberdeen, Brookings, Carter, Deadwood, Lead and Pukwana.

Steps taken this past week: 62,302 steps or 30.88 miles

Conde National League

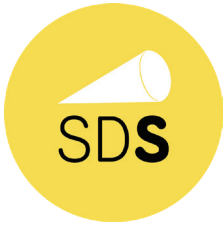
November 6 Team Standings: Cubs 20, Tigers 19, Braves 19, Giants 18½, Mets 18½, Pirates 13

Men's High Games: Russ Bethke 211, Ryan Bethke 185, Austin Schuelke 177

Men's High Series: Russ Bethke 550, Ryan Bethke 532, Dalton Locke 442

Women's High Games: Michelle Johnson 190, Suzi Easthouse 178, Vickie Kramp 171

Women's High Series: Suzi Easthouse 484, Vanessa Bethke 406, Michelle Johnson 403



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Federal agency threatens funding reduction over South Dakota's lax pipeline safety enforcement

Seven complaints filed against 489 reports of damage to natural gas lines

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 7, 2023 5:41 PM

Federal regulators say they'll reduce grant funding to South Dakota if the state doesn't do a better job preventing excavation damages to buried pipelines.

The warning came in a letter this month from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), after a July review. For the second year in a row, the evaluation found the state's enforcement "inadequate."

In South Dakota, anyone planning a digging project is supposed to notify the state's One Call service, either through an online form or by dialing 811. The service notifies utilities, and they mark the location of underground pipes and cables.

If excavation projects damage a pipeline, the pipeline operator can file a complaint with the state's One Call Board. The board can take disciplinary action, such as imposing fines on the party responsible for the damage and requiring safety training, but only after a complaint has been filed. The fine for a first offense can be up to \$1,000, and the second in the same year can be up to \$5,000.

But complaints are rarely filed. PHMSA said there were 489 reports of excavation damages to natural gas distribution pipelines last year in South Dakota, and only seven complaints.

Funding reduction would affect PUC

The state One Call Board met Tuesday via Zoom. Mary Zanter, pipeline safety program manager with the state Public Utilities Commission, told the board why pipeline operators file so few complaints.

"Currently, they don't believe there is anything that the board will do regarding their complaints that are filed," Zanter said.

PHMSA said in its letter that the state's complaint-driven approach, which encourages dispute resolution outside of the formal process, is also inhibiting enforcement and does not meet requirements in federal law.

The federal agency is threatening to decrease state-based grant funding for pipeline safety by roughly \$8,000 to \$10,000 — a 4% reduction — if the problems are not addressed in about three years, Zanter said. That funding goes to the Public Utilities Commission.

Zanter advised the board to accept PHMSA's invitation to offer guidance and support for better enforcement.

"Right now, South Dakota damages are within the top 10 highest in the nation and have been continuing for a number of years, and really, that's the issue that needs to be resolved," she said. "How do we reduce damages not only to gas facilities but all the facilities? So, we've got to look at the big picture, not just becoming adequate from the standpoint of this PHMSA evaluation."

PHMSA gave the board 30 days to respond, but has since granted a short extension.

"Nationwide statistics show that effective enforcement of state damage prevention laws reduces excavation damage and pipeline incidents, resulting in enhanced public safety," wrote Zach Barrett, the federal agency's state programs director.

One Call Board's reaction

The board unanimously decided to address the PHMSA letter by reevaluating its One Call complaint form. "It is quite lengthy and some of the questions are repetitive," said Codi Gregg, executive director of the

One Call Board.

She said state law requires the person or entity filing the complaint to cite a specific law being broken. "If it doesn't identify that state law, the board cannot say, 'OK, we believe it was a violation of this law number' and assert that belief to the complaint," Gregg said. "It has to be identified by the person filing. So, there were several complaints where there were no penalties issued."

She said that problem existed with seven complaints in 2022 that were therefore not filed, in addition to the seven that were filed.

Board members said they'll consider adjusting the language in their complaint processes and procedures that encourages excavators and pipeline operators to handle disputes themselves, rather than file a complaint to the board.

"PHMSA does not like that comment," Gregg told the board. However, she and multiple board members expressed support for the language.

"We're not out there to put somebody out of business," Gregg said, adding that 811 "is meant to be a teaching tool."

"I don't mind that statement," said Board Chairman Mark Meier of Watertown, who represents municipalities. "I like companies and contractors to work together to solve things."

The board could consider the proposed changes at its January meeting.

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

Lawmakers vote to ditch free fishing, state park entry for Mother's Day, Father's Day

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 7, 2023 2:21 PM

People will no longer get free entrance at South Dakota's state parks or free fishing on Mother's Day and Father's Day.

The Legislature's Interim Rules Review Committee signed off on a rule change from the state Game, Fish and Parks Department on Tuesday in Pierre, making final a proposal approved by the GF&P Commission early last month.

Wildlife Division Director Tom Kirschenmann told lawmakers that the free weekends, implemented in 2019, were meant to be an enticement that would convince more people to buy annual park passes and fishing licenses.

A look at the data revealed that the enticement strategy didn't work, Kirschenmann said. Mother's Day is often too cold and wet to draw many visitors, he said, and Father's Day weekend comes after most people have made their decision on buying a park pass.

Another factor is the state's open house and free fishing weekend, which comes shortly after Mother's Day, the weekend before Memorial Day.

That day is quite popular, he said, and the agency's rule change keeps it in place.

"It still does retain the most popular (free day), and the most sought-after opportunity that we want to provide to folks that want to come to the parks," Kirschenmann said.

Sen. Red Dawn Foster, D-Pine Ridge, said she was concerned about removing free days that offer community benefits and asked if the GF&P could quantify their popularity.

Al Nedved, deputy state parks director, said the agency didn't keep track of the visitors who enter the parks for free, but that the current rules put "three opportunities within the course of five weeks." It makes sense, Nedved said, for the state to focus on its attention on the free fishing weekend that falls in-between Mother's and Father's Day.

The committee passed the rule unanimously, as it did with the GF&P's remaining rule changes.

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.

Ban on added flavors in medical pot products shot down by legislative panel

Cannabis industry said rule change would kill 'an entire category of products'

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 7, 2023 11:41 AM

Lawmakers swatted back an attempt to ban flavoring in marijuana edibles and vape products on Tuesday in Pierre.

They also shot down a rule that would have forced cannabis manufacturers to test the rolling papers used to make pre-rolls – also known as joints — in addition to testing the pot inside them.

The rules were part of a 31-page set of proposed adjustments to South Dakota's medical marijuana program considered by the Legislature's Interim Rules Review Committee.

Voters approved a ballot initiative in 2020 that legalized cannabis for people with qualifying health conditions. As of Oct. 23, there were 12,325 medical marijuana cardholders in South Dakota, according to the Department of Health.

Pot sellers: Flavor ban too broad

Medical Marijuana Program Director Tamarah Lee told lawmakers that all non-cannabis additives represent a danger to patients. Lee pointed to a 2020 white paper from the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which regulates cannabis in that state, which described the dangers of artificial or naturally derived, non-cannabis flavors for inhalable vaping products.

Pre-roll testing rule nixed

The other disputed rule would have forced manufacturers to test the papers used in pre-rolls, with Lee saying that some papers pose health risks.

The current rule requiring cannabis products to be tested in their "final form" had an exemption for pre-rolls, essentially allowing manufacturers to test the pot before rolling it into a joint.

Rep. Jean Hunhoff, R-Yankton, wanted to know if the papers used for cannabis are similar to those used for roll-your-own cigarettes. Koehne told her that there are a wide variety of papers available, and that he'd rather vet them and choose tested ones than to do the testing himself.

Hunhoff put the same question to Lee: Are pot papers the same as cigarette papers?

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.

SD's Johnson votes with majority to censure Tlaib over Israel remarks

Congressman had voted to quash previous Tlaib censure proposed by Taylor Greene

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - NOVEMBER 7, 2023 9:47 PM

The U.S. House voted late Tuesday to censure Rep. Rashida Tlaib for remarks the Michigan Democrat has made about Israel and Palestine amid the ongoing war in the Middle East.

The chamber voted, 234-188, to adopt a resolution written by Georgia Republican Rich McCormick that censures Tlaib, the only Palestinian-American member of Congress, for a handful of statements in the month since the militant group Hamas launched a surprise attack into southern Israel. Twenty-two Democrats voted for the resolution.

Surrounded by a small circle of progressive lawmakers, Tlaib stood in the well of the House as Speaker Mike Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, read the results.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 15 of 79

The censure vote came after a procedural vote to quash the resolution failed 208-213 earlier Tuesday. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, voted with the majority against the tabling motion. He also voted in favor of censuring Tlaib.

The resolution was a formal statement that a majority of the chamber disapproves of Tlaib's statements. It does not include any additional punishment such as removal from committees.

Six Republicans — Ken Buck of Colorado, Thomas Massie of Kentucky, Ryan Zinke of Montana and John Duarte, Mike Garcia and Tom McClintock of California — voted with most Democrats to table the resolution.

One Democrat, Brad Schneider of Illinois, voted against tabling it and Susan Wild, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, voted present. Eleven members did not vote.

Tlaib's statements amounted to "calling for the destruction of the state of Israel and dangerously promoting false narratives regarding a brutal, large-scale terrorist attack against civilian targets inside the sovereign territory of a major non-NATO ally while hundreds of Israeli and American hostages remain in terrorist captivity," the McCormick resolution said.

The resolution cited Tlaib's criticism of Israel the day after Hamas' initial attack, her dissemination of a later-debunked report that Israeli rockets destroyed a hospital in the Gaza Strip and a video last week that included the phrase "from the river to the sea," which is widely seen as advocating for the dissolution of the state of Israel.

Tlaib has called for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Hamas' attack has killed more than 1,400, mostly civilians. Israel's counteroffensive has killed more than 10,000, according to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry. Most of the dead Palestinians were children, Tlaib said Tuesday.

In an emotional floor speech Tuesday, Tlaib said she was not antisemitic, but has long criticized the Israeli government. Her House colleagues were targeting her for her support of Palestinian causes and advocacy for a ceasefire, she said.

"I can't believe I have to say this, but Palestinian people are not disposable," she said, her voice cracking. "We are human beings, just like anyone else."

As Tlaib paused to regain her composure, Rep. Ilhan Omar, a Minnesota Democrat who with Tlaib comprised the first two Muslim women elected to Congress, rose in a sign of support and put a hand on Tlaib's back. Rep. André Carson of Indiana, who is also Muslim, placed a hand on Tlaib's shoulder.

"Speaking up to save lives, Mr. Chair — no matter faith, no matter ethnicity — should not be controversial in this chamber," Tlaib continued. "The cries of the Palestinian and Israeli children sound no different to me. What I don't understand is why the cries of Palestinians sound different to you all. We cannot lose our shared humanity."

Resolution criticizes Tlaib

The day after Hamas' surprise attack, Tlaib released a statement mourning "Palestinian and Israeli lives lost" but called Israeli policy "apartheid" that would lead to "resistance."

The resolution said the language in that statement "justified" the attack.

The resolution also criticized Tlaib for echoing reports that Israeli rockets killed hundreds at a hospital in Gaza. U.S. intelligence later debunked that report, which was initially based on information from Palestinian officials.

The most recent event cited in the resolution was Tlaib's tweet on Friday showing a video with pro-Palestinian protestors chanting "from the river to the sea." The slogan, which refers to the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea, is seen as a call to disband the state of Israel and grant the land to the Palestinian people.

In a follow-up tweet Friday, Tlaib called the slogan "an aspirational call for freedom, human rights and peaceful coexistence."

Rep. Jamie Raskin, a Maryland Democrat who is Jewish, led the floor debate against the resolution.

Raskin and Tlaib disagree about aspects of Israel-Palestine relations, but Raskin, a former constitutional law professor, said Tlaib was entitled by the First Amendment to speak her mind.

"The phrase 'from the river to the sea' is abhorrent to me, even with her public explanation of what

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 16 of 79

she means by it, which is very different from what Hamas says," Raskin said. "But I would never think of punishing her or disciplining her because we disagree about that."

McCormick responded that the resolution had nothing to do with Tlaib's right to free speech, but was about the House taking a position.

"This is not about a First Amendment issue," he said. "Rep. Tlaib has the right to spew antisemitic vitriol, even calling for the destruction of the Jewish state. But the House of Representatives also has the right to make it clear that her hate speech does not reflect the opinion of the chamber. And that's what this resolution is about."

Another resolution

The vote was the second time in as many weeks the House considered a resolution censuring Tlaib. The chamber voted Nov. 1 to quash a similar resolution sponsored by Georgia Republican Marjorie Taylor Greene. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, was one of 23 Republicans who voted with the majority to quash that resolution.

The chamber had been scheduled to vote again late Tuesday on another motion to table Greene's resolution but that vote was scrapped.

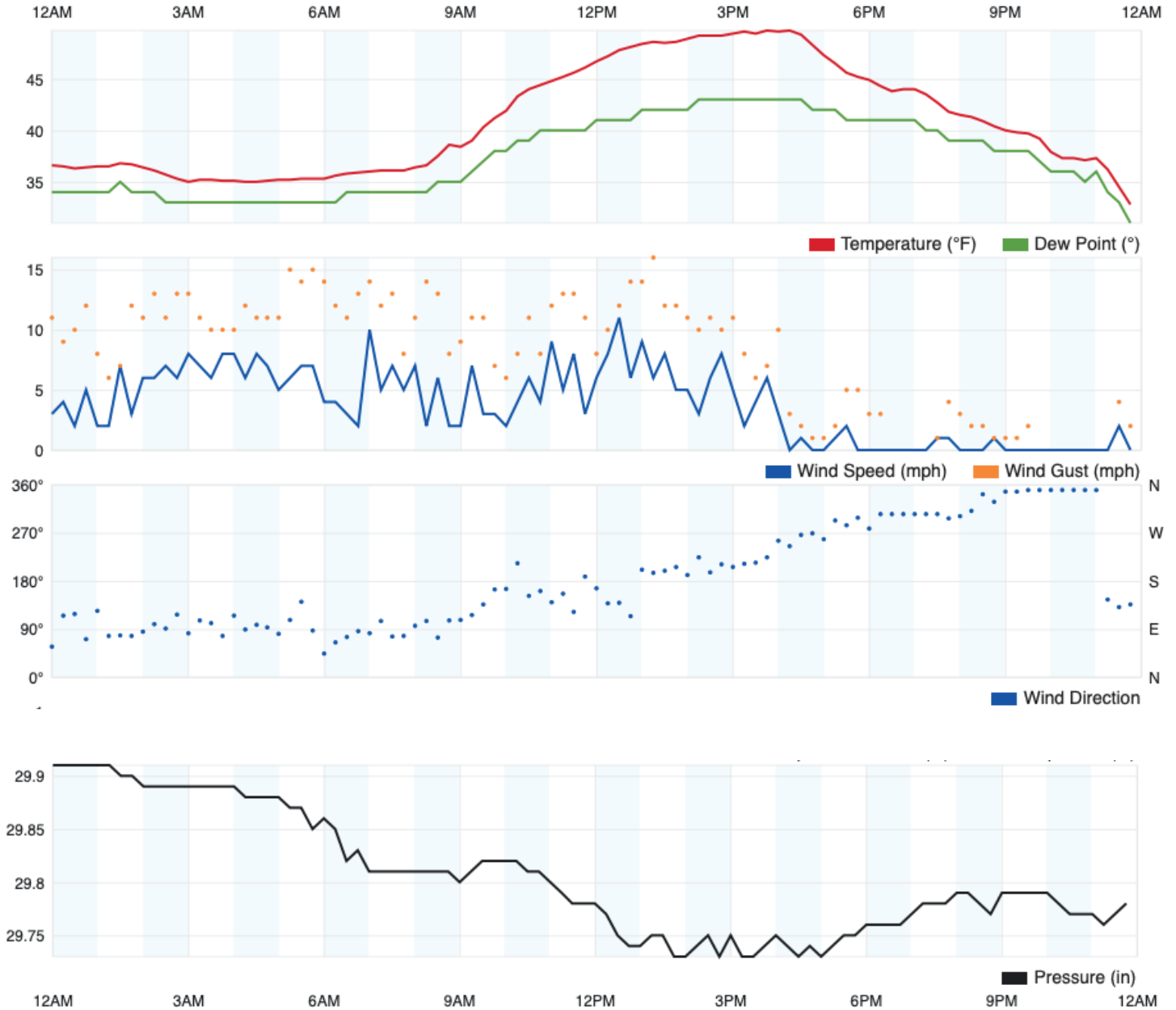
The vote last week occurred before Tlaib's tweets that included "from the river to the sea."

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 17 of 79

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 18 of 79

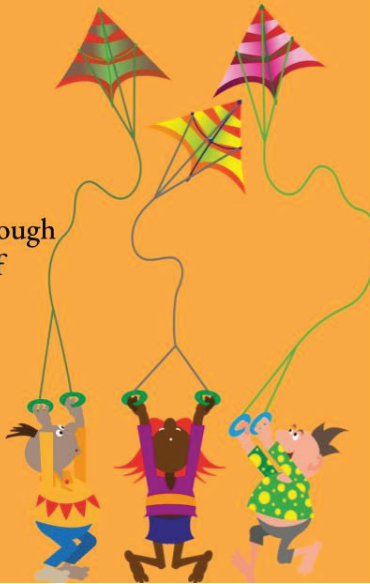
Wed Nov 8	Thu Nov 9	Fri Nov 10	Sat Nov 11	Sun Nov 12	Mon Nov 13	Tue Nov 14
50°F 30°F	44°F 25°F	41°F 26°F	47°F 29°F	53°F 33°F	56°F 36°F	57°F 34°F
SW 26 MPH	W 27 MPH	W 8 MPH	ESE 13 MPH	SW 16 MPH	S 15 MPH	S 14 MPH

Windy Today Through Thursday

Today: A blend of clouds and sun, then clearing late. Windy. Gusts 35-45 mph
Highs 45 to 55°

Tonight: Clear. Breezy.
Lows: 28 to 32°

Thursday: Winds diminishing through the evening. Sunny then a blend of clouds/sun. Cooler.
Highs: 41 to 50°



NWS Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov/aberdeen

	Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)														Maximum
	11/8 Wed							11/9 Thu							
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	
Aberdeen	20	35	33	36	29	23	26	30	36	40	40	37	23	16	40
Britton	14	29	36	35	28	23	25	29	31	40	38	35	25	18	40
Brookings	8	23	30	31	30	24	22	22	24	30	31	30	20	17	31
Chamberlain	15	31	36	33	25	21	20	21	21	25	30	30	20	16	36
Clark	13	29	35	36	36	24	26	29	35	39	39	37	28	17	39
Eagle Butte	24	37	40	39	33	32	31	29	32	36	37	36	25	14	40
Ellendale	24	35	36	38	30	25	28	29	36	43	40	39	26	16	43
Eureka	24	36	43	43	32	26	30	29	36	41	45	44	26	16	45
Gettysburg	25	37	44	44	32	32	32	29	33	41	43	41	25	16	44
Huron	10	29	32	35	28	23	22	23	21	25	31	31	20	18	35
Kennebec	20	31	39	38	32	25	26	28	30	36	38	35	21	14	39
McIntosh	35	44	49	49	33	32	32	35	40	44	45	44	25	13	49
Milbank	8	25	30	32	35	29	28	31	33	37	40	36	25	21	40
Miller	24	35	37	39	26	26	30	30	33	39	39	37	21	14	39
Mobridge	23	33	39	37	32	26	28	28	35	39	37	35	23	14	39
Murdo	20	31	37	38	35	26	26	28	30	33	36	32	22	13	38
Pierre	13	30	37	36	31	24	24	24	24	32	32	31	21	10	37
Redfield	16	32	35	38	28	21	26	29	32	39	39	38	21	14	39
Sisseton	15	31	35	36	35	32	30	36	39	39	38	37	30	22	39
Watertown	10	29	33	36	35	29	28	30	35	39	41	38	29	18	41
Webster	16	35	40	41	40	31	31	36	41	44	43	41	33	22	44
Wheaton	9	22	31	31	30	25	24	28	31	36	36	32	25	18	36

Dry conditions with winds on the increase through the day. Gusty winds continue tonight into Thursday before diminishing Thursday evening into the night. Gusts will range from 35-45mph. A Wind Advisory is in effect for Corson and Dewey counties where gusts could be as high as 50mph. Elevated fire danger today from north-central to south-central SD due to the gusty winds and dry conditions.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 19 of 79

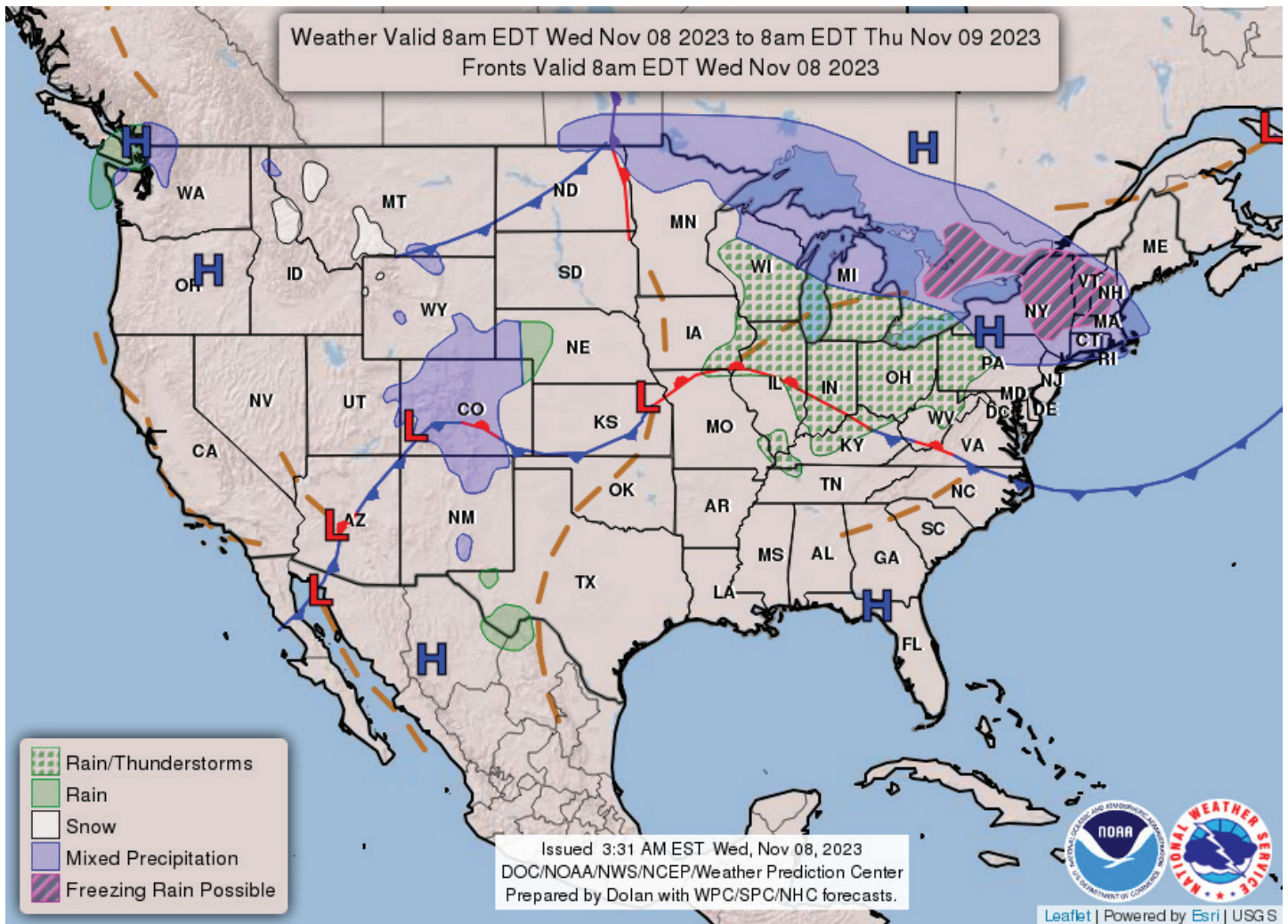
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 50 °F at 4:11 PM
Low Temp: 35 °F at 11:29 PM
Wind: 19 mph at 1:04 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 52 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 77 in 1999
Record Low: -3 in 1936
Average High: 46
Average Low: 23
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.26
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.17
Average Precip to date: 20.73
Precip Year to Date: 23.15
Sunset Tonight: 5:12:14 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:21:25 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 20 of 79

Today in Weather History

November 8th, 1985: Southern South Dakota saw heavy snow from the morning of the 8th through the evening on the 10th. Snowfall ranged from 5-10 inches over the area, with up to a foot or more in the Black Hills. The most significant amount was 18 inches in the higher elevations of the Black Hills. Winds gusting around 40 mph at times, combined with falling snow, produced near-blizzard conditions during the afternoon of the 9th through the early morning hours on the 10th, in the southwest. Some storm total snowfall amounts include; 16.0 inches near Presho; 11.5 inches in Kennebec; 9.0 inches in Murdo; and 4.0 inches in Timber Lake and near Onida.

1870: The U.S. Signal Corps Weather Service issued the first storm warning on this day. Professor Increase A. Lapham believed that warnings of deadly storms on the Great Lakes could be derived from telegraphed weather observations. As a result, a bill was introduced and signed into law to establish a national telegraphic weather service. The Signal Corps began taking observations of November 1st, 1870. On this date, Lapham would issue the first storm warning, a cautionary forecast for the Great Lakes.

1879: A tornado struck Crawford County, Arkansas, killing several people.

1913: The Great Lakes Storm of November 7-13, 1913, was a blizzard with hurricane-force winds that devastated the Great Lakes Region, sinking as many as 19 ships and stranding 19 others. This storm would be the deadliest and most destructive natural disaster ever to hit the Great Lakes.

1943 - An early season snowstorm raged across eastern South Dakota and Minnesota into northern Wisconsin. The storm produced 22 inches of snow at Fairbault and Marshall MN, 20 inches at Redwood Falls MN, and 10.1 inches at Minneapolis. Drifts fifteen feet high were reported in Cottonwood County MN. The storm produced up to two feet of snow in South Dakota smothering a million Thanksgiving day turkeys. (6th-8th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1953 - Residents of New York City suffered through ten days of smog resulting in 200 deaths. (The Weather Channel)

1966 - The temperature in downtown San Francisco reached a November record of 86 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms over Texas produced locally heavy rains in the Hill Country, with 3.50 inches reported at Lakeway, and 3.72 inches reported at Anderson Mill. Thunderstorms over Louisiana produced hail an inch in diameter at Clay and at Provencial. Blustery northwest winds, ushering cold air into western Kansas and into northwest Texas, gusted to 46 mph at Hill City KS. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Fair weather prevailed across much of the nation for Election Day. Midland TX equalled their record for November with an afternoon high of 89 degrees, and the record high of 87 degrees at Roswell NM was their fifth in eight days. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing along and ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from northern Louisiana into central Georgia. Thunderstorms spawned three tornadoes, and there were sixty-four reports of large hail or damaging winds. A late afternoon thunderstorm in central Georgia spawned a tornado which killed one person and injured eight others at Pineview. Late afternoon thunderstorms in central Mississippi produced baseball size hail around Jackson, and wind gusts to 70 mph Walnut Grove. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1994: The twelfth and final tropical cyclone of the Atlantic hurricane season formed in the southwestern Caribbean. While Hurricane Gordon was only a Category 1, it killed 1,149 individuals, including 1,122 in Haiti.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 21 of 79

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

WHAT'S IN A GOAL?

Charlie Brown struck out for the fourth time in the same game. In deep despair, he cried out, "Lucy! I'll never make it. All of my life I've dreamed of playing in the big leagues. But I know now I'll never make it!"

"Charlie," she answered, "choose an immediate goal. When you go out to pitch, see if you can walk to the mound without falling."

What's in a goal?

GUIDANCE: Establishing goals provides a process that enables us to accomplish worthwhile projects in life. Great things can be achieved when we know what we want to do. Goals enable us to make plans, solve problems, make decisions, and set priorities. Then, at the end of the day, we can review our progress or lack of it, redirect our steps, and move forward.

OBJECTIVITY: We all have days when we feel like giving up. But if we have a goal in front of us, we will be able to see progress and know that the struggle is worth the effort.

ACCOUNTABILITY: If we truly want to make a difference in this world, we can find an accountability partner who will work with us to encourage us to "get where we want to go." Being accountable is difficult without someone looking over our shoulder.

LABOR: Anything that has value and worth will require our hard work, patience, perseverance, and prayer. Want God's Help? Do whatever you do for the glory of God!

Prayer: Father, You have given each of us a reason for living and a purpose to accomplish. May we use the talents You have given us to achieve great things for You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Philippians 3:13-14



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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 22 of 79

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
- 11/05/2023 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Fall Dinner, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- 11/11/2023 Groton American Legion Annual Turkey Party 6:30 pm.
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 11/26/2023 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
- 12/02/2023 Live & Silent Auctions at Olive Grove Golf Course 4pm-close

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 23 of 79

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.07.23

3 11 33 42 52 20

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$223,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 53
DRAW: Mins 6 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.06.23

13 15 26 44 46 5

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,050,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 8 Mins 6
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.07.23

1 12 20 37 45 4

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 23 Mins 6
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.04.23

3 18 20 22 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$44,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 23 Mins 7
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.06.23

22 23 25 41 56 24

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 52 Mins 7
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.06.23

12 25 40 59 61 26

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$196,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 52 Mins 7
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 25 of 79

News from the  Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

SDHSAA Playoffs=

Class A=

SoDak 16=

State Qualifier=

Dakota Valley def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 25-21, 25-18, 25-18

Dell Rapids def. Hill City, 25-11, 25-22, 25-14

Lennox def. Groton Area, 25-20, 25-11, 25-27, 25-18

Miller def. Flandreau, 25-17, 25-17, 25-12

Platte-Geddes def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 21-25, 25-18, 25-19, 25-21

Rapid City Christian def. Winner, 25-11, 25-17, 26-24

Sioux Falls Christian def. Bennett County, 25-7, 25-4, 25-7

Wagner def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-20, 23-25, 25-22, 22-25, 15-7

Class B=

SoDak 16=

State Qualifier=

Burke def. Herreid/Selby Area, 18-25, 25-17, 25-15, 25-23

Castlewood def. Philip, 25-10, 24-26, 25-19, 25-15

Chester def. Lemmon High School, 25-11, 25-16, 25-11

Colman-Egan def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-17, 25-15, 25-9

Faulkton def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-22, 25-14, 25-20

Gayville-Volin High School def. Faith, 23-25, 25-21, 25-19, 25-11

Warner def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-9, 25-11, 25-6

Wolsey-Wessington def. Kadoka Area, 25-19, 25-17, 25-16

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

Abrupt stoppage of engine caused fatal South Dakota plane crash, preliminary NTSB report says

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A recent plane crash in South Dakota that killed one man and injured another was caused by an abrupt engine stop, according to a preliminary report by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The single-engine 1997 Piper Malibu Mirage crashed near Pierre on Oct. 23, killing the 76-year-old passenger, Hugh Alexander, and injuring the pilot. The NTSB report said that while climbing from the Pierre Regional Airport the engine "abruptly stopped" and "rolled back," KELO-TV reported.

The pilot, Eric Meyer, noted no abnormal indications or warnings before the sudden loss of power, according to the report, which said the pilot was unable to restart the engine. The plane crashed into an area of bluffs and rolling terrain.

The plane was headed to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where both men were from.

G7 nations announce a unified stance on Israel-Hamas war after intensive meetings in Tokyo

By MATTHEW LEE, FOSTER KLUG and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Top diplomats from the Group of Seven leading industrial democracies announced a unified stance on the Israel-Hamas war on Wednesday after intensive meetings in Tokyo, condemning Hamas, supporting Israel's right to self-defense and calling for "humanitarian pauses" to speed aid to desperate civilians in the Gaza Strip.

In a statement following two days of talks, the nations sought to balance unequivocal criticism of Hamas' attacks against Israel and "the need for urgent action" to help civilians in the besieged Palestinian enclave.

"All parties must allow unimpeded humanitarian support for civilians, including food, water, medical care, fuel and shelter, and access for humanitarian workers," said the statement, hammered out by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and foreign ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and Italy. "We support humanitarian pauses and corridors to facilitate urgently needed assistance, civilian movement and the release of hostages."

The G7 meeting was, in part, an attempt to contain the worsening humanitarian crisis while also keeping broader differences on Gaza from deepening. It came "at a very intense time for our countries and for the world," Blinken said in remarks to reporters, adding that "G7 unity is stronger and more important than ever."

The ministers noted that the G7 is "working intensively to prevent the conflict from escalating further and spreading more widely," and also using sanctions and other measures "to deny Hamas the ability to raise and use funds to carry out atrocities." They also condemned "the rise in extremist settler violence committed against Palestinians," which they said is "unacceptable, undermines security in the West Bank, and threatens prospects for a lasting peace."

As the diplomats met in downtown Tokyo, a U.N. agency said that thousands of Palestinians in Gaza are fleeing south on foot with only what they can carry after running out of food and water in the north. Israel said its troops were battling Hamas militants deep inside Gaza City, which was home to some 650,000 people before the war and where the Israel military says Hamas has its central command and a vast labyrinth of tunnels. The growing numbers making their way south point to an increasingly desperate situation in and around Gaza's largest city, which has come under heavy Israeli bombardment.

"All of us want to end this conflict as soon as possible and meanwhile to minimize civilian suffering," Blinken said. "But, as I discussed with my G7 colleagues, those calling for an immediate cease-fire have an obligation to explain how to address the unacceptable result that would likely bring about: Hamas left in place with more than 200 hostages, with a capacity and stated intent to repeat October 7th again and again and again."

Looking ahead to after the war, Blinken said, "key elements should include no forcible displacement of Palestinians from Gaza. ... No use of Gaza as a platform for terrorism or other violent attacks. No reoccupation of Gaza after the conflict ends. No attempt to blockade or besiege Gaza. No reduction in the territory of Gaza. We must also ensure no terrorist threats can emanate from the West Bank."

Besides the monthlong conflict in Gaza, which followed Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in Israel in which militants killed more than 1,400 people, mostly civilians, and captured 242, the G7 envoys dealt with a flurry of other crises, including Russia's war in Ukraine, North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and China's growing aggression in territorial disputes with its neighbors. There has also been a push for cooperation to combat pandemics, synthetic opioids, and threats from the misuse of artificial intelligence.

Since before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the G7 has held together in defense of the international order that originally emerged after the destruction of World War II. Despite some fraying around the edges, the group has preserved a unified front in condemning and opposing Russia's invasion.

"Our steadfast commitment to supporting Ukraine's fight for its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity will never waver," the statement said.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa said the G7 foreign ministers "strongly condemned North

Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches as well as arms transfers from North Korea to Russia, which directly violate relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions."

She stressed the need for G7 unity and cooperation in tackling global conflicts and tensions.

"G7 unity in the Indo-Pacific region is extremely important," she said. "It is extremely important that G7 engages candidly with China and expresses our concerns directly to China and works together with China on global challenges and areas of common interest."

Blinken has been pushing to significantly expand the amount of humanitarian aid being sent to Gaza, and getting Israel to agree to "pauses" in its military operation to allow that assistance to get in and more civilians to get out. Israel remains unconvinced and Arab and Muslim nations are demanding an immediate full cease-fire, something the United States opposes. There has also been resistance to discussing Gaza's future, with the Arab states insisting that the immediate humanitarian crisis must be addressed first.

There have been some small cracks in the G7 over Gaza, which has inflamed international public opinion. Democracies are not immune from intense passions that have manifested themselves in massive pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel demonstrations in G7 capitals and elsewhere.

Last month in the U.N. Security Council, for instance, France voted in favor of a resolution calling for a humanitarian truce in Gaza that was vetoed by the United States because it didn't go far enough in condemning Hamas' attack on Israel which ignited the war. Britain and Japan abstained in that vote.

Blinken arrived in Tokyo from Turkey, the last stop on a four-day whirlwind tour of the Middle East that began with visits to Israel, Jordan, the West Bank, Cyprus and Iraq. From Japan, he will travel to South Korea and then on to India.

Thousands flee north Gaza on foot as desperation grows over dwindling supplies and Israeli advance

By NAJIB JOBAIN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Thousands more Palestinians have fled northern Gaza on foot, the U.N. said Wednesday, as desperation grew over the dwindling supply of food and water, intensified shelling and the approach of Israeli troops and tanks.

Over 70% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have already left their homes, but the number of people making their way south has quickened recently, as the war triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 assault inside Israel entered its second month. With no end in sight to the fighting, an increasingly dire humanitarian situation is unfolding inside the besieged Palestinian enclave.

International pressure mounted on Israel over the civilians' plight, with the Group of Seven industrialized nations calling Wednesday for the "unimpeded" delivery of food, water, medicine and fuel, and for "humanitarian pauses" in the fighting. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has so far resisted such calls, while leaving open the possibility of smaller breaks in the fighting.

Israel has said its war to end Hamas' rule and crush its military capabilities will be long and difficult, and that it will maintain some form of control over the coastal enclave indefinitely — though how it will achieve that remains unclear. Support for the war remains strong inside Israel, where the focus has been on the fate of the more than 240 hostages held by Hamas and other militant groups.

About 15,000 people fled northern Gaza on Tuesday — triple the number that left Monday — according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. They are using Gaza's main north-south highway during a daily four-hour window announced by Israel.

Those fleeing include children, older people and people with disabilities, and most walked with minimal belongings, the U.N. agency said. Some say they had to cross Israeli checkpoints, where they saw people being arrested, while others held their hands in the air and raised white flags while passing Israeli tanks.

Hundreds of trucks carrying aid have been allowed to enter Gaza from Egypt since Oct. 21. But humanitarian workers say the aid is far short of mounting needs.

Residents reported loud explosions overnight into Wednesday across Gaza City and in its Shati refugee camp, which houses Palestinian families who fled from or were driven out of what is now Israel during the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 28 of 79

1948 war surrounding its establishment.

"The bombings were heavy and close," said Mohamed Abed, who lives in Gaza City.

The army's chief spokesperson, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said late Tuesday that Israeli ground forces had reached "the depths of Gaza City." The Israeli military said Wednesday that it killed one of Hamas' leading developers of rockets and other weapons, without saying where he was killed.

Hamas has denied that Israeli troops have made any significant gains or entered Gaza City. It was not possible to independently confirm battlefield claims from either side.

Israel is focusing its operations on Gaza City, which was home to some 650,000 people before the war and where the military says Hamas has its central command and a vast labyrinth of tunnels. Hundreds of thousands have heeded Israeli orders to flee the north in recent weeks, even though Israel also routinely strikes what it says are militant targets in the south, often killing civilians.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians remain in the north, however, many sheltering at hospitals or U.N. schools. The north has been without running water for weeks, and the U.N. aid office said the last functioning bakeries shut down Tuesday for lack of fuel, water and flour. Hospitals running low on supplies are performing surgeries — including amputations — without anesthesia, it said.

Majed Haroun, who lives in Gaza City, said women and children go door to door asking for food, while those in shelters rely on local donations.

Ameer Ghalban, who pushed an older relative in a wheelchair down Gaza's main highway, said the two of them had each lived off one piece of bread a day for the past three. "The majority of people have left their land because the siege has become absolute in Gaza. We have no water, no electricity, and no flour," he said.

The situation is little better in the south, where hundreds of thousands of displaced people are packed into makeshift shelters. At one, 600 people must share a single toilet, according to the U.N. office.

An airstrike in the southern town of Khan Younis early Wednesday destroyed a house and damaged others. First responders brought the bodies of six people pulled from the rubble, including two women and a child, to a nearby hospital, according to an Associated Press reporter who saw them arrive. The toll was expected to rise.

A month of relentless bombardment in Gaza since the Hamas attack has killed more than 10,500 Palestinians — two-thirds of them women and minors, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory. More than 2,300 are believed to have been buried by strikes that in some cases have demolished entire city blocks.

More than 1,400 people have died in Israel since the start of the war, most of them civilians killed by Hamas militants during the Oct. 7 incursion. Scores of hostages were also taken that day. Israel says 32 of its soldiers have been killed in Gaza since the ground offensive began, and Palestinian militants have continued to fire rockets into Israel on a daily basis.

Israeli officials say thousands of Palestinian militants have been killed, and blame civilian deaths on Hamas, accusing it of putting civilians at risk by operating in residential areas. Gaza's Health Ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its casualty reports.

The war has stoked wider tensions, with Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group trading fire along the border. More than 160 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli-occupied West Bank since the war began, mainly during violent protests and gunbattles with Israeli forces during arrest raids. Some 250,000 Israelis have been forced to evacuate from communities along the borders with Gaza and Lebanon.

Ivanka Trump is set to testify in the civil fraud trial that's probing into the family business

By JENNIFER PELTZ and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Her father gave caustic testimony. Her brothers each spent more than a day on the witness stand.

Now it's Ivanka Trump's turn to face questioning in the civil fraud trial that is publicly probing into the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 29 of 79

family business. Ex-President Donald Trump's eldest daughter, who has been in his inner circle in both business and politics, is due on the stand Wednesday, after trying unsuccessfully to block her testimony.

Unlike her father and her brothers Eric Trump and Donald Trump Jr., she is no longer a defendant in New York Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit. James alleges that Donald Trump's asset values were fraudulently pumped up for years on financial statements that helped him get loans and insurance.

The non-jury trial will decide allegations of conspiracy, insurance fraud and falsifying business records — but Judge Arthur Engoron already has resolved the lawsuit's top claim by ruling that Trump engaged in fraud. That decision came with provisions that could strip the ex-president of oversight of such marquee properties as Trump Tower, though an appeals court is allowing him continued control of his holdings, at least for now.

James, a Democrat, is seeking over \$300 million in penalties and a ban on Trump doing business in New York.

The ex-president and Republican 2024 front-runner denies any wrongdoing, as do the other defendants. He insisted in court Monday that his financial statements greatly underestimated his net worth, that any discrepancies were minor, that a disclaimer absolved him of liability and that "this case is a disgrace."

Ivanka Trump was an executive vice president at the family's Trump Organization before becoming an unpaid senior adviser in her father's White House. Like her brothers, who are still Trump Organization EVPs, she has professed minimal knowledge of their father's annual financial statements.

"I don't, specifically, know what was prepared on his behalf for him as a person, separate and distinct from the organization and the properties that I was working on," she said during sworn questioning for the investigation that eventually led to the lawsuit. She said she didn't know who prepared the statements or how the documents were compiled.

As a Trump Organization executive, Ivanka Trump dealt with securing a loan and a lease for a Washington hotel and financing for the Doral golf resort near Miami and a hotel and condo skyscraper in Chicago, according to court filings.

As her father's inauguration neared, she announced in January 2017 that she was stepping away from her Trump Organization job. After her time in the administration, she moved to Florida.

An appeals court dismissed her as a defendant in the lawsuit in June, saying the claims against her were too old.

Her attorneys contended that she shouldn't have to testify. They said the state was just trying to harass the family by dragging her into court.

The attorney general's office argued that her testimony would be relevant, saying she was involved in some events discussed in the case and remains financially and professionally entwined with the Trump Organization and its leaders. The company has bought insurance for her and her businesses, managed her household staff and credit card bills, rented out her apartment and paid her legal fees, according to the state's court papers.

Engoron and, later, an appeals court ruled that she had to testify.

Live updates | More Palestinians fleeing combat zone in northern Gaza, UN says

By The Associated Press undefined

The pace of Palestinian civilians fleeing the combat zone in northern Gaza has picked up as Israel's air and ground campaign there intensifies. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said Wednesday that about 15,000 people fled on Tuesday, compared to 5,000 on Monday and 2,000 on Sunday.

The densely populated northern area of Gaza, specifically Gaza City and adjacent crowded urban refugee camps, are the focus of Israel's campaign to crush Hamas, the militant group that has ruled Gaza for 16 years. The war, now in its second month, was triggered by the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel.

The number of Palestinians killed in the war passed 10,300, including more than 4,200 children, the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 30 of 79

Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza said Tuesday.

In the occupied West Bank, more than 160 Palestinians have been killed in the violence and Israeli raids. More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, most of them in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that started the fighting, and 242 hostages were taken from Israel into Gaza by the militant group.

Currently:

- G7 nations announce a unified stance on the war.
- Israel envisions an "overall security" role in Gaza indefinitely.
- U.S. House of Representatives censures only Palestinian American in Congress.
- Civilians fleeing northern Gaza's combat zone report a terrifying journey on foot past Israeli tanks.
- Indian bans pro-Palestinian protests.
- AP PHOTOS: Death, destruction and despair reign a month into latest Israel-Gaza conflict.
- How Lebanon's Hezbollah group became a critical player in the Israel-Hamas war.
- Find more of AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>.

Here's what is happening in the latest Israel-Hamas war:

G7 NATIONS ANNOUNCE A UNIFIED STANCE ON ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

TOKYO — Top diplomats from the Group of Seven leading industrial democracies announced a unified stance on the Israel-Hamas war on Wednesday after intensive meetings in Tokyo, condemning Hamas, supporting Israel's right to self-defense and calling for "humanitarian pauses" to speed aid to desperate civilians in the Gaza Strip.

In a statement following two days of talks, the nations sought to balance unequivocal criticism of Hamas' attacks against Israel and "the need for urgent action" to help civilians in the besieged Palestinian enclave.

"All parties must allow unimpeded humanitarian support for civilians, including food, water, medical care, fuel and shelter, and access for humanitarian workers," said the statement, hammered out by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and foreign ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and Italy. "We support humanitarian pauses and corridors to facilitate urgently needed assistance, civilian movement and the release of hostages."

MORE PALESTINIANS FLEEING COMBAT ZONE IN NORTHERN GAZA

JERUSALEM — The pace of Palestinian civilians fleeing the combat zone in northern Gaza has picked up as Israel's air and ground campaign there intensifies, U.N. monitors said Wednesday. About 15,000 people fled on Tuesday, compared to 5,000 on Monday and 2,000 on Sunday, said the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The civilians flee during a four-hour window set daily by the Israeli military that assures safe passage from Gaza City and its surroundings to the south. Most of those fleeing were children, the elderly and people with disabilities, the U.N. agency said. Many arrived on foot with minimal belongings.

In a new development, some of those fleeing reported that they had to cross Israeli checkpoints to reach the south and that they had witnessed some arrests by Israeli forces. Others have said they had to walk past Israeli tanks with raised hands while waving white flags.

The densely populated northern area of Gaza, specifically Gaza City and adjacent urban refugee camps, are the focus of Israel's campaign to crush Hamas, the militant group that has ruled Gaza for 16 years. The war, now in its second month, was triggered by the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel.

Tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians remain in the combat area, many sheltering at hospitals or U.N. schools. Some said they were deterred from moving south because of dire humanitarian conditions in the evacuation zone and ongoing Israeli airstrikes across Gaza, including the south.

U.N. monitors say some 1.5 million of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced.

ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO CONVENE JUDICIAL SELECTION COMMITTEE

JERUSALEM -- After months of refusal, Israeli Justice Minister Yariv Levin said he will convene the judicial selection committee on Nov. 16 to fill empty slots in the Supreme Court and lower benches.

The committee has been a central battleground in Levin's plan to weaken the country's judiciary because he wanted to change its makeup to give the government control over appointments. The proposed judicial overhaul touched off months of mass protests across the country by demonstrators who accused Prime

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 31 of 79

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government of seeking to weaken the only serious check on politicians.

Levin said earlier this week that he would convene the panel soon. In a letter Sunday to the Supreme Court, he said, "wartime is not the time to deal with controversial subjects," and that he would bring before the panel candidates who have broad support.

The government maintains the courts have overstepped their powers and need to be reined in. The demonstrations against the proposed overhaul were put on hold after Hamas militants from the Gaza Strip infiltrated southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing more than 1,400 people and taking over 240 hostages, touching off a fierce Israeli assault to crush Hamas.

ISRAELI AIRSTRIKE HITS RESIDENTIAL AREA IN SOUTH GAZA

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza — An Israeli airstrike struck a residential area in the Zannah neighborhood east of Khan Younis on Wednesday, destroying at least one house and damaging surrounding buildings.

First responders were searching the rubble for dead or wounded from the strike. At least three people — two women and a child — were killed, according to an Associated Press journalist. Ambulances were transporting injured people to a hospital, the journalist said.

Khan Younis is in southern Gaza where Israel's military ordered people in Gaza City and its surroundings to move.

EXPLOSIONS REPORTED ACROSS GAZA CITY AND SHATI REFUGEE CAMP

CAIRO — Residents reported loud explosions across Gaza City and the adjacent Shati refugee camp overnight into Wednesday, as Israel's military said its troops were battling Hamas forces deep inside the densely populated urban area.

The Hamas-run Interior Ministry said an airstrike Wednesday morning hit a house near the Jabaliya refugee camp, also part of that built-up area.

"The bombings were heavy and close," said Mohamed Abed, who lives in Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighborhood. He said people around him panicked when they heard the news late Tuesday that Israeli ground forces were fighting deep in the city.

Gaza City is the focus of Israel's military campaign, now in its second month, to crush the Hamas militant group, which has ruled Gaza for 16 years. The war was triggered by a deadly Hamas attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7.

40 FILIPINOS FLEE GAZA THROUGH RAFAH CROSSING INTO EGYPT

MANILA, Philippines — Dozens of Filipinos fled from the war-ravaged Gaza Strip into Egypt through the Rafah crossing after Filipino diplomats negotiated for their safe passage and Qatar mediated for the border to be opened, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Wednesday.

The 40 Filipinos were traveling to the Egyptian capital of Cairo, where they planned to take flights back to the Philippines, Marcos said in a video message in Manila. Two Filipino doctors managed to leave the Gaza Strip into Egypt last week.

"I hope the rest of our countrymen who also wanted to return home can also exit properly with their spouses and loved ones," Marcos said.

Most of at least 134 Filipinos in Gaza, many of whom are married to Palestinians, have sought help to leave the besieged territory and are waiting for an opportunity to leave, the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said.

HAMAS DENIES ISRAEL IS MAKING BIG MILITARY GAINS IN GAZA CITY

BEIRUT -- Hamas spokesman Ghazi Hamad, speaking on Tuesday from Beirut, denied that Israeli forces were making any significant military gains or that they had advanced deep into Gaza City.

"They never give the people the truth," Hamad said. He added that numerous Israeli soldiers were killed on Monday and "many tanks were destroyed."

"The Palestinians fight and fight and fight against Israel, until we end the occupation," said Hamad, who left Gaza days before the attack.

Israel's military says it has killed thousands of Hamas fighters in the monthlong war. The Associated Press could not independently verify the claims of either side.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 32 of 79

DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS TEAM MEMBER KILLED IN STRIKE ON REFUGEE CAMP

NEW YORK — Doctors Without Borders reported the death of Mohammed Al Ahel, a laboratory technician for the organization in Gaza, on Nov. 6, during a bombing in the Shati refugee camp. Several members of his family also died in the bombing.

The humanitarian organization said Al Ahel had worked with them for more than two years and was at his home when the area was bombed and his building collapsed.

"Our repeated calls for an immediate ceasefire have gone unanswered," the charity said in a statement Tuesday. "But we insist that a ceasefire is the only way to prevent more senseless deaths across Gaza and allow adequate humanitarian aid into the Strip."

ISRAELI HOSTAGES' FAMILIES HOLD VIGIL BESIDE WESTERN WALL

Hundreds of family members of hostages held in Gaza joined supporters beside the Western Wall in Jerusalem to call for the release of their loved ones.

Tuesday evening's event was one of several held around Israel to mark one month since the unprecedented Oct. 7 Hamas attack, in which more than 1,400 people were killed and around 240 taken captive.

"The hostages have been underground in Gaza for 32 days. I cry out to every single person here and every single person on the planet to make it your mission to free these souls," Rachel Goldberg, a prominent spokesperson for the hostage families said, her voice breaking.

Singing and praying together while holding signs of the kidnapped, parents and friends gave speeches calling for their release. They also lit a memorial flame that will be carried across the world to build political pressure to aid their release.

WHITE HOUSE SAYS IT DOES NOT SUPPORT ISRAEL RE-OCCUPYING GAZA AFTER WAR

WASHINGTON — The White House on Tuesday reiterated that President Joe Biden does not support an Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip once the war ends.

Asked about Netanyahu's comments, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said he would leave it to Netanyahu to clarify what he means by having "indefinite" control of Gaza's security.

"There needs to be a healthy set of conversations about what post conflict Gaza looks like and what governance looks like," Kirby told reporters. "What we absolutely agree with our Israeli counterparts on is what it can't look like, and it can't look like it looked on October 6."

Biden previously said it would be a "mistake" for Israel to occupy Gaza.

THOUSANDS OF PREGNANT WOMEN AND NEW MOTHERS IN DIRE CONDITION, UN SAYS

UNITED NATIONS — The figures are staggering: 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza are unable to access routine maternal health care, 180 women are giving birth there every day, and 5,500 babies have been born since the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks on Israel.

Dr. Natalia Kanem, head of the U.N. agency that promotes reproductive and sexual health, gave those figures at a U.N. news conference Tuesday where she issued an urgent appeal for fuel for hospitals and incubators, clean water and food for pregnant and lactating women, and for a humanitarian cease-fire.

Kanem said the U.N. has no figures on the number of new mothers or newborns who've died since the war began. But she said, "we have seen losses of life" of newborns in hospitals who need incubators and oxygen which require fuel, adding that being in a hospital is essential for Caesarean section deliveries.

While two truckloads of health and delivery kits and medication have arrived in Gaza, "it's a drop in the bucket" compared to the needs, said Kanem, the executive director of the U.N. Population Fund.

Pregnant women need double the amount of fluid than non-pregnant women, "and if you're a lactating mother, it's triple" — and "brackish water is not a solution," she added.

RED CROSS SAYS 2 AID TRUCKS CAME UNDER FIRE IN GAZA

CAIRO — The International Committee of the Red Cross said two of its trucks were damaged when a convoy of its vehicles in Gaza came under fire on Tuesday.

The ICRC vehicles were hit as they were transporting vital medical supplies to hospitals and health facilities in the besieged enclave, the aid group said. A driver was lightly wounded.

"These are not the conditions under which humanitarian personnel can work," said William Schomburg, the head of the ICRC sub-delegation in Gaza. Officials did not provide further details on the trucks' loca-

tion inside Gaza.

ISRAELI MILITARY SAYS ITS GROUND FORCES ARE BATTLING 'IN THE DEPTHS' OF GAZA CITY
JERUSALEM — The Israeli military said Tuesday that its ground forces are now fighting in “the depths” of Gaza City.

The comments signaled a new stage by the Israeli military as it moves in toward what it says is the headquarters and stronghold of the Hamas militant group.

Speaking to reporters, the chief military spokesperson, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said that Israeli ground forces “are located right now in a ground operation in the depths of Gaza City and putting great pressure on Hamas.”

Earlier, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed Israel was making great progress in its war, saying that the army has killed thousands of Hamas fighters.

Red hot October almost guarantees 2023 will be the hottest year on record

By MELINA WALLING Associated Press

This October was the hottest on record globally, 1.7 degrees Celsius (3.1 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the pre-industrial average for the month — and the fifth straight month with such a mark in what will now almost certainly be the warmest year ever recorded.

October was a whopping 0.4 degrees Celsius (0.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the previous record for the month in 2019, surprising even Samantha Burgess, deputy director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service, the European climate agency that routinely publishes monthly bulletins observing global surface air and sea temperatures, among other data.

“The amount that we’re smashing records by is shocking,” Burgess said.

After the cumulative warming of these past several months, it’s virtually guaranteed that 2023 will be the hottest year on record, according to Copernicus.

Scientists monitor climate variables to gain an understanding of how our planet is evolving as a result of human-generated greenhouse gas emissions. A warmer planet means more extreme and intense weather events like severe drought or hurricanes that hold more water, said Peter Schlosser, vice president and vice provost of the Global Futures Laboratory at Arizona State University. He is not involved with Copernicus.

“This is a clear sign that we are going into a climate regime that will have more impact on more people,” Schlosser said. “We better take this warning that we actually should have taken 50 years ago or more and draw the right conclusions.”

This year has been so exceptionally hot in part because oceans have been warming, which means they are doing less to counteract global warming than in the past. Historically, the ocean has absorbed as much as 90% of the excess heat from climate change, Burgess said. And in the midst of an El Nino, a natural climate cycle that temporarily warms parts of the ocean and drives weather changes around the world, more warming can be expected in the coming months, she added.

Schlosser said that means the world should expect more records to be broken as a result of that warming, but the question is whether they will come in smaller steps going forward. He added that the planet is already exceeding the 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming since pre-industrial times that the Paris agreement was aimed at capping, and that the planet hasn’t yet seen the full impact of that warming. Now, he, Burgess and other scientists say, the need for action — to stop planet-warming emissions — is urgent.

“It’s so much more expensive to keep burning these fossil fuels than it would be to stop doing it. That’s basically what it shows,” said Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at Imperial College London. “And of course, you don’t see that when you just look at the records being broken and not at the people and systems that are suffering, but that — that is what matters.”

House votes to censure Rep. Rashida Tlaib over her Israel-Hamas rhetoric in a stunning rebuke

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted late Tuesday to censure Democratic Rep. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan — the only Palestinian American in Congress — an extraordinary rebuke of her rhetoric about the Israel-Hamas war.

The 234-188 tally came after enough Democrats joined with Republicans to censure Tlaib, a punishment one step below expulsion from the House. The three-term congresswoman has long been a target of criticism for her views on the decades-long conflict in the Middle East.

The debate on the censure resolution on Tuesday afternoon was emotional and intense. Republican Rep. Rich McCormick of Georgia pushed the measure in response to what he called Tlaib's promotion of antisemitic rhetoric. He said she has "levied unbelievable falsehoods about our greatest ally, Israel, and the attack on October 7."

With other Democrats standing by her side, Tlaib defended her stance, saying she "will not be silenced and I will not let you distort my words." She added that her criticism of Israel has always been directed toward its government and its leadership under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"It is important to separate people and government," she said. "The idea that criticizing the government of Israel is antisemitic sets a very dangerous precedent. And it's been used to silence diverse voices speaking up for human rights across our nation."

That criticism reached new heights after the Oct. 7 attack by the terrorist group Hamas left hundreds of Israelis dead and scores injured. Tlaib, who has family in the West Bank, came under heavy reproval after she failed to immediately condemn Hamas after the attack.

All Democrats initially stood by Tlaib and helped defeat the first censure resolution against her last week. But since then, many of her colleagues, including prominent Jewish members, have become more conflicted about her rhetoric about the war, especially because of a slogan she has used frequently that is widely seen as calling for the eradication of Israel.

Ultimately, more than 20 of them joined Republicans on Tuesday night to censure her after an effort to shelve the measure failed earlier in the day.

The latest censure push resulted in a dramatic vote on the House floor amid political tensions over the ongoing, deadly Israel-Hamas war. While the majority of both parties have historically stood firmly on the side of Israel, divisions have emerged in the Democratic Party about the American response.

Rep. Brad Schneider, D-Ill., the lone Democrat to vote with Republicans on Tuesday to advance the censure resolution, said he believed it was important to debate the slogan "from the river to the sea."

"It is nothing else but the call for the destruction of Israel and murder of Jews," the Jewish Democrat said. "I will always defend the right to free speech. Tlaib has the right to say whatever she wants."

He added, "But it cannot go unanswered."

While the censure of a lawmaker carries no practical effect, it amounts to severe reproach from colleagues, as lawmakers who are censured are usually asked to stand in the well of the House as the censure resolution against them is read aloud. But the resolution against Tlaib did not call for the public admonishment.

With the vote, Tlaib will become the second Muslim-American woman in Congress to be formally admonished this year for her criticism of Israel. Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., was removed in February from the House Foreign Affairs Committee for similar comments she made about Israel.

Some on the left have criticized President Joe Biden's stance and urged him to put conditions on U.S. support for Israel as its aggressive military campaign drives the Palestinian death toll higher.

While the vote against Tlaib will take place against the extraordinary backdrop of the war, the push to censure her is part of a growing pattern in the House.

Censure had long been viewed as a punishment of last resort, just one step below expulsion and to be triggered only for the most egregious wrongdoing. But censure resolutions are quickly becoming routine in the chamber, often wielded in strikingly partisan ways.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 35 of 79

Many Democrats and some Republicans who opposed censuring Tlaib cited free speech and warned of the precedent it would set.

"This resolution not only degrades our Constitution, but it cheapens the meaning of discipline in this body for people who actually commit wrongful actions like bribery, fraud, violent assault and so on," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., who defended Tlaib against the resolution on the floor late Tuesday.

A second resolution by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., to censure Tlaib had also been scheduled for a procedural vote late Tuesday night. But that measure was put on hold after the censure resolution from McCormick advanced to a final vote.

Tlaib is now the 26th person to ever be censured by the chamber, and the second just this year. In June, Republicans voted to censure Democrat Adam Schiff of California for comments he made several years ago about investigations into then-President Donald Trump's ties to Russia.

When the House was under Democratic control, Republican Rep. Paul Gosar of Arizona was censured in 2021 for tweeting an animated video that depicted him striking Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York with a sword. And Democratic Rep. Charlie Rangel of New York was censured in 2010 over serious financial and campaign misconduct.

Librarians turn to civil rights agency to oppose book bans and their firings

By MEAD GRUVER Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — She refused to ban books, many of them about racism and the experiences of LGBTQ+ people. And for that, Suzette Baker was fired as a library director in a rural county in central Texas.

"I'm kind of persona non grata around here," said Baker, who had headed the Kingsland, Texas, library system until she refused to take down a prominent display of several books people had sought to ban over the years.

Now, Baker is fighting back. She and two other librarians who were similarly fired have filed workplace discrimination claims with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. And as culture war battles to keep certain books from children and teens put public and school libraries increasingly under pressure, their goal is redemption and, where possible, eventual reinstatement.

So far, it's a wait-and-see whether the claims will succeed — and set new precedent — in the struggle between teachers and librarians around the country who oppose book bans and conservative activists who say some books are inappropriate for young minds.

The fight has involved a record number of book-banning efforts; some libraries cutting ties with the American Library Association, which opposes book bans; and even attempts to prosecute librarians for allowing children to access books some consider too graphic.

At least one terminated librarian has gained a measure of success.

Brooky Parks, who was fired for standing up for programs on anti-racism and LGBTQ+ stories she organized for teens at the Erie Community Library north of Denver, won a \$250,000 settlement in September. Reached through the Colorado Civil Rights Division, the settlement requires her former employer to give librarians more say in decisions involving library programs.

Parks' settlement with the High Plains Library District capped a stressful eight-month period without work, when community donations helped her avoid losing her home. And it will likely resolve Parks' claim with the EEOC, said her attorney, Iris Halper, who represents the three librarians.

"I just wasn't going to back down from it. It was just the right thing to do," said Parks, now a librarian at the University of Denver.

After her firing in 2022, Baker filed an EEOC claim against her employer, the Llano County Library System in Kingsland, Texas. And in September 2023, Terri Lesley, executive director of the Campbell County Public Library System in Gillette, Wyoming, filed a claim over her firing last summer.

Halpern, with the Denver firm Rathod Mohamedbhai, compared the wrongful termination claims to civil rights era legal battles.

"It is honestly sad that we've gotten to this point. But history is a constant struggle and we have to

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 36 of 79

learn from our past," she said.

The 1964 Civil Right Act established the EEOC to enforce laws against workplace discrimination. One legal expert thinks the librarians might be able to prevail on the grounds that, under those laws, employees may not be discriminated against for associating with certain classes of people.

"With any case, the devil can be in the details in terms of how the facts come out and what they can present. But these are definitely actionable claims," said Rutgers University law professor David Lopez, a former EEOC general counsel.

An EEOC investigation can take over a year. After that, the EEOC may attempt to reach a settlement with the employer out of court, sue on the employee's behalf or issue a letter saying the employee has grounds to sue on their own.

The librarians haven't yet received an EEOC response and none is expected before the end of next year.

"I would love to be optimistic," Baker said. "I know there are a lot of people in this community who are just absolutely behind the library being open and free and equal for all. And there's a lot of people who aren't. So it's a hard, hard situation."

EEOC spokesperson Victor Chen declined to comment on specific filings, adding "we can't even confirm or deny we have these complaints."

The county attorney offices and other representatives of the government officials who fired Parks, Baker and Lesley did not return phone and email messages seeking comment, or declined to comment.

At her Texas library, Baker displayed several books that have been targeted in recent book bans and a sign that read: "We put the 'lit' in literature" — a reference to a Tennessee pastor's recent burning of books.

Baker was fired after refusing to take down the display and signs — the last straw after she resisted book banning in her own library.

In March, a federal judge ordered 17 books returned to Kingsland library shelves while a citizen lawsuit against book banning proceeded. The works ranged from children's books to award-winning nonfiction, including "They Called Themselves the K.K.K: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group," by Susan Campbell Bartoletti; and "It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex and Sexual Health," by Robie Harris.

"Content-based restrictions on speech are presumptively unconstitutional and subject to strict scrutiny," Texas U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman wrote in his March 30 ruling. He cited a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that barred communities from banning signs because of what they say.

The Llano County Commission considered but decided against closing the county's three libraries in response to the ruling. Closing the libraries would have been eerily similar to the history across the U.S. of closing swimming pools rather than desegregating them, Halpern said.

Like Baker, Lesley had trouble finding work after being fired from the library system she directed in Gillette, Wyoming. Her dismissal followed two years of turmoil over challenges to the books available and library programs.

Some of the same county officials who opposed a transgender magician's plans to perform at the library went on to join local residents in seeking to ban books, according to Lesley's EEOC filing.

Baker and Lesley both were fired after local officials appointed new library board members willing to be more aggressive about pulling books.

"Our county commissioners appointed board members who were sympathetic to the people who wanted to remove the books. And it was a long dance to try to get it there. And in the end they had to fire me, I think, in order to be able to meet their goal," Lesley said.

The Campbell County Commission skirted a deputy county attorney's recommendation not to appoint past applicants for the board without re-interviewing them along with new candidates, according to Lesley's EEOC claim.

"I saw this as a well-executed attack on the library by a group of citizens and elected officials. It was an attack on the LGBTQ+ community as well," she said. "And it was an attack on the books."

Democrats win in several states on abortion rights and other highlights from Tuesday's elections

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats had plenty of good news to celebrate in Tuesday's off-year elections and more evidence that they can win races centered on the national debate over abortion.

Abortion rights supporters won an Ohio ballot measure and the Democratic governor of beet-red Kentucky held onto his office by campaigning on reproductive rights and painting his opponent as extremist. A Democrat won an open seat on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court after campaigning on his pledge to uphold abortion rights. And Democrats took full control of the Virginia statehouse, blocking Republicans from being able to pass new abortion restrictions and delivering a defeat to Gov. Glenn Youngkin that may douse any buzz about a late entry into the GOP presidential primary.

The victories won't be enough to make Democrats feel secure heading into next year's presidential election. The off-year elections have major implications in all of those states and provide a snapshot of American politics heading into 2024. But two big names — Joe Biden and Donald Trump — weren't on the ballot this time. How Americans view them will be a huge factor in shaping next year's race.

Here are some key results from Tuesday's voting.

ABORTION REMAINS POTENT FOR DEMOCRATS

Democrats notched two early wins Tuesday night in Kentucky and Ohio, states that voted for Trump in 2020. In both states, abortion was the main campaign issue.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear was reelected in a state that Trump had won by 26 percentage points. Beshear had criticized the abortion views of his Republican challenger, Attorney General Daniel Cameron, in debates and television ads. One Beshear ad featured a woman who miscarried after being raped by her stepfather at age 12 expressing disbelief at Cameron's opposition to abortion in cases of rape and incest.

In Ohio, a ballot measure preserving abortion rights passed in a state that Trump won by eight percentage points in 2020. Republicans had already tried to derail the measure by calling an unusual August referendum to make it harder to pass ballot measures, an initiative that was roundly rejected by Ohio voters.

Later Tuesday, Dan McCaffery won an open seat on Pennsylvania's Supreme Court after positioning himself as a defender of abortion rights. And in Virginia, Democrats held the state Senate and flipped control of the Virginia House of Delegates from the GOP.

The outcomes suggest a transformed political landscape since a conservative majority of the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a federal right to an abortion last year. Abortion rights measures have passed in a plethora of states as some other Republican-run states have instituted new bans on the procedure.

Abortion rights may not be a potent enough issue to swing an election on its own. Several GOP governors who supported new bans cruised to reelection last year, including Ohio's Mike DeWine, Florida's Ron DeSantis and Texas' Greg Abbott.

But abortion was the key issue across the country on Tuesday. And that should worry Republicans in competitive races next year.

GOOD NIGHT FOR DEMOCRATS, BUT MAYBE NOT FOR 2024

It was a good night for Democrats following a series of wins in special elections and comes after a stronger performance in last year's midterms, which are usually crushing for the party in power in Washington.

But none of the races were an up-or-down decision on the incumbent president, Biden. And none featured Trump on the ballot or his ability to turbocharge turnout of infrequent voters.

Democrats have performed well in recent special elections and did better than expected in 2022. It increasingly seems like the party starts from a position of strength. But it's not clear that translates to its 80-year-old president, who faces widespread skepticism about his job performance and whether he is too old to serve a second term.

We'll have to wait until 2024 to see how Biden fares.

YOUNGKIN FALLS SHORT

Glenn Youngkin burst on the political scene in 2021, winning an upset victory to become the Republican

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 38 of 79

governor of Virginia, a state Biden won handily the previous year. Putting a moderate, suburban dad spin on modern Republicanism, Youngkin generated buzz that he could even make a late, surprise entry into the GOP presidential primary after this month's elections.

Instead, Youngkin said he would focus on the 2023 legislative elections and winning full Republican control over Virginia government. Things did not go the way he hoped.

Youngkin raised tens of millions of dollars for Republicans to defend their majority in Virginia's House of Delegates and win control of the Senate, which Democrats narrowly held in 2021. Among the things the legislature could do with that majority, he said, was pass a 15-week abortion ban he favored.

Youngkin didn't really have a path forward in the presidential primary — his window to get on the ballot has already closed in some states. Virginia has an unusual single-term limit for governors, making Youngkin's political future even more of a question.

Whatever he does, he'll have to explain 2023. And he'll face unified Democratic control of the statehouse for the rest of his term.

DEMOCRATS' HEARTBREAK HOTEL

It was a good night for Democrats, but it could only go so far.

The party invested heavily in an unlikely place: Mississippi, where Brandon Presley, best known as Elvis Presley's second cousin, was challenging Republican Gov. Tate Reeves.

The party hoped that Presley's celebrity and political skills, coupled with the change in a centuries-old provision originally designed to keep Black candidates from winning statewide races, could spell an unlikely victory. But it was not to be.

Reeves won the race. There are limited lessons to draw from a party falling short in a state its 2020 presidential candidate lost by 17 points, except one of the oldest — you can't win 'em all.

HISTORIC FIRSTS

Political candidates broke barriers in a handful of wins Tuesday.

Former Biden White House aide Gabe Amo will become the first Black member of Congress from Rhode Island after winning the special election in that state's first congressional district.

The son of West African immigrants, Amo emerged from a 12-candidate September primary to succeed retiring Rep. David Cicilline. On Tuesday, Amo defeated Republican Gerry Leonard, a Marine veteran, in the heavily Democratic district.

And Philadelphia will have its first female mayor after Democrat Cherelle Parker defeated Republican David Oh in the overwhelmingly Democratic city.

India bars protests that support the Palestinians. Analysts say a pro-Israel shift helps at home

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — From Western capitals to Muslim states, protest rallies over the Israel-Hamas war have made headlines. But one place known for its vocal pro-Palestinian stance has been conspicuously quiet: Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Indian authorities have barred any solidarity protest in Muslim-majority Kashmir and asked Muslim preachers not to mention the conflict in their sermons, residents and religious leaders told The Associated Press.

The restrictions are part of India's efforts to curb any form of protest that could turn into demands for ending New Delhi's rule in the disputed region. They also reflect a shift in India's foreign policy under populist Prime Minister Narendra Modi away from its long-held support for the Palestinians, analysts say.

India has long walked a tightrope between the warring sides, with historically close ties to both. While India strongly condemned the Oct. 7 attack by the militant group Hamas and expressed solidarity with Israel, it urged that international humanitarian law be upheld in Gaza amid rising civilian deaths.

But in Kashmir, being quiet is painful for many.

"From the Muslim perspective, Palestine is very dear to us, and we essentially have to raise our voice

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 39 of 79

against the oppression there. But we are forced to be silent," said Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, a key resistance leader and a Muslim cleric. He said he has been put under house arrest each Friday since the start of the war and that Friday prayers have been disallowed at the region's biggest mosque in Srinagar, the main city in Kashmir.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep in the Himalayan region which is divided between India and Pakistan and claimed by both in its entirety. In 2019, New Delhi removed the region's semiautonomy, drastically curbing any form of dissent, civil liberties and media freedoms.

Kashmiris have long shown strong solidarity with the Palestinians and often staged large anti-Israel protests during previous fighting in Gaza. Those protests often turned into street clashes, with demands for an end of India's rule and dozens of casualties.

Modi, a staunch Hindu nationalist, was one of the first global leaders to swiftly express solidarity with Israel and call the Hamas attack "terrorism." However, on Oct. 12, India's foreign ministry issued a statement reiterating New Delhi's position in support of establishing a "sovereign, independent and viable state of Palestine, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side at peace with Israel."

Two weeks later, India abstained during the United Nations General Assembly vote that called for a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza, a departure from its usual voting record. New Delhi said the vote did not condemn the Oct. 7 assault by Hamas.

"This is unusual," said Michael Kugelman, director of the Wilson Center's South Asia Institute.

India "views Israel's assault on Gaza as a counterterrorism operation meant to eliminate Hamas and not directly target Palestinian civilians, exactly the way Israel views the conflict," Kugelman said. He added that from New Delhi's perspective, "such operations don't pause for humanitarian truces."

India's foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, sought to justify India's abstention.

"It is not just a government view. If you ask any average Indian, terrorism is an issue which is very close to people's heart, because very few countries and societies have suffered terrorism as much as we have," he told a media event in New Delhi on Saturday.

Even though Modi's government has sent humanitarian assistance for Gaza's besieged residents, many observers viewed its ideological alignment with Israel as potentially rewarding at a time when the ruling party in New Delhi is preparing for multiple state elections this month and crucial national polls next year.

The government's shift aligns with widespread support for Israel among India's Hindu nationalists who form a core vote bank for Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party. It also resonates with the coverage by Indian TV channels of the war from Israel. The reportage has been seen as largely in line with commentary used by Hindu nationalists on social media to stoke anti-Muslim sentiment that in the past helped the ascendance of Modi's party.

Praveen Donthi, senior analyst with the International Crisis Group, said the war could have a domestic impact in India, unlike other global conflicts, due to its large Muslim population. India is home to some 200 million Muslims who make up the predominantly Hindu country's largest minority group.

"India's foreign policy and domestic politics come together in this issue," Donthi said. "New Delhi's pro-Israel shift gives a new reason to the country's right-wing ecosystem that routinely targets Muslims."

India's foreign policy has historically supported the Palestinian cause.

In 1947, India voted against the United Nations resolution to create the state of Israel. It was the first non-Arab country to recognize the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinians in the 1970s, and it gave the group full diplomatic status in the 1980s.

After the PLO began a dialogue with Israel, India finally established full diplomatic ties with Israel in 1992.

Those ties widened into a security relationship after 1999, when India fought a limited war with Pakistan over Kashmir and Israel helped New Delhi with arms and ammunition. The relationship has grown steadily over the years, with Israel becoming India's second largest arms supplier after Russia.

After Modi won his first term in 2014, he became the first Indian prime minister to visit Israel in 2017. Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, travelled to New Delhi the following year and called the relationship between New Delhi and Tel Aviv a "marriage made in heaven."

Weeks after Netanyahu's visit, Modi visited the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah, a first by an Indian

prime minister, and held talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. "India hopes that Palestine soon becomes a sovereign and independent country in a peaceful atmosphere," Modi said.

Modi's critics, however, now draw comparisons between his government and Israel's, saying it has adopted certain measures, like demolishing homes and properties, as a form of "collective punishment" against minority Muslims.

Even beyond Kashmir, Indian authorities have largely stopped protests expressing solidarity with Palestinians since the war began, claiming the need to maintain communal harmony and law and order.

Some people have been briefly detained by police for taking part in pro-Palestinian protests even in states ruled by opposition parties. The only state where massive pro-Palestinian protests have taken place is southern Kerala, which is ruled by a leftist government.

But in Kashmir, enforced silence is seen not only as violating freedom of expression but also as impinging on religious duty.

Aga Syed Mohammad Hadi, a Kashmiri religious leader, was not able to lead the past three Friday prayers because he was under house arrest on those days. He said he had wanted to stage a protest rally against "the naked aggression of Israel." Authorities did not comment on such house arrests.

"Police initially allowed us to condemn Israel's atrocities inside the mosques. But last Friday they said even speaking (about Palestinians) inside the mosques is not allowed," Hadi said. "They said we can only pray for Palestine — that too in Arabic, not in local Kashmiri language."

Two governors win reelection, while Ohio passes amendment on abortion rights. Follow live updates

By The Associated Press undefined

Democratic Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear and Republican Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves won reelection on Tuesday, while Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to an abortion and other forms of reproductive health care. In Virginia, Democrats swept legislative elections in a blow to GOP Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

What to know

Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear elected to second term in Kentucky

Ohio voters enshrine abortion rights in their state's constitution

Mississippi Republican Gov. Tate Reeves wins reelection, defeating Elvis' cousin

Virginia Democrats sweep legislative elections after campaigning on abortion rights

Gov. Reeves wins second term in Mississippi

Mississippi Republican Gov. Tate Reeves has won a second term, defeating his Democratic challenger Brandon Presley.

"Mississippi has momentum, and this is Mississippi's time," Reeves told cheering supporters at a party in the Jackson suburb of Flowood, reflecting the main theme of his campaign.

The mood at Presley's party in Jackson was somber as he said hours after the polls closed: "Tonight's a setback, but we're not going to lose hope ... This campaign elevated issues that had to be elevated in Mississippi."

Presley raised more money and made an aggressive push to give Democrats a rare statewide victory in the Deep South.

Reeves managed to avoid a runoff by winning over 50% of the vote in Tuesday's race.

Presley concedes Mississippi governor's race

Democrat Brandon Presley has conceded his race for Mississippi governor.

Presley, a state utility regulator and cousin of rock 'n' roll legend Elvis Presley, said Tuesday night, "I respect the decision of the voters of Mississippi."

The Associated Press has not yet called the race because it's unclear whether Republican Gov. Tate Reeves would remain above the threshold for a runoff. Mississippi requires that contests where no candidate receives a majority of the vote must advance to a runoff.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 41 of 79

Reeves, meanwhile, claimed victory, saying his win "sure is sweet" and congratulating Presley for "running hard all the way through."

The hard-fought contest was disrupted by a voting mess when polling places in the state's largest county ran out of ballots and voters endured long lines in a key Democratic stronghold.

Hinds County election commissioners — all Democrats — were said to have underestimated the turnout and failed to have enough ballots on hand.

Voters reelect DA who lost Democratic primary and ran as Republican

Voters in Pennsylvania's second-largest county have reelected their longtime district attorney who lost his Democratic primary and ran in the general election as a Republican.

Steve Zappala bested progressive Democrat Matt Dugan in a rematch for district attorney of Allegheny County, which includes Pittsburgh.

"In terms of my politics, I'm not a politician," Zappala said during a debate in October. "I don't care about the GOP. I don't care about the Democrats."

Zappala defended his record as DA and said his support came from the county. He also dismissed his opponent as having out-of-state financial support.

Women will lead Philadelphia and county that includes Pittsburgh

Voters have elected women for the first time to lead Philadelphia and Pennsylvania's second-largest county, installing Cherelle Parker as the 100th mayor of the state's largest city and Sara Innamorato as executive of the county that includes Pittsburgh.

Parker, 51, who has held office at the state and local level after first becoming involved in politics as a teenager, emerged from a crowded field of Democrats in the May primary as the only leading Black candidate. She will replace term-limited Democratic Mayor Jim Kenney.

Across the state in Allegheny County, Innamorato, 37, defeated Republican Joe Rockey, a political newcomer. The former state legislator who campaigned on progressive models to modernize county government will replace Democrat Rich Fitzgerald, who was term-limited.

To the tune of "Ladies First," an emotional Parker addressed supporters at her election night watch party.

"Who is Cherelle Parker going to be? A get-it-done Philadelphian. A get-it-done mayor who won't ever forget her deep roots," she said. "I'm Philly-born, I'm Philly-bred and I'll be Philadelphian 'til I'm dead."

'Absurd' to claim Kentucky gas leak was election rigging, officials say

Officials are refuting online claims that a gas leak at one polling place in Kentucky's largest county was election rigging that helped Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear win reelection.

The claims amassed thousands of shares on social media Tuesday after reports of a gas leak at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville caused polls there to close for about 30 minutes while Louisville Gas & Electric investigated the issue. The delay prompted a judge to extend voting at the church until 6:30 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. EST.

Social media users questioned whether the gas leak was real and insinuated that extended voting hours in a Democratic county gave Beshear the votes he needed to win.

The delay was prompted by a legitimate report of gas emitting from a stove in the church, said Chris Whelan, a spokesperson for Louisville Gas & Electric. Gas was detected, but not at hazardous levels, she said. The stove was turned off and it dissipated.

"This was a legitimate instance of a gas leak so any claims otherwise, we just think are patently absurd," said Erran Huber, a spokesperson for the Jefferson County Clerk's Office.

Huber added that only one voter came to cast a ballot between 6 and 6:30 p.m. at either of the two polling places in the county where a judge extended voting hours. The other polling place, an elementary school, was temporarily shut down Tuesday morning because of a police pursuit.

2 Council members arrested on Election Day in separate incidents

Two Democrats on the 20-member Bridgeport, Connecticut, City Council have been arrested in separate incidents at the same polling place on Election Day.

A police spokesperson says Councilmember Samia Suliman was charged with breach of peace after

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 42 of 79

police received a 911 call late Tuesday afternoon about a person causing a disturbance outside the John F. Kennedy School.

Less than an hour later, police arrested Councilmember Maria Pereira and charged her with assaulting a 70-year-old woman on the same school property. Pereira was on the ballot Tuesday.

Police didn't explain the circumstances of either arrest and declined to say how Suliman disturbed the peace.

Text messages seeking comment from the women were not immediately returned.

Uvalde mom who lost mayoral race says she'll never stop fighting

An Uvalde mother who lost her bid for mayor says she'll never stop fighting for her daughter, Lexi, who was among the 19 children killed in last year's school shooting rampage.

"I meant it when I said this was only the beginning," Kimberly Mata-Rubio posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. "After all, I'm not a regular mom. I'm Lexi's mom."

She lost to Cody Smith, a former mayor of Uvalde who left office in 2012. He will complete the term of Mayor Don McLaughlin, who criticized police in Texas over their hesitant response to the shooting and is resigning to seek a seat in the state legislature.

Mata-Rubio, who pressed Uvalde leaders for answers and transparency after the shooting, campaigned on unifying the small town that is still riven with division. Her candidacy put on the ballot one of Uvalde's most outspoken figures and an aggressive proponent of stricter gun laws.

National Democrats cheer Ohio's abortion vote

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris are cheering Ohio's vote to ensure access to abortion and other forms of reproductive health care.

Biden said in a statement Tuesday that "democracy won" in Ohio. The Democratic president says the state's voters rejected "attempts by MAGA Republican elected officials to impose extreme abortion bans that put the health and lives of women in jeopardy."

Harris used the win in Ohio to call for Congress to pass a bill restoring the federal abortion protections that were lost after the reversal of Roe v. Wade.

She said in a statement, "When they do, President Biden will sign it into law."

Beshear says his win shows voters' disdain for 'anger politics'

Democratic Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear says his reelection victory "sends a loud, clear message" that there should be an end to "anger politics."

Beshear said in his victory remarks on Tuesday that Kentucky voters had made "a choice not to move to the right or to the left but to move forward for every single family."

Beshear defeated Republican challenger Daniel Cameron, who had been endorsed by former President Donald Trump. Beshear said he had been up against a number of GOP-funded, third-party groups that were running ads "full of hate and division."

"And you know what?" Beshear asked. "We beat 'em all at the same time."

Ohio becomes 7th state to protect abortion rights in post-Roe era

With Tuesday's vote to enshrine abortion rights into its state constitution, Ohio is the seventh state where voters have protected abortion access since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last year.

Voters in both Democratic and Republican states — California, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana and Vermont — have either affirmed abortion access or turned back attempts to undermine it.

Ohio was the only state to consider a statewide abortion rights question this year, and some view its decision as a signal of how voters nationwide will be feeling about the issue ahead of the 2024 presidential race.

All in the (Beshear) family

It's officially a two-term trend for the Beshear family.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear has joined his father, Steve Beshear, as a twice-elected top Democratic leader of the state.

The younger Beshear won his second term Tuesday by defeating Republican Attorney General Daniel Cameron. With it, Andy Beshear is also positioning himself to join a growing list of Democratic governors

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 43 of 79

flagged as potential contenders for higher office nationally.

By the end of Andy Beshear's second four-year term, a Beshear will have presided in the Kentucky governor's office for 16 of the last 20 years. Steve Beshear served from 2007 to 2015.

Amo makes history as Rhode Island's first Black congressman

Democrat Gabe Amo says that he's "humbled" to be elected Rhode Island's first Black representative to Congress but that he "didn't run to make history."

Amo told The Associated Press shortly after his win over Republican Gerry Leonard on Tuesday that he sees himself as part of a long line of advocates, whether they were people of color or fighting for the rights of woman or working people.

The former White House aide succeeds former Democratic Rep. David Cicilline, who stepped down this summer to become president and CEO of the Rhode Island Foundation.

The son of Ghanaian and Liberian immigrants, Amo emerged victorious from a crowded Democratic field in the September primary, claiming more than 32% of the vote.

Voting times at 4 precincts in Mississippi county extended again

A judge in Mississippi's largest county has extended voting times to 10 p.m. EST at four voting precincts after they experienced ballot shortages and long lines.

The order from a special judge in Hinds County came after a nonpartisan group, Mississippi Votes, filed a petition to extend voting in the four precincts in some Jackson suburbs.

The four precincts where voting will be allowed until 10 p.m. EST are Byram City Hall, a United Methodist church in Raymond, and Wildwood Baptist Church and Northside Baptist Church, both in Clinton.

A different judge already had extended voting throughout the county until 9 p.m. EST in response to the ballot shortages.

Bomb threat keeps 2 Pennsylvania precincts open for extra hour

Two precincts in a Philadelphia suburb will remain open an extra hour after a bomb threat forced the evacuation of a polling place.

A Delaware County spokesperson says the county solicitor sought and won the extension from a judge after a threat forced the evacuation of Radnor High School and polling places for two precincts to move to Radnor Elementary in Wayne. Officials say police are investigating the threat.

Polls will remain open there until 9 p.m. Eastern time.

The state's top-of-the-ticket race is an open seat for state Supreme Court, which could play an important role in settling legal challenges in the 2024 presidential election in the battleground state.

Voting times extended in Mississippi county after problems

A judge has extended voting times in Mississippi's largest county by an hour, until 9 p.m. Eastern time, after several polling places had ballot shortages and long lines.

The order came after the Mississippi Democratic Party filed a petition in one court and a nonpartisan group, Mississippi Votes, filed a separate petition in another court and its request was backed by the Mississippi Republican Party.

The ballot shortages in Hinds County were reported in several Jackson suburbs. Polls in Mississippi were supposed to be open 12 hours, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

The problems in Hinds County happened after the county's poll worker training was delayed by a September breach involving the county's computer system.

Credell Calhoun, a Hinds County supervisor, said he had heard of at least seven Hinds County precincts that ran out of ballots at some point Tuesday. He said the Hinds County election commissioners underestimated turnout.

"This is way beyond anything we've ever seen in the electoral process," Calhoun said. "As hard as we worked to get the vote out and then you're going to have stupidity to not have enough ballots."

Polls close in Kentucky and Virginia

Polls are closing in Kentucky and Virginia in pivotal off-year elections.

Voting closed at 7 p.m. ET Tuesday across Virginia, where Democrats and Republicans have campaigned

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 44 of 79

for legislative control by arguing the other party is wrong on abortion. Polls had also closed across Kentucky by 7 p.m. ET as voters decide whether to give Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear a second term.

Over the next hour, polls will also close in Ohio, where voters are considering a constitutional amendment supported by abortion rights groups.

At 8 p.m. ET, voting closes in six other states, as well as Texas counties in the Central Time Zone.

An hour later, polls close in the rest of Texas' counties, as well in New York.

Democrat who endured sex scandal is on the ballot in Virginia

A key race in Virginia's pivotal legislative elections hinges on a Democrat whose campaign was upended by revelations she engaged in sex acts with her husband on a pornographic website.

Susanna Gibson is running against Republican businessman David Owen in one of the state's most competitive districts after all 100 seats in the House of Delegates were redrawn to conform with the 2020 census.

Some people wrote off Gibson's chances after The Washington Post reported in September about her participation in livestreamed sex, which included soliciting payments from viewers in exchange for specific acts.

But Gibson, a nurse practitioner, refused to withdraw from the race and accused Republicans of dirty politics for exposing her conduct. She has largely ignored the allegations and focused on abortion rights, which Democrats said could be in jeopardy if Republicans gain control of the Legislature.

Polls close in parts of Kentucky as voters decide governor's race

Polls have closed in parts of Kentucky as voters consider whether to give Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear a second term or replace him with Republican Daniel Cameron.

Much of Beshear's first term was dominated by his response to a series of natural disasters and the pandemic. But his reelection campaign often focused on dire warnings about the future of abortion rights. He portrayed Cameron as too extreme on the issue, pointing to his support for the state's abortion ban, which lacks exceptions for pregnancies caused by rape or incest.

Cameron would be the nation's first Black Republican to be elected governor if he wins. He has reaffirmed his support for the current Kentucky law, which bans all abortions except when carried out to save a pregnant woman's life or to prevent a disabling injury.

Pole-wielding man charged with interfering with an election

Authorities have arrested a man accused of wielding a flag attached to a fishing pole as he made threatening gestures to voters and damaged a voting machine at a Kentucky polling location.

The 40-year-old Louisville man was charged with interfering with election and tampering and destruction of a voting machine. Both are felony counts under state law. He was also charged with two misdemeanor counts of menacing.

Erran Huber, a spokesperson for the Jefferson County Clerk's Office, said no votes were compromised and voting continued at the polling location.

The man was taken to the Louisville Metro Department of Corrections for booking. A phone listing for him went straight to voicemail and did not accept messages Tuesday.

Coding error in Pennsylvania county flips some votes

Officials say a coding error in an eastern Pennsylvania county caused votes to be flipped on a ballot question that asked whether a pair of incumbent state appeals judges should be retained.

Voters are deciding whether Pennsylvania Superior Court Judges Jack Panella and Victor Stabile should be retained for additional 10-year terms. Officials in Northampton County say the "yes" or "no" votes for each judge were being switched because of the error. If a voter marked "yes" to retain Panella and "no" on Stabile, for example, it was reflected as "no" on Panella and "yes" on Stabile.

County officials say voters first noticed the error, which affected all the county's voting machines in use on Tuesday. They plan to correct the error when votes are tabulated.

Officials say the coding error was limited to the county and only affected the judicial retention question.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 45 of 79

Mood is somber at polling places in Maine town where 18 were slain

Less than two weeks after 18 people were killed by a gunman in their small New England city, residents headed gingerly cast ballots Tuesday for a slate of municipal races in an election that took on a more subdued and somber tone after the tragedy.

The mood in Lewiston, Maine, was somber. Several shooting survivors remained hospitalized, flags flew at half-staff, and funerals were being held this week for those who died in the attack.

Citing civic duty and a quest to return the community to normal life, Lewiston residents turned out to vote in several high-profile referendums and local races.

"This is a necessity. We have to do this. So we can't neglect it even though we've been through a terrible tragedy," said James Scribner, 79, a retired teacher and Marine veteran, who was joined by his wife at local school that was transformed into a polling place.

Election websites in Kentucky and Mississippi suffer some glitches

State election websites in Kentucky and Mississippi, two states featuring key governors' races, experienced some issues early on Election Day.

In Mississippi, voters looking up details about their polling location experienced slow loading times, according to Elizabeth Holbert Jonson, spokesperson for the Mississippi Secretary of State's office. She said that increased traffic to the website caused the problem and that an additional server was added that "appears to have resolved the issue."

But the polling place locator was still spotty late Tuesday morning. The Associated Press checked addresses in several cities — including Jackson, Madison, Gulfport, Greenwood and Marks — and it wasn't working.

"We encourage folks to type slowly in the residential address box," Holbert Jonson said. "When doing that, the system should auto-populate the addresses."

In Kentucky, a spike in traffic to the State Board of Election's website disrupted access for a "short period of time," according to Michon Lindstrom, spokesperson for the Kentucky Secretary of State's office. Issues were resolved and officials don't expect further issues, Lindstrom said.

Abortion and inflation are on Kentucky voters' minds

Kentucky voters had different issues on their minds as they went to vote Tuesday.

Kayla Long was thinking of abortion as she cast her ballot for Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear in Shelbyville, between Louisville and Frankfort, on a warm fall morning.

"I think it's a woman's right to choose," she said. "And I don't think politicians should be involved in that choice at all."

The state currently has a near-total abortion ban.

Another Shelbyville voter, Kent Herold, said it's time for a change at the top of state government. Herold voted for Republican nominee Daniel Cameron. Herold, a registered Republican, criticized President Joe Biden, especially for his handling of the economy amid surging inflation during his term.

"Do you go grocery shopping? Do you buy gas? Let's be real. I'm not sure he knows what he's doing," Herold said.

Ohio is the latest state to determine abortion question

Voters in a suburb of Columbus, Ohio, are weighing in on whether to pass a constitutional amendment guaranteeing an individual right to abortion and other forms of reproductive health care.

Mathis Kleckley, a charter bus driver from Reynoldsburg, on Tuesday cast his ballot in favor of Issue 1.

Kleckley said he's a Christian and that those who share his faith may disagree with him, but he believes that God gives people choices.

"We don't want the government playing God, either," he said.

Lester and Sheila Bowling, a married couple from Reynoldsburg, voted no on Issue 1. Sheila Bowling said it's not a political issue but a moral one.

Lester Bowling, a pastor and veteran, quoted Psalm 139 as saying God formed babies in their mother's wombs and deserve life at any stage of pregnancy.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 46 of 79

Swifties to the polls!

Taylor Swift is encouraging her pack of Swifties to head to the polls on Election Day.

"Voters gonna vote!" Swift wrote in a post to her 275 million Instagram followers, riffing off the lyrics to her hit single "Shake It Off."

In the post, she encouraged those registered to vote in Colorado, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia to "use your voice" and directed them to the nonpartisan voter advocacy group Vote.org for more information.

Vote.org says nearly 40,000 people registered to vote on their website after Swift mentioned the group on National Voter Registration Day in September.

"Taylor Swift is one of the busiest people in the world, but she always has time to stand up for democracy, use her own voice and encourage her fans and followers to use theirs," Vote.org CEO Andrea Hailey said in a statement Tuesday.

Polls begin to open on Election Day

Polls have begun to open in a few states for off-year elections that could give hints of voter sentiment ahead of next year's critical presidential contest.

In Kentucky, Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear is hoping that his support of abortion rights will persuade voters in his Republican-leaning state to look past their skepticism of the national party and give him another term in office.

Ohio is the only state to consider a statewide abortion rights question this year. Voters there will decide whether to pass a constitutional amendment guaranteeing an individual right to abortion and other forms of reproductive health care.

In Virginia, party control of the state legislature is up for grabs in what Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin is calling the "most important elections in America." The results will determine whether Republicans are empowered with full state government control or Democrats can continue serving as a bulwark against Youngkin's agenda.

Voters in Ohio backed a measure protecting abortion rights. Here's how Republicans helped

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A proposal to enshrine abortion rights in Ohio's Constitution was approved in a statewide election Tuesday, with a significant number of Republicans joining with Democrats to ensure the measure's passage.

The Associated Press has called the race, with votes cast in favor of proposal winning with about 56% of the vote, compared with about 44% for votes cast in opposition — a lead of approximately 232,000 votes as of the latest tally.

Known as "Issue 1," the proposal would amend the state Constitution to establish the right to "make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions" on matters including abortion, contraception and fertility treatment. It would also allow for abortions to be banned once it has been established that the fetus can survive outside of the womb, unless a physician determines that continuing with the pregnancy would endanger the patient's "life or health."

Tuesday's vote followed a similar path as an August ballot measure election that would have raised the threshold to amend the state Constitution from a simple majority to 60% of the statewide vote. The August measure, which failed 57% to 43%, did not mention abortion or reproductive rights specifically but quickly became a proxy fight over reproductive rights as it would have made it more difficult for Tuesday's measure to pass.

In this election, the more than 836,000 advance votes cast by mail or in-person before Election Day broke heavily in favor of the amendment, with Yes votes receiving roughly 63%, compared with 37% for No votes. This is not surprising, considering Ohio Democrats campaigned heavily in favor of Issue 1, and

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 47 of 79

pre-Election Day voting tends to skew heavily Democratic.

The Yes side also appeared to have a slight lead among votes cast on Election Day, which is notable because Election Day votes have tended to favor Republicans ever since Donald Trump discouraged advance voting in his failed 2020 reelection bid. The No side initially led in the Election Day vote on Tuesday evening in the early stages of vote-counting, but that advantage steadily eroded.

When the AP called the race, the No side was still ahead among Election Day voters but not by enough to offset the advantage the Yes side had amassed in the pre-Election Day advance votes.

The scope of the victory for the Yes side suggests that a significant number of Republicans voted in favor of Issue 1. While the No side appears to have won all 44 of the counties Trump won in 2020 with more than 70% of the vote, the Yes side won 9 of the 10 counties that Trump won with less than 60% of the vote. Yes was also leading in a third of the counties that Trump carried, with between 60% and 70% of the vote. The No side trailed Trump's performance in every county in the state except for Putnam, as of the latest tally. Yes votes had an overwhelming lead in areas President Joe Biden won in 2020, as expected.

The pro-abortion rights forces appear to have scored a broader victory geographically than they did in the August ballot measure vote. Yes was leading in 21 of the 22 counties that the pro-abortion rights position won in August and also prevailed in a handful of additional counties that previously sided with the abortion rights foes.

Yes had comfortable leads in the counties making up the metropolitan areas of Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus and Youngstown, mirroring the August vote. No was ahead in Dayton and appears to have picked up Toledo, which voted with abortion rights supporters in August.

Ohio is the latest state to put the question of abortion rights directly to voters. It's also the latest state where voters decided either in favor of protecting access to abortion or against placing further restrictions on the procedure. In 2022, voters in California, Michigan and Vermont approved state constitutional amendments enshrining abortion rights, while voters in Kansas and Kentucky rejected measures to amend their state constitutions to restrict the procedure. Montana voters also rejected a proposal that year backed by opponents of abortion rights.

Americans divided over Israel response to Hamas attacks, AP-NORC poll shows

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans have become more likely to describe Israel as an ally that shares U.S. interests and values since the war with Hamas began, but they're divided over whether Israel has gone too far in its response to last month's attack, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The survey, which was conducted from Nov. 2 to 6, also reveals skepticism among Democrats toward Israel, which could present a challenge for President Joe Biden as he tries to balance support for the country's defense and his party's shifting priorities.

The result is a rather muddled picture that presents few easy options for the White House as it keeps one eye on public opinion with an election year on the horizon.

"It's just so complicated," said Carolyn Reyes, a 36-year-old Democrat in New York. "And I will not even pretend to understand the complicated nature of the relationship between the United States and Israel."

During an August poll, only 32% of Americans described Israel as an ally that shares U.S. interests and values. But that figure increased to 44% in the latest survey, which was conducted after the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas that killed 1,400 Israelis.

However, only 36% said it's extremely or very important to provide aid to Israel's military to fight Hamas. And 40% of Americans said Israel's military response in the Gaza Strip has gone too far. The Health Ministry in the Gaza Strip, which is run by Hamas, said 10,000 Palestinians have died from weeks of Israeli bombardment and a recent ground invasion.

Reyes recalled hearing about the death toll on the news and thinking "it seems so high, I thought that can't be right."

Four thousand children have died in Gaza, according to the Health Ministry there, and Reyes said "that's

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 48 of 79

the line that's too far."

It's a sentiment more common among Democrats, 58% of whom view Israel's counterattack as excessive. Overall, 38% of Americans said Israel's response has been about right, and just 18% said it has not gone far enough.

Complicating the situation is Americans' interest in balancing several foreign policy goals simultaneously. About 6 in 10 believe it's extremely important or very important for the U.S. to help recover hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, while roughly half said the same thing about preventing harm to Palestinian civilians or providing humanitarian relief in the territory.

Nearly two thirds of Americans (63%) disapprove of how Biden is handling the conflict between Israel and Hamas, while only one-third approve. That's in line with his overall job approval: 60% of US adults disapprove of the way Biden is handling his job as president, while 38% approve.

Robert Byrd, a 50-year-old Democrat in Virginia, said he's glad to see Biden supporting Israel.

Back in World War II, when the Holocaust occurred, "the United States waited too long to help out the Jewish community," he said. "I think we've learned from our mistakes of our past. It's wonderful that we have a president that's willing to step up and do the right thing."

Byrd said he'll remain satisfied with Biden's handling of the situation "as long as we don't have boots on the ground over there," and he's comfortable with Israel's response to Hamas' attack.

"Israel is trying to keep its independence," he said. "They're doing what they should probably do to keep their independence."

Such sentiments are less common among younger voters like Sean O'Hara, an 18-year-old in California. He said he's registered to vote but not with a political party.

"Funding a war like this isn't really in line with my beliefs," he said. "I think staying out of it is the better option."

O'Hara was concerned about supporting Israel because "they're colonizing all of Palestine and they have been for many years."

Although there was initially sympathy among people he knows for Israel after the Hamas attacks, O'Hara said, that shifted once "people were like, there's a history here."

Israel gained control of the Palestinian territories of West Bank and Gaza during the Six Days War in 1967.

The West Bank remains under military occupation. Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but instituted a blockade when Hamas took control, and there has been sporadic fighting for years.

Americans pin blame for the current conflict on Hamas, which the U.S. government considers to be a terrorist organization. About two-thirds of Americans (66%) said Hamas has a lot of responsibility for the war, while 35% said the same about Israel.

Aaron Philipson, a 64-year-old Republican in Florida, said he's disappointed by Biden's approach to the war.

"He's not taking a proper stand," he said. "He seems to be trying to dictate policy to Netanyahu, and Netanyahu doesn't seem to be having any of it," he said, referring to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"I've never seen the anti-Israeli sentiment so high," Philipson said. "It's awful what's going on right now."

About half of Americans (52%) say they are extremely or very concerned that the recent war between Israel and Hamas will increase prejudice against Jewish people in the United States. About 4 in 10 share the same concern about prejudice against Muslim people (43%).

Majorities of Democrats are similarly concerned about prejudice against Jews (57%) and Muslims (58%). A slight majority of Republicans are worried about prejudice against Jews (54%) with fewer being concerned about Muslims (28%).

Philipson said he didn't want to vote for Donald Trump again, but would consider backing the former president in a potential contest with Biden next year.

Under Biden's leadership, he said, "it's all falling apart right now," and "this war is sort of like the icing on the cake."

Fighting Hamas deep in Gaza City, Israel foresees control of the enclave's security after the war

By NAJIB JOBAIN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli ground forces were battling Hamas fighters deep inside Gaza's largest city, Israel said Tuesday. The push signals a major new stage in the month-old conflict, and its leaders foresee controlling the enclave's security after the war.

The push into Gaza City guarantees that the already staggering death toll will rise further, while comments from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about controlling Gaza's security for "an indefinite period" pointed to the uncertain endgame of a war that Israel says will be long and difficult.

Israeli ground troops have battled Palestinian militants inside Gaza for over a week, cutting the territory in half and encircling Gaza City. The army's chief spokesperson, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said Israeli ground forces "are located right now in a ground operation in the depths of Gaza City and putting great pressure on Hamas."

Hamas spokesperson Ghazi Hamad, speaking Tuesday from Beirut, denied that Israeli forces were making any significant military gains or that they had advanced deep into Gaza City.

"They never give the people the truth," Hamad said. He added that numerous Israeli soldiers were killed Monday and "many tanks were destroyed."

"The Palestinians fight and fight and fight against Israel, until we end the occupation," said Hamad, who left Gaza days before Hamas' Oct. 7 incursion in southern Israel, which sparked the war.

The Associated Press could not independently verify the claims of either side.

Israelis commemorated the 30th day — a milestone in Jewish mourning — since the Hamas incursion, which killed 1,400 people. About 240 people Hamas abducted during the attack remain in Gaza, and more than 250,000 Israelis have evacuated homes near the borders of Gaza and Lebanon as rockets were continuously fired into Israel.

Hundreds of family members of the hostages held in Gaza joined supporters Tuesday beside the Western Wall in Jerusalem to call for the release of their loved ones.

"The hostages have been underground in Gaza for 32 days. I cry out to every single person here and every single person on the planet to make it your mission to free these souls," said Rachel Goldberg, a prominent spokesperson for the hostage families, her voice breaking.

A month of relentless bombardment in Gaza since the Hamas attack has killed more than 10,300 Palestinians — two-thirds of them women and minors, according to the Health Ministry of the Hamas-run territory. More than 2,300 are believed to be buried from strikes that reduced entire city blocks to rubble.

Around 70% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have fled their homes, and many of them are crowded into schools-turned-shelters run by the United Nations. Civilians in Gaza are relying on a trickle of aid and their own daily foraging for food and water from supplies that have dwindled after weeks of siege.

FLEEING SOUTH

Israel unleashed another wave of strikes across the Gaza Strip on Tuesday as hundreds more Palestinians fled Gaza City to the south.

Some arrived on donkey carts, most on foot, some pushing elderly relatives in wheelchairs, all visibly exhausted. Many had nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Hundreds of thousands have heeded Israeli orders to head to the southern part of Gaza, out of the ground assault's path. Others are afraid to do so since Israeli troops control part of the north-south route. Bombardment of the south has also continued.

An Israeli airstrike destroyed several homes early Tuesday in Khan Younis. An Associated Press journalist at the scene saw first responders pulling five bodies — including three dead children — from the rubble. One man wept as he carried a bloodied young girl, until a rescue worker pried her from his arms, saying, "Let her go, let her go," to rush her to an ambulance.

AP video at a nearby hospital showed a woman desperately searching for her son, then crying and kissing him when she found him, half-naked and bloodied, but apparently without serious injuries. A girl

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 50 of 79

sobbed next to a baby on a stretcher, apparently dead.

"We were sleeping — babies, children, elderly," said one survivor, Ahmad al-Najjar, who is the general director at the Education Ministry in Gaza.

In the town of Deir al-Balah, rescue workers brought out at least four dead and a number of wounded children from the wreckage of a flattened building, witnesses said.

Israel says it targets Hamas fighters and infrastructure and accuses the group of endangering civilians by operating among them.

At a school in Khan Younis, thousands of displaced people were living in classrooms and on the playground. One of them, Suhaila al-Najjar, said the past month was filled with sleepless nights.

"What's to come? How will we live? Bakeries have closed, there's no gas. What will we eat?" she said.

ISRAEL TO MAINTAIN CONTROL

Israel has vowed to remove Hamas from power and crush its military capabilities — but neither Israel nor its main ally, the United States, has said what would come next.

Netanyahu told ABC News that Gaza should be governed by "those who don't want to continue the way of Hamas," without elaborating.

"I think Israel will, for an indefinite period, will have the overall security responsibility because we've seen what happens when we don't have it. When we don't have that security responsibility, what we have is the eruption of Hamas terror on a scale that we couldn't imagine," he said.

Netanyahu did not make clear what shape that security control would take. The White House reiterated Tuesday that President Joe Biden does not support an Israeli reoccupation of the Gaza Strip after the war.

"We do think that there needs to be a healthy set of conversations about what post-conflict Gaza looks like and what governance looks like," said White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby, adding that he would leave it to Netanyahu to clarify what he means by "indefinite."

Israeli officials say the offensive against Hamas will last for some time and acknowledge that they have not yet formulated a concrete plan for what comes after the war. The defense minister has said Israel does not seek a long-term reoccupation of Gaza but predicted a lengthy phase of low-intensity fighting against "pockets of resistance." Other officials have spoken about establishing a buffer zone that would keep Palestinians away from the Israeli border.

"There are a number of options being discussed for The Day After Hamas," said Ophir Falk, a senior adviser to Netanyahu. "The common denominator of all the plans is that 1) there is no Hamas 2) that Gaza is demilitarized 3) Gaza is deradicalized."

Israel withdrew troops and settlers in 2005 but kept control over Gaza's airspace, coastline, population registry and border crossings, excepting one into Egypt. Hamas seized power from forces loyal to President Mahmoud Abbas in 2007, confining his Palestinian Authority to parts of the occupied West Bank. Since then, Israel and Egypt have imposed a blockade on Gaza to varying degrees.

In his ABC interview, Netanyahu also expressed openness for the first time to "little pauses" in the fighting to facilitate delivery of aid to Gaza or the release of hostages. But he ruled out any general cease-fire without the release of all the hostages.

HEAVY FIGHTING IN THE NORTH

For now, Israel's troops are focused on northern Gaza, including Gaza City, which before the war was home to about 650,000 people. Israel says Hamas has extensive militant infrastructure within residential areas, including a vast tunnel network.

Israel's military says it has killed thousands of Hamas fighters. The Gaza Health Ministry's death toll does not distinguish between civilians and combatants — and slain fighters not brought to hospitals would not be in its count. Israel also says 30 of its soldiers have been killed in Gaza since the ground offensive began.

Several hundred thousand people are believed to still be in the north, in the assault's path.

Residents in northern Gaza reported heavy battles overnight into Tuesday morning on the outskirts of Gaza City. The Shati refugee camp — a built-up district housing refugees from the 1948 war and their descendants — has been heavily bombarded over the past two days, residents said.

The latest war has also stoked wider tensions, with Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group trading fire along the border. More than 160 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the war began, mainly during violent protests and gunbattles with Israeli forces during arrest raids.

Hundreds of trucks carrying aid have been allowed to enter Gaza from Egypt since Oct. 21. But humanitarian workers say the aid is far short of mounting needs. Egypt's Rafah crossing has also opened to allow hundreds of foreign passport holders and medical patients to leave Gaza.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said 40 Filipinos fled from Gaza into Egypt through the Rafah crossing after Filipino diplomats negotiated for their safe passage. The Filipinos were expected to take flights back to the Philippines from the Egyptian capital of Cairo, Marcos said in a video message in Manila. Most of at least 134 Filipinos in Gaza, many of whom are Filipinas married to Palestinians, have sought help to leave the besieged territory, the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said.

Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear reelected to second term in Kentucky, overcoming state's GOP dominance

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear won reelection to a second term Tuesday, notching another significant statewide victory in an increasingly red state that could serve as a model for other Democrats on how to thrive politically heading into next year's defining presidential election.

"Tonight, Kentucky made a choice, a choice not to move to the right or to the left but to move forward for every single family," Beshear told a raucous crowd of supporters in Louisville.

The governor withstood relentless attempts to connect him to Democratic President Joe Biden, especially his handling of the economy. Beshear insulated himself from the attacks by focusing on state issues, including his push for exceptions to the state's near-total abortion ban that he said would make it less extreme. His reelection gave pro-choice advocates nationwide yet another victory since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

While Beshear kept Biden at arms-length during the campaign, he benefited politically from massive infusions of federal pandemic and infrastructure money pumped into Kentucky. Biden spoke with Beshear Tuesday evening to congratulate him on his re-election win.

Beshear said his victory "sends a loud, clear message — a message that candidates should run for something and not against someone. That a candidate should show vision and not sow division. And a clear statement that anger politics should end right here and right now."

The win also marks the 45-year-old governor as a Democrat to watch, a candidate with the skills to win a decisive victory in difficult political terrain.

Beshear rode his stewardship over record economic growth and his handling of multiple disasters, from tornadoes and floods to the COVID-19 pandemic, to victory over Cameron, the state's attorney general and a protege of Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. In what could be a preview of how Democrats campaign in 2024, Beshear hammered Cameron throughout the campaign for his support of the state's sweeping abortion ban, which makes no exceptions for victims of rape or incest.

Cameron, who was seeking to become Kentucky's first Black governor, called Beshear to congratulate his former law firm colleague on his victory.

"We all want the same thing for our future generations," Cameron said in his concession speech. "We want a better commonwealth, one in which it can ultimately be a shining city on a hill, a model and example for the rest of the nation to follow."

The outcome gives divided government another stamp of voter approval in Kentucky, as Republicans hold supermajorities in both chambers of the legislature and continue to dominate the state's congressional delegation, including both U.S. Senate seats. Beshear has wrangled with GOP lawmakers over a series of policy issues during his tenure.

While Beshear and Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman earned new four-year terms as a ticket, their win did nothing to change Kentucky's identity as a solidly red state or prevent a Republican sweep of all other

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 52 of 79

statewide constitutional offices on Tuesday's ballot.

Republican Michael Adams won reelection as secretary of state, while GOP nominee Russell Coleman, a former U.S. attorney, claimed the job of attorney general.

Republican Allison Ball, who is finishing her second term as state treasurer, was elected state auditor. The GOP also won contests for state treasurer and state agriculture commissioner to maintain its electoral dominance in Kentucky.

Beshear's victory sustains a family dynasty that has repeatedly defied the Bluegrass State's tilt toward the GOP. His father, Steve Beshear, is a former two-term governor. By the end of Andy Beshear's second term, a Beshear will have presided in the Kentucky governor's office for 16 of the last 20 years.

Cameron tried nationalizing the campaign in a state where Republican ex-President Donald Trump remains popular. Beshear followed his successful campaign formula from 2019, when he narrowly defeated GOP Gov. Matt Bevin, by sidestepping discussion of Biden or Trump, focusing instead on Kentucky matters and emphasizing his leadership during a tumultuous first term.

In the end, Cameron was unable to overcome the personal popularity of Beshear, who became a living room fixture across Kentucky with his press conferences during the pandemic. From those briefings, Beshear became known to many Kentuckians as much by his first name as his last.

Throughout the campaign, Beshear offered an upbeat assessment of the state, while Cameron pounded away at the governor's record and linked it to Biden. Beshear touted the state's record-high economic development growth and record-low unemployment rates during his term, and said he has Kentucky poised to keep thriving.

The governor touted his efforts for a new Ohio River bridge that will connect Kentucky and Ohio without tolls. Beshear was rewarded Tuesday with a strong showing in key suburban Kentucky counties across the river from Cincinnati.

The race nonetheless reflected the widening gap nationally between rural and urban voters, with Beshear running up big margins in Louisville, Lexington and Cameron winning large swaths of rural Kentucky. But the Democratic governor also notched some wins in rural areas, including several Appalachian counties well beyond the suburbs of the state's biggest cities.

Beshear was thrust into crisis management during the pandemic and when deadly tornadoes tore through parts of western Kentucky — including his father's hometown — in late 2021, followed by devastating flooding the next summer in sections of the state's Appalachian region in the east. The governor oversaw recovery efforts that are ongoing, offering frequent updates and traveling to stricken areas repeatedly.

Cameron blasted the governor's restrictions during the pandemic, saying the shutdowns crippled businesses and caused learning loss among students. Beshear said his actions saved lives, mirrored those in other states and reflected guidance from the Trump administration.

Cameron and his GOP allies tried to capitalize on Beshear's veto of a measure banning gender-affirming care for children, portraying the governor as an advocate of gender reassignment surgery for minors.

Beshear hit back, claiming his foes misrepresented his position while pointing to his faith and support for parental rights to explain his veto. He said the bill "rips away" parental freedom to make medical decisions for their children.

Beshear, a church deacon, said he believes "all children are children of God."

In declaring victory, the governor ripped into GOP groups he accused of running ads "full of hate and division."

"And you know what? We beat 'em all at the same time," Beshear said.

During the campaign, Beshear denounced Cameron's support for the state's existing near-total abortion ban as extremist, and the governor's campaign ran a viral TV ad featuring a young woman, now in her early 20s, who revealed she was raped, and later became pregnant, by her stepfather when she was 12 years old but eventually miscarried. She took aim at Cameron in the ad, saying: "Anyone who believes there should be no exceptions for rape and incest could never understand what it's like to stand in my shoes."

Cameron signaled that he would sign legislation adding the rape and incest exceptions, but days later he resumed a more hardline stance, indicating during a campaign stop that he would support such excep-

tions "if the courts made us change that law." It highlighted the complexities of abortion-related politics for Republicans since the U.S. Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade*.

Kayla Long cited abortion rights as an important issue for her as she cast her ballot for Beshear in Shelbyville, between Louisville and Frankfort, on Tuesday.

"I think it's a woman's right to choose," she said. "And I don't think politicians should be involved in that choice at all."

Ohio voters enshrine abortion access in constitution in latest statewide win for reproductive rights

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment on Tuesday that ensures access to abortion and other forms of reproductive health care, the latest victory for abortion rights supporters since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* last year.

Ohio became the seventh state where voters decided to protect abortion access after the landmark ruling and was the only state to consider a statewide abortion rights question this year.

"The future is bright, and tonight we can celebrate this win for bodily autonomy and reproductive rights," Lauren Blauvelt, co-chair of Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights, which led support for the amendment, told a jubilant crowd of supporters.

The outcome of the intense, off-year election could be a bellwether for 2024, when Democrats hope the issue will energize their voters and help President Joe Biden keep the White House. Voters in Arizona, Missouri and elsewhere are expected to vote on similar protections next year.

Heather Williams, interim president of the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, which works to elect Democrats to state legislatures, said the vote in favor of abortion rights was a "huge victory."

"Ohio's resounding support for this constitutional amendment reaffirms Democratic priorities and sends a strong message to the state GOP that reproductive rights are non-negotiable," she said in a statement.

Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris issued statements celebrating the amendment's win, saying efforts to ban or severely restrict abortion represent a minority view across the country.

Harris, who rallied Issue 1 supporters during a virtual gathering this past weekend, hinted at how the issue would likely be central to Democrats' campaigning next year for Congress and the presidency, saying "extremists are pushing for a national abortion ban that would criminalize reproductive health care in every single state in our nation."

Ohio's constitutional amendment, on the ballot as Issue 1, included some of the most protective language for abortion access of any statewide ballot initiative since the Supreme Court's ruling. Opponents had argued that the amendment would threaten parental rights, allow unrestricted gender surgeries for minors and revive "partial birth" abortions, which are federally banned.

Public polling shows about two-thirds of Americans say abortion should generally be legal in the earliest stages of pregnancy, a sentiment that has been underscored in both Democratic and deeply Republican states since the justices overturned *Roe* in June 2022.

Before the Ohio vote, statewide initiatives in California, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana and Vermont had either affirmed abortion access or turned back attempts to undermine the right.

Two leading national anti-abortion groups said they would learn from Ohio results but would be undeterred in trying to defeat abortion-rights measures planned for next year's ballots.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, said her group would focus on promoting "compassionate pro-life messages for women and their children" to counter what she labeled a "campaign of fear" from abortion-rights supporters.

"For us, it's very clear that post-*Roe* America, our movement is very much a marathon, not a sprint," Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life of America said.

Voter turnout for Ohio's amendment, including early voting, was robust for an off-year election. Issue 1's approval will all but certainly undo a 2019 state law passed by Republicans that bans most abortions

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 54 of 79

after fetal cardiac activity is detected, with no exceptions for rape and incest. That law, currently on hold because of court challenges, is one of roughly two dozen restrictions on abortion the Ohio Legislature has passed in recent years.

Republicans and the state-level anti-abortion groups that worked to defeat the amendment remained defiant in the wake of Tuesday's vote. Ohio House Speaker Jason Stephens said Issue 1's approval "is not the end of the conversation."

"As a 100% pro-life conservative, I remain steadfastly committed to protecting life, and that commitment is unwavering," Stephens said. "The Legislature has multiple paths that we will explore to continue to protect innocent life."

Previously, state Senate President Matt Huffman, a Republican, has suggested that lawmakers could come back with another proposed amendment next year that would undo Issue 1, although they would have only a six-week window after Election Day to get it on the 2024 primary ballot.

"We don't have time to lick our wounds," said Mark Harrington, president of the Ohio anti-abortion group Created Equal. "In the coming days, we'll process what led to this defeat. But if abortion doesn't stop, neither do we."

Issue 1 specifically declared an individual's right to "make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions," including birth control, fertility treatments, miscarriage and abortion.

It allowed the state to regulate the procedure after fetal viability, as long as exceptions were provided for cases in which a doctor determined the "life or health" of the woman was at risk. Viability was defined as the point when the fetus had "a significant likelihood of survival" outside the womb, with reasonable interventions.

Anti-abortion groups, with the help of Republican Gov. Mike DeWine, tested a variety of messages to try to defeat the amendment, primarily focusing on the idea that the proposal was too extreme for the state. The supporters' campaign centered on a message of keeping government out of families' private affairs.

The latest vote followed an August special election called by the Republican-controlled Legislature that was aimed at making future constitutional changes harder to pass by increasing the threshold from a simple majority vote to 60%. That proposal was aimed in part at undermining the abortion-rights measure decided Tuesday.

Voters overwhelmingly defeated that special election question, setting the stage for the high-stakes fall abortion campaign.

40 Filipinos flee war-ravaged Gaza Strip through Rafah crossing and arrive in Egypt

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Dozens of Filipinos fled from the war-ravaged Gaza Strip into Egypt through the Rafah crossing after Filipino diplomats negotiated for their safe passage and Qatar mediated for the border to be opened, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Wednesday.

The 40 Filipinos were traveling to the Egyptian capital of Cairo, where they planned to take flights back to the Philippines, Marcos said in a video message in Manila. Two Filipino doctors managed to leave the Gaza Strip into Egypt last week.

"I hope the rest of our countrymen who also wanted to return home can also exit properly with their spouses and loved ones," Marcos said.

Most of at least 134 Filipinos in Gaza, many of whom are married to Palestinians, have sought help to leave the besieged territory and are waiting for an opportunity to leave, the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said.

Hamas militants rampaged in southern Israel on Oct. 7, which sparked a war between Israel and Hamas.

Before the war began, about 30,000 Filipinos were living and working in Israel, many as caregivers who look after the elderly, the ill and those with physical disabilities, according to the Philippines' foreign ministry. The huge income they send back home has helped keep the country's fragile economy afloat.

The Philippines is a major source of manual labor worldwide.

The Supreme Court seems likely to preserve a gun law that protects domestic violence victims

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court seemed likely Tuesday to preserve a federal law that prohibits people under domestic violence restraining orders from having guns.

In their first guns case since last year's expansion of gun rights, the justices suggested that they will reverse a ruling from an appeals court in New Orleans that struck down the 1994 ban on firearms for people under court order to stay away from their spouses or partners.

The court's decision could affect other cases in which other gun laws have been called into question, including in the high-profile prosecution of Hunter Biden. President Joe Biden's son has been charged with buying a firearm while he was addicted to drugs, but his lawyers have indicated they will challenge the indictment.

Liberal and conservative justices sounded persuaded by arguments from the Biden administration's top Supreme Court lawyer that the prohibition is in line with the longstanding practice of disarming dangerous people.

The case before the court involves a Texas man, Zackey Rahimi, who was accused of hitting his girlfriend during an argument in a parking lot and later threatening to shoot her.

The justices peppered Rahimi's lawyer, J. Matthew Wright, with skeptical questions that seemed to foretell the outcome.

"You don't have any doubt that your client is a dangerous person, do you?" Chief Justice John Roberts asked Wright. When Wright said it depends on what Roberts meant by dangerous, the chief justice shot back, "Well, it means someone who's shooting, you know, at people. That's a good start."

Justice Brett Kavanaugh voiced concern that a ruling for Rahimi could also jeopardize the background check system that the Democratic administration said has stopped more than 75,000 gun sales in the past 25 years based on domestic violence protective orders.

The federal appeals court in New Orleans struck down the domestic violence law, following the Supreme Court's Bruen decision in June 2022. That high court ruling not only expanded Americans' gun rights under the Constitution but also changed the way courts are supposed to evaluate restrictions on firearms.

Justice Clarence Thomas' opinion for the court tossed out the balancing test judges had long used to decide whether gun laws were constitutional. Rather than consider whether a law enhances public safety, judges should only weigh whether it fits into the nation's history of gun regulation, Thomas wrote for the six conservative justices on the nine-member court.

The Bruen decision has resulted in lower court rulings striking down more than a dozen laws. Those include age restrictions; bans on homemade ghost guns, which don't have serial numbers; and prohibitions on gun ownership for people convicted of nonviolent felonies or using illegal drugs.

Justice Elena Kagan noted that "there seems to be a fair bit of division and a fair bit of confusion about what Bruen means and what Bruen requires in the lower courts."

Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, defending the domestic violence law, urged the justices to use this case to correct lower courts' "profound misreading" of the decision.

It was unclear how far the high court would go in this case, and some of the justices sounded interested in a limited ruling that might leave open other challenges to the same law. "Do we need to get into any of that?" Justice Neil Gorsuch asked Prelogar.

Rahimi, who lived near Fort Worth, Texas, hit his girlfriend during an argument in a parking lot and then fired a gun at a witness in December 2019, according to court papers. Later, Rahimi called the girlfriend and threatened to shoot her if she told anyone about the assault, the Justice Department wrote in its Supreme Court brief.

The girlfriend obtained a protective order against him in Tarrant County in February 2020.

Eleven months later, Rahimi was a suspect in shootings when police searched his apartment and found guns. He eventually pleaded guilty to violating federal law. The appeals court overturned that conviction when it struck down the law. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the Biden administration's appeal.

Rahimi remains jailed in Texas, where he faces other criminal charges. In a letter he wrote from jail last summer, after the Supreme Court agreed to hear his case, Rahimi said he would "stay away from all firearms and weapons" once he's released. The New York Times first reported the existence of the letter.

Guns were used in 57% of killings of spouses, intimate partners, children or relatives in 2020, according to data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Seventy women a month, on average, are shot and killed by intimate partners, according to the gun control group Everytown for Gun Safety.

"Guns and domestic are a deadly combination," Prelogar said in court Tuesday.

A decision in U.S. v. Rahimi, 22-915, is expected by early summer.

Highlights of Donald Trump's hours on the witness stand at his New York civil fraud trial

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump went off. Again and again. Making the witness stand at his civil fraud trial his podium, the former president laid into the judge who'll decide the case and the New York attorney general who's suing him.

During 3½ hours of testimony on Monday, the Republican denied Attorney General Letitia James' allegations that he duped banks by exaggerating his wealth on financial statements used to make deals and secure loans.

"There was no victim. There was no anything," he said.

He bragged about his riches, saying he has "a lot of cash" and described one of the grown sons he put in charge of his company as a "hard working boy." He said of his priorities while president: "My threshold was China, Russia and keeping our country safe."

Trump's often verbose responses — replete with anecdotes about development projects, the intricacies of property valuations and complaints that he was a victim of a "political witch hunt" — led a frustrated Judge Arthur Engoron to warn: "This is not a political rally."

Here are some highlights from Trump's day on the witness stand:

'A VERY UNFAIR TRIAL'

Trump made his grievances a focal point of his testimony, amplifying complaints the 2024 Republican front-runner has made for weeks in front of TV cameras outside the courtroom.

He directed a lot of his ire against the judge, who issued a decision before the trial even began holding Trump liable for fraud.

"He ruled against me without knowing anything about me," Trump testified. "He ruled against me, and he said I was a fraud before he knew anything about me, nothing about me. I think it's fraudulent, the decision. I think it's fraudulent. The fraud is on the court, not on me."

During the trial, the judge has fined Trump \$15,000 for violating a limited gag order barring attacks on court staff. But nothing in the order bars the former president from criticizing the judge.

Engoron did try to clamp down on Trump's speechifying during his testimony.

"I'm not here to hear what he has to say. I'm here to hear him answer questions," Engoron told one of Trump's lawyers. The former president retorted: "This is a very unfair trial, very, very. And I hope the public is watching it."

Engoron's admonition only gave Trump more ammunition to claim he was being mistreated. Trump later posted Engoron's "not here to hear what he has to say" comment to his Truth Social account.

On the witness stand, Trump suggested the judge should've showed him deference as a former president, testifying, "How do you rule against somebody and call them a fraud, as the president of the United States, who did a great job?"

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 57 of 79

STATEMENTS 'WEREN'T VERY BADLY NEEDED'

In defending his business practices, Trump sought to downplay the importance of the annual statements of financial condition at issue in the case. He testified that the documents, which listed values for his properties and assets, were "nice to see" but "weren't very badly needed" to obtain financing and make deals.

Even when banks required Trump to provide copies of his financial statements as part of a loan agreement, he testified that they really wanted to know if he had enough cash to cover the loan. Trump testified that he typically kept \$300 million to \$400 million in the bank, saying, "I've had a lot of cash for a long time."

"They were not really documents that the banks paid much attention to," Trump testified. "They looked at the deal. They looked at the asset. If it is real estate, they looked at the location."

Retired Deutsche Bank official Nicholas Haigh testified earlier in the trial that the bank, which loaned Trump hundreds of millions of dollars, would look to his financial statements to ensure that his "financial strength is being maintained."

Trump testified that he relied on two longtime Trump Organization executives and an outside accounting firm to prepare his financial statements. He said ex-CFO Allen Weisselberg would give him a draft before each year's statement was finalized and that he'd "look it over and maybe have a suggestion."

"But it wasn't very important," Trump testified. "You've made it important. But it wasn't very important to me."

A 'VERY, VERY POWERFUL' DISCLAIMER

Trump testified that he had no qualms with how his financial statements turned out and that, if anything, they undervalued some of his properties. Regardless, he said, the statements had a "disclaimer clause that was very, very powerful" that absolved him and his company of responsibility.

Trump said the disclaimer instructed banks and others: "Do your own due diligence. Do your own work. Do your own study. Don't take anything from this statement for granted."

The disclaimer said, among other things, that the financial statements weren't audited by outside accountants.

Trump mentioned the disclaimer more than a dozen times, at one point irking Engoron, whose pretrial ruling found that the clause didn't insulate Trump from liability.

"No, no, no. We are not going to hear about the disclaimer clause," the judge bellowed. "If you want to know about the disclaimer clause, read my opinion again, or for the first time, perhaps."

"Well, you are wrong on the opinion," Trump responded.

'A VERY SAD THING' FOR EX-CFO

As Trump wrapped up his testimony, he expressed sorrow for Weisselberg, his longtime finance chief who pleaded guilty and served jail time last year for evading taxes on pricey company-paid perks, including a Manhattan apartment, luxury cars and private school tuition for his grandchildren.

At a trial largely built on Weisselberg's testimony, Trump's company was convicted last year of helping executives dodge taxes on such perks. The Trump Organization was ordered to pay a \$1.6 million fine.

"It was a sad, very sad thing," Trump testified. "People went after him viciously and violently because he happened to work for me."

Trump testified that he'd learned of Weisselberg's tax misdeeds only through last year's trial, where the ex-executive testified that his schemes were unknown to his boss. Despite the revelation about his trusted lieutenant, Trump said he never thought to go back and review Weisselberg's work.

"The education of his grandchildren -- that is going to be some kind of a breach where you want to put a man in jail? It's a very sad thing," Trump lamented.

'A DISGRACE' AND 'DISTRACTIONS'

Trump looked away from Attorney General James and scowled as he walked past her on the way into court. On the witness stand, he tore into the Democrat, accusing her of pursuing him to advance her political career.

"She's a political hack, and this is a disgrace that a case like this is going on," Trump testified, adding that James "should be ashamed of herself."

Trump also directed his enmity at Kevin Wallace, the lawyer from James' office who was questioning him, saying: "People like you go around and try and demean me and try and hurt me. Probably for political reasons. In her case, definitely for political reasons."

James made a short-lived run for New York governor in 2021 before winning reelection as attorney general last year.

Outside court Monday, James said Trump was "engaging in distractions and engaging in name calling" to steal attention from the evidence against him.

AT MAR-A-LAGO, 'FOREVER' ISN'T NECESSARILY FOREVER

Trump suggested he or his heirs could someday depart from a decades-old agreement that limits the use of his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

Trump's financial statements have valued the sprawling Palm Beach club as high as \$739 million, based on what James' office argues is a false premise that it could be sold as a private residence. Real estate agents say it's possible it could fetch \$1 billion as a home. Trump claims the property is now worth up to \$1.5 billion.

In 2002, Trump signed an agreement with the National Trust for Historic Preservation that limited Mar-a-Lago's use to a social club. From the stand, Trump argued that language in the document stating that he did "intend to forever" use the estate as a club didn't necessarily mean forever.

"It doesn't say I will. It says 'intend,'" Trump testified, adding: "I would, personally, never change it. If somebody later on, including my children, if they want to change it, I believe they would have a right to do that."

Shown a 2003 article in The Palm Beach Post that quoted him saying "it will forever be a club," Trump responded, "I think that was said with bravado, as opposed to with legal intent."

Trump acknowledged benefiting from the deal, testifying that as a club "you pay much less tax."

Special counsel in the Hunter Biden case insists he was the 'decision-maker' in rare testimony

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The prosecutor overseeing the Hunter Biden investigation testified Tuesday that he had the ultimate authority in the yearslong case as he made an unprecedented appearance before Congress to rebut Republicans' explosive claims that the probe has been plagued with interference.

U.S. Attorney David Weiss' nearly seven-hour interview with the House Judiciary Committee marked the first time a special counsel has ever testified to lawmakers in the middle of a probe. He agreed to the unusual appearance under heavy pressure from House Republicans, who are looking to ramp up their impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden and his family.

In his opening statement, Weiss told lawmakers he would not answer questions that could jeopardize the investigation and would only talk about the scope of his authority. "I am, and have been, the decision-maker on this case," he told lawmakers. "I do not, however, make these decisions in a vacuum."

He acknowledged being required to follow Justice Department guidelines and processes as well as federal law as he carried out his investigation. But those requirements "did not interfere with my decision-making authority," he said.

No one at the Justice Department, including U.S. attorneys or the tax division, blocked or prevented him from pursuing charges or taking other necessary steps in the investigation, Weiss said.

Lawmakers leaving the interview with Weiss described it as "tedious" and "a waste of time" as the federal prosecutor was bound by Justice Department rules that limit his ability to talk about an ongoing investigation.

"Mr. Weiss was here incarnate, but not particularly in spirit," Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., said during a lunch break. He added that in response to any questions Republicans had about the investigation, Weiss would "demure and say that it was just part of his deliberative process."

Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan remained defiant, walking out of the interview saying that

Weiss' testimony confirmed whistleblower testimony that he did not have full authority.

Democrats accused Republicans of trying to interfere with the Hunter Biden investigation by bringing Weiss in to testify.

"This is unprecedented. You never interrupt a prosecution with congressional hearings. This is the first time it's ever happened," Rep. Glenn Ivey, D-Md., said after leaving the interview. "And the fact that he can't answer your questions is an obvious byproduct of that because he doesn't want to do anything or say anything that will disrupt a criminal prosecution."

The rare move by the Justice Department to allow Weiss' testimony before the conclusion of an investigation indicates just how seriously the department is taking accusations of interference.

The interview came after months of back-and-forth negotiations between Republicans on the Judiciary Committee and the Justice Department after lawmakers subpoenaed several investigators and attorneys involved in the Hunter Biden case.

In July, Weiss, looking to correct the record of what he and the department see as a misrepresentation of the investigation, agreed to come to Capitol Hill but only if he was able to testify in a public hearing where he could directly respond to claims of wrongdoing by Republicans.

The Justice Department remained willing to have Weiss testify publicly even after the implosion of a plea agreement with Hunter Biden that could have effectively closed the case, but said he couldn't make more than one appearance in the near term. The two parties ultimately agreed on a closed-door interview with both Democratic and Republican members and their respective staff.

The interview on Tuesday focused on testimony from an Internal Revenue Service agent who claimed that under Weiss, the investigation into the president's son was "slow-walked" and mishandled. Weiss, who was originally appointed by then-President Donald Trump, has denied one of the more explosive allegations by saying in writing that he had the final say over the case.

And he did so again behind closed doors Tuesday when he denied bowing to political pressure in the five-year-long investigation, saying the decisions have been based on "the facts and the law."

"Political considerations played no part in our decision-making," he said.

Weiss added that he did not feel the need to request special counsel status until August and when he did it was quickly granted by Attorney General Merrick Garland. Like other special counsels, he will prepare a report at the end of his investigation that's expected to be publicly released.

Two other U.S. attorneys from Washington and California testified in recent weeks that they didn't block Weiss from filing charges in their districts, though they declined to partner with him on it.

But the IRS whistleblower, who testified publicly over the summer, insists his testimony reflects a pattern of interference and preferential treatment in the Hunter Biden case and not just disagreement with their superiors about what investigative steps to take.

Jordan remained defiant, walking out of the interview saying that Weiss' testimony confirmed whistleblower testimony that he did not have full authority.

Questions about Hunter Biden's business dealings overall have been central to a GOP-led impeachment inquiry into the president. That's been led in part by Jordan, who had a prominent role in the questioning Tuesday.

Biden administration warns of major disruption at border if judges halt asylum rule

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

The Biden administration on Tuesday urged an appeals court to allow sweeping new asylum restrictions to stay in place, warning that halting them would be "highly disruptive" at the border.

The government is urging a panel of judges in Pasadena, California — two appointed by President Bill Clinton and one by President Donald Trump — to overturn a July ruling that sought to block the new asylum restrictions. The new restrictions made it far more difficult to qualify for asylum if a migrant didn't

first apply online or traveled through another country, such as Mexico, and didn't seek protection there. They have remained in place during the appeal.

Although the judges didn't rule immediately and gave no indication how they were leaning, the arguments occurred against a backdrop of Senate Republicans seeking to legislate far-reaching changes to asylum eligibility as part of President Joe Biden's request for military aid to Ukraine and Israel.

Courts blocked similar measures under Trump but the Biden administration says its approach differs because it is coupled with new legal pathways to enter the country and creates exceptions. However, advocates represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, Center for Gender & Refugee Studies and National Immigrant Justice Center argue that they are recycled Trump-era policies that violate U.S. law allowing people to seek asylum no matter how and where they arrive.

A mobile app introduced in January allows asylum-seekers to make 1,450 appointments per day at official border crossings with Mexico, while the Biden administration has allowed up to 30,000 a month from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela to pursue asylum if they apply online with a financial sponsor and arrive at an airport.

Those new pathways represent "a very significant difference" from Trump policies, said Brian Boynton, a Justice Department attorney. Boynton also noted that 12% of the 57,700 asylum-seekers who were subject to the new rule through September avoided it by proving "exceptionally compelling circumstances," including "acute medical emergency," "imminent and extreme threat to life or safety" or being a victim of human trafficking.

ACLU attorney Spencer Amdur said the exceptions were "tiny" and that the "overwhelming majority" of asylum-seekers had to enter at an official point of entry.

"The one thing they can't do is adopt substantive asylum bars," Amdur said. "That's not an available option to them."

Illegal crossings from Mexico dropped from all-time daily highs in early May after the new restrictions took effect, but although arrests haven't returned to 10,000 crossings per day, the lull was short-lived. Arrests in September were just shy of an all-time monthly high reached in December 2022 and they topped 2 million for the second year in a row for the government's budget year that ended Sept. 30.

Blas Nuñez-Neto, assistant Homeland Security secretary for border and immigration policy, said in filing in a separate case last week that the asylum restrictions were critical. Figures show approval rates on initial asylum screenings fell sharply after the new restrictions were put to use.

Boynton asked the judges to keep the policy in place even if they decide against the administration, implying that it was prepared to take the case to the Supreme Court if it lost.

Syphilis cases in US newborns skyrocketed in 2022. Health officials suggest more testing

By MIKE STOBBE and KENYA HUNTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Alarmed by yet another jump in syphilis cases in newborns, U.S. health officials are calling for stepped-up prevention measures, including encouraging millions of women of childbearing age and their partners to get tested for the sexually transmitted disease.

More than 3,700 babies were born with congenital syphilis in 2022 — 10 times more than a decade ago and a 32% increase from 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday. Syphilis caused 282 stillbirth and infant deaths, nearly 16 times more than the 2012 deaths.

The 2022 count was the most in more than 30 years, CDC officials said, and in more than half of the congenital syphilis cases, the mothers tested positive during pregnancy but did not get properly treated.

The rise in congenital syphilis comes despite repeated warnings by public health agencies and it's tied to the surge in primary and secondary cases of syphilis in adults, CDC officials said. It's also been increasingly difficult for medical providers to get benzathine penicillin injections — the main medical weapon against congenital syphilis — because of supply shortages.

"It is clear that something is not working here, that something has to change," the CDC's Dr. Laura Bach-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 61 of 79

mann said. "That's why we're calling for exceptional measures to address this heartbreaking epidemic"

The federal agency wants medical providers to start syphilis treatment when a pregnant woman first tests positive, rather than waiting for confirmatory testing, and to expand access to transportation so the women can get treatment. The CDC also called for rapid tests to be made available beyond doctors' offices and STD clinics to places like emergency rooms, needle-exchange programs and prisons and jails.

Federal officials again advised sexually active women of childbearing age and their partners to get tested for syphilis test at least once if they live in a county with high rates. According to a new CDC map and definition, 70% of U.S. adults live in a county with high rates. That's likely tens of millions of people, according to an Associated Press estimate based on federal data.

The CDC's recommendations are just that; there is no new federal money going out to state and local health departments to bolster testing or access. Some state health departments have already said they're stretched thin when it comes to treatment and prevention, though Illinois announced last week it was starting a phone line for health care providers to help with record searching, consultation and assistance with mandatory reporting.

Syphilis is a bacterial infection that for centuries was a common but feared sexually transmitted disease. New infections plummeted in the U.S. starting in the 1940s when antibiotics became widely available and fell to their lowest mark in the late 1990s. By 2002, cases began rising again, with men who have sex with other men being disproportionately affected, though the STD is spreading among several demographics.

In congenital syphilis, moms pass the disease on to their babies, potentially leading to death of the child or health problems for the child like deafness, blindness, and malformed bones. Case rates have been rising across racial and ethnic groups.

Dr. Mike Saag, an infectious diseases expert at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, said syphilis can be "a silent infection" in women because it's tricky to diagnose without a blood test — not everyone gets painless sores, wart-like lesions or other visible symptoms.

The CDC has long recommended that all pregnant women should be tested for syphilis at their first prenatal visit, but poor access to prenatal care — largely in rural areas of the U.S. — can make that difficult. Nearly 40% of last year's congenital syphilis cases involved mothers who didn't have prenatal care, the CDC said.

If syphilis is diagnosed early in a pregnancy, the threat of passing it to the baby can be removed by a single penicillin shot. But experts say the later you get into pregnancy, the more likely you'll need multiple shots, and they have to be completed at least 30 days before delivery.

"I have had patients who have been on (a three-shot) regimen who then miss a shot," said Dr. Nina Ragunathan, an OB/GYN at the Delta Health Center in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. "So they are trying to get their shots, but if they don't get the three in a row, because of transportation issues, because of job issues, child care issues, any number of reasons that prevent them from coming back, they don't complete their treatment."

Plus, the shortage of shots makes the task of getting syphilis numbers down difficult, health officials across the U.S. told the AP. Patients who are not pregnant can use the antibiotic doxycycline to treat syphilis, but health officials are concerned that the 14- to 28-day timeline of treatment is difficult to complete, leaving infected people uncured.

Pfizer is the nation's sole supplier of the penicillin shot. Earlier this year, company officials said it was in short supply because of increased demand. Pfizer also said the shortage may not be resolved until next year.

The CDC said the shortage didn't affect the 2022 congenital syphilis case numbers and that, despite the shortage, it isn't aware of patients not getting their needed shots.

The Biden administration says colleges must fight 'alarming rise' in antisemitism and Islamophobia

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is warning U.S. schools and colleges that they must take immediate action to stop antisemitism and Islamophobia on their campuses, citing an "alarming rise" in threats and harassment.

In a Tuesday letter, the Education Department said there's "renewed urgency" to fight discrimination against students during the Israel-Hamas war. The letter reminds schools of their legal duty to protect students and intervene to stop harassment that disrupts their education.

"The rise of reports of hate incidents on our college campuses in the wake of the Israel-Hamas conflict is deeply traumatic for students and should be alarming to all Americans," Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said in a statement. "Antisemitism, Islamophobia and all other forms of hatred go against everything we stand for as a nation."

Universities have faced mounting criticism over their response to the war and its reverberations at U.S. schools. Jewish and Muslim students on many campuses say too little is being done to keep them safe. Protests have sometimes turned violent, including at a recent demonstration at Tulane University, while threats of violence have upended campuses including Cornell University.

The Education Department letter offered few specifics on how colleges should respond, and it did little to answer questions about where to draw the line between political speech and harassment. Instead, it outlined schools' broad duties under the Civil Rights Act.

It says schools must intervene to stop conduct that is "objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the recipient's education program or activity." It urged schools to "be vigilant in protecting your students' rights."

The Education Department investigates reports of civil rights violations at schools and universities. Institutions can face penalties up to a loss of federal money.

Meeting with a group of Jewish students from Baltimore colleges last week, Cardona said he was "appalled and horrified" by incidents of antisemitism on U.S. campuses. A White House official at the meeting noted that attacks on Arabs and Muslims have been on the rise too.

At the meeting, students called on Cardona to help colleges combat the type of casual antisemitism that they fear will escalate into violence.

Students at Towson University described a recent prayer gathering that was disrupted when other students wrote "(expletive) the Jews" on a nearby chalkboard. Online chat boards have been littered with antisemitic insults, they said, some singling out Jews on campus.

Makayla Bernstein, president of Towson Hillel, said the Education Department's letter is a strong start but needs to go farther. She was hoping for clearer guidance to help colleges identify rhetoric or behavior that should be considered antisemitic.

"Leaders on our campus have been having a hard time knowing where the line is," Bernstein said. Anything short of violence has been tolerated, she added, with other forms of antisemitism "falling through the cracks."

"Hopefully our president will be reading this letter and realize that there are many students who are afraid to walk around campus right now," she said.

The letter is valuable because it points students to a legal route to fight harassment and discrimination, said Steven Doctorman, a Jewish student at Johns Hopkins University. But more needs to be done to discourage harmful speech before it becomes commonplace, he said.

"It requires the school or the administration or even the federal government to really take a stand," he said.

Nothing new is required of colleges in the letter, and it adds no clarity around thorny free speech questions. Still, it's a reminder that colleges should be paying attention to the issue, said Jonathan Fansmith, who leads government relations for the American Council on Education, an association of university presidents.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 63 of 79

He cautions against the idea of letting the federal government decide what phrases or rhetoric should be deemed acceptable.

"That is something that I think people rightfully would have a lot of concerns about," he said. "It just never will be simple or straightforward."

On many campuses, Muslim and Arab students say they also feel unsafe. At Yale University, "death to Palestine" was found written on a campus whiteboard last month. On Friday, an Arab Muslim student at Stanford University was injured in a hit-and-run that's being investigated as a hate crime.

Abdulwahab Omira, the Stanford student, said the university waited six hours to issue a statement and played down the severity of the incident.

"The hours following the incident were agonizingly silent from the institution that I had trusted to be my safeguard," he wrote in a statement.

Weeks of turmoil have tested university leaders who strive to balance students' safety and speech rights. Many have issued broad statements condemning violence while allowing pro-Israel and pro-Palestine rallies that have sometimes roiled campuses.

The president of Brandeis University broke from the pack Monday, declaring in an op-ed that student groups "will lose their affiliations and privileges when they spew hate." Brandeis is a secular college founded by the American Jewish community in 1948.

In his op-ed, President Ronald D. Liebowitz denounced rhetoric used by pro-Palestine demonstrators, saying colleges "cannot stop hate speech, but they can stop paying for it." The school's chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine announced it had been de-recognized by Brandeis and forced to cancel an event.

The Education Department's letter is one of several actions from the Biden administration to help colleges. Federal law enforcement officials are working with campus police to assess threats, and the Education Department updated a federal complaint form to clarify that certain forms of antisemitism and Islamophobia are prohibited by federal law.

The Biden administration says it will take other steps as it unrolls its national strategy against antisemitism — an effort inspired by a 2017 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. It's also working on a new strategy to counter Islamophobia.

5 years after California's deadliest wildfire, survivors forge different paths toward recovery

By ADAM BEAM and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

PARADISE, Calif. (AP) — On the day Paradise burned, Gwen Nordgren stopped her car just long enough to rescue a young woman escaping by foot.

By that time on Nov. 8, 2018, the sky was black even though the sun had been up for hours. Both sides of the street were on fire as Nordgren grabbed the woman's hand.

"Have you lived a good life?" she asked. The woman said she had.

"So have I," said Nordgren, the president of the Paradise Lutheran Church council. "We're going to say the Our Father and we're going to drive like hell."

Nordgren has told that story countless times in the five years since the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California's history nearly erased a quiet community in the Sierra Nevada foothills. There are thousands more stories like it, each one providing a frame for one of the worst wildfires in U.S. history.

Five years later, some — like Nordgren — are sharing their stories freely and managing their post-traumatic stress enough to return to Paradise to help make something new. Others, like Shari Bernacette, are still haunted by their memories — including witnessing the flames consume a fleeing couple, one pushing the other in a wheelchair.

"We still can't sleep well. We toss and turn all night," said Bernacette, who moved with her husband to Yuma, Arizona, to escape the risk of future wildfires. The couple lives in a used RV purchased with their insurance money. "We are in the desert surrounded by cactus and rocks. There is nothing that can light up. We will never live amongst the trees again."

Graton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 64 of 79

For people who returned to Paradise, life is about adjusting. It's the same place, but doesn't feel the same. Paradise was once so thick with trees it was hard to tell the town was perched on a ridge. Now, the shadows are gone as sunlight bathes the town on clear days, offering impressive views of the canyons.

Today's population of just under 10,000 is less than half the 26,000 who lived there before the blaze.

The Camp Fire destroyed about 11,000 homes, which amounted to about 90% of the town's structures. So far 2,500 homes have been rebuilt. About 700 are under construction at any one time, many on original lots. But just six of the town's 36 mobile home parks that served mostly low-income and older residents have reopened.

Donna Hooton and her husband lived in one of the mobile home parks destroyed by the fire. The Hootons live off of Social Security and said they can't afford to move to Paradise. They now live an hour away, in a small, decades-old mobile home.

"We wish we could go home but home is not there anymore," Hooton said.

Paradise Mayor Greg Bolin says that by 2025 all of the town's overhead power lines will be buried underground. By 2026, he says all public roads will be repaved.

"I can see what it's going to look like. I know how nice it is going to be when it's done," said Bolin, who also owns Trilogy Construction Inc., one of the town's main construction companies.

For the most part, Bolin said it is "amazing, in five years, how well people are doing." But then a whiff of smoke will linger in the air, and it instantly brings residents back to that terrible day. It happened just last month, when Derrick Harlan — a 34-year-old Paradise resident whose business reduces fire hazards — got a permit to burn some debris piles in Paradise.

When neighbors saw smoke from the debris fire though, they called the police. The next day, the fire department showed up.

"That's where the trauma and the PTSD comes in," Harlan said.

Wildfires have always been a part of life in California, but they are getting more severe as climate change has caused hotter, drier summers. Seven of the state's top 10 most destructive fires happened in the past decade. Before the Camp Fire killed 85 people, the state's deadliest was a 1933 blaze that killed 29. More recently, a 2017 fire shocked the state as it ripped through suburban neighborhoods in California wine country, killing 22.

But the Camp Fire, the official name of the Paradise fire, marked a turning point.

Now, utility companies routinely shut off power for millions of people during wind storms in an effort to prevent fires from starting. Major property insurance companies have raised homeowners' rates to exponential highs or dropped coverage for many in wildfire-prone areas. Other providers have simply stopped writing new policies altogether. PG&E pleaded guilty to 84 counts of manslaughter, filed for bankruptcy and announced plans to bury 10,000 miles of power lines. The town has installed warning sirens and is working to create more evacuation routes.

But just when it seemed safe to think that what happened in Paradise was a once-in-a-lifetime fire, it happened again — this time thousands of miles away in Maui, Hawaii. It meant April Kelly, who grew up in Paradise and lived in Maui for 16 years, lost both of her hometowns.

"I can't believe I'm going through this a second time," she said.

Finding ways to cope with that grief has become a shared part of life in Paradise. The local theater saved Judy Clemens, giving her a space to channel her passion for live performance after the blaze. The Theatre on the Ridge opened to host its first show on Valentine's Day in 2019.

"If the theater had gone, too, I really would have been lost," Clemens said.

For Samuel Walker, making peace with the fire meant making peace with God. The pastor of the First Baptist Church of Paradise was wracked with guilt over the death of Bob Quinn, a church member who Walker likened to a second father. On the day of the fire, Walker drove by the street where Quinn lived and for a moment, thought about checking on him. Instead, he rescued his parents, who would not have been able to escape the fire on their own.

Walker learned of Quinn's death three days after the fire, while he was in Fresno with his family. Thieves had just broken into Walker's car and stolen the only things his wife and daughter had saved from their

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 65 of 79

house — including photos, an iPad and a knitting machine.

He was angry about his situation, everything that had happened and all of the people who had died or been hurt. For a pastor, being mad at God is a bigger problem than most.

"How am I going to minister to a congregation with all of these people with all of their issues, if I'm still trying to get through mine?" Walker asked.

He finally found peace after a trip to the hospital, of all places. Walker injured his arm after a fall while taking out the trash. In the hospital, he immediately thought of a Bible verse from the New Testament that says: "The Lord disciplines everyone he loves."

"It was almost kind of a healing point ... to say, 'OK Lord, I'm going to let this go. I'm going to stop being angry and get back to what you have me here to do,'" Walker said.

Businesses are returning to Paradise, with recent openings of a Big Lots and Ross Dress for Less sending ripples of excitement through town. Town leaders plan to begin installing a sewer system next summer for the business district, which would allow more restaurants to operate.

That will help Nicki Jones' restaurant, a deli and wine bar called Nic's. Jones first came to Paradise 25 years ago. She called it a "fluke," a place to retire with her husband. The town quickly became much more than that. She opened two businesses: a candle shop and a women's clothing store. Both burned in the fire, along with her home.

After the fire, there was no time for rest or reflection. She had a community to rebuild. With a background in accounting she knew what to do. She started by calling her insurance companies. Within 30 days of the fire, she was able to buy a building. Within a year, she opened a restaurant called Nic's, what she said is the first new business to open in Paradise after the fire.

"Everybody reacts to whatever tragedy there is — and we all have them — but my way has always been to jump in. How can I fix it?" she said. "I wanted a place where everybody could come and feel comfortable and feel normal."

The best time to go to Nic's is for "Wine room Wednesdays," when lots of locals stop by for a drink and a hug. That sometimes includes Adam Thompson, who is not from Paradise. After the pandemic, Thompson and his family were looking for a quiet community in the foothills to raise their family. In 2021, they moved to Magalia, just outside of Paradise.

If the town is to grow, it needs new people. But newcomers face a daunting question: How do you assimilate into a community defined by a shared tragedy?

Thompson said his family was quickly accepted. His kids are enrolled in a local school. They play Little League baseball and perform in the local theater.

"There's a humility and a resilience here that I don't think would be in a town like this had they not gone through the fire," he said. "I've never once felt excluded up here. I've never felt judged. I've only felt love and welcome from literally every single person I've met."

April Kelly, who hails from Paradise and Maui, is now the general manager at Nic's. She is on the board of directors for a parent support group called Mom's on the Ridge. Samuel Walker is still the pastor of Paradise Baptist Church, now living with his family in nearby Magalia.

Before the fire, Paradise was viewed as a retirement community with mostly older residents. But that's changing. The Paradise Little League has had so much interest it's warned parents that kids may be turned away next year.

The town's rebirth has amazed Don Criswell, a Paradise native who moved back to the area in 1998. Wildfires burned his property in 2008 and again in 2018. Both times he stayed to fight the fires himself.

The Paradise of his memory has been erased. Personal landmarks — the house he grew up in, his elementary school — are gone. Most of his childhood friends and neighbors have since moved away.

But he hasn't gone anywhere. Instead, he has planted trees and a garden. He donates vegetables to a free community lunch put on by his church. He even plays the piano for people who come to eat.

"I'm so sorry that it (the fire) happened. There's nothing I can do about that," he said. "I can try to make it a good, fun and beautiful place to live again. I think we're doing that."

A Meta engineer saw his own child face harassment on Instagram. Now, he's testifying before Congress

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

On the same day whistleblower Frances Haugen was testifying before Congress about the harms of Facebook and Instagram to children in the fall of 2021, a former engineering director at the social media giant who had rejoined the company as a consultant sent an alarming email to Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg about the same topic.

Arturo Béjar, known for his expertise on curbing online harassment, recounted to Zuckerberg his own daughter's troubling experiences with Instagram. But he said his concerns and warnings went unheeded. And on Tuesday, it was Béjar's turn to testify to Congress.

"I appear before you today as a dad with firsthand experience of a child who received unwanted sexual advances on Instagram," he told a panel of U.S. senators.

Béjar worked as an engineering director at Facebook from 2009 to 2015, attracting wide attention for his work to combat cyberbullying. He thought things were getting better. But between leaving the company and returning in 2019 as a contractor, Béjar's own daughter had started using Instagram.

"She and her friends began having awful experiences, including repeated unwanted sexual advances, harassment," he testified Tuesday. "She reported these incidents to the company and it did nothing."

In the 2021 note, as first reported by The Wall Street Journal, Béjar outlined a "critical gap" between how the company approached harm and how the people who use its products — most notably young people — experience it.

"Two weeks ago my daughter, 16, and an experimenting creator on Instagram, made a post about cars, and someone commented 'Get back to the kitchen.' It was deeply upsetting to her," he wrote. "At the same time the comment is far from being policy violating, and our tools of blocking or deleting mean that this person will go to other profiles and continue to spread misogyny. I don't think policy/reporting or having more content review are the solutions."

Béjar testified before a Senate subcommittee on Tuesday about social media and the teen mental health crisis, hoping to shed light on how Meta executives, including Zuckerberg, knew about the harms Instagram was causing but chose not to make meaningful changes to address them.

He believes that Meta needs to change how it polices its platforms, with a focus on addressing harassment, unwanted sexual advances and other bad experiences even if these problems don't clearly violate existing policies. For instance, sending vulgar sexual messages to children doesn't necessarily break Instagram's rules, but Béjar said teens should have a way to tell the platform they don't want to receive these types of messages.

"I can safely say that Meta's executives knew the harm that teenagers were experiencing, that there were things that they could do that are very doable and that they chose not to do them," Béjar told The Associated Press. This, he said, makes it clear that "we can't trust them with our children."

Opening the hearing Tuesday, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a Connecticut Democrat who chairs the Senate Judiciary's privacy and technology subcommittee, introduced Béjar as an engineer "widely respected and admired in the industry" who was hired specifically to help prevent harms against children but whose recommendations were ignored.

"What you have brought to this committee today is something every parent needs to hear," added Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, the panel's ranking Republican.

Béjar pointed to user surveys carefully crafted by the company that show, for instance, that 13% of Instagram users — ages 13-15 — reported having received unwanted sexual advances on the platform within the previous seven days.

Béjar said he doesn't believe the reforms he's suggesting would significantly affect revenue or profits for Meta and its peers. They are not intended to punish the companies, he said, but to help teenagers.

"You heard the company talk about it 'oh this is really complicated,'" Béjar told the AP. "No, it isn't. Just give the teen a chance to say 'this content is not for me' and then use that information to train all of the

other systems and get feedback that makes it better.”

The testimony comes amid a bipartisan push in Congress to adopt regulations aimed at protecting children online.

Meta, in a statement, said “Every day countless people inside and outside of Meta are working on how to help keep young people safe online. The issues raised here regarding user perception surveys highlight one part of this effort, and surveys like these have led us to create features like anonymous notifications of potentially hurtful content and comment warnings. Working with parents and experts, we have also introduced over 30 tools to support teens and their families in having safe, positive experiences online. All of this work continues.”

Regarding unwanted material users see that does not violate Instagram’s rules, Meta points to its 2021 “content distribution guidelines” that say “problematic or low quality” content automatically receives reduced distribution on users’ feeds. This includes clickbait, misinformation that’s been fact-checked and “borderline” posts, such as a “photo of a person posing in a sexually suggestive manner, speech that includes profanity, borderline hate speech, or gory images.”

In 2022, Meta also introduced “kindness reminders” that tell users to be respectful in their direct messages — but it only applies to users who are sending message requests to a creator, not a regular user.

Tuesday’s testimony comes just two weeks after dozens of U.S. states sued Meta for harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis. The lawsuits, filed in state and federal courts, claim that Meta knowingly and deliberately designs features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children to its platforms.

Béjar said it is “absolutely essential” that Congress passes bipartisan legislation “to help ensure that there is transparency about these harms and that teens can get help” with the support of the right experts.

“The most effective way to regulate social media companies is to require them to develop metrics that will allow both the company and outsiders to evaluate and track instances of harm, as experienced by users. This plays to the strengths of what these companies can do, because data for them is everything,” he wrote in his prepared testimony.

Cyprus official says Israel-Hamas war may give an impetus to regional energy projects

By MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — The political and economic ramifications from the Israel-Hamas war may provide an impetus to plans for a pipeline conveying offshore natural gas to Cyprus for processing and shipping to foreign markets, the east Mediterranean island nation’s energy minister said Tuesday.

The fighting in the Gaza Strip and Israel’s desire to boost its energy security also lend weight to a proposed 2,000-megawatt undersea electricity cable that would connect the power grids of Israel and Cyprus to the European mainland via Greece, Cypriot Energy Minister George Papanastasiou said.

Papanastasiou said Israel’s contacts with Turkey for possible energy cooperation - part and parcel of the Israeli government’s desire to keeping all available options open - may have fallen by the wayside given Turkey’s increasingly harsh criticism of Israeli actions in Gaza.

After Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told hundreds of thousands of participants at a pro-Palestinian rally last month that his country planned to formally accuse Israel of committing war crimes, the Israeli government said it was reassessing diplomatic relations with Ankara.

The deteriorating relationship may have narrowed Israel’s options for exporting its excess gas supply to the alternatives offered by neighboring Cyprus.

The war “has changed the situation somewhat, and that’s where Cyprus has to take advantage of this emerging window of opportunity,” Papanastasiou told the Associated Press in an interview.

The United Arab Emirates has shown “immediate” interest in investing in the 1.9 billion-euro (\$2.03 billion) cable dubbed the EurAsia Interconnector, Papanastasiou said. Jordan has also expressed an interest in “becoming part of the conversation,” he said.

The European Union agreed to finance the project to the tune of 657 million euros (\$702.57 million). Cyprus plans to draw another 100 million euros from the EU executive arm's resilience fund and hopes the European Investment Bank extends the country a loan for another 600 million euros. Other investors are expected to cover the remainder.

According to Papanastasiou, Israel wants to expedite projects that would enhance its electricity supply because some estimates indicate the country will experience a shortage in three to four years.

"There are security challenges, therefore Israel casts a very positive eye to its electricity connection with Cyprus and Greece, which essentially connects it with the European grid," the minister said.

Cyprus pitched Israel earlier this year on the idea of a pipeline to carry Israeli and Cypriot natural gas from offshore deposits to the island for processing and eventual export.

It would be a truncated version of a much longer pipeline intended to convey east Mediterranean gas directly to Greece. The U.S. wrote off the idea, but Papanastasiou said the European Union still considers the longer pipeline as an option.

Cyprus and U.S. energy company Chevron are still trying hammer out a deal reconciling differing approaches to developing the Aphrodite gas field, the first to be discovered off Cyprus and which is estimated to hold 4.2 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Chevron wants to send the gas to Egypt through a pipeline, but Cyprus wants to process it on a floating production facility because it would be more economically beneficial for the Cypriot government and would lend more flexibility to supplying other markets.

How Lebanon's Hezbollah group became a critical player in the Israel-Hamas war

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — When the Lebanese militia Hezbollah announced last week that its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, would deliver his first public speech since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, much of the region held its breath.

Would Iranian-backed Hezbollah, the Arab world's most powerful paramilitary force, continue its limited exchanges of fire with Israel or throw itself wholeheartedly into the war? In Lebanon, streets emptied as people sat glued to their screens to watch, ready to parse his words along with decision-makers in Israel and across the Mideast.

Hezbollah has traded fire with Israeli troops along the border since the day after Hamas' Oct. 7 surprise attack in southern Israel sparked war in the Gaza Strip. Both sides have suffered casualties, but the fear is that the conflict will escalate and spiral into a regional fight.

Nasrallah nodded to those concerns in his speech Friday. "Some say I'm going to announce that we have entered the battle," he said. "We already entered the battle on Oct. 8."

But he stopped short of saying Hezbollah would more fully join the fight.

Here's a look at why Hezbollah and its leader are key players in the trajectory of the Israel-Hamas war.

WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH?

Shiite Muslim Hezbollah is one of a collection of Iranian-backed groups and governments in the region known as the Axis of Resistance.

Founded in 1982 during Lebanon's civil war, Hezbollah's initial objective was ending Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, which it eventually achieved in 2000. It was the first group Iran invested in to export its brand of political Islamism.

In its early days, the group also carried out attacks on U.S. targets, causing Washington to designate it a terrorist organization.

"Iran's support has helped Hezbollah consolidate its position as Lebanon's most powerful political actor as well as the most equipped military actor supported by Iran in the whole of the Middle East," Lina Khatib, the director of the SOAS Middle East Institute in London, told The Associated Press.

After a Hezbollah fighters ambushed an Israeli patrol in 2006 and took two Israeli soldiers hostage,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 69 of 79

Hezbollah and Israel fought a monthlong war that ended in a draw — but not before Israeli bombardment wreaked widespread destruction in southern Lebanon.

At the time, Israel's objective was similar to its current war with Hamas: eliminate Hezbollah. Instead, the group came out stronger — not only an armed force but also a key political party in Lebanon.

However, domestic opponents criticized Hezbollah for maintaining its arsenal and dominating the government. Its reputation also suffered when it briefly seized a section of Beirut in May 2008 after the Lebanese government took measures against its private telecommunications network.

WHO IS HASSAN NASRALLAH?

Born in 1960 into a poor Shiite family in the Beirut suburb of Bourj Hammoud and later displaced to south Lebanon, Nasrallah studied theology and joined the Amal movement, a Shiite political and paramilitary organization, before becoming one of Hezbollah's founders.

He became Hezbollah's leader in 1992 after his predecessor was killed in an Israeli strike. Nasrallah now stands as one of the most powerful political figures in Lebanon.

Idolized by many for presiding over Israel's withdrawal from the south and leading the 2006 war, his image appears on billboards and on gadgets in souvenir shops in Lebanon, Syria and other countries across the Arab world. But he also faces opposition among Lebanese who accuse him of tying their country's fate to Iran.

Nasrallah is also considered to be pragmatic, able to make political compromises.

He has lived in hiding for years, fearing Israeli assassination, and delivers his speeches from undisclosed locations.

HOW DOES HEZBOLLAH COMPARE TO OTHER IRANIAN-BACKED GROUPS?

Hezbollah is the Arab world's most significant paramilitary force with a robust internal structure as well as a sizeable arsenal. Israel estimates it has an arsenal of 150,000 precision-guided missiles.

In recent years, Hezbollah sent forces to Syria to help fellow Iranian ally President Bashar Assad against armed opposition groups. It also supported the growth of Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, Yemen and Syria.

Khatib likened Hezbollah to a "big brother" of fledgling Iranian-backed groups that "do not enjoy the same level of infrastructure or discipline."

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEZBOLLAH AND HAMAS?

While Hezbollah is bound to Iran by doctrine, its relationship with Hamas is based on pragmatism.

The Palestinian militant group was founded in 1987 as an offshoot of the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood movement. Its political and financial backing from Iran and Syria did not pick up until 2006.

A schism erupted between Hamas and the Iranian-backed axis over the Syrian civil war, where Hamas for some time backed Syria's largely Sunni opposition fighters.

Despite differences over Syria, "over the past five years, relations improved at a fast pace," said Qassim Qassir, a Lebanese analyst close to Hezbollah.

Although many top Hamas officials lived in Qatar and Turkey, which backed the Syrian opposition, the group's return to the Iranian fold put them in a tricky situation.

Some Hamas officials, including its second-in-command, Saleh al-Arouri, have since moved to Lebanon, where they have Hezbollah's protection and a presence across Lebanon's multiple Palestinian refugee camps.

HOW FAR IS HEZBOLLAH WILLING TO GO TO PROTECT HAMAS?

For Hezbollah, fully entering the Israel-Hamas war would risk dragging Lebanon — beset by economic calamity and internal political tensions — into a conflict it can ill afford, fueling domestic opposition to the group.

But staying on the sidelines as Israeli troops take control of the Gaza Strip could compromise Hezbollah's credibility, and a Hamas defeat would be a blow to Iran.

Hezbollah's steady pressure on Israel's northern border shows support for Hamas and keeps open the threat of a wider intervention.

Qassir interpreted the message behind Nasrallah's speech as: "If you don't want the regional war to expand, then the war (in Gaza) has to stop."

But it's unclear how long Hezbollah can maintain this delicate balancing act, with Israel seemingly determined to crush Hamas and the Palestinian death toll in Gaza passing 10,000.

"If there is a full collapse in Gaza and things reach a point where they have to be fully involved, then they're ready," Qassir said.

What to know about Elijah McClain's death and the cases against police and paramedics

By MATTHEW BROWN and COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

BRIGHTON, Colo. (AP) — A jury has acquitted a Denver-area police officer of manslaughter, following trial testimony that he put Elijah McClain in a neck hold before the Black man was injected with the powerful sedative ketamine by paramedics and died.

The acquittal came Monday in the second of three trials against first responders indicted by a grand jury over the 23-year-old massage therapist's 2019 death. The charges were filed in 2021 following social justice protests nationwide in response to the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others.

The first trial ended in a split verdict last month with one Aurora officer found guilty and another acquitted. Jury selection in the final trial, against paramedics Jeremy Cooper and Lt. Peter Cichuniec with the Aurora fire department, is scheduled to begin Nov. 27. They have pleaded not guilty.

Here's what you need to know about the criminal trials:

WHY WERE THE OFFICERS AND PARAMEDICS CHARGED?

Local prosecutors initially decided not to bring charges in McClain's death largely because an initial autopsy didn't determine exactly how he died.

Following the protests over Floyd's death Democratic Gov. Jared Polis directed the state attorney general to re-investigate the McClain case. A grand jury indicted the three officers and two paramedics in 2021. Dr. Stephen Cina, a forensic pathologist who performed McClain's autopsy, said he changed his findings to pin the blame on the sedative ketamine in 2021 after looking at body camera footage.

WHY DID POLICE STOP McCLAIN

?

Officer Nathan Woodyard, who was acquitted Monday, was the first of three officers who approached McClain. A 17-year-old 911 caller had said McClain, who was wearing earbuds and listening to music, seemed "sketchy" and was waving his arms as he walked home on the night of Aug. 24, 2019. McClain was often cold and wore a runner's mask and jacket despite the warm weather.

The encounter quickly escalated as McClain, seemingly caught off guard, tried to keep walking. When officer Randy Roedema said that McClain had reached for one of their guns, Woodyard put him in a neck hold, pressing against his carotid artery, which rendered him temporarily unconscious.

Assistant Attorney General Ann Joyce said McClain didn't try to get a gun, but defense attorney Megan Downing said Woodyard had to react quickly to what he heard.

A paramedic later injected McClain with an overdose of ketamine. He was pronounced dead three days later.

WHY WERE THE TWO OFFICERS ACQUITTED?

Woodyard was charged with manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide.

Prosecutors contended his actions including the neck hold contributed to McClain's death. But defense attorneys convinced the 12-person jury that the officer wasn't responsible, arguing Woodyard wasn't present during later crucial moments.

Woodyard testified that he put McClain in the neck hold because he feared for his life after he heard McClain say, "I intend to take my power back" and another officer say, "He just grabbed your gun, dude."

Rosenblatt — who faced charges of manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide and assault — also was acquitted. His attorney pointed out at trial that Rosenblatt was not near McClain when Roedema and another officer held down McClain while paramedics administered the ketamine.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 71 of 79

Roedema was the most senior of the three officers. He was convicted in October of negligent homicide and third-degree assault, and was then fired from Aurora's police department. He faces a sentence of anywhere from probation to prison time.

McClain's mother, Sheneen McClain, left the courthouse Monday with a fist raised in the air. She declined to talk to reporters but later told KUSA-TV that she was disappointed but not surprised at Woodyard's acquittal.

"I don't have faith in this system at all. Because it lets us down – not just people of color, it lets down everybody. They don't do the right thing," she said.

Even though everyone agrees McClain should not have died, holding police officers accountable for what happened through the legal system is difficult both because the law treats police differently than the average person and because most people picked to sit on juries have a generally favorable view of police, said David Harris, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh's law school.

Police are legally allowed to use force against others as long as they can explain why it was reasonable, he said. If you have an officer who said they feared for their life, as Woodyard said, and it's not contradicted by other evidence, jurors could find that the force was justified, he said.

"It's that moment, those seconds that will loom the largest and you'll have an acquittal," he said.

WHAT DO THE FIRST TWO TRIALS MEAN FOR THE PARAMEDICS?

The actions of Cooper and Cichuniec were a constant theme in the first two trials. They're charged with manslaughter, negligent homicide and several counts each of assault — all felonies.

Defense attorneys for the officers repeatedly said it was the ketamine injection — not their clients — that caused McClain's death. In Woodyard's case, the defense brought in a paid expert witness who has also worked for the prosecution in the paramedic's case. Dr. Nadia Iovetz-Tereshchenko, an emergency room doctor who has worked as a paramedic, said Cooper and Cichuniec did not follow their training protocols in caring for McClain.

Prosecution experts also said the ketamine was the ultimate cause of death after the officer's violent stop of McClain set in motion events that led to and contributed to his killing.

A use of force expert who has been tracking the McClain case said it was unusual for medical professionals to be brought to trial for the death of a person in police custody.

"When paramedics show up at a scene they have to make fast decisions, obviously, and they base their decisions based on what the officer are telling them, and then apply what they believe is the proper course of treatment," said Ed Obayashi, an attorney and use of force training adviser who spent more than two decades in law enforcement.

DeSantis argues Iowa governor's support may help him stop Trump and he labels his rivals as spoilers

By STEVE PEOPLES and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

DAVENPORT, Iowa (AP) — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' senior advisers are outlining a difficult path to the Republican presidential nomination that can succeed only by first denying former President Donald Trump "a big win" in Iowa, where the DeSantis campaign is promising to leverage the "vast statewide political operation" of his newest major endorser, Gov. Kim Reynolds.

The memo, distributed late Monday to the campaign's national donor network and to another group of uncommitted billionaires known as the American Opportunity Alliance, argues that other Republican candidates, including former United Nations ambassador Nikki Haley, are at best spoilers.

Instead of cementing his place as Trump's chief rival as many expected when he entered the race, DeSantis is locked in a distant second place in Iowa with Haley, who is gaining more interest from donors and voters heading into Wednesday's third GOP debate. The memo, shared with The Associated Press, pointed to Reynolds' surprise endorsement — a rarity for sitting Iowa governors before the caucuses — as proof that DeSantis could cut into Trump's margins.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 72 of 79

"Everyone can universally agree that if Trump were to win big in Iowa it would create media and political momentum for his candidacy that would be difficult to stop heading into New Hampshire," reads the memo, penned by campaign manager James Uthmeier, deputy manager David Polyansky and senior adviser Ryan Tyson.

"Additionally, a Trump loss or even a close battle in the Hawkeye State will reveal his political vulnerabilities and inspire Republican voters across the country who are either in the 'not for Trump' or 'consider Trump and others' camps," the advisers wrote.

The memo argues that Haley and others "are, at best, simply playing the role of spoiler — exponentially increasing the odds of a Trump nomination."

Haley's advisers and other campaigns reject that DeSantis is the leading Trump alternative. And so far it's unclear how much Reynolds' endorsement will ultimately help him with fewer than 70 days left before the Jan. 15 caucuses.

DeSantis and Reynolds were greeted Monday night by a cheering crowd of 700, a crowd larger than typical for him, inside a rustic-themed event center in downtown Des Moines. A country band warmed up the crowd before Reynolds took the stage.

"We can turn this country around. But if we don't get this next election right we are not going to get this country back," Reynolds told the audience before welcoming DeSantis to the stage with a hug. "We need someone who will put this country first and not himself. That leader is Ron DeSantis."

But one potential caucusgoer who previously attended a Trump event suggested — as the former president has — that Reynolds was being disloyal.

"The reason Kim Reynolds got elected is because Trump endorsed her," said Ira Roffel, a business consultant from Fairfield, Iowa, who likes Trump but hasn't committed to a candidate. "I'm not going to call her a rat or anything. But she could have shown some loyalty by remaining neutral. I think she's making a mistake."

DeSantis may be banking most on the 64-year-old Reynolds' popularity within the state's conservative base and her abilities of political persuasion. Reynolds also presents an upbeat public persona that could complement the sometimes rigid DeSantis.

"She very quickly has learned how to deploy political power and how to play in the big game — and how to win," said John Stineman, a Republican strategist who has managed Iowa caucus campaigns. "But the bigger potential differentiator is she's willing to go persuade. And she will convey with enthusiasm to people she knows are prone to listening to her."

Julie Troyer said Reynolds' support prompted her to come see the Iowa governor introduce DeSantis to more than 200 people who filled the back room of the farm-themed Machine Shed restaurant Tuesday morning in Davenport. "It sure puts him in a more positive light for me," the print shop owner said.

Troyer, from Iowa City, waited for a handshake as Reynolds moved through the room chatting with the crowd before she and DeSantis spoke. Afterwards, she said, "I'm closer to supporting him now than when I got here, but I need to hear more."

A Des Moines Register poll published last week showed Haley tied with DeSantis for second in Iowa, which holds the first-in-the-nation GOP caucuses on Jan. 15. Both candidates are at 16%. That's 27 percentage points behind Trump, whose support was virtually unchanged since August in spite of several criminal indictments and fears that he might lose again to President Joe Biden.

The poll showed Trump supporters are much more likely to say their minds are made up than supporters of other candidates.

In her own memo, Haley campaign manager Betsy Ankney on Monday described the Iowa contest as a "dead heat" between DeSantis and Haley, while ignoring Trump's massive lead.

"The Iowa Caucuses are in just over two months. The New Hampshire primary is just 8 days after that. And Nikki Haley is the only candidate who is positioned to do well in both," Ankney wrote. "EVEN IF DeSantis were to do well in Iowa, which is a big 'if' given his current decline, he is in such a weak position in New Hampshire and South Carolina that it doesn't matter. He has no end game."

The new DeSantis memo points to the political infrastructure that he and an allied super PAC have established across several early voting states. While his footprint is far smaller than initially envisioned because of fundraising troubles, the memo notes that DeSantis' team still has four offices and 13 paid staff in New Hampshire and another five offices and 23 staffers in South Carolina.

In Iowa, the memo claims "there will soon be 50 dedicated paid staff" and the organizing help of Reynolds, who has her own statewide operation.

Helen Herbold is among those Trump supporters open to other candidates. But learning of Reynolds' support for DeSantis Sunday did nothing to move her toward him, she said Monday. Instead, it troubled her given Reynolds' past statement that she would stay neutral.

"I'm disappointed she chose to take a position after she said she wouldn't," said Herbold, a retired insurance underwriter. "It doesn't change who I'll support. But I'm confused why she did it after saying she wouldn't."

The Air Force asks Congress to protect its nuclear launch sites from encroaching wind turbines

By TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

The Air Force's vast fields of underground nuclear missile silos are rarely disturbed by more than the occasional wandering cow or floating spy balloon. But the service is now asking Congress to help with another unexpected danger: towering wind turbines, which are growing in number and size and are edging closer to the sites each year.

The silos share space on vast private farmlands with the turbines. Whereas the nuclear launch sites are almost undetectable — just small, rectangular plots of land marked only by antennae, a chain-link fence and a flat 110,000-ton (100,000-metric tonne) concrete silo blast door — the turbines are hundreds of feet high, with long, sweeping blades that have parts so large and long they dwarf the 18-wheeler flatbed trucks that transport them to new sites.

As nearby populations have grown, so have energy needs, and so have the number and size of the turbines. It's a boon for farmers and landowners, who can lease space on their lands to support both the military needs and wind power companies.

But the growth is making it dangerous for military helicopter crews. When an alarm triggers at a site, the UH-1 Huey crews fly in low and fast, often with security teams on board.

"When you think about a wind turbine, and even fields of wind turbines, they'll stretch for miles," said Staff Sgt. Chase Rose, a UH-1 Huey flight engineer at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana. "They're monstrous, and then you have gigantic blades spinning on them as well. Not only is that a physical obstacle, but those turbines, they create the hazards like turbulence as well. That can be really dangerous for us to fly into. So it's a very complex situation, when you have to deal with those."

So the Air Force is asking Congress to pass legislation to create a 2-nautical-mile buffer zone around each site. The legislation has the support of wind energy advocates, but they caution against a one-size-fits-all approach. There are hundreds of underground silos spread across the U.S., in Nebraska, Colorado, North Dakota, Montana and Wyoming.

"The wind industry recognizes the nuclear missile silo mission is unique," said Jason Ryan, a spokesman for the American Clean Power Association, which worked with the Air Force and lawmakers on drafting language for a buffer zone. "However, one-size-fits-all setbacks do not make sense for other (Department of Defense) missions or assets as site-specific and mission-specific evaluations are necessary to ensure military readiness."

Jo Dee Black, a spokeswoman for NorthWestern Energy, which operates some of the towers near Malmstrom's launch sites, did not say whether the firm is in support of the buffer zone but said "we have always and continue to support the critical role Malmstrom Air Force Base has in our nation's security."

"NorthWestern Energy and the U.S. Air Force have a long, successful history of collaboration that supports our missions of national security and providing safe, reliable energy service," Black said.

Language to create a setback was included in the Senate version of the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act. The language is not in the House version of the bill and would need to be negotiated in conference.

Under the legislation, current towers would be unaffected, unless a company decided to refurbish an existing tower to make it taller.

That could still be a problem for the air crews. Some of the modern turbines have towers as tall as 650 feet, or nearly 200 meters, "which is twice the height of the Statue of Liberty," Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael Lutton, who oversees all 450 missile silo sites, said earlier this year. Some rotor diameters, the width of the circle swept by the rotating blades, can be as much as 367 feet (112 meters), the distance from home plate to the left field pole at the Colorado Rockies' baseball stadium.

Of the 450 sites, 46 are "severely" encroached upon, which the Air Force defines as having more than half of the routes to the launch site closed due to obstructions.

But the service acknowledges the difficult position it is in. The farmers who have allowed it to use their lands for decades benefit from the income from the turbine leases, and the service does not want to appear to push back on environmental energy alternatives.

The Air Force continues to "support renewable energy efforts to include wind turbines, and we continue to work with energy industry partners to ensure the country's green energy needs are met," said Air Force Maj. Victoria Hight, a spokeswoman for F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming. However, she said, "the encroaching turbines limit safe helicopter transit and nuclear security operations."

Drugs aren't required to be tested in people who are obese. Here's why that's a problem

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

More than 40% of American adults are considered obese, yet the medications many take are rarely tested in bigger bodies.

That's because they are not required to be included in drug studies. And often, they're explicitly excluded.

"Clinical trials and dosing instructions don't always ensure that drugs will be safe and effective for people with obesity," said Christina Chow, a drug researcher who's reported on the challenges of considering obesity in drug development. "There's no real emphasis for them to be studied at all."

Many widely prescribed drugs and over-the-counter medications work differently in people who are obese, but exactly how and at what dose often isn't clear. Research suggests that may include antibiotics and antifungal drugs used to treat serious infections, synthetic hormones used in Plan B emergency contraception and even ibuprofen, the common painkiller sold as Advil.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health — agencies that regulate and fund drug testing — are putting new focus on the gaps in research. At a workshop last year, FDA Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf acknowledged a "deficit of evidence" about how medicines act in patients who are obese. The NIH now encourages researchers to consider the impact of excluding obese people in their studies, a spokesperson said.

At a recent medical conference, Chow presented a review of more than 200 studies for new drugs in the U.S. last year. Of those, nearly two-thirds failed to mention weight or body mass index — a common assessment of obesity — meaning they wouldn't ensure inclusion of people with obesity, she said.

The studies that did cite weight were most often used to exclude people with obesity from participating, said Chow, who works for Emerald Lake Safety, a California company that investigates severe drug reactions. People with a body mass index or BMI of 30 or higher are considered obese.

Historically, certain populations have been left out of testing for fear of harm, including pregnant people and children. Women, racial and ethnic minorities and the elderly, too, have been underrepresented before recent efforts to bolster diversity.

The reasons for excluding people with obesity are longstanding and varied, said Dr. Caroline Apovian, a researcher at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and co-author of Chow's study.

Participants willing to sign up for studies are often leaner and don't reflect the general population, she noted. And researchers often worry that health complications that can come with obesity will cloud the results of their work.

"Sometimes patients with obesity have many more comorbidities than others. They'll have more diabetes, more heart disease, more strokes," she said.

But if drugs aren't studied in a condition that affects 42% of the U.S. population, the real-world consequences can be dire, experts said.

Some drugs can become concentrated in fat tissues and not in the bloodstream. That means there will be less medication in the blood, leading to undertreatment, Apovian said.

Other drugs remain in the body longer in the obese. That could result in harmful drug interactions if another medication is added too soon.

An antipsychotic drug called Rexulti is often prescribed for people suffering from schizophrenia or major depressive disorder, Chow noted. Research has shown that in obese patients it may take much longer to reach the concentration of Rexulti needed to be effective. As a result, many patients — and their doctors — may stop treatment too early or conclude that the drug doesn't work.

"Not treating or undertreating schizophrenia may be dangerous to themselves and the people around them," Chow said.

The emergency contraception drug Plan B One-Step is another example. Studies suggest that levonorgestrel, the active drug, may not work as well in people with obesity, possibly leading to drug failure and pregnancy, said Dr. Alison Edelman, an OB-GYN and researcher at Oregon Health & Science University, who studies contraception and obesity. But the FDA says the data are limited and conflicting, so there's not enough evidence to require a label warning.

Even a drug as common as ibuprofen, sold as Advil, may not relieve pain in people at higher weights when taken as directed, research shows.

But without adequate testing and clear instructions, doctors won't know how to adjust dosing for obesity, said Dr. Colleen Tenan, a board member of the Association of Clinical Research Professionals.

"It's very hard to be a physician and say that I'm going to prescribe out of the normal range," she said.

Change is coming, but progress is slow, Edelman said. In 2019, the FDA issued draft guidance on hormonal contraception that asks study sponsors to lift restrictions on body mass index and include obese women. Even though the guidance isn't final, it already has changed how she and some other researchers structure their studies, she said.

"It's just something that we have to chip away at because it's so important," she said. "Because unless we see representation in our study population, we don't end up with treatments that work well for individuals."

In the meantime, Apovian said patients can ask their doctors about whether the standard dose of a medication is appropriate for their weight. The doctors may not know, but it could start an important conversation about effective treatment.

"This is a big issue," she said. "It can be important for patients to speak up."

Civilians fleeing northern Gaza's combat zone report a terrifying journey on foot past Israeli tanks

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BUREIJ REFUGEE CAMP, Gaza Strip (AP) — What was once Gaza's busiest thoroughfare has become a terrifying escape route for Palestinian civilians fleeing combat on foot or on donkey carts. On their way south, those running for their lives said they raised their hands and waved white flags to move past Israeli tanks along the four-lane highway.

Some reported Israeli soldiers firing at them and said they passed bodies strewn alongside the road.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 76 of 79

Many escaped with just the clothes on their back. One woman, covered head-to-toe in a black veil and robe, cradled a toddler and clutched a black purse. A man walked alongside a covered donkey cart that transported his family. It was piled high with mattresses.

In the north of the Gaza Strip, Israeli ground forces backed by relentless airstrikes have encircled Gaza City, the base of Hamas' power, since the weekend. They cut the strip in half and sought to drive Palestinians from northern Gaza as troops advanced.

From early on in the war, now in its second month, the army has urged civilians to move south, including by announcing brief windows for what it said would be safe passage through Salah al-Din, which runs through the center of the besieged enclave.

But tens of thousands of civilians have remained in the north, many sheltering in hospitals or United Nations facilities.

Those who have stayed put say they are deterred by overcrowding in the south, along with dwindling water and food supplies, and continued Israeli airstrikes in what are supposed to be safe areas. Some said fear of the treacherous journey, following reports from other travelers about coming under fire, initially made them hesitate.

On Monday, Health Ministry in Gaza spokesperson Ashraf al-Qidra dismissed the Israeli offers of safe passage as "nothing but death corridors." He said bodies have lined the road for days, and called for the International Committee of the Red Cross to accompany local ambulances to retrieve the dead.

Israel's military said that, at one point, troops came under Hamas fire when trying to open the road temporarily for civilians. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu echoed the army's claims in an interview with ABC News broadcast late Monday.

"We are fighting an enemy that is particularly brutal. They are using their civilians as human shields, and while we are asking the Palestinian civilian population to leave the war zone, they are preventing them at gunpoint," Netanyahu said.

The claims could not be verified independently.

During a four-hour evacuation window Sunday, fewer than 2,000 made the move, followed by about 5,000 on Monday, according to U.N. monitors.

Some of those were from Gaza City and the adjacent Shati refugee camp, fleeing Monday after heavy Israeli bombardment there overnight.

"Last night was very difficult," said Amal, a young woman who declined to give her family name due to safety concerns. She was part of a group of 17 people making the journey Monday. She said tanks fired near the group. Soldiers then ordered everyone to raise their hands and white flags before being allowed to pass.

Nour Naji Abu Nasser, 27, arrived Sunday in Khan Younis in southern Gaza. She described an hourslong frightening journey.

"They fired at the sand around us. They wanted to scare us," she said, adding that she saw bodies lying along the road outside Gaza City.

Once those fleeing the north had reached the evacuation zone, residents from the Bureij refugee camp along the highway offered water — a scarce resource in wartime Gaza — to the evacuees.

The four-week war has displaced more than 1.5 million people across Gaza, according to U.N. figures.

The Israeli military said thousands heeded its orders to move south.

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees says more than 530,000 people are sheltering in its facilities in southern Gaza, and it's now unable to accommodate new arrivals. Many displaced people sought safety by sleeping in the streets near U.N. shelters, the agency said.

Blinken seeks G7 unity on Israel-Hamas war among items on crisis-heavy global agenda

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Fresh from a whirlwind tour of the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken shifted his intense diplomacy on the Israel-Hamas war to Asia on Tuesday with an appeal for the Group of Seven leading industrial democracies to forge consensus on how to deal with the crisis.

As he and his G7 counterparts began two days of talks in Japan, Blinken said it was critically important for the group to show unity as it has over Russia's war in Ukraine and other major issues and prevent existing differences on Gaza from deepening.

"This is a very important moment as well for the G7 to come together in the face of this crisis and to speak, as we do, with one clear voice," Blinken told Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, shortly after talks with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

The devastating monthlong conflict in Gaza and efforts to ease the dire humanitarian impacts of Israel's response to the deadly Oct. 7 Hamas attack will be a major focus of the meeting. Yet with the Russia-Ukraine war, fears North Korea may be readying a new nuclear test, and concerns about China's increasing global assertiveness, it is far from the only crisis on the agenda.

In Tokyo, Blinken and foreign ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and Italy will be seeking common ground in part to prevent the Gaza war from further destabilizing already shaky security in the broader Middle East and seeking to maintain existing positions on other matters.

An early consensus on Gaza appeared to be building as at least four of the G7 members made statements in favor of strong common stance. And U.S. officials said they were expecting the group to release a communique featuring a common position after the meetings end on Wednesday.

Kishida said "the unity of G7 is needed more than ever with the situation in Israel and Palestine, the situation in Ukraine, and the challenges in the Indo-Pacific region," his office said in a statement, adding that the prime minister "highly appreciates the leadership and diplomatic efforts by the Biden administration concerning this issue."

"You have our utmost support," Kamikawa told Blinken.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that "as G7 countries, we are making clear that Israel has the right and the duty to protect its population and its people in the framework of international law." She said that she has been discussing with many partners "how we can finally get humanitarian cease-fires off the ground, in terms of time and also geographically."

Britain's Foreign Secretary James Cleverly told a select group of journalists, including The Associated Press, that his government only supports a time and geographically specific "humanitarian pause" and not a wider cease-fire.

"Firstly, we have seen and heard absolutely nothing that makes us believe that Hamas leadership is serious about (a) cease-fire," he said, adding that a cease-fire would hamper Israel's ability to defend itself.

Blinken's efforts include pushing to significantly expand the amount of humanitarian aid being sent to Gaza, getting Israel to agree to "pauses" in its military operation to allow that assistance to get in and more civilians to get out, beginning planning for a post-conflict governance and security structure in the territory and preventing the war from spreading.

Blinken described all of these as "a work in progress" and acknowledged deep divisions over the pause concept. Israel remains unconvinced and Arab and Muslim nations are demanding an immediate full cease-fire, something the United States opposes. There has also been resistance to discussing Gaza's future, with the Arab states insisting that the immediate humanitarian crisis must be addressed first.

Securing agreement from G7 members, none of which border or are directly involved in the conflict, may be a slightly less daunting challenge for Blinken.

Yet some small cracks have emerged over Gaza, which has inflamed international public opinion. Democracies are not immune from intense passions that have manifested themselves in massive pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel demonstrations in G7 capitals and elsewhere.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 78 of 79

Last month in the U.N. Security Council, France voted in favor of a resolution calling for a humanitarian truce in Gaza that was vetoed by the United States because it didn't go far enough in condemning Hamas' attack on Israel, which ignited the war. Britain abstained in that vote.

Several days later in the U.N. General Assembly, a non-binding U.S.-Canadian resolution that would have condemned Hamas failed, while a separate resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire overwhelmingly passed. The U.S. voted against the second resolution while France voted in favor. Britain, Canada, Germany, Italy and Japan all abstained.

Since before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the G7 has held together in defense of the international order that emerged from the destruction of World War II. Despite some fraying around the edges, the group has preserved a unified front in condemning and opposing Russia's war.

The group similarly has been of one voice in demanding that North Korea halt its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, that China exercise its growing international clout responsibly, and also in calling for cooperative actions to combat pandemics, synthetic opioids, and threats from the misuse of artificial intelligence.

Blinken arrived in Tokyo from Turkey, the last stop on his four-day whirlwind through the Mideast that began with visits to Israel, Jordan, the West Bank, Cyprus and Iraq. From Japan, he will travel to South Korea and then on to India.

Today in History: November 8, Hitler's "Beer-Hall Putsch" fails

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Nov. 8, the 312th day of 2023. There are 53 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 8, 1923, Adolf Hitler launched his first attempt at seizing power in Germany with a failed coup in Munich that came to be known as the "Beer-Hall Putsch."

On this date:

In 1793, the Louvre began admitting the public, even though the French museum had been officially open since August.

In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln won reelection as he defeated Democratic challenger George B. McClellan.

In 1889, Montana became the 41st state.

In 1935, the movies "Mutiny on the Bounty," starring Clark Gable and Charles Laughton, and "A Night at the Opera," starring the Marx Brothers, premiered in New York.

In 1942, Operation Torch, resulting in an Allied victory, began during World War II as U.S. and British forces landed in French North Africa.

In 1950, during the Korean War, the first jet-plane battle took place as U.S. Air Force Lt. Russell J. Brown shot down a North Korean MiG-15.

In 1966, Republican Ronald Reagan was elected governor of California, defeating Democratic incumbent Pat Brown.

In 1974, a federal judge in Cleveland dismissed charges against eight Ohio National Guardsmen accused of violating the civil rights of students who were killed or wounded in the 1970 Kent State shootings.

In 2000, a statewide recount began in Florida, which emerged as critical in deciding the winner of the 2000 presidential election. Earlier that day, Vice President Al Gore had telephoned Texas Gov. George W. Bush to concede, but called back about an hour later to retract his concession.

In 2002, the U.N. Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1441, aimed at forcing Saddam Hussein to disarm or face "serious consequences." President George W. Bush said the new resolution presented the Iraqi regime "with a final test."

In 2011, an asteroid as big as an aircraft carrier zipped by Earth in the closest encounter by such a massive space rock in more than three decades.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 137 ~ 79 of 79

In 2012, Jared Lee Loughner was sentenced to life in prison without parole for the January 2011 shootings in Tucson, Arizona, that killed six people and wounded 13 others, including Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most powerful storms ever recorded, slammed into the central Philippines, leaving more than 7,300 people dead or missing, flattening villages and displacing more than 5 million.

In 2016, Republican Donald Trump was elected America's 45th president, defeating Democrat Hillary Clinton in an astonishing victory for a celebrity businessman and political novice.

In 2017, director Ridley Scott decided to cut Kevin Spacey out of the already-completed movie "All the Money in the World" because of the sexual misconduct allegations against Spacey and reshoot his many scenes using Christopher Plummer, just six weeks ahead of the film's release date.

In 2018, tens of thousands of people fled a fast-moving wildfire in Northern California that would become the state's deadliest ever, killing 86 people and nearly destroying the community of Paradise.

In 2022, in the midterm elections, Republicans gained a narrow majority in the House, while Democrats managed to maintain control of the Senate.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Alain Delon is 88. Singer-actor Bonnie Bramlett is 79. Singer Bonnie Raitt is 74. TV personality Mary Hart is 73. Former Playboy Enterprises chairman and chief executive Christie Hefner is 71. Actor Alfre Woodard is 71. Singer-songwriter Rickie Lee Jones is 69. Nobel Prize-winning author Kazuo Ishiguro is 69. Rock musician Pearl Thompson (The Cure) is 66. Singer-actor Leif Garrett is 62. Chef and TV personality Gordon Ramsay is 57. Actor Courtney Thorne-Smith is 56. Actor Parker Posey is 55. Actor Roxana Zal is 54. Singer Diana King is 53. Actor Gonzalo Menendez is 52. Rock musician Scott Devendorf (The National) is 51. Actor Gretchen Mol is 51. ABC News anchor David Muir is 50. Actor Matthew Rhys is 49. Actor Tara Reid is 48. Country singer Bucky Covington is 46. Actor Dania Ramirez is 44. Actor Azura Skye is 42. Actor Chris Rankin is 40. TV personality Jack Osbourne is 38. Actor Jessica Lowndes is 35. R&B singer SZA is 34. New York Yankees outfielder and designated hitter Giancarlo Stanton is 34. Singer-actor Riker Lynch is 32. Country singer Lauren Alaina is 29. Actor Van Crosby (TV: "Splitting Up Together") is 21.