

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 1 of 61

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [3- NEC Boys' Basketball](#)
- [4- NEC Girls' Basketball](#)
- [5- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [6- Prairie Doc: "These Boots Are Made For Walking"](#)
- [7- SD SearchLight: Legislative Roundup: 'Diet weed,' lithium taxation, quantum computers, Medicaid work requirements](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: Details of proposed major overhaul of U.S. immigration law, global aid package unveiled](#)
- [12- EarthTalk - Philanthro-activism](#)
- [13- Weather Pages](#)
- [18- Daily Devotional](#)
- [19- Subscription Form](#)
- [20- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [21- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Monday, Feb. 5

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick.  
School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, fries.  
Senior Menu: Cranberry meatballs, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit, whole wheat bread.  
Pantry Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

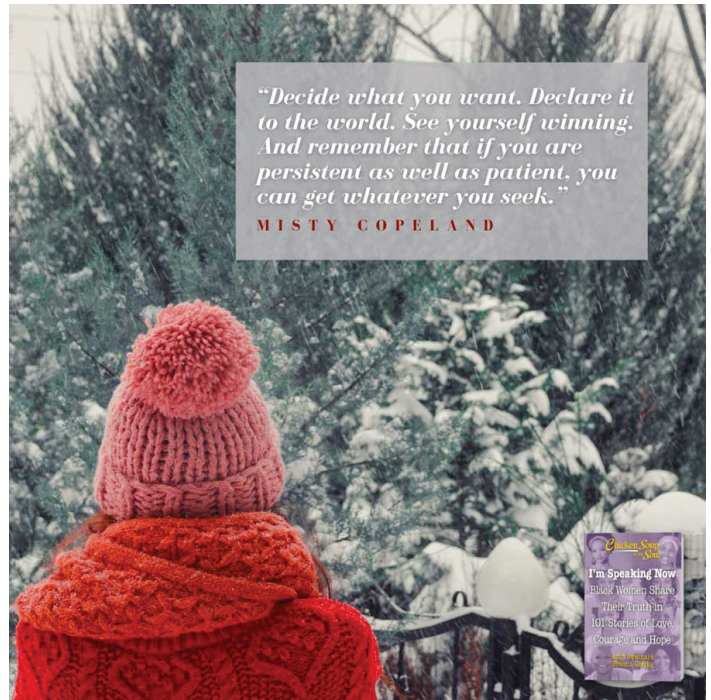
## Tuesday, February 6

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin potatoes, 3 bean salad, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Scones.  
School Lunch: Scalloped potatoes and ham.  
NAEP Testing at Groton Area  
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.  
Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

## Wednesday, Feb. 7

Senior Menu: Breaded pork cutlets, creamy noodles, broccoli and cauliflower blend frosted brownie, fruit, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Biscuits.

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



School Lunch: Taco burgers, tater tots.  
Groton Chamber Meeting, Noon at City Hall  
Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 6 p.m.

## Thursday, Feb. 8

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken breast, sweet potatoes, vegetable capri blend, acini depepi fruit salad, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.  
School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans.  
Boys Basketball hosts Redfield: (JH game in Gym at 4 p.m.) C game at 6 p.m., Varsity game at 7:15 p.m. (No JV Game)  
Groton Lions Club Meeting, 6 p.m. at 104 N Main

**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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# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 2 of 61

# 1440

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Roughly 37 million Californians were under flood watches or warnings across the state yesterday as an intense storm system began pushing inland while moving southward from the greater San Francisco region. As of this writing, wind gusts reaching up to 85 mph had knocked out power to at least 860,000 customers up and down the coast, while more than one hundred flights out of San Francisco were canceled.

The 66th annual Grammys were held last night, with Taylor Swift taking home the show's top prize of album of the year for "Midnights."

The win was Swift's fourth in the category, pushing her past Frank Sinatra, Paul Simon, and Stevie Wonder for the most in Grammy history. She announced her next album, "Tortured Poets Society," during her acceptance speech (out April 19).

Michelle O'Neill became Northern Ireland's first minister Saturday, the first Irish nationalist to hold the position in the nearly 26-year history of the institution. Due to an extended government boycott from the opposition, she assumes power two years after her Sinn Fein party won elections and the right to name the first minister.

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Spotify signs Joe Rogan to new multiyear deal worth a reported \$250M; partnership will include YouTube distribution rights.

Toronto Maple Leafs' Auston Matthews wins NHL All-Star Game MVP after leading Team Matthews to 7-4 victory over Team McDavid. NFC tops AFC for second straight NFL Pro Bowl Games victory.

Former WWE CEO Vince McMahon under federal criminal investigation amid sexual assault and trafficking allegations brought by a former employee.

## Science & Technology

Fully autonomous vehicles logged an estimated 3.3 million miles in California in 2023; GM's Cruise (63%) and Google's Waymo (36%) accounted for the vast majority of driverless trips.

Biodegradable sensors allow monitoring of pesticide levels in individual fruits and vegetables; expected to enhance food safety along complex supply chains.

Paleontologists uncover 350-million-year-old plant fossil; discovery sheds light on how shrubs and trees evolved prior to the arrival of dinosaurs and reptiles.

## Business & Markets

Markets close up on strong tech earnings reports (S&P 500 +1.1%, Dow +0.4%, Nasdaq +1.7%); S&P 500 caps fourth straight week of gains, hits new record high.

Meta stock jumps more than 20% Friday following 25% quarter-over-quarter revenue gains, announcement of company's first-ever dividend scheduled for March 26. \$197B market capitalization surge was the biggest single-day increase in market history.

Canadian government extends ban on foreign nationals and companies purchasing residential property through 2026; foreign ownership accounts for between 2% and 6% of market.

## Politics & World Affairs

US and UK forces carry out weekend strikes against Houthi militia camps across Yemen; follows Friday airstrikes against separate Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria. See updates on the Israel-Hamas war.

Senate negotiators unveil border security bill, packaged with funding for Ukraine and Israel; \$118B bill sets aside \$20B for the border, vote possible this week. President Joe Biden wins Democratic primary in South Carolina with 96% of the vote Saturday, the party's first official primary of the campaign.

El Salvador President Nayib Bukele, known for his tough-on-crime policies, wins reelection Sunday. At least 99 people killed in wildfires on Chile's densely populated coast since Friday, toll expected to grow; officials investigating whether fires were intentionally set.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 3 of 61

## NEC Boys' Basketball

### Milbank moves to number 2 in Region

Milbank has a slight edge in the number two spot in the Region 1A standings over Tiospa Zina. Groton Area has a one point lead over the Bulldogs.

Hamlin remains undefeated in the NEC title hunt.

### Boys NEC Standings

	NEC	Overall
Hamlin	7-0	12-3
Groton Area	7-1	10-4
Clark/Willow Lake	5-1	7-6
Roncalli	5-3	9-6
Deuel	4-3	7-9
Milbank	4-3	9-5
Webster Area	3-6	7-9
Sisseton	1-6	3-11
Tiospa Zina	2-4	7-6
Britton-Hecla *	2-5	4-12
Redfield	0-8	1-12

\* Class B Team

Britton-Hecla 65, Sisseton 58, 2OT  
 Aberdeen Roncalli 62, Tiospa Zina 53  
 Webster 79, Redfield 42  
 Groton 69, Deuel 35  
 Milbank 51, Aberdeen Roncalli 45  
 Clark-Willow Lake 50, Sisseton 45

Feb. 6: Milbank at Sisseton (Conference game)

Feb. 8: Deuel at Hamlin

Feb. 8: Redfield at Groton Area

Feb. 8: Britton-Hecla at Clark/Willow Lake

Feb. 9: Sisseton at Tiospa Zina

Feb. 12: Clark/Willow Lake at Roncalli

Feb. 13: Clark/Willow Lake at Tiospa Zina

Feb. 13: Sisseton at Deuel

Feb. 13: Britton-Hecla at Hamlin

Feb. 15: Hamlin at Clark/Willow Lake

Feb. 15: Roncalli at Deuel









Feb. 16: Redfield at Tiospa Zina

Feb. 16: Britton-Hecla at Groton Area

Feb. 16: Milbank at Webster Area

Feb. 23: Tiospa Zina at Milbank

### Region 1A Standings

#	Name	Season			Seed	Pts
		W	L	PCT		PTS
1	 Groton Area	10	4	.714		43.000
2	 Milbank	9	5	.643		42.000
3	 Tiospa Zina	7	6	.538		41.923
4	 Waubay/Summit	9	5	.643		41.357
5	 Aberdeen Roncalli	9	6	.600		41.200
6	 Webster Area	7	9	.438		39.500
7	 Sisseton	3	11	.214		37.071
8	 Redfield	1	12	.077		34.769

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 4 of 61

## NEC Girls' Basketball

### NEC goes 1-9 at DAK XII Clash

Clark-Willow Lake was the only team to post a win this year at the DAK XII-NEC Clash held Saturday in Madison. Sisseton lost its first game of the season to the hands of Sioux Falls Christian. Scores from the clash are:

Canton 56, Deuel 30  
 Clark-Willow Lake 46, Dell Rapids 32  
 Dakota Valley 53, Milbank 31  
 Elk Point-Jefferson 44, Groton 23  
 Lennox 45, Hamlin 37  
 Madison 61, Tiospa Zina 49  
 Sioux Falls Christian 70, Sisseton 62  
 Tri-Valley 49, Redfield 26  
 Vermillion 75, Aberdeen Roncalli 41  
 West Central 66, Webster 23

Groton Area went 2-1 during the week and gained one point in the Region 1A Standings. The Tigers are now just a point away from the number two seed Roncalli in the region. Sisseton remains undefeated in the Northeast Conference standings.

### Girls NEC Standings

Sisseton	7-0	14-1
Hamlin	6-1	9-6
Roncalli	7-2	12-3
Milbank	5-3	9-6
Groton Area	5-3	11-5
Deuel	4-3	6-10
Webster Area	3-6	6-10
Clark/Willow Lake	2-5	6-10
Redfield	2-6	5-10
Britton-Hecla *	1-6	6-10
Tiospa Zina	0-7	0-13

\* Class B Team

Aberdeen Roncalli 63, Tiospa Zina 23  
 Sisseton 51, Britton-Hecla 37  
 Aberdeen Roncalli 57, Milbank 41  
 Groton 42, Deuel 30  
 Sisseton 60, Clark-Willow Lake 25  
 Webster 49, Redfield 41, OT

Feb. 6: Milbank at Sisseton

Feb. 8

Tiospa Zina at Sisseton  
 Britton-Hecla at Clark/Willow Lake  
 Deuel at Hamlin

Feb. 9: Groton Area at Redfield

Feb. 13

Deuel at Sisseton  
 Clark/Willow Lake at Tiospa Zina  
 Britton-Hecla at Hamlin









Feb. 15

Roncalli at Deuel  
 Webster Area at Milbank  
 Hamlin at Clark/Willow Lake

Feb 16

Britton-Hecla at Groton Area  
 Redfield at Tiospa Zina

### Girls Region 1A Standings

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	PTS
1	 Sisseton	14	1	.933	46.067
2	 Aberdeen Roncalli	12	3	.800	44.200
3	 Groton Area	11	5	.688	43.188
4	 Milbank	9	6	.600	41.800
5	 Waubay/Summit	8	6	.571	40.357
6	 Webster Area	6	10	.375	38.625
7	 Redfield	5	10	.333	38.467
8	 Tiospa Zina	0	13	.000	34.615



## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

If you didn't catch the Pro Bowl this past weekend, don't worry, I have your breakdown right here!

It was a rough season for the Minnesota Vikings. Not only did the team fail to make the playoffs, many of the team's elite players had subpar seasons. As a result, the Vikings only had three representatives in this year's Pro Bowl: edge defender Danielle Hunter, fullback C.J. Ham, and long snapper Andrew DePaola. In recent years, the NFL Pro Bowl has undergone significant changes. The current format includes multiple skill competitions and a flag football matchup. The players are divided into AFC and NFC squads, and the winning team receives \$88,000 (losers get \$44,000).

C.J. Ham took part in the dodgeball competition, along with Hunter. Danielle also participated in the tug-o-war event. However, it was the Vikings' long snapper who might have been the NFC's secret superstar. DePaola almost single-handedly won the precision snapping event (he had 9 points, while the whole AFC squad could only muster 11). In a surprise move, DePaola was also an anchor during the obstacle course relay event, helping push a weighted sled past the finish line to secure a win for the NFC.

Ultimately, the Pro Bowl is a reward for players and a chance for them to relax and have some fun after a grueling season. It was a fun event to watch with my son, and it was great seeing some lesser-known players thrust into the spotlight.

### Looking ahead

The Super Bowl is this weekend, and we'll get to watch the San Francisco 49ers take on the Kansas City Swifts Chiefs.

The 49ers were the best team in the NFC this year with a 12-5 record. After a bye in the first round of the playoffs, they defeated the Green Bay Packers 24-21 in the divisional round then defeated the Detroit Lions 34-31 (yes, you heard that right, the Lions made it to the Conference Championship this season). The 49ers are led by Brock Purdy, who was the very last pick in the draft just a couple of years ago. On offense, San Fran also has a good offensive line, playmakers at wide receiver and tight end (Deebo Samuel and George Kittle), and perhaps the best offensive weapon in the game (running back Christian McCaffrey). On defense, the 49ers' biggest strength is getting to the QB with pass rushers Nick Bosa and Chase Young.

Kansas City is back in the Super Bowl for the fourth time in five years. While the result is the same, the route to the Super Bowl was more difficult for the Chiefs when compared to previous seasons. For the first time in his career, quarterback Patrick Mahomes had to go on the road in the playoffs - facing the elements of upstate New York (Buffalo) in the divisional round then heading to Baltimore for the AFC Championship. Besides Mahomes, the Chiefs have tight end Travis Kelce - who, despite being a likely first-ballot Hall of Famer, is now best known as Taylor Swift's boyfriend.

## “These Boots Are Made For Walking”

Winter weather has finally arrived this year. Getting outside for some activity, even in winter, is great for your overall health. However snow, ice, and cold can turn a stroll in the park into an obstacle course. Having proper footwear is not only important for warmth, but also the wellbeing of your feet. Choosing the correct boots for the elements could mean the difference between enjoying the outdoors and needing an urgent care visit. What makes good footwear for enjoying the outdoors safely?

Good traction is essential for walking outside in slippery conditions. If your shoes do not have good traction, you can buy ice cleat attachments. However, you likely already have something in your home that will help with increasing traction on icy sidewalks. The New Zealand

Medical Journal published a study showing a significant improvement in traction by placing socks over normal footwear. In the study, those who wore socks over their shoes found walking on a hillside footpath less slippery and had increased confidence. You may look silly, but you are less likely to slip.

Having proper fitting shoes is also important when going outside. Shoes that are too tight could decrease circulation; leading to swelling of the feet and ankles. If they are too small, it can lead to ingrown toenails, corns, and calluses. Conversely, boots that are too loose can cause friction leading to blisters. Ill-fitting shoes can have poor arch support causing shin pain when walking. One might also be at higher risk for jamming a toe or spraining an ankle due to tripping or falling caused by improper fitting shoes.

Additionally having shoes that keep your feet warm and dry are crucial in the winter. Frostbite occurs most commonly in extremities, such as fingers, toes, or the nose. The first signs of frostbite are a pins and needles sensation, throbbing, or aching in the affected areas. Trench foot has similar symptoms, but is caused by feet being in a wet environment for a prolonged period of time. Wet socks and wet boots can lead to both of these injuries. It is important to dry out boots between uses and have clean, dry socks when going outside in the winter. Having boots with weatherproofing and insulation will also help prevent these issues from occurring.

Now that you know what “Boots are Made for Walking” and whether you are “Walking on Sunshine,” “Walking in Memphis,” or just want to “Walk the Line”. The proper winter boots will keep you upright and safe. We would not want you to fall and have anyone else “walk all over you.” So stay safe, get outside and stay healthy out there.

*Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a hospitalist in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and on Facebook and Instagram featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust, streaming live on Facebook and SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.*



Jill Kruse, DO



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Legislative Roundup: 'Diet weed,' lithium taxation, quantum computers, Medicaid work requirements

**Bills continue their journey as session completes its fourth of nine weeks**

**BY: JOHN HULT, MAKENZIE HUBER AND JOSHUA HAIAR - FEBRUARY 4, 2024 10:33 AM**

Compromise can come quickly in Pierre – at least when lawmakers share the same goal.

Rep. Brian Mulder, R-Sioux Falls, is the prime sponsor of a bill that aims to bar the sale or manufacture of synthetically produced "diet weed" products. They're legal under federal law because their active ingredients can be extracted from legally grown hemp and labeled as delta-8, delta-10 and THC-O, among other names.

Mulder's intention is to ban the products when they've been chemically modified to spike potency. Manipulated versions of the chemicals have been tagged as problematic by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

The trouble, at least according to the hemp industry, was that the initial version of Mulder's bill swept in delta-8-style products created using copious amounts of the naturally occurring chemicals present in trace amounts in the hemp plant.

On Wednesday, the House handled that problem at the behest of Rep. Oren Lesmeister, D-Parade. Lesmeister is a grower and booster of hemp.

Lesmeister's amendment made clear that only synthetic versions of delta-8 would be illegal. The bill passed unanimously as amended, and is on its way to a Senate committee.

Here's a rundown of some other bills we've been tracking so far this legislative session, which just finished the fourth of its nine weeks.

#### Medical marijuana and guns

A bill to add a notice to medical marijuana applications to signal that the use of marijuana remains federally illegal, and that its use could impact the applicants' firearms rights, passed the Senate on a 30-1 vote Monday. It had been amended in a Senate committee to remove a requirement that the applicant sign a separate acknowledgement of having read the notice, so it went back to the House on Wednesday. It passed there 67-1, and is headed for the governor's desk.

#### Medical marijuana and drug tests

Another cannabis bill would allow employers to fire medical marijuana patients for failing drug tests if those patients are working safety-sensitive jobs. The House Judiciary Committee endorsed it 9-1. Next up: A House floor vote.

#### Child pornography penalties

A bill that began in the Senate would adjust penalties related to the manufacture, distribution and possession of child pornography, with higher penalties for the manufacture and distribution of that material than current law provides. It also adds mandatory minimums and makes it illegal to produce, share or possess computer-generated child pornography. It passed the House Judiciary Committee on a 12-0 vote Friday on its way to the full House.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 8 of 61

## How communities become cities

A bill making it easier for some communities to become incorporated cities passed the House of Representatives with a 58-11 vote on Wednesday. The bill, which was motivated by the community of Black Hawk, now heads to the Senate Local Government Committee. In Black Hawk's case, the bill would retain a requirement for Black Hawk to petition Rapid City for annexation before trying to become a city in its own right, but would remove a requirement for Black Hawk to additionally petition the city of Summerset.

## Hunting/fishing residency

Senate Bill 54 would impose stricter criteria for resident hunting and fishing licenses. It passed the House of Representatives with a 37-29 vote on Monday and was delivered to Gov. Kristi Noem for final consideration. The bill says people would lose their resident status if they undertake any of several activities in another state, such as applying for a resident license, registering to vote or residing outside of South Dakota for a total of 180 days in a year. Plus, the bill would put into law that possessing a mailing address in South Dakota, owning property or a business, or being employed in the state is not adequate proof of residency.

## Lithium mining tax

A bill to impose a tax on lithium mining unanimously passed the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on Tuesday after clearing the House of Representatives earlier. Companies are exploring for lithium in the Black Hills to feed the growing need for lithium-based batteries in electric vehicles and devices. The full Senate is the bill's final legislative stop.

## Quantum computers

A bill to provide \$6.03 million for research into the field of quantum computing at several state universities received a unanimous endorsement Jan. 25 from the Legislature's joint budget committee.

## Medicaid work requirements

Senate Joint Resolution 501 would ask voters in November to give state lawmakers the authority to impose work requirements on Medicaid recipients. That bill passed the Senate in a 28-4 vote Jan. 25. The bill now heads to the House State Affairs Committee.

## 911 surcharges

A bill to increase funding for 911 call centers by raising phone customers' monthly surcharge from \$1.25 to \$2 per line passed the House of Representatives with a 60-9 vote on Wednesday and now heads to a Senate committee. In 2023, the existing surcharge generated about \$12.47 million in revenue. With the proposed increase and assuming no change in the number of service lines, the projected revenue is approximately \$19.95 million. The surcharge has not been increased since 2012.

## Tax credits for ethanol sales

A bill to incentivize the sale of more ethanol unanimously passed the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on Thursday after cruising through the Senate. The legislation outlines a new tax refund that would be in effect from 2025 to 2030. It would allow gas stations to claim a fuel tax refund of up to 5 cents per gallon of E15 fuel sold. E15 is 15% ethanol and 85% gasoline, which is a higher blend of ethanol than the typical E10. The bill now moves to the full House.

## Bills signed into law

Gov. Kristi Noem signed the first bills of the 2024 session into law last week:  
Senate Bill 3 extends the length of time allowed for a tax agreement with an Indian tribe.  
House Bill 1041 modifies the definition of public infrastructure to allow a federally recognized Indian tribe to be eligible for housing infrastructure grants and loans and to declare an emergency.  
Senate Bill 7 revises the water resources projects list  
House Bill 1019 clarifies language regarding sales and use tax in certain statutes.



## Details of proposed major overhaul of U.S. immigration law, global aid package unveiled

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - FEBRUARY 4, 2024 9:00 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on Sunday night released a \$118.28 billion global security package that includes a long-anticipated overhaul of immigration law negotiated by a bipartisan trio of senators.

"The United States and our allies are facing multiple, complex and, in places, coordinated challenges from adversaries who seek to disrupt democracy and expand authoritarian influence around the globe," Schumer, a New York Democrat, said, explaining the need for U.S. aid for Ukraine, Israel and others.

The nearly 400-page package also includes sweeping bipartisan immigration legislation that would:

Raise the bar for migrants claiming asylum;

Clarify the White House's use of parole authority to temporarily grant protections to migrants;

Create a procedure to shut down the border at particularly active times;

And end the practice of allowing migrants to live in the United States while they wait for their cases to be heard by an immigration judge.

Senate Republicans had insisted that the changes in immigration policy accompany the global aid package.

For security, the measure includes \$60 billion to support Ukraine in its war against Russia and \$14.1 billion in assistance for Israel. It also has \$10 billion in humanitarian assistance "to provide food, water, shelter, medical care, and other essential services to civilians in Gaza and the West Bank, Ukraine, and other populations caught in conflict zones across the globe," according to a summary.

"Failing to pass this supplemental, and failing to support Ukraine is nothing short of throwing in the towel to Putin," Senate Appropriations Chair Patty Murray, a Washington state Democrat, said on a call with reporters.

The immigration provisions, negotiated by the White House and Sens. James Lankford, a Republican from Oklahoma, Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, and Kyrsten Sinema, an independent from Arizona, would be the biggest changes to immigration law in nearly 40 years if enacted — although a tough path is ahead in both the Senate and House.

Following the release of the bill, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, a Louisiana Republican, wrote on X that the Senate's bill will not "receive a vote in the House." He argued that some of the provisions will be "a magnet for more illegal immigration."

The bill makes changes to credible fear of persecution standards for asylum and for the expedited removal of those asylum seekers who don't qualify. There would be \$3.99 billion provided for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to hire 4,338 asylum officers.

Schumer said the deal the three senators worked on for four months "is a real opportunity for Congress to address our borders and make progress towards a more efficient and well-resourced system."

"This agreement improves an adjudication system that has been underfunded for decades by hiring more frontline personnel, asylum officers, and creating new processes to provide faster and fair decisions," Schumer said.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell in a statement blamed President Joe Biden for "an unprecedented crisis" at the Southern border and said the legislation would force the president to enforce immigration laws. The Kentucky Republican also praised the new emergency tools.

"I am grateful to Senator Lankford for working tirelessly to ensure that supplemental national security legislation begins with direct and immediate solutions to the crisis at our southern border," McConnell said.

### Border funding

The package includes \$20.23 billion to "address existing operational needs and expand capabilities at our nation's borders, resource the new border policies included in the package, and help stop the flow of fentanyl and other narcotics," according to a summary from Murray's office.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 10 of 61

Murray said on the call with reporters Sunday evening that "there's no reason for drama, delay, or partisanship."

While the Senate language is bipartisan, U.S. House Republicans, including Speaker Mike Johnson, have said new immigration legislation is not necessary and blame Biden for not enforcing current law. Several House members strongly criticized the measure after it was released Sunday, previewing a difficult path in that chamber.

The legislation would prohibit additional U.S. funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, following allegations from Israel that several of its staffers participated in the Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

The Biden administration has paused funding for UNRWA while the investigation is ongoing, but many, including McConnell have called for a full cutoff in U.S. aid.

McConnell said in late January on the Senate floor that Republicans "will not accept any legislation that allows taxpayer dollars to fund UNRWA."

## Option to shut down the border

The legislation would give the secretary of Homeland Security the option to shut down the border if, during a period of seven consecutive days, there are more than 4,000 encounters recorded with migrants. If that number reaches 5,000 encounters for a period of seven consecutive days, the U.S. would be required to shut down the border.

The only way the border would be shut down within one day is if there is a combined total of 8,500 migrants encountered, according to the bill text.

Sinema said during a Sunday morning interview on the CBS show "Face the Nation" that the proposed policy would be a "powerful tool."

That tool would be known as a border emergency authority and is temporary and would sunset within three years, according to the bill text. Some exceptions to that authority include unaccompanied minors and victims of human trafficking.

"The reason we're doing that is because we want to be able to shut down the system when it gets overloaded, so we have enough time to process those asylum claims," Sinema said.

The secretary of Homeland Security could remove that emergency authority in no later than 14 days, if there are seven consecutive days during which the number of migrant encounters that initially sparked that emergency authority goes down to 75% of encounter levels.

## Votes on the way

Votes in the Senate could come as early as Wednesday for the package. Enacting it into law will be an uphill battle, even though Biden has committed to supporting the deal, as his administration contends with the largest number of migrant encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border in 20 years.

"There is more work to be done to get it over the finish line," Biden said in a statement on Sunday night. "But I want to be clear about something: If you believe, as I do, that we must secure the border now, doing nothing is not an option."

House Republicans have fallen in line behind former President Donald J. Trump's opposition to an agreement. Trump's GOP-leading 2024 presidential campaign has used fears of immigration at the southern border as a central theme.

Johnson, a Republican of Louisiana, has argued that Biden has the authority to make immigration policy changes, and does not need Congress to take action.

The release of the immigration bill text and global aid package accompanies a drive by House Republicans to impeach U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas over what critics say are policy differences, but it's unclear if the GOP's razor-thin majority will prevail. A vote is expected in the coming week.

Johnson has a slim two-vote majority, and even if Mayorkas is impeached, the Democratic-controlled Senate likely would acquit the secretary, meaning he would not be removed.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 11 of 61

In a statement, Mayorkas said that the changes do “not fix everything in our immigration system,” but are an important step.

“This agreement builds on this Administration’s approach of strengthened consequences for those who cross the border unlawfully, without curtailing the development of lawful, safe, and orderly pathways for those who qualify,” he said.

“While it will take time to fully implement these new measures, the new enforcement tools and resources this proposal offers will further strengthen our ability to enforce the law in the months and years ahead, and we will begin implementing them as soon as it becomes law,” Mayorkas said.

## **Sinema says no more ‘catch and release’**

Sinema said the bill would end the policy of allowing migrants who are detained to live in U.S. communities while they await having their asylum cases heard by an immigration judge, known colloquially as “catch and release.”

Instead of that practice, Sinema said those migrants would be taken to a short-term detention center, where a quick asylum interview would determine whether that migrant meets the asylum requirements or should be swiftly removed.

Sinema said that those migrants who cannot be detained, such as families, would have a three-month asylum review.

“For folks that we can’t detain, like families, for instance, (we) will ensure that we’re supervising them over the course of just three months and conduct that interview with that new higher standard, requiring them to show more proof early on about whether or not they qualify for asylum and to return them to their country if they do not have the evidence or the proof that they qualify for asylum,” Sinema said.

She added that those who do qualify for asylum will be on a rapid path for approval, within about six months.

## **Immigration court backlog**

There currently is a backlog of more than 3.2 million cases in immigration court, pending under roughly 600 immigration judges, according to Syracuse University’s Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, or TRAC, which compiles immigration data.

Many migrants have initial court dates set years in the future. The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service has estimated that an additional 700 — so 1,349 total — immigration judges would need to be hired in order for the backlog of immigration courts to be cleared by fiscal year 2032.

To help with court backlogs, the bill provides the Executive Office for Immigration Review with \$440 million to hire immigration judges and support staff.

The bill provides U.S. Customs and Border Protection with \$6.7 billion, and out of that, \$723 million to hire additional border patrol officers and for overtime pay.

The bill includes a provision of the bipartisan Afghan Adjustment Act that would create a pathway to residency for Afghan nationals who worked and helped the U.S. government before Afghanistan fell to the Taliban following the U.S. withdrawal in 2021.

About 76,000 Afghans were placed through a humanitarian parole program, granting them temporary protections but leaving them in legal limbo.

*Jennifer Shutt and Jacob Fischler contributed to this report*

*Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.*

## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What is “Philanthro-activism” and who leads this movement? – K. Smith, via email

Philanthro-activism, which combines philanthropy (donating money) and activism, could be an important part of solving the climate crisis. In 2020, less than two percent of philanthropic capital was allocated to climate and environmental causes. Given the urgency to achieve the United Nations’ goal of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2050, and to mitigate the impact of abnormal climate patterns on communities and ecosystems, it is imperative we allocate increased funding to address climate challenges. This is where philanthro-activism comes into play. Philanthropy provides needed funding to make positive change, while activism implements plans within communities.

Pioneering the philanthro-activist movement is One Earth, a foundation built around three objectives: funding environmental projects that closely interact with underserved communities; maximizing the benefits of these projects; and researching ongoing problems. With this framework, One Earth addresses three primary issues: (1) making food and fiber agriculture more efficient and regenerative, (2) protecting and restoring half of the planet’s land and ocean, and (3) converting to 100% renewable energy.

One Earth has a “Marketplace” where donors are matched with locally-based projects. This not only encourages financial backing for grassroots initiatives but also fosters a stronger sense of connection to environmental activism. These partnerships foster a collaborative atmosphere, correcting the perception that climate and ecological change are issues beyond individual control.

The current One Earth Marketplace is a network of over 140 vetted projects scattered all around the globe that target the three primary issues. Reforestation of over 5,000 hectares of land in Kenya and women-led restoration of the Colorado River Delta are examples of projects that contribute to the rehabilitation of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. One Earth has pushed for cleaner energy through projects such as the distribution of affordable solar-powered home electricity generators in the Philippines.

But many of the projects with the most direct influence focus on regenerative agriculture. Over 20 percent of people in the Pursat Province of Cambodia earn less than \$2.70 daily. Women often resort to labor-intensive work or migrate to garment factory jobs to support their families. Rural communities face great environmental challenges like floods and heat waves, compounded by monocropping practices damaging the land. One Earth paired with the Face-to-Face Project and their Victory Garden Campaign, which engages women in cultivating gardens that provide nutritious food and sustainable livelihoods. Through organic permaculture and community involvement, the campaign empowers 2,200 families, fostering food security, improved nutrition and financial independence, particularly among women caretakers.

One Earth is the pinnacle of the fusion of philanthropy and activism to address pressing ecological challenges at the ground level and beyond. In the future, the expansion of similar philanthro-activist initiatives holds the potential of creating sustainable solutions to environmental and social problems.



**The snowy albatross is an icon of the Subantarctic Indian Ocean Islands Bioregion, one of 138 bioregions around the world that philanthro-activists with One Earth are working to protect.**

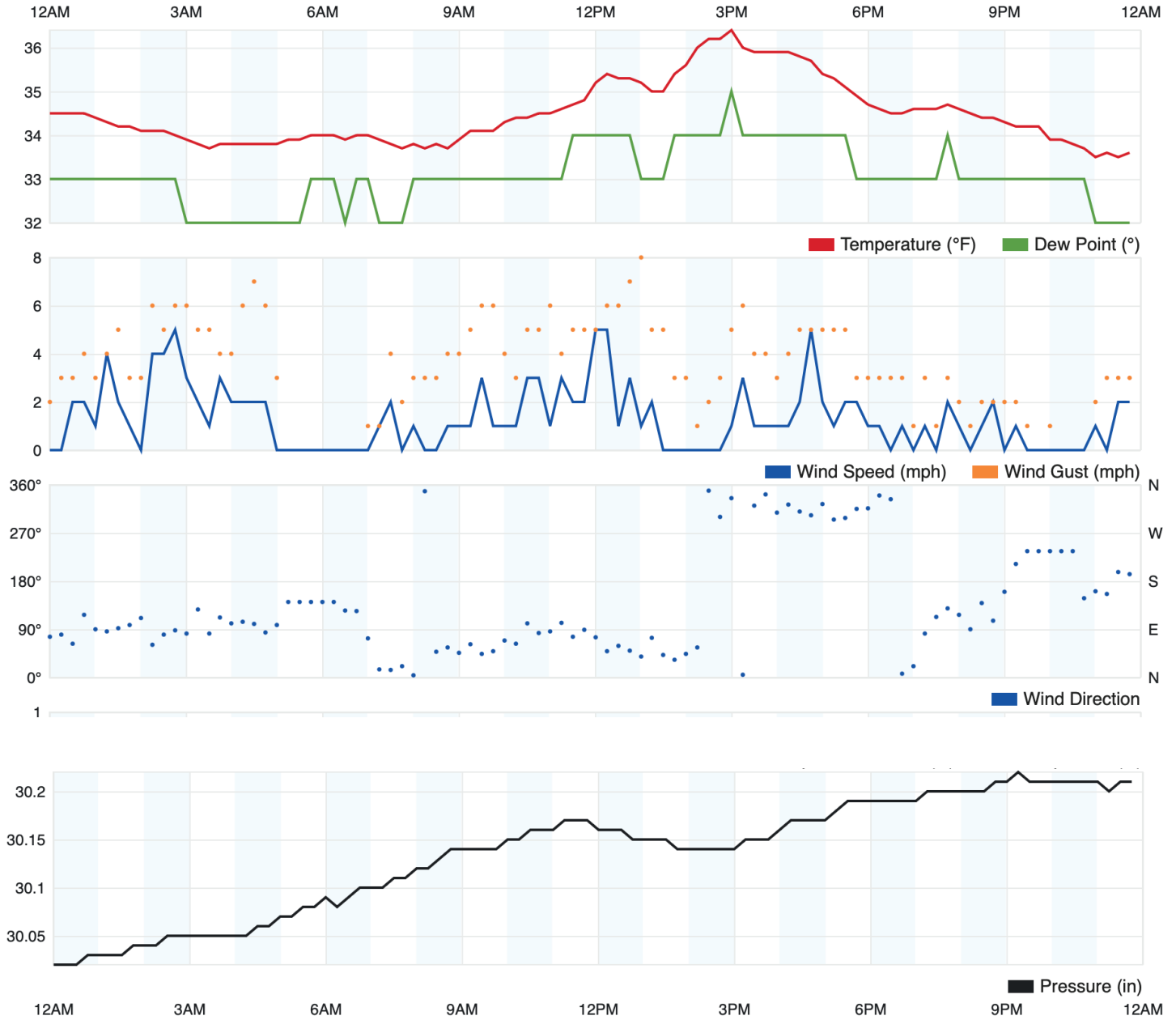
Credit: JJ Harrison, WikiCommons.



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 13 of 61

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



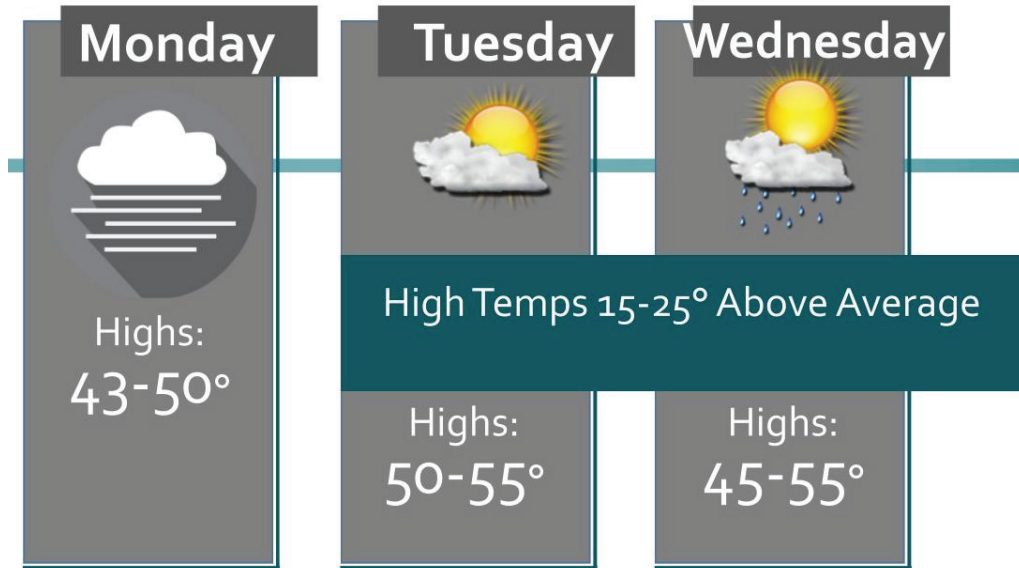
# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 14 of 61

Mon Feb 5	Tue Feb 6	Wed Feb 7	Thu Feb 8	Fri Feb 9	Sat Feb 10	Sun Feb 11
43°F 36°F	51°F 35°F	51°F 41°F	45°F 32°F	36°F 25°F	33°F 20°F	33°F 22°F
S 12 MPH	S 13 MPH	E 17 MPH	SE 13 MPH	NW 18 MPH	NNW 13 MPH	N 9 MPH
		60%	80%	60%	20%	



**Weather Outlook:** Fog Dissipating on Monday, Much Warmer Midweek



Foggy conditions will continue tonight and into the morning hours on Monday. Warmer temperatures are set to move into the region starting Monday, with highs reaching the 40s and 50s. A storm system will bring some rain chances starting Wednesday afternoon.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 15 of 61

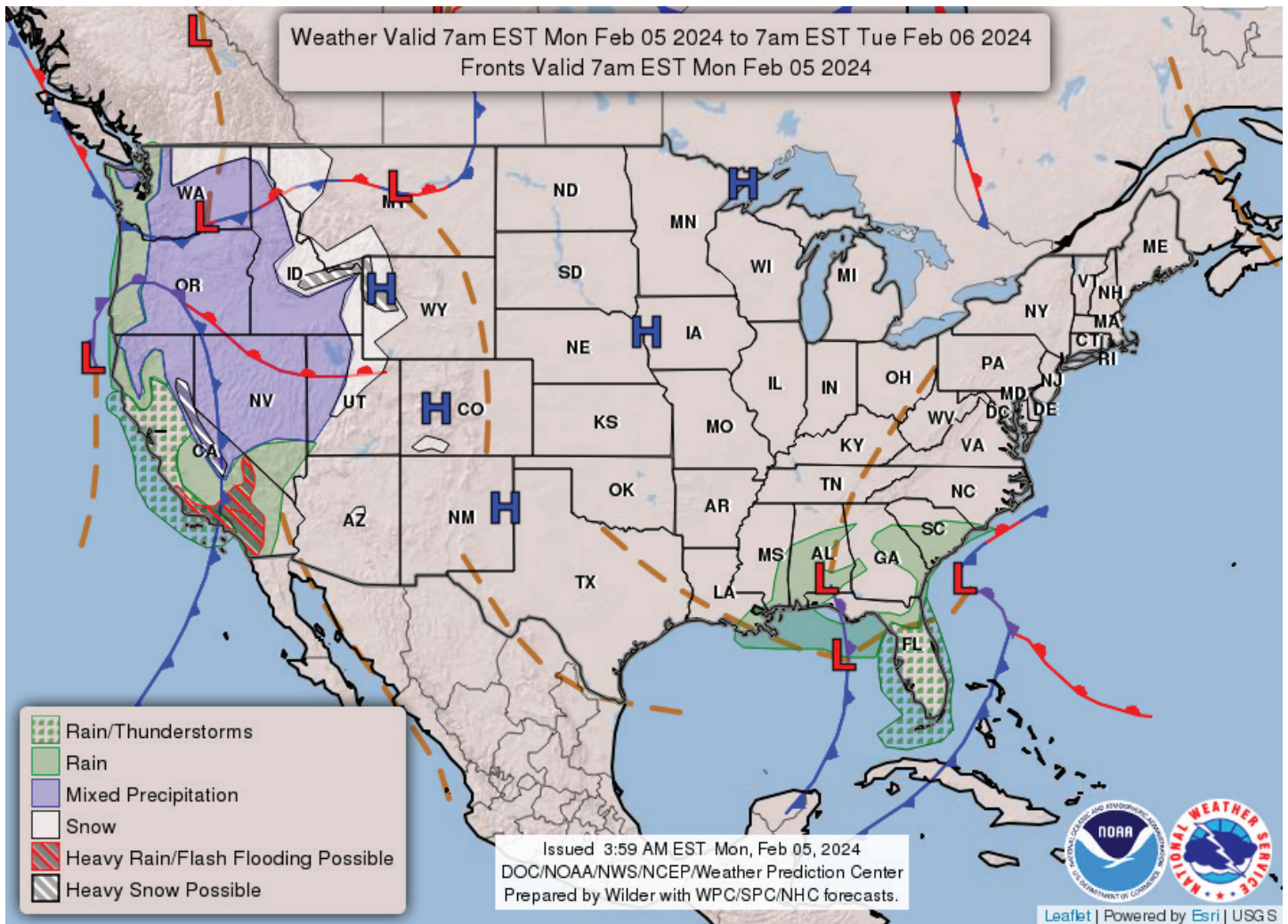
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 36 °F at 2:58 PM**  
**Low Temp: 33 °F at 11:27 PM**  
**Wind: 8 mph at 12:55 PM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 9 hours, 59 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 57 in 1991  
Record Low: -36 in 1907  
Average High: 26  
Average Low: 3  
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.10  
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 0.65  
Precip Year to Date: 0.00  
Sunset Tonight: 5:45:51 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45:31 am



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 16 of 61

## Today in Weather History

February 5, 1978: Another winter blizzard plagued the northern half of the state, beginning on February 5th and continuing until the 9th. The unusual aspect of this blizzard was that the wind came from the southeast between 25 to 45 mph. Only one to three inches of new snow accumulation fell during the five days but was piled high on the existing large snowdrifts. Most of the northern half of the state was paralyzed due to blocked roads. Eighteen counties across the north part of South Dakota were declared a disaster by the governor. There were also numerous livestock losses.

1745: Today is National Weatherman/Meteorologist day, commemorating the birth of John Jeffries in 1745. Jeffries, one of America's first weather observers, began taking daily weather observations in Boston, MA, in 1774, and he made the first balloon observation in 1784. You can read a narrative from the Library of Congress of the two aerial voyages of Doctor Jeffries with Mons. Blanchard: with meteorological observations and remarks. The first voyage was on November 13th, 1784, from London into Kent. The second was on January 7th, 1785, from England into France.

1887: San Francisco experienced its most significant snowstorm of record. Nearly four inches was reported in downtown San Francisco, and the western hills of the city received seven inches. Excited crowds went on a snowball throwing rampage.

1920: An intense nor'easter dumped 17.5 inches of snow over three days in New York City Central Park, New York. Boston, MA, saw 12.2 inches of snow on this day.

1976: Record-breaking snowfall of just two inches fell in Sacramento, California. February 5, 1976, is the only time since November 1941 when snow was reported in Sacramento.

1986: A supercell thunderstorm tracked through the Tomball area northwest of Houston, TX, and produced four tornadoes along with damaging microburst winds and up to tennis ball size hail. An F3 tornado killed two people, injured 80 others, and devastated a mobile home park and the David Wayne Hooks Airport. In addition, 300 aircraft were either damaged or destroyed. Much of the more substantial hail was propelled by 60 to 80 mph winds, resulting in widespread moderate damage. The total damage from this storm was 80 million dollars.

1987 - Thunderstorms in the Southern Plains Region caused flooding in parts of south central Texas. Del Rio TX was soaked with two inches of rain in two hours prior to sunrise. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cold and snow invaded the southern U.S. Roswell NM was buried under 16.5 inches of snow in 24 hours, an all-time record for that location. Parts of the Central Gulf Coast Region reported their first significant snow in fifteen years. Strong winds in Minnesota and the Dakotas produced wind chill readings as cold as 75 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Severe cold gripped much of the nation. Thirty cities reported new record low temperatures for the date. Morning lows of 9 above at Astoria OR and 27 below zero at Ely NV were records for February. In Alaska, Point Barrow warmed to 24 degrees above zero, and Nome reached 30 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - For the second time in two days, and the third time in a week, high winds plagued the northwestern U.S. Winds in Oregon gusted to 60 mph at Cape Disappointment, and wind gusts in Washington State reached 67 mph at Bellingham. The first in a series of cold fronts began to produce heavy snow in the mountains of Washington and Oregon. Ten inches of snow fell at Timberline OR. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2006 - Mount Washington Observatory in New Hampshire reaches a high of 41°F, the warmest February 5th on record at the summit and two degrees off the monthly mark, where records have been kept since 1932. The Weather Doctor

2008 - The deadliest round of tornadoes in nearly a quarter century kill 58 people in the south. The storms kill 32 people in Tennessee, 14 in Arkansas, seven in Kentucky and five in Alabama. Damage is likely to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The Weather Doctor



# Groton Daily Independent

**Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 17 of 61**

2008 - The Super Tuesday 2008 Tornado Outbreak has been one of the deadliest tornado outbreaks in the US, with 59 fatalities reported. So far, it ranks in the top 15 deadly tornado outbreaks (and the highest number of tornado deaths since 1985). According to the SPC Storm Reports, there were over 300 reports of tornadoes, large hail (up to 4.25 inches in diameter in Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri), and damaging wind gusts from Texas to Ohio and West Virginia. The outbreak produced at least 64 tornadoes, some producing EF-3 and EF-4 damage.

2010 - A mega-snowstorm, which President Obama dubbed Snowmageddon, buried the Washington D.C. area with more than 30 inches of snow in some areas. At American University in Washington the official snowfall was 27.5 inches. Snowfall totals in the Washington DC area range from a low of 17.9 inches at Ronald Reagan National Airport to 40 inches in the northern suburb of Colesville, MD. Dulles Airport reported 32.4 inches, which established a new two-day snowfall record. The Baltimore-Washington International Airport, MD, measured 24.8 inches from the storm breaking the record for the largest two day snowfall there. It is one of the worst blizzards in the city's history.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 18 of 61

Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### EARNING IT IS WHAT MATTERS!

A friend of Clark Gable took her young son to his home for a visit. As they were about to leave, the boy pointed to the Oscar that Gable had won and asked, "May I have this?"

"Sure," answered Gable, giving the Oscar to the child.

"Give it back immediately," shouted the mother in shock.

"Oh, no," said Gable. "Keep it. Having the Oscar around doesn't mean anything to me. Earning it does."

Focusing on the future has many benefits. Paul boldly declared that "I am still not all I should be! But I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead I strain to reach the end of the race."

Paul had excellent reasons to want to forget the past - he persecuted Christians and even had them killed. He held them in great contempt, creating fear and anxiety among them. But, he also accomplished many outstanding things for Christ before he wrote these words. In all reality, he could have "stayed stuck" for one reason or another: either feelings of guilt from the evil things he had done to Christians or a sense of false pride for his exemplary service to his Lord.

These are two traps that every Christian faces: our failures and our successes. Either trap can destroy or defeat what God is calling us to do. We must avoid the "traps" and move forward!

Prayer: Help us, Father, not to ruin the present or the future by staying stuck in the past. You have called us to do great things through Christ. May we always be faithful. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 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

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 19 of 61

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# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 20 of 61



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.02.24

11 22 42 64 69 18

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$358,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 23  
Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.03.24

10 34 40 47 48 1

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$2,800,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 38 Mins 14  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.04.24

10 16 27 33 44 13

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

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 53 Mins 14  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.03.24

17 20 26 27 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$40,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 53  
Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.03.24

23 26 30 35 39 13

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 14  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.03.24

9 11 27 59 66 19

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$214,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 14  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



## News from the Associated Press

### **Kyle puts up 16, South Dakota State downs South Dakota 70-67**

By The Associated Press undefined

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — William Kyle III scored 16 points as South Dakota State beat South Dakota 70-67 on Sunday night.

Kyle added 11 rebounds and five blocks for the Jackrabbits (13-11, 6-3 Summit League). Luke Appel added 15 points while shooting 4 of 9 from the field and 7 for 10 from the foul line, and he also had six rebounds. Charlie Easley had 12 points and shot 3 for 9 (2 for 6 from 3-point range) and 4 of 6 from the free-throw line.

The Coyotes (9-15, 2-7) were led by Kaleb Stewart, who posted 27 points and six rebounds. South Dakota also got 13 points and 10 rebounds from Lahat Thioune. In addition, Paul Bruns finished with 11 points.

Kyle scored 12 points in the first half and South Dakota State went into halftime trailing 38-37. South Dakota State outscored South Dakota by four points in the second half. Appel led the way with 11 second-half points.

### **At least 6 Kurdish fighters are killed in a drone attack on a Syrian base housing US troops**

By BASSEM MROUE and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A drone attack on a base housing U.S. troops in eastern Syria killed six allied Kurdish fighters late Sunday, in the first significant attack in Syria or Iraq since the U.S. launched retaliatory strikes over the weekend against Iran-backed militias that have been targeting its forces in the region.

The U.S.-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said Monday the attack hit a training ground at al-Omar base in Syria's eastern province of Deir el-Zour, where the forces' commando units are trained. No casualties were reported among U.S. troops.

An umbrella group of Iran-backed Iraqi militias, dubbed the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, released a video claiming responsibility for the attack and showing them launching a drone from an unspecified location.

In late January, a drone attack by the same group killed three U.S. troops and wounded dozens more at a desert base in Jordan. The U.S. military launched dozens of retaliatory strikes targeting Iran-backed militant groups in western Iraq and eastern Syria and also struck the Houthis in Yemen.

The SDF initially accused "Syrian regime-backed mercenaries" of carrying out Sunday's attack but in a second statement blamed "Iran-backed militias" after investigating the attack.

The umbrella group has launched dozens of drone attacks on U.S. military bases and troops in Iraq and Syria, and has called for the withdrawal of American soldiers from both countries.

The attack comes as tensions flare across the Middle East amid the Israel-Hamas war, which was sparked by Hamas' rampage in southern Israel on Oct. 7.

Meanwhile, Britain-based opposition war monitor Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least seven SDF fighters were killed in the attack on Sunday and at least 18 others wounded, some in critical condition.

The attack late Sunday came two days after the U.S. military carried out strikes against militant targets linked to Iran in Syria and Iraq.

The SDF said it has the right to respond to the attack.

The U.S. military said it struck four anti-ship missiles on Sunday that were prepared to be fired at vessels in the Red Sea from Houthi rebel-controlled areas in Yemen.

In a statement early Monday, the U.S. Central Command said the strikes were in self-defense and came after forces determined the missiles "presented an imminent threat to U.S. Navy ships and merchant vessels in the region."

Sunday's strikes came a day after the U.S. and Britain launched a second wave of strikes against the

Houthis, meant to degrade the Iranian-backed group's capabilities to attack vessels in the Red Sea. The U.S. and Britain said they hit 36 Houthi targets.

## Ukraine's president confirms he's thinking about dismissing the country's military chief

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he was weighing a possible dismissal of the country's top military officer, a prospect that has shocked the nation fighting Russia's invasion and worried Kyiv's Western allies.

Asked whether he was considering the ouster of Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi, Zelenskyy told Italian RAI TV in an interview released late Sunday that he was thinking about it as part of a broader issue of setting the country's path. He said that "a reset, a new beginning is necessary," and it's "not about a single person but about the direction of the country's leadership."

"I'm thinking about this replacement, but you can't say here we replaced a single person," Zelenskyy said. "When we talk about this, I mean a replacement of a series of state leaders, not just in a single sector like the military. If we want to win we must all push in the same direction, convinced of victory, we cannot be discouraged, let our arms fall, we must have the right positive energy."

Zelenskyy's comments marked his first confirmation that he was mulling to fire the widely popular general, a possibility that caused an uproar in Ukraine and delighted the Kremlin as the war approaches its second anniversary.

According to Ukrainian and Western media reports, Zelenskyy last week offered Zaluzhnyi to resign, but the general refused. Zaluzhnyi hasn't commented on the issue.

The tensions between the president and Zaluzhnyi have been rising as the country grapples with dire ammunition and personnel shortages following a failed summer counteroffensive. The need for a broad mobilization to fill the ranks has reportedly been one of the areas of disagreement.

Zelenskyy said at the end of last year that he had turned down the military's request to mobilize up to 500,000 people, demanding more details about how it would be organized and paid for.

Ukrainska Pravda reported Monday that Zelenskyy was allegedly considering the removal of General Staff Chief Serhii Shaptala along with Zaluzhnyi.

Zaluzhnyi on Monday congratulated Shaptala on his birthday and posted a picture of them together on Facebook.

"It will still be very difficult for us, but we will definitely never be ashamed," Zaluzhnyi wrote.

A rift between Zaluzhnyi and Zelenskyy first broke into the open last fall when the general acknowledged in an interview with *The Economist* that the fighting with Russia had stalemated. The president strongly denied that was the case.

Ukraine desperately needs more Western military assistance as the Russian forces are pressing in many directions of the 1,500-kilometer (900-mile) frontline, but an aid package has been blocked in the U.S. Congress. Zaluzhnyi's dismissal could fuel uncertainty among Western allies.

Russia has rejoiced at the prospect, with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying that the talk about Zaluzhnyi's dismissal exposed rifts in the Ukrainian leadership.

## Second atmospheric river in days churns through California, knocking out power and flooding roads

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The second of back-to-back atmospheric rivers churned slowly through California early Monday, flooding roadways and knocking out power to hundreds of thousands of people and prompting a rare warning for hurricane-force winds as the already soggy state braced for another day of heavy rains.

The storm inundated streets and brought down trees and electrical lines Sunday across the San Fran-

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 23 of 61

cisco Bay Area, where winds topped 60 mph (96 kph) in some areas. Gusts exceeding 80 mph (128 kph) were recorded in the mountains.

Just to the south in San Jose, emergency crews pulled occupants out of the windows of a car stranded by floodwaters and rescued people from a homeless encampment alongside a rising river.

The storm then moved into Southern California, where officials warned of potentially devastating flooding and ordered evacuations for canyons that burned in recent wildfires that are at high risk for mud and debris flows.

Classes were canceled Monday for schools across Santa Barbara County, which was devastated by mudslides caused by powerful storms in 2018.

Further down the coast, strong winds and heavy rain brought treacherous conditions to the city of Ventura, said Alexis Herrera, who was trying to bail out his sedan which was filled with floodwater. "All the freeways are flooded around here," Herrera said in Spanish. "I don't know how I'm going to move my car."

More than 845,000 customers were without electricity statewide by Sunday evening, according to poweroutage.us.

Winds caused hours-long delays at San Francisco International Airport. By 2:30 p.m. Sunday, 155 departing flights were delayed and 69 had been canceled, according to the tracking website FlightAware. There were also delays at the airports in San Jose and Sacramento.

Palisades Tahoe, a ski resort about 200 miles (320 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco, said Sunday it was anticipating the heaviest snowfall yet this season, with accumulations of 6 inches (15 centimeters) per hour for a total of up to two feet (60 centimeters). Heavy snow was expected into Monday throughout the Sierra Nevada and motorists were urged to avoid mountain roads.

Much of the state had been drying out from the system that blew in last week, causing flooding and dumping welcome snow in mountains. The latest storm, also called a "Pineapple Express" because its plume of moisture stretches back across the Pacific to near Hawaii, arrived offshore in Northern California on Saturday, when most of the state was under some sort of wind, surf or flood watch.

The weather service issued a rare "hurricane force wind warning" for the Central Coast, with wind gusts of up to 92 mph (148 kph) possible from the Monterey Peninsula to the northern section of San Luis Obispo County.

Meanwhile, the southern part of the state was at risk of substantial flooding beginning late Sunday because of how slow the system was moving, said Ryan Kittell, a meteorologist at the weather service's Los Angeles-area office.

"The core of the low pressure system is very deep, and it's moving very slowly and it's very close to us. And that's why we have those very strong winds. And the slow nature of it is really giving us the highest rainfall totals and the flooding risk," he said at a Sunday briefing.

Evacuation orders and warnings were in effect for mountain and canyon areas of Monterey, Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles counties. LA County Supervisor Lindsay Horvath urged residents near wildfire burn areas of Topanga and Soledad canyons to heed orders to get out ahead of possible mudslides.

"If you have not already left, please gather your family, your pets, your medications and leave immediately," Horvath said at a Sunday briefing. The county set up shelters where evacuees could spend the night.

Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services activated its operations center and positioned personnel and equipment in areas most at risk.

The storm was expected to move down the coast and bring heavy rain, possible flash-flooding and mountain snow to the Los Angeles area late Sunday, before moving on to hammer Orange and San Diego counties on Monday.

As of Sunday afternoon, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second largest, said it was planning to open schools as usual Monday. The decision would be reevaluated at 6 a.m. Monday, said Superintendent Alberto Carvalho.

The weather service forecast up to 8 inches (20 cm) of rainfall across Southern California's coastal and

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 24 of 61

valley areas, with 14 inches (35 cm) possible in the foothills and mountains. Heavy to moderate rain is expected in Southern California until Tuesday.

## China gives suspended death sentence to Chinese Australian democracy blogger Yang Hengjun

By KEN MORITSUGU and KEIRAN SMITH Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A Chinese court gave a suspended death sentence to a China-born Australian democracy blogger on Monday. The Australian government, which has repeatedly raised his case over the years, said it was appalled.

Yang Hengjun was found guilty of espionage and sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said. Such sentences are often commuted to life in prison after the two years.

"The Australian Government is appalled," Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said in a statement. "This is harrowing news for Dr. Yang, his family and all who have supported him."

Yang, a former Chinese diplomat and state security agent who became a political commentator and writer of spy novels in Australia, was detained on Jan. 19, 2019, when he arrived in the southern China city of Guangzhou from New York with his wife and teenage stepdaughter.

He was tried behind closed doors in May 2021. The details of his case have not been disclosed. Yang, who became an Australian citizen in 2002, has denied working as a spy for Australia or the United States.

In a letter to his sons in August last year, Yang said he hadn't experienced direct sunlight in more than four years. He told his family he feared he would die in detention after being diagnosed with a kidney cyst, prompting supporters to demand his release for medical treatment.

Australia "will be communicating our response in the strongest terms" and will continue to press for his interests and wellbeing, including appropriate medical care, the Australian foreign minister said in her statement.

Wang, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said the court had protected Yang's procedural rights and arranged for the Australian side to attend Monday's sentencing, likely referring to a diplomat or diplomats from the Australian Embassy.

In October last year, Australian journalist Cheng Lei was freed after more than three years in detention in China for breaking an embargo with a television broadcast on a state-run TV network.

The plights of Yang and Cheng had frequently been on the agendas of high-level meetings between the countries in recent years.

## Grammys are Taylor Swift's world on a night when women like Cyrus, Mitchell and Chapman also shine

By DAVID BAUDER AP Entertainment Writer

It's Taylor Swift's world, and she just allows us to live in it.

After weeks where she attracted endless attention for her football star boyfriend and a mystifying right-wing campaign against her, the Grammy Awards put the focus squarely back on her art. "Midnights" earned Swift her fourth career Grammy for album of the year on Sunday, an achievement no one can match.

It breaks a tie with Frank Sinatra, Paul Simon and Stevie Wonder, who each won the honor three times. "For me, the award is the work," she said. "All I want to do is keep doing it."

And she will (more on that later). Swift was the last example of an action-packed show where women earned the biggest honors and had the majority of the most memorable performances. Miley Cyrus powerfully belted "Flowers, which won record of the year. Billie Eilish's ballad from "Barbie," "What Was I Made For?" was song of the year for her and co-writer Finneas O'Connell, her brother. Singer-songwriter Victoria Monét is best new artist.

There were so many riches that rock supergroup boygenius, with Julien Baker, Phoebe Bridgers and Lucy



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 25 of 61

Dacus, won three Grammys and didn't even make it onto the CBS portion of the show.

Making the best pop vocal solo performance the televised show's first award — where all five nominees were women — was a savvy hint to what was coming.

## TRACY'S TURN

Bringing the reclusive Tracy Chapman on to duet with country singer Luke Combs, who had a massive hit covering her "Fast Car" this past summer, was spine-tingling. In a pre-taped segment leading into it, Combs eloquently described what the song meant to him growing up. Clearly moved, Chapman's eyes glistened when the crowd roared as she played the 1988 song's unforgettable guitar riff. She's kept to the background as Combs brought the song to a new generation, and chose a wise place to reemerge.

## SOME FLOWERS FOR MILEY

Not to diss more elaborately-staged affairs, but there was a certain power to Cyrus' performance of "Flowers." It was just her and the song, essentially. There was no question she could carry it, and she even inserted a couple of ad-libs: "I just won my first Grammy!" Her acceptance speeches were packed with personality. "I don't think I've forgotten anyone," she said, after a requisite list of thank-yous, "but I may have forgotten underwear."

## JAY-Z NEVER FORGETS

In accepting the Dr. Dre Global Impact Award, Jay-Z proved he has a long memory. He recalled the times that rap artists were outspoken about not getting enough attention from the Grammys commensurate with music sales, even boycotting a show — although "they went to a hotel to watch the Grammys," he said. "It wasn't a great boycott." Jay-Z considers it an injustice that his wife, Beyoncé, has never won album of the year despite her astonishing haul of 32 Grammys. "When I get nervous," he said, "I tell the truth."

## JONI'S RETURN

Joni Mitchell's return to the stage earned her a Grammy and her performance Sunday was another emotional highlight. Surrounded by musical friends like Brandi Carlile, the 80-year-old Mitchell sat in an easy chair that resembled a throne, tapping her cane as she sang "Both Sides Now." Her voice, which she had to recover after suffering a brain aneurysm, brought a richness and perspective to the song that could only be hinted at in the original. Like Chapman, she was visibly moved by the audience's reception, betrayed by laughter after she finished.

## TOUCHING TRIBUTES

Let's be honest, those "in memoriam" tributes to people who died in the past year usually signal that it's time for a bathroom break. Not so here. Stevie Wonder honored Tony Bennett on a chilling "duet" with a filmed Bennett on Wonder's "For Once in My Life," then sang Bennett's "The Best is Yet to Come." Annie Lennox, saluting Sinéad O'Connor, sang "Nothing Compares 2 U," with two of the late songwriter Prince's accompanists. And Fantasia Barrino shook the walls with "Proud Mary" to honor Tina Turner.

## LATE 'LIGHTS'

The Grammys no doubt intended Billy Joel's performance of his first new song in 30 years, "Turn the Lights Back On," to be a big show-capper. But the Grammys' previous three hours were a hard act to top.

## HARD WORK

To the public, it sometimes seems that stars arrive suddenly, but Monét and SZA offered charming reminders of all the hard work and dreams that go into success. After disarmingly thanking "the champagne servers of tonight," Monét described the 15-year journey that took her to a best new artist award. "My roots have been growing underneath the ground for so long — and I feel like today I'm sprouting," she said. There was a brief pause before SZA accepted an award for best R&B song, since she was changing backstage. But she was overwhelmed after recalling, with the trophy presented Lizzo, the days a decade ago when they opened shows in small clubs. She hustled offstage when the tears flowed. "I'm not an attractive crier," she said.

## PROMO TIME

Yes, we understand that artists are always on the lookout to promote their work. But when Swift took time in accepting an award to announce that her new album would come out in April, and said she would

share cover art on social media, it felt ... cheap. Like she was hijacking the event for her own purposes, with news she knew would overshadow much of what was happening. U2, beamed in from a concert at their Las Vegas residency, felt like they were promoting an arena instead of their own work, lost as they were in the razzle-dazzle. Two forgettable moments for two big stars.

TREVOR KNOWS

Props to Trevor Noah for his job as host. His enthusiasm for the music world can seem puppy dog-like, but it beats insult comics and ironists Opening the show from the arena's floor, walking around to point out the stars, Noah built spirit for people there and at home alike. He got in some good lines, too, like when he noted Universal Music was removing its artists from TikTok. "How dare you rip off all the artists," he said. "Shame on you. That's Spotify's job." As Swift arrived late, he said that as she walked in the room, "the economy around these tables improve. Lionel Richie becomes Lionel Wealthy."

Unlike her glares that torpedoed Jo Koy at the Golden Globes, Swift appeared to be enjoying Noah.

## Taylor Swift wins album of the year at the Grammy Awards for the fourth time, setting a new record

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Taylor Swift won album of the year at the Grammy Awards for "Midnights," breaking the record for most wins in the category with four.

She began her speech by thanking her producer and friend Jack Antonoff and added, "I would love to tell you this is the happiest moment of my life," she told the crowd, but said she feels this happy when she creates music and plays shows.

Earlier in the night, Taylor Swift used her 13th Grammy win on Sunday to announce her new album, "The Tortured Poets Department," will arrive April 19.

"I know that the way that the Recording Academy voted is a direct reflection of the passion of the fans," she said while accepting the best pop vocal album award. "So, I want to say thank you to the fans by telling you a secret that I've been keeping from you for the last two years."

One of the night's biggest awards, record of the year, went to Miley Cyrus for "Flowers," her second-ever Grammy and second of the night.

"This award is amazing. But I really hope that it doesn't change anything because my life was beautiful yesterday," she said in her speech.

Victoria Monét won best new artist. "Thank you to the champagne-servers tonight," Monét began her acceptance speech. "Thanks to my mom, a single mom raising this really bad girl." Then she started to cry, telling the room that this award was "15 years in the making."

Billie Eilish won song of the year for writing the "Barbie" hit, "What Was I Made For?" She thanked director Greta Gerwig for "making the best movie of the year."

It was just one of several standout moments from Sunday's show, hosted by Trevor Noah and broadcast live from Crypto.com Arena in downtown Los Angeles.

Karol G made Grammy history Sunday by becoming the first female performer to win best música urbana album for her blockbuster "Mañana Será Bonito" record.

"This is my first time at the Grammys," she told the audience in English. "And this is my first time holding my own Grammy."

Performances were many. Olivia Rodrigo brought her bloodsucking ballad "vampire" – or in this case, bloodletting, as red liquid dripped from the walls behind her. Joni Mitchell, 80, made Grammy history by performing "Both Sides Now" from her 1969 album "Clouds"; Travis Scott did a medley of "My Eyes," "I Know?," and "Fein." Burna Boy was joined by Brandy and 21 Savage and did "On Form," "City Boys," and "Sittin' on Top of the World."

A long and touching In Memoriam segment celebrated many of the musical greats lost last year. Stevie Wonder performed "For Once in My Life" and "The Best Is Yet To Come" in honor of Tony Bennett; Annie Lennox delivered "Nothing Compares 2 U" for Sinéad O'Connor. "Artists for ceasefire, peace in the world,"

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 27 of 61

Lennox said at the end of the song, her fist extended in the air.

Jon Batiste did a medley of "Ain't No Sunshine," "Lean On Me," and finally "Optimistic" with Ann Nesby for the late great music exec Clarence Avant. Oprah introduced a fiery Tina Turner tribute of "Proud Mary" by Fantasia Barrino and Adam Blackstone.

SZA also took the stage – performing a medley of her larger-than-life hits "Snooze" and "Kill Bill," joined by dancers wielding katanas. Later, she'd take home the trophy for best R&B song — for "Snooze," handed to her by Lizzo. SZA ran to the stage and gave a charming, out of breath speech because she was "changing, and then I took a shot."

Luke Combs' delivered a heartfelt rendition of "Fast Car" with Tracy Chapman – his cover of the Chapman classic has dominated country radio and won him song of the year at the 2023 CMAs. In 1989 the song won Chapman best female pop vocal performance.

Dua Lipa opened the show with a high-octane medley: first, a tease of her forthcoming single, "Training Season," then, her most recent single, "Houdini," and finally, her disco-pop "Barbie" hit "Dance the Night."

Eilish and Finneas also brought "Barbie" to the Grammys stage with live string accompaniment. They were followed by Cyrus, who performed "Flowers" for the first time live on television.

"Why are you acting like you don't know this song?" she teased the crowd — John Legend and wife Chrissy Teigen were among those in the audience who got up to dance — and later cheered mid-song, "I just won my first Grammy!"

Best country album went to Lainey Wilson for "Bell Bottom Country," — her very first Grammy — as presented by Kacey Musgraves. "I'm a fifth-generation farmer's daughter," she told the crowd, adding that she's a "songwriting farmer," and that's where the musical magic came from.

Jay-Z was awarded the Dr. Dre Global Impact Award and used his speech to talk about the hip-hop greats that came before him – and heavily suggesting at the Grammys history of placing rap on the backburner – or at the very least, not in the televised version of the show. (This year, there were no rap categories on the telecast, but two pop, one Latin, one country and one R&B.)

"We want you all to get it right," he said. "At least get it close to right," before switching focus to Beyoncé. "Most Grammys, never won album of the year. How does that work?"

Bridgers took an early lead at the Grammys, quickly winning four trophies ahead of the main telecast, with her and her boygenius bandmates bringing an infectious energy to the pre-telecast Premiere Ceremony.

Jack Antonoff took home producer of the year, non-classical for a third year in a row, tying Babyface as the only other producer to do so consecutively. "You need the door kicked open for you," he said in his acceptance speech. "Taylor Swift kicked that (expletive) door open for me," he said.

The first of three new categories in 2024, best pop dance recording, went to Kylie Minogue for "Padam Padam" — her first win in 18 years.

About 80 Grammys were handed out pre-broadcast. Regional Mexican star Peso Pluma won his first Grammy for his first and only nomination, for best música Mexicana album for his "Genesis."

Best African music performance, a new category which aims to highlight regional musical traditions and recognizing "recordings that utilize unique local expressions from across the African continent," went to South African singer Tyla for her ubiquitous hit, "Water."

"I never thought I'd say I won a Grammy at 21 years old," she said in her acceptance speech. "Last year God decided to change my whole life."

Killer Mike won three awards in quick succession Sunday night, but ended up in police custody before the main Grammys ceremony began because of an altercation, police spokesperson Officer Mike Lopez said.

The rapper won his first first Grammy in 21 years, for best rap performance for "Scientists & Engineers," which featured André 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane. Soon afterward, they won for "best rap song." Killer Mike also took home best rap album for "Michael," cheering, "It is a sweep! It is a sweep!"

Billy Joel was both the penultimate and final performance of the night. First, he brought his new track "Turn the Lights Back on" — his first new music in decades — live to the Grammy stage. Then, after album of the year was announced, he returned to the stage for his 1980 classic, "You May Be Right."

A welcome surprise was the inclusion of Celine Dion, who handed Swift her record-breaking trophy. "When I say I'm happy to be here, I really mean it from my heart," she told the audience. In 2022, Dion revealed she was diagnosed with a rare neurological disorder called stiff person syndrome, which causes spasms that affect her ability to walk and sing.

## El Salvador's Nayib Bukele heads for reelection as president, buoyed by support for gang crackdown

By MEGAN JANETSKY and MARCOS ALEMAN Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — Voters in El Salvador appeared to give Nayib Bukele a second term as president, putting him well on his way to a landslide victory in an election that for many hinged on the tradeoff of curtailed civil liberties for security in a country once terrorized by gangs.

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal said late Sunday that with ballots from 31% of polling places tallied, Bukele had 83% of the vote, far ahead of his nearest competitor's 7% for the leftist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front. The electoral site updating the count crashed shortly before midnight.

After casting his vote, Bukele made clear that he expects the newly elected Legislative Assembly to continue extending the special powers he has enjoyed since March 2022 to combat the gangs.

Later, standing on the balcony of the National Palace, he said that the country had made history.

"Why are there so many eyes on a small (Latin) American country?" he asked thousands of supporters. "They're afraid of the power of example."

"Salvadorans have given the example to the entire world that any problem can be solved if there is the will to do it," he said.

The self-described "world's coolest dictator" appeared to sweep to victory after enjoying soaring approval ratings and virtually no competition. That came despite concerns that Bukele's government has slowly chipped away at checks and balances in his first term and accusations that he dodged a constitutional ban on reelection.

After voting, he jostled with reporters, asserting that the election's results would serve as a "referendum" on what his administration has done.

"We are not substituting democracy, because El Salvador never had democracy," he said. "This is the first time in history that El Salvador has democracy. And I'm not saying it, the people say it."

Bukele has been a highly popular leader and only more so since the government began its crackdown on the country's feared gangs.

Under a "state of emergency" approved in March 2022, the government has arrested more than 76,000 people — more than 1% of the Central American nation's population. The assault on the gangs has spurred accusations of widespread human rights abuses and a lack of due process, but violence has plummeted in a country known just a few years ago as one of the most dangerous in the world.

Sara Leon, 48, was among throngs of people who flocked to El Salvador's previously gang-controlled downtown to celebrate. When she was 23, Leon risked her life to migrate from El Salvador to the United States with her 6-year-old daughter.

"If the gangs saw a cute girl, they abducted her, abused her and killed her," she said. "I didn't want that to happen to my daughter."

She returned to her homeland in October because of the "state of emergency." She said she now plans to buy a home here and hopes her daughter who has since moved to Toronto will be able to return.

"He is a genius," she said of Bukele, tearing up when asked what his administration has meant. "If he's a dictator, may we have a dictator for 100 more years. May he stay in power. That is good if he's this way and continues governing the country the same way."

Bukele's popularity has also drawn eyes from across the region, and he and party are increasingly looked to as a case study for a wider global rise in authoritarianism.

Throughout his presidency, Bukele has been accused of taking undemocratic steps that concentrated power in his hands, something observers have worried will only grow with Sunday's election.



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 29 of 61

He showed up in congress with soldiers while attempting to pass his agenda. After his party was victorious in 2021 legislative elections, the newly elected congress purged the constitutional court, replacing judges with loyalists. The new justices later ruled that Bukele could run for a second term despite the constitutional ban on reelection.

Bukele has also been accused of harassing and even detaining journalists, union organizers and political opponents.

But Bukele arrived on the scene when Salvadorans were craving change, when El Salvador's traditional parties — the conservative Nationalist Republican Alliance and leftist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front — alternating power for three decades were thoroughly discredited by deep corruption and ineffectiveness.

Earlier Sunday, Bukele waded through a crowd to vote wearing a blue golf shirt and white baseball cap, while supporters chanted, "Five more years! Five more years!"

Smiling, Bukele and his wife dropped their ballots into the box as R.E.M.'s 1987 hit "It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)," blared over speakers. Bukele has a habit of trolling his critics.

The charismatic leader has harnessed social media in a way few other leaders in the region have, using it as a tool to pump out propaganda, bolstered by an elaborate communications machine. Not appearing at a single campaign event before the election, he instead plastered videos taped from his couch on social media urging Salvadorans to vote for him so the opposition doesn't "free the gang members and use them to return to power."

He speaks with conviction about the changes he has made to El Salvador, describing the gangs as a "cancer" the nation had to battle in order to grow.

"What's coming in El Salvador is a period of prosperity, because now there's no stopping you from opening a business, no stopping you from studying, no stopping you from working," Bukele said Sunday.

He dismissed foreign criticism as promoting failed "recipes" and ignoring his administration's homegrown solution. He said now that voters had approved him for a second term, external observers don't have the right to describe his government as undemocratic.

Opposition lawmaker Claudia Ortiz, of the party VAMOS, urged voters to support candidates outside Bukele's party in the legislative elections in order to preserve checks and balances.

"Absolute power corrupts absolutely," she said in a video recorded from polling stations.

But Sunday night, Gesenia García, the 26-year-old owner of a sorbet shop in Ilopango, said she saw things differently. She had hitched a ride with neighbors from the outskirts of the capital to celebrate.

"This is a moment of happiness because before we lived in corruption and crime," they said. "He is the best that God could have sent to this country."

García said they had seen friends killed before their eyes under previous administrations. The traditional parties only brought corruption and bloodshed, she said.

"Our president is not unconstitutional because it is something the people made happen at the polls, nobody made me do it," García said. "He is not unconstitutional. The parties of the past are unconstitutional."

García strolled through San Salvador with 5-year-old son and mother, beaming to be out on streets that not long ago were no-go zones for ordinary citizens. Even without a plan for how to get home, they walked trusting everything would work out.

## **A year after Syria's deadly earthquake, orphaned children adjust to the loss bit by bit**

By ABBY SEWELL and GHAITH ALSAYED Associated Press

IDLIB, Syria (AP) — Aya al-Sudani, a bubbly toddler with a toothy smile, will mark her first birthday on Tuesday, but there will be no celebration with cake and presents. The day also marks a dark memory.

On Feb. 6, 2023, a massive earthquake hit Syria and Turkey and the baby girl was pulled alive from the rubble of her family's house in the town of Jinderis in northern Syria. She was still attached by an umbili-

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 30 of 61

cal cord to her dead mother.

The girl was named "Baby Aya" — Aya is Arabic for "a sign from God" — by hospital workers but nicknamed Afraa in memory of her mother by the relatives who are now her guardians. The newborn was the only surviving member of her immediate family after the devastating quake that killed more than 59,000 people.

She was one of hundreds of children orphaned or separated from their families by the disaster, on top of many more who have lost their parents in the country's nearly 13-year civil war.

Some 542 children were found "unaccompanied and separated" after the earthquake throughout Syria, said Eva Hinds, a spokesperson for the United Nations children's agency or UNICEF. Some were eventually reunited with their parents, others placed with "close relatives or extended family, and some have been supported with alternative care," she said.

Local authorities in northwest Syria say at least 537 children lost a parent to the quake, although of those only 61 were recorded as having lost both their mother and father. The real number is likely higher.

A year later, those children have begun to adjust to their new reality, most of them living now with extended family while smaller numbers have ended up in foster homes or orphanages.

For many of them, losing their parents in the earthquake was only the latest in a string of tragedies.

"Almost everyone in Syria at this point has a personal connection to loss because of the conflict," said Kathryn Achilles, a spokesperson for Save the Children's Syria response office. "It's not something that children should have to learn to live with ... having to deal with loss and deal with displacement and deal with losing family and community."

Yasmine Shahoud was 11 when the earthquake struck. Her family had been displaced from their hometown of Maarat al-Numan to the town of Armanaz in northwest Syria, about 70 kilometers (45 miles) away. Despite the war, she remembers many carefree hours playing and laughing with her siblings after school.

On Feb. 6, their house collapsed, and she was buried under the rubble for 20 hours before rescue workers pulled her out. Yasmine's arm and leg were crushed, requiring a series of surgeries. For the first few weeks, no one had the heart to tell the badly injured girl that her family was dead.

"When I arrived at the hospital, the child Yasmine was in a state of shock and didn't understand what had happened," said Ghaitha al-Ibrahim, a social worker with the Syrian American Medical Society who has followed her case.

The girl stayed for several months in an orphanage to be near the hospital and because she needed intensive physical therapy. Now she is living with her grandfather, aunt and uncle and cousins, with whose help, she said, "I made it through a lot of hard steps." Although she still walks with difficulty, she has gone back to school. She hopes eventually to become a pharmacist.

The first period was "very, very hard," Yasmine said, but "thank God, I'm getting better."

In the town of Harem in Idlib province, where 8-year-old Hanaa Shreif now lives with her grandfather and uncle's family, she likes to play with her baby cousin, born after the earthquake, who was named Mahmoud at Hanaa's request after her deceased father.

Hanaa's parents and sister died in the quake and Hanaa was trapped under the rubble for 33 hours. At first, doctors thought her hand would have to be amputated.

"She asked about her family, her mother and her father, and bit by bit we told her that they had gone to heaven," said her uncle, Ali Shreif.

After the earthquake, some children "were found in the streets, in garbage dumps, in front of mosques or among the fields who had been abandoned," said Alaeddin Janid, founder of Child Houses, a non-governmental organization that runs two shelters for orphaned or abandoned children. The organization works to reunite them with family members or place them in foster homes. Islam generally does not recognize legal adoption but encourages providing long-term guardianship to orphans.

Their center was badly damaged in the earthquake — although staff and children managed to get out safely — and they had to quickly secure another location to be able to receive the flood of children orphaned or separated from their families by the quake. Some of the shelter staff buried their own loved ones and then came back to work.

They were soon caring for about 100 children in their shelters, which before would host no more than 35. "About 70% of them, we were able to find their relatives and 30%, their family was all dead or the relatives had abandoned the child," Janid said.

In those cases, he said, the group worked to place the children with vetted foster families. "An orphanage is not a suitable place for any child to begin his life."

Despite the tragedy of her birth, Baby Aya — or Afraa — was one of the lucky ones. With no memory of the family she lost, the only parents she knows are her aunt and aunt's husband who took her in. Their four daughters and two sons have become like her sisters and brothers.

The family has an apartment in Jinderis where they stay in the daytime, but at night they crowd into a tent in one of the area's displacement camps, still afraid to sleep in a concrete building lest another earthquake should bring it down on their heads. Since the earthquake, the area lacks both work opportunities and schools.

The baby's uncle and guardian, Khalil al-Sawadi, said he hopes she will have the chance to study — possibly outside of Syria — and "take the highest degree, not like my children."

The family will not celebrate her first birthday because "this day is a painful memory." But he said, "I have hope at the same time because of the presence of Afraa, and we will tell her about this memory when she gets older."

## How two sentences in the Constitution rose from obscurity to ensnare Donald Trump

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — In the summer of 2020, Gerard Magliocca, like many during the coronavirus pandemic, found himself stuck inside with time on his hands.

A law professor at Indiana University, Magliocca figured he would research the history of two long-neglected sentences in the Constitution's 14th Amendment. Dating to the period just after the Civil War, they prohibit those who "engaged in insurrection or rebellion" from holding office.

On Jan. 6, 2021, after then-President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol to try to block certification of his loss to Joe Biden, Magliocca watched as Republicans such as Sens. Mitch McConnell and Mitt Romney described the attack as an "insurrection."

That night, Magliocca composed a quick post on a legal blog: "Section Three of the Fourteenth Amendment," he wrote, "might apply to President Trump."

Just over four years later, the U.S. Supreme Court will have to determine whether it does. On Thursday, the nation's highest court is scheduled to hear arguments over whether Trump can remain on the ballot in Colorado, where the state's Supreme Court ruled that he violated Section 3.

It's the first time the Supreme Court has heard a case on Section 3, which was used to keep former Confederates from holding government offices after the amendment's 1868 adoption. It fell into disuse after Congress granted an amnesty to most ex-rebels in 1872.

Before the attack on the Capitol, even many constitutional lawyers rarely thought about Section 3. It hadn't been used in court for more than 100 years. Its revival is due to an unlikely combination of Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, all rediscovering 111 words in the nation's foundational legal document that have now become a threat to the former president's attempt to return to office.

In the days after Jan. 6, thanks to scholars such as Magliocca, Section 3 started its slow emergence from obscurity.

Free Speech For People, a Massachusetts-based liberal nonprofit, sent letters to top election officials in all 50 states in June 2021, warning them not to place Trump on the ballot should he run again in 2024.

The group didn't hear back from any of them.

"People were just treating it as something that was not serious," recalled John Bonifaz, the group's co-founder.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 32 of 61

In January 2022, Free Speech For People filed a complaint in North Carolina to disqualify Republican Rep. Madison Cawthorn under Section 3. Cawthorn lost his primary, mooting the case.

That same month, the group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics, also known as CREW, decided to test Section 3 in court.

"It wasn't just Trump we were focused on," chief counsel Donald Sherman said in an interview. "One thing we've been very careful about is we don't think it's appropriate to pursue outside or longshot cases."

On Sept. 6, 2022, a New Mexico judge ordered Couy Griffin, a rural New Mexico county commissioner convicted of illegally entering the Capitol on Jan. 6, removed from his position after CREW filed against him. It was the first time in more than 100 years an official had been removed under Section 3. Griffin has appealed to the Supreme Court.

Trump announced his campaign for president two months later.

Both Free Speech For People and CREW began scouring state ballot laws, looking for places that allowed the rapid contesting of a candidacy. CREW settled on Colorado.

Sherman and another CREW attorney, Nikhel Sus, contacted Martha Tierney, a veteran election lawyer who also served as general counsel of the state Democratic Party.

Tierney wasn't acting as the Democratic Party's lawyer, but CREW wanted to balance its team. Sherman contacted Mario Nicolais, a former Republican election lawyer who had left the party over Trump.

Nicolais' first interaction with Sherman was a direct message about the case on X, the social media platform previously known as Twitter. Nicolais thought it could be from a crank.

"Is this for real or is this from somebody just angry at the president?" Nicolais recalled wondering.

On Sept. 6, 2023 — one year from the disqualification of Griffin — their 105-page complaint was filed in district court in Denver.

Trump hired former Colorado Secretary of State Scott Gessler to represent him. The Denver judge who got CREW's complaint, Sarah Block Wallace, said she was obligated to hold a hearing under state election law.

During the five-day hearing, two officers who defended the Capitol testified, along with a University of California professor who was an expert in right-wing extremism, two Trump aides and several other witnesses. One was Magliocca, who laid out the history of Section 3.

Trump's attorneys were pessimistic, expecting Wallace, who had a history of donating to Democrats, to rule against them. Trump spokesman Jason Miller addressed reporters outside court, complaining that the plaintiffs had intentionally filed in a liberal jurisdiction in a blue state.

Wallace issued her decision on Nov. 17. She found that Trump had "engaged in insurrection" but ruled that — contrary to Magliocca's testimony — it wasn't certain that the authors of the 14th Amendment meant it to apply to the president. Section 3 refers to "elector of President and Vice President," but not the office itself.

Wallace was hesitant to become the first judge in history to bar a top presidential contender unless the law was crystal clear.

"It was a loss that only a lawyer could love," Sus recalled.

CREW was just a legal sliver away from victory. It just needed the Colorado Supreme Court to uphold all of Wallace's ruling besides the technicality of whether the president was covered.

The seven justices of the state's high court — all appointed by Democrats from a pool chosen by a non-partisan panel — peppered both sides with pointed questions at oral argument three weeks later.

Neither side left feeling certain of victory.

On Dec. 19, the court announced it would issue its decision that afternoon — ruling 4-3 that Trump was disqualified. The decision was put on hold, pending the outcome of the case that will be argued Thursday.



## Here's how 2 sentences in the Constitution rose from obscurity to ensnare Donald Trump

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — In the summer of 2020, Gerard Magliocca, like many during the coronavirus pandemic, found himself stuck inside with time on his hands.

A law professor at Indiana University, Magliocca emailed with another professor, who was writing a book about overlooked parts of the Constitution's 14th Amendment. He decided he would research the history of two long-neglected sentences in the post-Civil War addition that prohibit those who "engaged in insurrection or rebellion" from holding office.

Magliocca posted a copy of his research — which he believed was the first law journal article ever written about Section 3 of the 14th Amendment — online in mid-December of 2020, then revised and re-posted it on Dec. 29. Eight days later, President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol to prevent the certification of his loss to Joe Biden. Magliocca watched as Republicans such as Sens. Mitch McConnell and Mitt Romney described the attack as an "insurrection."

That night, Magliocca composed a quick post on a legal blog: "Section Three of the Fourteenth Amendment," he wrote, "might apply to President Trump."

Just over four years later, the U.S. Supreme Court will have to determine whether it does. On Thursday, the nation's highest court is scheduled to hear arguments over whether Trump can remain on the ballot in Colorado, where the state's Supreme Court ruled that he violated Section 3.

It's the first time in history that the nation's highest court has heard a case on Section 3, which was used to keep former Confederates from holding government offices after the amendment's 1868 adoption. It fell into disuse after Congress granted an amnesty to most ex-rebels in 1872.

Before the violent Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, even many constitutional lawyers rarely thought about Section 3, a provision that isn't taught at most law schools and hadn't been used in court for more than 100 years. Legal scholars believe the only time it was cited in the 20th century was to deny a seat in Congress to a socialist on the grounds that he opposed U.S. involvement in World War I.

The clause's revival is due to an unlikely combination of Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, all rediscovering 111 words in the nation's foundational legal document that have now become a threat to the former president's attempt to return to office.

### THE FIRST TARGETS

Once she had dried her tears after watching rioters storm the Capitol, Norma Anderson sat down with one of the multiple copies of the Constitution she keeps around her house in the Denver suburbs and reread the 14th Amendment.

"I made the connection," Anderson, now 91, said in an interview.

Anderson is a former Republican leader of Colorado's General Assembly and state Senate, and eventually would become the lead plaintiff in the case now before the Supreme Court. The evening of Jan. 6, she read the provision that prohibited anyone who swore an oath to "support" the Constitution and later "engaged in insurrection" against it, or provided "aid and comfort" to its enemies, from holding office.

Anderson didn't yet have the chance to spread the word beyond her own circle, but in the days after Jan. 6, thanks to scholars such as Magliocca and the University of Maryland law professor whose book project had inspired him, Mark Graber, Section 3 started its slow emergence from obscurity.

"We were the two people doing a little work on Section 3," Graber said of Magliocca and himself. "We thought this is real interesting; it makes great chitchat at the American Legal Historians Society." He added, "Then Donald Trump did academics a favor."

Though the provision was occasionally mentioned, conversation in Washington and the legal profession in general remained dominated by Trump's second impeachment — where he was acquitted by the Senate after 43 Republicans voted not to convict him.

It took months before the first mention of Section 3 in a public document. Free Speech For People, a Massachusetts-based liberal nonprofit, sent letters to top election officials in all 50 states in June 2021,

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 34 of 61

warning them not to place Trump on the ballot should he run again in 2024 because he had violated the provision.

The group didn't hear back from any of them.

"People were just treating it as something that was not serious," recalled John Bonifaz, the group's co-founder.

In January 2022, Free Speech For People filed a complaint in North Carolina to disqualify Republican Rep. Madison Cawthorn under Section 3 for his involvement in the rally that preceded the Capitol attack. But Cawthorn lost his primary in that year's midterms, mooting the case.

At the same time, another liberal watchdog group was starting its own Section 3 campaign.

After Jan. 6, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics, also known as CREW, in Washington was focused on Trump's impeachment and other possible legal penalties against those who participated in the Capitol attack before exploring other remedies, said its chief counsel, Donald Sherman.

By January 2022, the group decided to test Section 3 in court.

"It wasn't just Trump we were focused on," Sherman said in an interview. "One thing we've been very careful about is we don't think it's appropriate to pursue outside or longshot cases."

Looking for a lower-level defendant, Sherman's organization zeroed in on Couy Griffin. The subject of one of the earliest Jan. 6 prosecutions, Griffin already has a rich legal record. He was recorded in a restricted area of the U.S. Capitol as head of a group called Cowboys for Trump. Griffin was convicted of illegally entering the Capitol, but acquitted of engaging in disorderly conduct.

He still served as a commissioner in a rural New Mexico county, which kept CREW's attention on him. On Sept. 6, 2022, a New Mexico judge ordered Griffin removed from his position. It was the first time in more than 100 years an official had been removed under Section 3. Griffin has appealed to the Supreme Court.

CREW prepared to turn to other Section 3 targets. But it quickly became clear Trump would be next. He announced his campaign for president on Nov. 15, 2022.

'IS THIS FOR REAL?'

Both Free Speech For People and CREW had similar discussions about how to challenge a presidential candidacy. They knew the complaints would have to come at the state level because federal courts have ruled that citizens can't challenge presidential criteria in that venue.

The two groups began scouring state ballot laws, looking for a place that allowed the rapid contesting of a candidacy. CREW settled on Colorado. It had a clear process for a quick challenge in trial court that would be fast-tracked on appeal to the state Supreme Court.

After a brief trip to Denver checking on potential local lawyers to lead the challenge, Sherman and another CREW attorney, Nikhel Sus, contracted Martha Tierney, a veteran election lawyer who also served as general counsel of the state Democratic Party.

"Hmm, that's a longshot," Tierney recalled thinking. She signed up, anyway.

Tierney wasn't acting as the Democratic Party's lawyer, but CREW wanted to balance its team with someone from the right. Sherman reached out to Mario Nicolais, a former Republican election lawyer who had left the party over Trump.

Nicolais' first interaction with Sherman was a direct message about the case on X, the social media network previously known as Twitter. Nicolais thought it could be from a crank.

"Is this for real or is this from somebody just angry at the president?" Nicolais recalled wondering.

Then he saw Sherman was with CREW. — an organization he considered serious. In Nicolais' office hangs a copy of his first appearance on the front page of The Denver Post, when he beat CREW's local chapter in a case before the Colorado Supreme Court.

Nicolais was in charge of recruiting plaintiffs. The attorneys wanted Republicans and independents, not only because they were eligible to vote in Colorado's Republican primary but also to keep the case from being seen as partisan. Anderson, the former state lawmaker, signed on right away.

On Sept. 6, 2023 — one year from the disqualification of the New Mexico county commissioner — Anderson's was the lead name of the six plaintiffs on the 105-page complaint filed in district court in Denver.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 35 of 61

## A HISTORIC RULING

Scott Gessler got the call from Trump's team that day. A former Colorado secretary of state, Gessler was one of the go-to Republican election lawyers in the state.

Trump's campaign had been fending off scores of Section 3 lawsuits across the country, often from fringe players such as John Castro, a write-in Republican presidential candidate from Texas who had filed numerous ones against Trump.

This case was more serious. The Denver judge who got CREW's complaint, Sarah Block Wallace, said she was obligated to hold a hearing under Colorado election law.

In the five-day hearing, which took place in late October and early November, two officers who defended the Capitol testified, along with a University of California professor who was an expert in right-wing extremism, two Trump aides and several other witnesses. One was Magliocca, who laid out the history of Section 3.

Trump's attorneys were pessimistic, expecting Wallace, who had a history of donating to Democrats, to rule against them. Trump's top spokesman, Jason Miller, addressed reporters outside court, complaining that the plaintiffs had intentionally filed in a liberal jurisdiction in a blue state.

Trump's lawyers filed a motion asking Wallace step aside because before becoming a judge, she had made a \$100 donation to a liberal group that had declared Jan. 6 was an "insurrection." She declined.

"I will not allow this legal proceeding to turn into a circus," Wallace said as the hearing began.

Testimony was occasionally interrupted by sirens from a fire station around the corner from Wallace's courtroom. Security was an ever-present concern. About a half-dozen sheriff's deputies stood guard throughout the trial, and the plaintiffs had reached out to the FBI and other law enforcement agencies.

To handle much of the examination and argument, Tierney and Nicolais had brought on a new firm of trial lawyers, whose lead partner was former Colorado Solicitor General Eric Olson.

Wallace issued her decision on Nov. 17. She ruled that Trump had "engaged in insurrection" but found that — contrary to Magliocca's testimony — it wasn't certain that the authors of the 14th Amendment meant it to apply to the president. Section 3 refers to "elector of President and Vice President," but not specifically to the office itself.

Wallace was hesitant to become the first judge in history to bar a top presidential contender from the ballot unless the law was crystal clear.

"It was a loss that only a lawyer could love," Sus recalled.

CREW was just a legal sliver away from victory — it just needed the Colorado Supreme Court to uphold all of Wallace's ruling besides the technicality of whether the president was covered.

## A COURT DIVIDED

The seven justices of the state's high court — all appointed by Democrats from a pool chosen by a nonpartisan panel — peppered both sides with pointed questions at oral argument three weeks later.

Olson and another partner from his firm, Jason Murray, argued for the plaintiffs. Murray had the rare distinction of having clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan, a member of the court's liberal bloc, and Justice Neil Gorsuch, a member of its conservative bloc.

Gessler handled the argument for Trump. At the end of the grueling session, he addressed the meaning of insurrection and summed up the unprecedented, improvised nature of the case.

"You're going to tell me, 'Mr. Gessler, you're making it up,'" Gessler told the justices. "I'm going to tell you, well, so did the judge. And at the end of the day, we all are to a certain extent."

Neither side left feeling certain of victory.

On Dec. 19, the court announced it would issue its ruling that afternoon. Sean Grimsley, one of Olson's law partners who also had argued the case, was in Washington, at the memorial service for former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, for whom he had clerked.

The ruling, which was 4-3, came down while Grimsley was on the flight back, frantically checking his phone via the plane's wi-fi. They had won. Grimsley leapt from his seat and dashed back several rows, where he high-fived a fellow O'Connor clerk who was on the flight.

Eight days later, Maine's Democratic secretary of state barred Trump from that state's ballot under Sec-

tion 3. That decision and Colorado's are on hold until the U.S. Supreme Court rules.

The reaction to Colorado and Maine's decisions has been furious, especially from Republicans. Trump has decried them as "election interference" and "anti-democratic." They have warned that, if they stand, they could open the door to challenges of other politicians under Section 3, including Biden for not sufficiently defending the nation's southern border.

Sherman, who chafes at the notion that his nonpartisan group works on Democrats' behalf, notes that several Republican lawyers, former judges, members of Congress and governors have filed briefs with the Supreme Court backing them. In contrast, Sherman said he has heard grumbling from Democrats that the case risks replacing Trump with a Republican who would be harder to beat in this year's election.

Free Speech For People has filed Section 3 cases against Trump in five states. None has succeeded, with every legal entity ruling that it doesn't have the authority to decide whether to remove Trump from the ballot. The Minnesota Supreme Court, for example, kept Trump on that state's ballot by ruling that state law allows political parties to put whomever they want on their primary ballot.

With most jurisdictions dodging the questions at the heart of the case, it can create a misleading impression that things have gone well for the former president.

"The cases have gone poorly for Trump," Derek Muller, a Notre Dame law professor who has followed the cases closely, wrote Friday in a blog post. "He lost on the merits in the only two jurisdictions that got to the merits, Colorado and Maine."

Next up is the one that matters most.

## **Jury to get manslaughter case against Michigan school shooter's mother**

By ED WHITE Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) — A Michigan jury will get instructions from a judge and begin deliberations Monday in a novel trial against a school shooter's mother who could go to prison if convicted of involuntary manslaughter in the deaths of four students in 2021.

Prosecutors say Jennifer Crumbley was grossly negligent when she failed to tell Oxford High School officials that the family had guns, including a 9 mm handgun that was used by her son, Ethan Crumbley, at a shooting range just a few days earlier.

The school was concerned about a macabre drawing of a gun, bullet and wounded man, accompanied by desperate phrases, on a math assignment. But Ethan was allowed to stay in school on Nov. 30, 2021, following a roughly 12-minute meeting with Jennifer and James Crumbley, who didn't take him home.

The teenager pulled the gun from his backpack in the afternoon and shot 10 students and a teacher, killing four peers. No one had checked the backpack.

"He literally drew a picture of what he was going to do. It says, 'Help me,'" prosecutor Karen McDonald said during closing arguments Friday in suburban Detroit.

Jennifer Crumbley knew the gun in the drawing was identical to the new one at home, McDonald said.

"She knew it wasn't stored properly," the prosecutor added. "She knew that he was proficient with the gun. She knew he had access to ammunition."

"Just the smallest steps" by Jennifer Crumbley could have saved the lives of Hana St. Juliana, Tate Myre, Justin Shilling and Madisyn Baldwin, the prosecutor said.

Defense attorney Shannon Smith told jurors that a conviction would have a chilling effect on unwitting parents whose kids break the law. The tragedy, she argued, was not foreseeable.

Ethan Crumbley was a "skilled manipulator" who didn't have mental illness, and the gun was the responsibility of James Crumbley, not Jennifer, Smith said.

"Unfortunately this is a case where the prosecution made a charging decision way too fast," Smith said. "It was motivated by obvious reasons, for political gain and done for media attention."

She said the case won't bring justice to the victims or their families: "It certainly doesn't bring back any lives."

Jennifer Crumbley, 45, and James Crumbley, 47, are the first parents in the U.S. to be charged in a mass school shooting committed by their child. The latter faces trial in March.



The maximum penalty for involuntary manslaughter is 15 years in prison. The Crumbleys have been in jail for more than two years, unable to post \$500,000 bond while awaiting trial.

Ethan Crumbley, now 17, pleaded guilty to murder and terrorism and is serving a life sentence.

Besides knowledge of the gun, the Crumbleys are accused of ignoring their son's mental health needs. In a journal found by police in his backpack, he wrote that they wouldn't listen to his pleas for help.

"I have zero help for my mental problems and it's causing me to shoot up the ... school," Ethan wrote.

## Shelling kills at least 28 at bakery in Russian-occupied Ukraine, Moscow-installed officials say

By The Associated Press undefined

Ukrainian shelling killed at least 28 people at a bakery in the Russian-occupied city of Lysychansk, Moscow-installed officials said.

At least one child was among the dead Saturday, local leader Leonid Pasechnik wrote in a statement on Telegram. A further 10 people were rescued from under the rubble by emergency services, he said.

Ukrainian officials in Kyiv did not comment on the incident.

Both Moscow and Kyiv have increasingly relied on longer-range attacks this winter amid largely unchanged positions on the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line in the nearly 2-year-old war.

However, Ukrainian forces have come under intense Russian attack over the past 24 hours, with continuous assaults along the front line, Ukraine's General Staff said in a statement Sunday.

Fighting has been particularly fierce in the eastern city of Avdiivka, where Moscow is attempting to encircle Kyiv's troops, while Ukrainian forces have also been on the defensive in Kupiansk, Lyman, Bakhmut and Zaporizhzhia, officials said.

One civilian was killed and two injured in a Russian artillery strike in the frontline town of Toretsk, less than 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) from Bakhmut, said Donetsk regional governor Vadym Filashkin.

The military administration for Ukraine's northern Sumy region said Sunday that Russian forces had shelled the region in 16 separate attacks the previous day, firing on the border communities of Yunakivka, Bilopillia, Krasnopillia, Velyka Pysarivka, and Esman. Gen. Serhii Naiev, commander of the Ukrainian Joint Forces, also said that Kyiv's troops had pushed back Russian sabotage and reconnaissance units attempting to cross the border in the Sumy region.

With Ukraine's soldiers concentrated in the eastern regions of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv, the reported incursion suggests that Moscow could be probing vulnerabilities on a new front to further stretch Ukrainian resources.

## Biden warns of a 'nightmare' future for the country if Trump should win again, and lists reasons why

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and GABE STERN Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — President Joe Biden on Sunday ticked through a list of reasons he says a second Donald Trump presidency would be a "nightmare" for the country as he urged Nevada Democrats to vote for him in the state's presidential primary this week and for his party at large in November.

Biden opened a campaign swing with a fundraiser where he focused on Trump's ample history of provocative statements — his description of Jan. 6 rioters as "hostages," his musing about a former top military officer deserving execution, his branding of fallen soldiers as "suckers" and "losers," his wish to be a Day One "dictator," his vow to supporters that "I am your retribution," and more.

Then it was on to a community center in a predominantly Black section of Las Vegas, where he told his crowd of several hundred that "you're the reason we'll make Donald Trump a loser again."

Biden said the stakes were huge when he took on Trump in 2020 — "what made America America, I thought, was at risk" — and they are even larger now as a likely rematch looms.

He told donors at the private home in Henderson, Nevada, that if they came to Washington, he'd show

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 38 of 61

them the White House dining room table where Trump, according to ex-aides, sat transfixed for hours in front of the TV as the rioters he'd fired up with his rhetoric stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

"We have to keep the White House," he said., "We must keep the Senate" and win back the House.

Accomplish that, he said, and "we can say we saved American democracy."

He was equally blunt in talking up his record at his subsequent rally where he implored voters to "imagine the nightmare of Donald Trump."

Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung responded in kind, saying Biden "has been a nightmare for this country in just three short years in the White House, and no amount of gaslighting will make Americans forget about all the misery and destruction he has brought."

In Tuesday's Nevada Democratic presidential primary, Biden faces only token opposition from author Marianne Williamson and a few relatively unknown challengers. He won Nevada in November 2020 by fewer than 3 percentage points. But he came to Nevada to rouse voters for the fall campaign as well.

The state known largely for its casino and hospitality industries is synonymous with split-ticket, hard-to-predict results. It has a transient, working-class population and large Latino, Filipino and Chinese American and Black communities. Nevada has a stark rural-urban divide, with more than 88% of active registered voters — and much of its political power — in the two most populous counties, which include the Las Vegas and Reno metro areas.

In 2022, Democrats successfully defended their Senate seat and lost the governor's office. The six constitutional officers elected statewide are split evenly among Democrats and Republicans.

The narrow victory of Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto helped Democrats party keep control of the Senate for the remainder of Biden's current term.

Working in Biden's favor this year is the vast Democratic operation built by the late Sen. Harry Reid. The "Reid Machine" has for years trained operatives and retained organizers and is partially why, despite Nevada's status as a purple state, Democrats have won every presidential election here since 2008.

But early signs show Biden could have more ground to make up than in past races. Voters are largely dissatisfied with the likely Biden-Trump rematch. A New York Times/Siena poll from November put Biden's approval rating at 36% in Nevada.

"I know from my reelection, the issues that matter to Nevadans are still those kitchen table issues," Cortez Masto said in an interview.

Biden has built his reelection campaign around the theme that Trump presents a dire threat to U.S. democracy and its founding values. The president also has championed the defense of abortion rights, recently holding his first big campaign rally, in Virginia, where the issue energized Democrats who won control of the state's House of Delegates.

Biden also promotes his handling of the economy, arguing that his policies have created millions of jobs, combated climate change and improved American competitiveness overseas. But polls suggest many voters aren't giving his administration credit.

The Democratic National Committee recently announced a six-figure ad buy in Nevada and South Carolina, where Biden won the leadoff primary Saturday. The ads are meant to boost enthusiasm among Black, Asian American and Latino voters statewide, including radio, television and digital ads in Spanish, Chinese and Tagalog, and a billboard in Las Vegas' Chinatown.

As early voting began a week ago in Nevada, Trump asserted without evidence during a campaign rally in Las Vegas that he was the victim of the Biden administration's weaponizing law enforcement against him. Trump has been indicted four times and faces 91 felonies.

Dan Lee, an associate professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said that for Biden, "the map says he has to hold on to Nevada."

The Republican presidential primary is also Tuesday but the state GOP is holding caucuses on Thursday to allocate delegates. Trump is competing in the caucuses; rival Nikki Haley opted to stay on the nonbinding primary ballot.

## Senators release a border and Ukraine deal but the House speaker declares it 'dead on arrival'

By STEPHEN GROVES, MARY CLARE JALONICK and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators on Sunday released a highly anticipated \$118 billion package that pairs border enforcement policy with wartime aid for Ukraine, Israel and other U.S. allies, but it quickly ran into a wall of opposition from top House Republicans, including Speaker Mike Johnson.

The proposal could be the best chance for President Joe Biden to resupply Ukraine with wartime aid — a major foreign policy goal that is shared with both the Senate's top Democrat, Sen. Chuck Schumer, and top Republican, Sen. Mitch McConnell. The Senate was expected this week to hold a key test vote on the legislation, but within hours of the text being released Johnson said on social media that it would be "dead on arrival" if it reaches the House.

With Congress stalled on approving \$60 billion in Ukraine aid, the U.S. has halted shipments of ammunition and missiles to Kyiv, leaving Ukrainian soldiers outgunned as they try to beat back Russia's invasion.

Senators have been working for months on the carefully negotiated compromise intended to overcome opposition from conservatives who have tired of funding Ukraine's fight. But the coming days will be a crucial test of whether congressional leaders can once again muscle their members to support a package designed to assert American strength — and commitment — around the world.

They will also be weighing whether to continue pressing on one of the most fraught issues in American politics — border and immigration legislation.

Biden said in a statement that the Senate proposal "allows the United States to continue our vital work, together with partners all around the world, to stand up for Ukraine's freedom and support its ability to defend itself against Russia's aggression."

And on the border, Biden said that the immigration system has been broken for too long, and it's time to fix it. "It will make our country safer, make our border more secure, treat people fairly and humanely while preserving legal immigration, consistent with our values as a nation," the Democratic president said.

The proposal would overhaul the asylum system with faster and tougher enforcement, as well as give presidents new powers to immediately expel migrants if authorities become overwhelmed with the number of people applying for asylum. The new bill would also invest in U.S. defense manufacturing, send \$14 billion in military aid to Israel, steer nearly \$5 billion to allies in the Asia-Pacific, and provide humanitarian assistance to civilians caught in conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

In a call with reporters after releasing the legislation, Schumer said he has never worked so closely with McConnell. He called the bill a "monumental step" toward strengthening national security at home and abroad.

Without the Ukraine aid, Schumer said, he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin "could be rolling over Ukraine and even into Eastern Europe."

McConnell said in a statement that the Senate must be "prepared to act."

"America's sovereignty is being tested here at home, and our credibility is being tested by emboldened adversaries around the world," McConnell said. "The challenges we face will not resolve themselves, nor will our adversaries wait for America to muster the resolve to meet them."

In a bid to overcome opposition from House Republicans, McConnell had insisted last year that border policy changes be included in the national security funding package. However, in an election-year shift on immigration, Biden and many Democrats have embraced the idea of strict border enforcement, while Donald Trump and his allies have criticized the proposed measures as insufficient.

Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, said on social media, "I've seen enough. This bill is even worse than we expected, and won't come close to ending the border catastrophe the President has created."

Republicans have been reluctant to give Biden a political win on an issue they see as one of his biggest vulnerabilities and argue that presidents already have enough authority to curb illegal border crossings — a stance that would ensure immigration remains a major issue in the presidential election. Yet at the same time, House Republicans have also pushed for their own, stricter version of border security legislation.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 40 of 61

That bill, which passed the House last year without a single Democratic vote, currently has no chance of gaining the Democratic support it would need in the Senate. GOP senators also attempted to add it on to other legislation last year, but that effort only gained 46 votes.

Johnson indicated Saturday that the House will vote on a separate package of \$17.6 billion of military aid for Israel — a move that allows House Republicans to show support for Israel apart from the Senate deal.

It is also unclear if the bill will pass in the Senate. Senate Republicans have been divided on the bill, with several in McConnell's ranks arguing that it isn't strong enough. Some quickly said they would vote against it.

"The 'border deal' is an easy NO. It reads like a parody of an actual border security bill," Sen. Marco Rubio, a Florida Republican, posted on social media.

The bipartisan proposal is aimed at gaining control of an asylum system that has been overwhelmed by historic numbers of migrants coming to the border.

Oklahoma Sen. James Lankford, who negotiated the bill for Republicans, told reporters that GOP critics were missing parts of the bill that would give Republicans wins on issues they have talked about for years.

He said it provides border-wall money, expands deportation flights, increases the number of border officers and creates a faster process for deportation. Republican critics, he said, should look at "how it clears up a lot of the long-term issues and loopholes that have existed in the asylum law and it gives us an emergency authority that stops the chaos right now on the border."

Migrants who seek asylum, which provides protection for people facing persecution in their home countries, would face a tougher and faster process to having their claim evaluated. The standard in initial interviews would be raised, and many would receive those interviews within days of arriving at the border.

Final decisions on their asylum claims would happen within months, rather than the often years-long wait that happens now. They would also be given work permits if they pass the initial screenings.

"America is and continues to be a bastion of hope for true asylum seekers," Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, an Arizona independent who negotiated the border proposal, told reporters on a phone call. "But it is not an open door for economic migrants. It has been, as we know, exploited dramatically by cartels in the last four to five years."

If the number of illegal border crossings reaches above 5,000 daily for a five-day average, an expulsion authority would automatically kick in so that migrants who cross illegally are expelled without an opportunity to make an asylum claim. If the number reaches 4,000, presidential administrations would have the option of using the new authority. Under the proposal, migrants could still apply at ports of entry.

Biden, referencing the authority, has said he would use it to "shut down the border" as soon as the bill is signed into law.

The bill would allot \$20 billion to immigration enforcement, including the hiring of thousands of new officers to evaluate asylum claims and hundreds of Border Patrol agents, as well as funding local governments that have seen influxes of migrants.

Among Democrats, the tougher asylum standards have raised concern, especially from progressive and Hispanic lawmakers. Sen. Alex Padilla, a Democrat of California, said in a statement that the proposal would cause "more chaos at the border, not less."

Immigration advocates were highly critical of new limits on asylum, with some urging that the bill be rejected in its current form.

The \$14 billion in the package intended for military support for Israel could also splinter Democratic votes. Sen. Bernie Sanders, an independent of Vermont, is pushing to strip \$10 billion for offensive weaponry for Israel from the package while maintaining money for defensive systems.

Schumer said he would schedule a key test vote on the legislation Wednesday.



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 41 of 61

## Forest fires rage on in central Chile, killing at least 112 people over 3 days

By PATRICIA LUNA and MANUEL RUEDA Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Firefighters wrestled Sunday with massive forest fires that broke out in central Chile two days earlier, as officials extended curfews in cities most heavily affected by the blazes and said at least 112 people had been killed.

The fires burned with the highest intensity around the city of Viña del Mar, where a famous botanical garden founded in 1931 was destroyed by the flames Sunday. At least 1,600 people were left without homes.

Several neighborhoods on the eastern edge of Viña del Mar were devoured by flames and smoke, trapping some people in their homes. Officials said 200 people were reported missing in Viña del Mar and the surrounding area. The city of 300,000 people is a popular beach resort and also hosts a well-known music festival during the southern hemisphere's summer.

On Sunday morning, Chilean President Gabriel Boric visited the town of Quilpé, which was also heavily affected by the fires and reported that 64 people had been killed. Late Sunday, Chile's Forensic Medicine Service updated the confirmed death toll to 112 people.

Boric said the death toll could rise as rescue workers search through homes that have collapsed. Some of those arriving in hospitals were also in critical condition.

Rodrigo Mundaca, the governor of the Valparaíso region, where Viña del Mar and other affected cities are located, said Sunday he believed some of the fires could have been intentionally caused, echoing a theory that had also been mentioned Saturday by Boric.

"These fires began in four points that lit up simultaneously," Mundaca said. "As authorities we will have to work rigorously to find who is responsible."

The fires around Viña del Mar began in mountainous forested areas that are hard to reach. But they have moved into densely populated neighborhoods on the city's periphery despite efforts by Chilean authorities to slow down the flames.

On Saturday, Boric said that unusually high temperatures, low humidity and high wind speeds were making it difficult to control the wildfires in central Chile, which have already burnt through 8,000 hectares (30 square miles) of forest and urban areas.

Boric flew over some of the areas burned by the fires Sunday and visited a school that has been turned into a shelter for the displaced. He said that a presidential vacation home on the shores of Viña del Mar that is surrounded by large gardens would be temporarily converted into a leisure center for the children of families affected by the fires.

The president declared two days of national mourning.

"All of Chile is suffering" Boric said. "But we will stand up once again."

Officials asked people in areas affected by the fires to evacuate their homes as quickly as possible, while those farther from the fires were told to stay at home in order to facilitate the transit of fire engines and ambulances.

Curfews were declared in Viña del Mar and the neighboring cities of Quilpé and Villa Alemana as part of an effort to prevent looting.

The fires broke out during a week of record high temperatures in central Chile. Over the past two months, the El Niño weather pattern has caused droughts and high temperatures in western South America that have also increased the risk of forest fires.

## Second atmospheric river in days blows into California, knocking out power and flooding roads

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The second of back-to-back atmospheric rivers battered California on Sunday, flooding roadways and knocking out power to nearly 850,000 people and prompting a rare warning for hurricane-force winds as the state braced for what could be days of heavy rains.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 42 of 61

The storm inundated streets and brought down trees and electrical lines across the San Francisco Bay Area, where winds topped 60 mph (96 kph) in some areas. Gusts exceeding 80 mph (128 kph) were recorded in the mountains.

Just to the south in San Jose, emergency crews pulled occupants out of the windows of a car stranded by floodwaters and rescued people from a homeless encampment alongside a rising river.

In Southern California, officials warned of potentially devastating flooding and ordered evacuations for canyons that burned in recent wildfires that are at high risk for mud and debris flows. The National Weather Service office for Los Angeles warned that "all systems are go for one of the most dramatic weather days in recent memory."

On Sunday, customers called the Santa Barbara Home Improvement Center inquiring about sandbags, flashlights and generators, said assistant manager Lupita Vital. Sandbags sold out on Saturday, so people were buying bags of potting soil and fertilizer instead, she said.

"People are trying to get anything they can get that's heavy to use it as, you know, protection for their doors and everything," Vital said Sunday.

"This storm is predicted to be one of the largest and most significant in our county's history, and our goal is to get through it without any fatalities or any serious injuries," Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown told reporters Saturday. Classes were canceled Monday for schools across the county, which was devastated by mudslides caused by powerful storms in 2018.

Strong winds and heavy rain brought treacherous conditions to the coastal city of Ventura, west of Los Angeles, said Alexis Herrera, who was trying to bail out his sedan which was filled with floodwater. "All the freeways are flooded around here," Herrera said in Spanish. "I don't know how I'm going to move my car."

More than 847,000 customers were without electricity statewide by Sunday evening, with most of the outages concentrated in coastal regions, according to [poweroutage.us](http://poweroutage.us).

Six San Francisco Bay Area counties were at low risk of waterspouts coming ashore and becoming tornadoes, said the Storm Prediction Center. The last time the center forecasted a tornado risk in the region was in February 2015, according to the San Francisco Chronicle.

Winds caused hours-long delays at San Francisco International Airport. By 2:30 p.m. Sunday, 155 departing flights were delayed and 69 had been canceled, according to the tracking website FlightAware.

Palisades Tahoe, a ski resort about 200 miles (320 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco, said it was anticipating the heaviest snowfall yet this season, with accumulations of 6 inches (15 centimeters) per hour for a total of up to two feet (60 centimeters). Heavy snow was expected into Monday throughout the Sierra Nevada and motorists were urged to avoid mountain roads.

Much of the state had been drying out from the system that blew in last week, causing flooding and dumping welcome snow in mountains. The latest storm, also called a "Pineapple Express" because its plume of moisture stretches back across the Pacific to near Hawaii, arrived offshore in Northern California on Saturday, when most of the state was under some sort of wind, surf or flood watch.

The weather service on Sunday issued a rare "hurricane force wind warning" for the Central Coast, with wind gusts of up to 92 mph (148 kph) possible from the Monterey Peninsula to the northern section of San Luis Obispo County.

Meanwhile, Southern California was at risk of substantial flooding beginning late Sunday because of how slow the system was moving, said Ryan Kittell, a meteorologist at the weather service's Los Angeles-area office.

"The core of the low pressure system is very deep, and it's moving very slowly and it's very close to us. And that's why we have those very strong winds. And the slow nature of it is really giving us the highest rainfall totals and the flooding risk," he said at a Sunday briefing.

Evacuation orders and warnings were in effect for mountain and canyon areas of Monterey, Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles counties. LA County Supervisor Lindsay Horvath urged residents near wildfire burn areas of Topanga and Soledad canyons to heed orders to get out ahead of possible mudslides.

"If you have not already left, please gather your family, your pets, your medications and leave immedi-

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 43 of 61

ately," Horvath said at a Sunday briefing. The county set up shelters where evacuees could spend the night.

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Sunday declared a state of emergency for Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services activated its operations center and positioned personnel and equipment in areas most at risk.

The storm was expected to move down the coast and bring heavy rain, possible flash-flooding and mountain snow to the Los Angeles area late Sunday, before moving on to hammer Orange and San Diego counties on Monday.

"This is a dangerous system with major risks to life and property," the weather service's LA-area office said. "Residents should heed any evacuation orders. Stay off the roads, especially the freeways, this afternoon through at least Monday morning."

Organizers of the Grammy Awards in downtown Los Angeles were hoping the Sunday evening show would end before the fiercest rain moved in.

As of Sunday afternoon, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second largest, said it was planning to open schools as usual Monday. The decision would be reevaluated at 6 a.m. Monday, said Superintendent Alberto Carvalho.

The weather service forecast up to 8 inches (20 cm) of rainfall across Southern California's coastal and valley areas, with 14 inches (35 cm) possible in the foothills and mountains. Heavy to moderate rain is expected in Southern California until Tuesday.

## **Michigan city ramps up security after op-ed calls it 'America's jihad capital'**

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) — Dearborn, Michigan, is ramping up its police presence in response to fallout from an opinion piece that described the city, which has the nation's highest Muslim population per capita, as "America's jihad capital."

Dearborn Mayor Abdullah Hammoud on Friday tweeted that city police increased security at places of worship and major infrastructure points as a "direct result" of a Wall Street Journal opinion piece titled, "Welcome to Dearborn, America's Jihad Capital."

Hammoud posted on the X platform, formerly known as Twitter, that the item published Friday "led to an alarming increase in bigoted and Islamophobic rhetoric online targeting the city of Dearborn."

Steven Stalinsky, executive director of the Middle East Media Research Institute, who authored the opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal, said in an interview with The Associated Press that he wanted to draw attention to protests in Michigan and elsewhere across the U.S. in which people have expressed support for Hamas since the start of the war with Israel.

More than 27,000 Palestinians, mostly women and minors, have been killed in Gaza since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory. Hamas killed more than 1,200 people and kidnapped about 250 more, mostly civilians, in the attack.

"Nothing in my article was written to instigate any sort of hate," Stalinsky said. "This is a moment for counterterrorism officials to be concerned."

The Wall Street Journal did not immediately respond Sunday to requests for comment left by The Associated Press via email and voicemail. An email sent to a Dearborn spokeswoman also was not immediately returned Sunday.

In a tweet referencing Dearborn on Saturday, President Joe Biden condemned "hate in all forms."

"Americans know that blaming a group of people based on the words of a small few is wrong," Biden's post read. "That's exactly what can lead to Islamophobia and anti-Arab hate, and it shouldn't happen to the residents of Dearborn — or any American town."

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 44 of 61

## 2026 World Cup final will be played at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey

By RONALD BLUM AP Sports Writer

The 2026 World Cup final will be played at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, beating out Texas and California for soccer's showcase game.

FIFA awarded the July 19 championship to the \$1.6 billion venue, which opened in 2010, the culminating match of an expanded 48-nation, 104-game tournament that will be spread across three nations for the first time.

Located about 10 miles from Manhattan, MetLife was promoted by both New York and New Jersey, where the stadium was built in the Meadowlands marshes. The land of Bruce Springsteen, Jon Bon Jovi and Frank Sinatra will be the focal point of the globe on that Sunday, when either Lionel Messi's Argentina will try to win its second straight title or a successor will emerge.

"It will be a celebration of our diversity and our values," New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy said in a telephone interview. "The bigger picture is what leads up to it and what we leave behind for the decades to come."

FIFA made the announcement Sunday at a Miami television studio, allocating the opener of the 39-day tournament to Mexico City's Estadio Azteca on June 11 and the finale to the home of the NFL's New York Jets and Giants.

Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones had lobbied for the final to be at his AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

"The competition was dealing with the perception of the coastal, of a New York, or a Los Angeles," he said. "If this were totally being played to just America and the United States, that wouldn't have been such a formidable thing to overcome. But internationally, that's formidable to overcome."

All games from the quarterfinals on are being played in the United States. Semifinals are on July 14 at AT&T and the following day at Mercedes Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

Quarterfinals are at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, on July 9, at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, the following day, and at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, and Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida, on July 11. The third-place game will be at Hard Rock on July 18.

The U.S. team will train in suburban Atlanta ahead of the tournament and open at SoFi on June 12. The Americans play seven days later at Seattle's Lumen Field and finish the group stage at SoFi on June 25.

Since reaching the semifinals of the first World Cup in 1930, the U.S. has advanced to the quarterfinals just once, in 2002.

"It's about making our nation proud," American coach Gregg Berhalter said. "One way to really grow the game and to change soccer in America forever is to perform well and do something that no U.S. team has ever done before."

Seventy-eight of 104 matches will be played in the U.S., with 13 games each in Mexico and Canada, and there as many as six matches a day.

AT&T will host a tournament-high nine matches. There will be eight each at MetLife, SoFi and Mercedes Benz; seven apiece at Hard Rock, Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, and NRG Stadium in Houston; and six apiece at Lumen, Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, and Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California.

FIFA officials did not publicly explain their site-decision process.

Philadelphia's final match will be a round-of-16 meeting on July 4, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Philadelphia's Citizens Bank Park hosts baseball's All-Star Game, likely on July 14.

Santa Clara is the only U.S. site that will not host a game after the new round of 32. AT&T will host two round-of-32 matches.

FIFA expanded the World Cup from 32 to 48 nations, increased matches from 64 and announced the 16 sites in 2022.

Murphy learned of the decision while at a watch party in a MetLife Stadium suite. He was not discouraged by a British tabloid report on Jan. 17 that said the final would be at AT&T.

"We did everything we could to put our head down, focus on the job at hand, kind of push out the



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 45 of 61

noise, and that turned out to be a winning formula," Murphy said.

Mexico will play its second match at Guadalajara's Estadio Akron on June 18 and return to Azteca on June 24. Mexico City will host five matches, with four each at Monterrey's Estadio BBVA and Guadalajara.

Canada will play its opening first-round match in Toronto on June 12, then at B.C. Place in Vancouver, British Columbia, on June 18 and 24. Each Canada venue will host 13 games.

A nation will need to play eight matches to win the title, up from seven since 1982.

All 11 of the U.S. stadiums are home to NFL teams. Hard Rock will host this year's Copa América final on July 14, while MetLife was the site of the 2016 Copa América final.

Both the 1970 and 1986 World Cup finals were at Azteca.

When the U.S. hosted the 24-nation, 52-game tournament in 1994, the final was at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, the opener at Chicago's Soldier Field and the semifinals at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford and the Rose Bowl.

With the additional teams, the length of the tournament will grow from 29 days in the shortened 2022 schedule in Qatar and 32 days for the 2018 tournament in Russia.

Only one match will involve a team that has not had at least three off days. FIFA divided the group stage into East, Central and West regions and intended to make travel shorter for group winners.

The stadiums in Arlington, Atlanta and Houston have retractable roofs that are expected to be closed because of summer heat, and Inglewood and Vancouver have fixed roofs.

Artificial turf will be replaced by grass in Arlington, Atlanta, East Rutherford, Foxborough, Houston, Inglewood, Seattle and Vancouver.

Several of the venues are expected to widen their surfaces to accommodate a 75-by-115 yard (68-by-105 meter) playing field, including AT&T, MetLife and SoFi.

## **Powell: Federal Reserve on track to cut rates this year with inflation slowing and economy healthy**

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Chair Jerome Powell said in an interview broadcast Sunday night that the Federal Reserve remains on track to cut interest rates three times this year, a move that's expected to begin as early as May.

Powell, in an interview recorded Thursday for the CBS news program "60 Minutes," also said the nation's job market and economy are strong, with no sign of a recession on the horizon.

"I do think the economy is in a good place," he said, "and there's every reason to think it can get better."

Powell's comments largely echoed remarks he gave at a news conference Wednesday, after the Fed decided to keep its key interest rate steady at about 5.4%, a 22-year high. To fight inflation, the Fed raised its benchmark rate 11 times beginning in March 2022, causing loans for consumers and businesses to become much more expensive.

The Fed chair also reiterated that the central bank's next meeting in March was likely too soon for a rate cut. Most economists think the first cut is likely to come in May or June.

With inflation steadily cooling, nearly all the 19 members of the Fed's policy-setting committee have agreed that cuts in the central bank's key rate will be appropriate this year, Powell said in the "60 Minutes" interview. A reduction in that rate would help lower the cost of mortgages, auto loans, credit cards and other consumer and business borrowing.

In December, Fed officials indicated that they envisioned three rate cuts in 2024, reducing their benchmark rate to about 4.6% by year's end. Powell told "60 Minutes" that that forecast likely still reflected policymakers' views.

As gauged by the Fed's preferred measure, inflation fell to just 2.6% in December compared with 12 months earlier. And in the second half of 2023, inflation was measured at an annual pace of just 2%, matching the Fed's target level, down drastically from a peak of 7.1% in the summer of 2022.

Powell attributed the inflation surge of 2021-2022 to the disruptions of the pandemic, including a shift

in spending away from services, like restaurant meals, to goods, like home office furniture and exercise bikes. At the same time, COVID closed down or slowed factories across the globe, severely disrupting supply chains and causing widespread shortages of goods and components. Both trends, Powell said, accelerated inflation.

At the same time, Powell acknowledged in the interview, the Fed misjudged the duration of the resulting inflation, which it repeatedly suggested would prove short-lived. As he has before, Powell said the central bank moved too slowly to raise its key rate, which can help slow borrowing and spending. Inflation began spiking in mid-2021 yet the Fed didn't start raising rates until March 2022.

"So in hindsight, it would've been better to have tightened policy earlier," Powell said, referring to rate hikes. "I'm happy to say that. ... We thought that the economy was so dynamic that it would fix itself fairly quickly. And we thought that inflation would go away fairly quickly without an intervention by us."

At his news conference Wednesday, Powell signaled that the Fed was likely to cut rates this year but underscored that central bank officials wanted to see further evidence that inflation is in check.

"It's not that we're looking for better data — it's just that we're looking for a continuation of the good data that we've been getting," he said. "We just need to see more."

Also Wednesday, Powell repeatedly acknowledged the strength of the U.S. economy and noted that inflation had slowed without the sharp rise in unemployment and weak growth that many economists had said would be necessary to cool consumer demand and slow price increases.

"We've got six months of good inflation data and an expectation that there's more to come," Powell said Wednesday. "So this is a good situation. Let's be honest. This is a good economy."

Other Fed officials have expressed caution about the prospect of rate cuts, particularly after a government report Friday showed that job growth soared unexpectedly in December, a sign that businesses remain confident enough in the economy to add many workers.

Michelle Bowman, a member of the Fed's Board of Governors, said Friday that once it was clear that inflation was in check, it would eventually become appropriate to cut rates.

"In my view," she said, "we are not yet at that point."

## **GOP governors back at Texas border to keep pressure on Biden over migrant crossings**

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

EAGLE PASS, Texas (AP) — As more than a dozen Republican governors gathered Sunday on the Texas border, Kyle Willis was across the river in Mexico considering his next move to enter the U.S.

The 23-year-old Jamaican, who said he left his country after facing attacks and discrimination due to his sexuality, had followed the path of a historic number of migrants over the past two years and tried crossing the Rio Grande at the border city of Eagle Pass. But he waded back across the river after spending hours, in soaking clothes, failing to persuade Texas National Guard soldiers behind a razor wire fence to let him through.

"It's not just something they're saying to deter persons from coming in. It's actually real," said Willis, who for now is staying at a shelter in Piedras Negras.

His experience would be considered a victory for Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who returned to Eagle Pass on Sunday surrounded by GOP governors who have cheered on his extraordinary showdown with President Joe Biden's administration over immigration enforcement. But declines in crossings are part of a complex mix of developments along the U.S. border, including heightened enforcement in Mexico. Meanwhile, migrants are moving further down the river and crossing elsewhere.

The issue was also at the forefront in Washington, where senators on Sunday raced to release a highly-anticipated bill that pairs border enforcement policy with wartime aid for Ukraine.

Abbott said he would continue expanding operations along the Texas border but did not provide details. For nearly a month, Texas has restricted U.S. Border Patrol's access to an area along the river known as Shelby Park, accusing the Biden administration of not being tough enough on crossings.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 47 of 61

"We are here to send a loud and clear message that we are banding together to fight to ensure that we will be able to maintain our constitutional guarantee that states will be able to defend against any type of imminent danger," Abbott said.

The record number of border crossings is a political liability for President Joe Biden and an issue that Republicans are eager to put front and center to voters in an election year. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis last week committed to send more National Guard troops to Texas and other governors are also weighing new deployments.

Although DeSantis wasn't present Sunday in Eagle Pass, Abbott was joined by Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders of Arkansas and Gov. Bill Lee of Tennessee, among other Republicans.

Eagle Pass is where Texas has been locked in a power struggle with the Biden administration for the past month after the state began denying access to U.S. Border Patrol agents at Shelby Park.

Crossings in recent weeks are down overall along the entire U.S. border, including areas without such a heavy security presence.

Tucson, Arizona, which has been the busiest of nine Border Patrol sectors on the Mexican border, tallied 13,800 arrests in the weeklong period that ended Friday. That is down 29% from a peak of 19,400 in week ended Dec. 22, according to John Modlin, the sector chief.

Just a day after Biden expressed "his appreciation for Mexico's operational support and for taking concrete steps to deter irregular migration" in a call with President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the Mexican immigration agency said Sunday that in the last week, they had rescued 71 immigrants – 22 of them minors— in two groups stranded on sand bars of the Rio Grande, between Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras. They were from Mexico, Central America, Ecuador and Peru.

A Honduran woman and her 1-year-old baby were also rescued from the water and the emergency team also found three corpses, apparently migrants who died trying to cross into the U.S.

Biden, now sounding increasingly like former President Donald Trump, is pressing Congress for asylum restrictions that would have been unthinkable when he took office. Immigration remains a major worry for voters in the 2024 election: An AP-NORC poll earlier this month found that voters voicing concerns about immigration climbed to 35% from 27% last year.

The arrival of GOP governors to Eagle Pass rounds out a weekend that has kept the small border city of roughly 30,000 residents in an unwitting spotlight. Hundreds protesting Biden's immigration policies held a "Take Back Our Border" rally on the outskirts of the city on Saturday where vendors sold Donald Trump-inspired MAGA hats and Trump flags.

The number of crossings in Eagle Pass has recently fallen to a few hundred a day. Texas closed access to federal agents at Shelby Park after the number of crossings decreased sharply at the end of December. Mike Banks, who Abbott appointed last year to oversee Texas' border operations, described the park as a "magnet" for migrants trying to enter the country.

"So we've taken that pull factor away," Banks said.

Mexico has bolstered immigration efforts that include adding more checkpoints and sending people from the northern border to southern Mexico. The country has also deported some Venezuelan migrants back home.

Melissa Ruiz, 30, arrived at the Piedras Negras shelter, across the river from Eagle Pass, along with her four children. The Honduran mother said gang members back home had tried to recruit her 15-year-old son, her oldest, prompting her to reluctantly flee.

Ruiz said she had little awareness of the tightening security on the Texas side, having heard of many people crossing into the U.S. since she arrived at the shelter. The main deterrence for her, she said, is the cold weather and the river's increased flow after recent rainfall. Drownings in the river are tragically common.

"What they say that one suffers so much on this road, it's true," Ruiz said.

## US warns of further retaliation if Iran-backed militias continue their attacks

By JON GAMBRELL and TARA COPP Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — After a weekend of retaliatory strikes, the United States on Sunday warned Iran and the militias it arms and funds that it will conduct more attacks if American forces in the Mideast continue to be targeted, but that it does not want an “open-ended military campaign” across the region.

“We are prepared to deal with anything that any group or any country tries to come at us with,” said Jake Sullivan, President Joe Biden’s national security adviser. Sullivan said Iran should expect “a swift and forceful response” if it — and not one of its proxies — “chose to respond directly” against the U.S.

Sullivan delivered the warnings during a series of interviews with TV news shows after the U.S. and Britain on Saturday struck 36 Houthi targets in Yemen. The Iran-backed militants have fired on American and international interests repeatedly in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war.

An air assault Friday in Iraq and Syria targeted other Iranian-backed militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in retaliation for the drone strike that killed three U.S. troops in Jordan last weekend. The U.S. fired again at Houthi targets on Sunday.

“We cannot rule out that there will be future attacks from Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria or from the Houthis,” Sullivan said. He said the president has told his commanders that “they need to be positioned to respond to further attacks as well.”

The U.S. has blamed the attack at the Tower 22 base in Jordan on Jan. 28 on the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a coalition of Iranian-backed militias. Iran has tried to distance itself from the drone strike, saying the militias act independently of its direction.

Biden “is not looking for a wider war,” Sullivan said, when questioned about the potential for strikes inside Iran that would expand the conflict in the volatile region. But when asked about the possibility of direct escalation by the Iranians, he said: “If they chose to respond directly to the United States, they would be met with a swift and forceful response from us.”

While pledging to respond in a “sustained way” to new assaults on Americans, Sullivan said he “would not describe it as some open-ended military campaign.”

Still, he said, “We intend to take additional strikes and additional action to continue to send a clear message that the United States will respond when our forces are attacked or our people are killed.”

There will be more steps taken, he said. “Some of those steps will be seen. Some may not be seen.”

The U.S. attack on dozens of sites in Iraq and Syria hit more than 85 targets at seven locations. These included command and control headquarters, intelligence centers, rockets and missiles, drone and ammunition storage sites and other facilities that were connected to the militias or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ Quds Force, the expeditionary unit that handles Tehran’s relationship with, and arming of, regional militias.

The Biden administration has so far appeared to stop short of directly targeting Iran or senior leaders of the Quds Force within its borders.

The U.S. military does not have any confirmation at this time of civilian casualties from those strikes, Sullivan said. “What we do know is that the targets we hit were absolutely valid targets from the point of view of containing the weaponry and the personnel that were attacking American forces. So, we are confident in the targets that we struck.”

Some of the militias have been a threat to U.S. bases for years, but the groups intensified their assaults in the wake of Israel’s war with Hamas following the Oct. 7 attack on Israel that killed 1,200 people and saw 250 others taken hostage. More than 27,000 people have been killed by Israel’s offensive against Hamas in Gaza, the territory’s Health Ministry has said,

The Houthis have conducted almost daily missile or drone attacks against commercial and military ships transiting the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and they have made clear that they have no intention of scaling back their campaign despite a new international force to protect vessels in the vital waterway.

U.S. strikes overnight Sunday struck across six provinces of Yemen held by the Houthi rebels, includ-



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 49 of 61

ing in Sanaa, the capital. The Houthis gave no assessment of the damage but the U.S. described hitting underground missile arsenals, launch sites and helicopters used by the rebels.

"These attacks will not discourage Yemeni forces and the nation from maintaining their support for Palestinians in the face of the Zionist occupation and crimes," Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said. "The aggressors' airstrikes will not go unanswered."

Meanwhile, Iran warned the U.S. over potentially targeting two cargo ships in the Mideast long suspected of serving as forwarding operating bases for Iranian commandos. The statement from Iran on the Behshad and Saviz ships appeared to signal Tehran's growing unease over the U.S. strikes across the region.

The ships are registered as commercial cargo ships with a Tehran-based company the U.S. Treasury has sanctioned as a front for the state-run Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines. The Saviz, then later the Behshad, have loitered for years in the Red Sea off Yemen, suspected of serving as spy positions for Iran's Revolutionary Guard.

In the video statement by Iran's regular army, a narrator describes the vessels as "floating armories." The narrator describes the Behshad as aiding an Iranian mission to "counteract piracy in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden." But Iran is not publicly known to have taken part in any of the recent campaigns against rising Somali piracy in the region off the back of the Houthi attacks.

Just before the new campaign of U.S. airstrikes began, the Behshad traveled south into the Gulf of Aden. It's now docked in Djibouti in East Africa just off the coast from a Chinese military base in the country.

The statement ends with a warning overlaid with a montage of footage of U.S. warships and an American flag.

"Those engaging in terrorist activities against Behshad or similar vessels jeopardize international maritime routes, security and assume global responsibility for potential future international risks," the video said.

The U.S. Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet declined to comment over the threat.

The Saviz is now in the Indian Ocean near where the U.S. alleges Iranian drone attacks recently have targeted shipping.

Sullivan appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," ABC's "This Week," CNN's "State of the Union" and CBS' "Face the Nation."

## Far-right Israel minister suggests that Trump would give more US support to offensive in Gaza

By MELANIE LIDMAN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A far-right minister in Israel's government has criticized President Joe Biden and said that having Donald Trump in power would allow more freedom to fight Hamas. The comments sparked outrage among other Israeli officials on Sunday and highlighted the sensitivity of relations as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visits the region again this week.

The Biden administration has skirted Congress to rush weapons to Israel and shielded it from international calls for a cease-fire in the four months since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. But the White House has urged Israel to take greater measures to avoid harming civilians and allow more aid to besieged Gaza.

Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel's national security minister, said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal that Biden was hindering Israel's war effort.

"Instead of giving us his full backing, Biden is busy with giving humanitarian aid and fuel (to Gaza), which goes to Hamas," Ben-Gvir said. "If Trump was in power, the U.S. conduct would be completely different."

His remarks drew fire from Benny Gantz, a retired general and member of Netanyahu's three-man War Cabinet, who said Ben-Gvir was "causing tremendous damage" to U.S.-Israeli relations. Opposition leader Yair Lapid, also posting on X, said Ben-Gvir's remarks prove that he "does not understand foreign relations."

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry condemned Ben-Gvir's comments as "racist" and called for international sanctions against him, saying he threatens the region's stability.

Netanyahu, without mentioning Ben-Gvir by name, appeared to refer to his remarks during a weekly Cabinet meeting. "I am not in need of any assistance in navigating our relations with the U.S. and the

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 50 of 61

international community," he said.

Ben-Gvir, along with other far-right figures, has called for "voluntary" mass emigration of Palestinians from Gaza and the return of Jewish settlements, which Israel dismantled when it withdrew troops from the territory in 2005. The Biden administration opposes any such scenario.

Ben-Gvir and other key members of Netanyahu's governing coalition have threatened to bring down the government if they believe he is too soft on Hamas. Netanyahu said the military was carrying out "very aggressive raids" in northern and central Gaza while dealing with remaining Hamas battalions around Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah.

Israel's military said Sunday it had raided the headquarters of Hamas' brigade in Khan Younis in the south and found what it called training materials for the Oct. 7 attack including "models simulating entrance gates of Israeli kibbutzim, military bases and IDF armored vehicles."

The war in Gaza has leveled vast swaths of the tiny enclave, displaced 85% of its population and pushed a quarter of residents to starvation. The Health Ministry in Gaza said 127 bodies had been brought to hospitals in the last 24 hours, bringing the overall death toll to 27,365. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants but says most of those killed are women and children.

In central Gaza, Israeli airstrikes hit two houses and a mosque in Deir al-Balah and killed 29 people and wounded at least 60 others including children, according to an Associated Press journalist at the scene. At Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, a nurse cleaned the head injuries of a boy who sat between two other children, one trembling, the other in tears.

Other Palestinians found shelter at the hospital but little relief. "Someone like me has been here for three months or two-and-a-half months, and I haven't had a shower. What can we do? We want to go back to our home," said Basemah Al-Haddad, displaced from Gaza City.

Two children were killed in separate airstrikes in Rafah, according to the registration office at the hospital where the bodies were taken. The first hit a house in the Jeneina refugee camp and killed a 12-year-old. The second hit a room west of the Rafah border crossing, killing a 2-year-old.

The bodies lay on the hospital floor. A female relative bent down to gently touch one child's face.

More humanitarian aid to Gaza will be a "top priority" as Blinken visits the region, Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, told CBS. Blinken is set to begin Monday in Saudi Arabia and will stop in Egypt, Qatar, Israel and the West Bank.

Another focus is Israel's tense negotiations mediated by the U.S., Qatar and Egypt aimed at freeing more than 100 remaining captives taken in the Oct. 7 attack in return for a cease-fire and the release of Palestinians jailed in Israel.

"It's up to Hamas to come forward and respond to what is a serious proposal," Sullivan told NBC, adding there's no clear idea how many hostages remain alive.

Hamas and other militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7 attack and abducted around 250. More than 100 captives, mostly women and children, were released during a weeklong cease-fire in November in exchange for the release of 240 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

Hamas has said it won't release more hostages until Israel ends its offensive. It also demands the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners. Netanyahu has publicly ruled out both demands.

Hamas is expected to respond to the latest cease-fire offer in the coming days.

## Claims that Jan. 6 rioters are 'political prisoners' endure. Judges want to set the record straight

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — While sentencing a North Carolina man to prison for his role in the U.S. Capitol riot, a Republican-appointed judge issued a stark warning: Efforts to portray the mob of Donald Trump's supporters as heroes and play down the violence that unfolded on Jan. 6, 2021, pose a serious threat to the nation.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth condemned the depiction by Trump and Republican allies of Jan. 6

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 51 of 61

defendants as "political prisoners" and "hostages." Lamberth also denounced attempts to undermine the legitimacy of the justice system for punishing rioters who broke the law when they invaded the Capitol.

"In my 37 years on the bench, I cannot recall a time when such meritless justifications of criminal activity have gone mainstream," Lamberth, an appointee of President Ronald Reagan, wrote in a recent ruling. The judge added he "fears that such destructive, misguided rhetoric could presage further danger to our country."

As Trump floats potential pardons for rioters if he returns to the White House, judges overseeing the more than 1,200 Jan. 6 criminal cases in Washington's federal court are using their platform to try to set the record straight concerning distortions about an attack that was broadcast live on television. A growing number of defendants appear to be embracing rhetoric spread by Trump, giving defiant speeches in court, repeating his false election claims and portraying themselves as patriots.

During a recent court hearing, Proud Boys member Marc Bru repeatedly insulted and interrupted the judge, who ultimately sentenced him to six years in prison. "You can give me 100 years and I'd do it all over again," Bru said.

At least two other rioters shouted "Trump won!" in court after receiving their punishment.

Some people charged in the riot are pinning their hopes on a Trump victory in November.

Rachel Marie Powell, a Pennsylvania woman who was sentenced to nearly five years in prison for smashing a Capitol window, told a CNN reporter that the 2024 presidential election is "like life or death" for her. She said she believes she will get out of prison if Trump is elected.

The rhetoric resonates with the strangers who donate money to Jan. 6 defendant's online campaigns, but it isn't earning them any sympathy from the judges. Judges appointed by presidents from both political parties have described the riot as an affront to democracy and they repeatedly have admonished defendants for not showing true remorse or casting themselves as victims.

Over more than three years, judges have watched hours of video showing members of the mob violently shoving past overwhelmed officers, shattering windows, attacking police with things such as flagpoles and pepper spray and threatening violence against lawmakers. In court hearings, officers have described being beaten, threatened and scared for their lives as they tried to defend the Capitol.

Before sentencing a Kentucky man, who already had a long criminal record, to 14 years in prison for attacking police with pepper spray and a chair, U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta admonished the man for propagating "the lie that what's happening here in Washington, D.C., is unfair and unjust."

"You are not a political prisoner," Mehta, who was nominated by President Barack Obama told Peter Schwartz. "You're not Alexei Navalny," the judge said referring to the imprisoned Russian opposition leader. "You're not somebody who is standing up against injustice, who's fighting against an autocratic regime. ... You're somebody who decided to take the day into his own hands, much in the same way that you have used your hands against others for much of your life."

Lamberth's scathing remarks came in the case of James Little, a North Carolina man who was not accused of any violence or destruction during the riot and pleaded guilty only to a misdemeanor offense. Lamberth didn't name the people responsible for what the judge called "shameless" attempts to rewrite history. But Trump has closely aligned himself with rioters during his presidential campaign. He has described them as "hostages," called for their release from jail and pledged to pardon a large portion of them if he wins the White House in November.

Roughly 750 people charged with federal crimes in the riot have pleaded guilty and more than 100 others have been convicted at trial. Many rioters were charged only with misdemeanor offenses akin to trespassing while others face serious felonies such as assault or seditious conspiracy. Of those who have been sentenced, roughly two-thirds have received some time behind bars, with terms ranging from a few days of intermittent confinement to 22 years in prison, according to data compiled by The Associated Press.

Lamberth had originally sentenced Little in 2022 to 60 days behind bars, followed by three years of probation. But Washington's federal appeals court sided with Little on appeal, ruling he could not be sentenced to both prison time and probation. When Little's case returned to Lamberth's court, the judge resentenced him to 150 days — with credit for time already served in jail and on probation — citing the

man's claims of persecution and efforts to downplay the Jan. 6 attack.

"Little cannot bring himself to admit that he did the wrong thing, although he came close today," Judge Lamberth wrote. "So it is up to the court to tell the public the truth: Mr. Little's actions, and the actions of others who broke the law on Jan. 6, were wrong. The court does not expect its remarks to fully stem the tide of falsehoods. But I hope a little truth will go a long way."

An attorney for Little declined to comment on Lamberth's remarks.

In other cases, judges have said their sentence must send a message when rioters have promoted the notion that they are being unfairly prosecuted for their political views. U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper told Richard "Bigo" Barnett, the Arkansas man who propped his feet on a desk in then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office in a widely circulated photo, that he seemed to enjoy the notoriety of becoming one of the faces of the Jan. 6 attack.

"You have made yourself one of the faces of J6 not just through that photo but using your platform and your notoriety to peddle the misconception that you and other J6ers are somehow political prisoners who are being persecuted for your beliefs as opposed to your conduct on Jan. 6," Cooper, an Obama appointee, told Barnett before sentencing him to more than four years in prison.

"So to all those folks that follow Bigo, they need to know that the actions of Jan. 6 cannot be repeated without some serious repercussions," the judge said.

## Haley uses her appearance on 'SNL' to poke fun at her Civil War gaffe and jab at a stand-in Trump

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley poked fun at herself over a campaign misstep, but her primary target during a "Saturday Night Live" appearance was Donald Trump, joining in a skit that mocked a stand-in for the former president over his refusal to debate her and questioned his mental fitness.

"Had a blast tonight on SNL! Know it was past Donald's bedtime so looking forward to the stream of unhinged tweets in the a.m.," Haley posted on X, formerly Twitter, early Sunday.

The segment is a faux CNN town hall with Trump in Columbia, South Carolina, which holds the next nominating contest on Feb. 24. "SNL's" Kenan Thompson and Punkie Johnson play hosts Charles Barkley and Gayle King, respectively, and James Austin Johnson is Trump.

Haley, a former South Carolina governor, is an audience member who is introduced as "someone who describes herself as a concerned South Carolina voter" when she is called upon to question the candidate.

"My question is why won't you debate Nikki Haley?" she asks.

Trump, the front-runner for the nomination, has avoided all debates so far in the campaign, and Haley is his last major rival.

"Oh my God, it's her, the woman who was in charge of security on Jan. 6. It's Nancy Pelosi," the actor responds.

During a campaign speech in New Hampshire last month, Trump repeatedly seemed to confuse Haley, who was his U.N. ambassador, with Democratic Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, the former House speaker. Trump had mistakenly asserted that Haley was in charge of security at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, when Trump supporters stormed the building.

U.S. Capitol Police are responsible for security on the grounds of the Capitol and protecting Congress, along with the House and Senate sergeants-at-arms. Trump has accused Pelosi of turning down security he says his administration offered, but a special House committee that investigated the siege found no evidence to support that claim.

After the town hall moderators correct the stand-in Trump, Haley asks, "Are you doing OK Donald? You might need a mental competency test."

Trump has boasted that he has "aced" cognitive tests in the past, and Johnson's Trump told Haley: "You know what I did. I took the test and I aced it, OK? Perfect score. They said I'm 100% mental."



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 53 of 61

The final question in the skit comes from an audience member, "SNL" host Ayo Edebiri, who stars in Hulu's "The Bear." She questions Haley, now referred to as Ambassador Haley, about the root cause of the American Civil War. The candidate, during a town hall in December in New Hampshire, was asked about the reason for the war, and she did not mention slavery in her response. She walked back her comments hours later.

"I was just curious, what would you say was the main cause of the Civil War?" Edebiri asked Haley during the show. "Do you think it starts with an 'S' and ends with a 'lavery'?"

Haley replied: "Yep, I probably should have said that the first time," before saying, "And live from New York, it's 'Saturday Night.'"

## What to know about the situation in the Middle East this week

By BALINT SZLANKO Associated Press

The United States and Britain have struck Iran-backed armed groups in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, while Israel presses ahead with its offensive against Hamas in Gaza. Here is what to know about what is happening in the region now, and why:

### US ATTACKS ON GROUPS BACKED BY IRAN

On Friday, the U.S. struck Iran-backed armed groups in Iraq and Syria in retaliation for the killing of three American soldiers at a U.S. base on the Syria-Jordan border. At the same time, Washington emphasized that it doesn't want to escalate the conflict with Iran into outright war.

To date, the militias have not struck back, indicating that they don't want all-out war with the U.S. either.

### WHY THE US IS IN THE REGION

U.S. troops maintain a presence in the area to fight the Islamic State group. They returned to Iraq in 2014 after the extremists overran much of the country's north and started a genocidal campaign against the Yazidis, a religious minority. U.S. forces are also present in Syria, where they work with Kurdish-led fighters to keep pressure on IS, as well as in Jordan, a long-standing Western ally. The U.S. rushed additional warships to the region after Hamas' attack on Israel on Oct. 7 and the start of the war in Gaza to deter Iran and its clients from further escalation.

### STRIKES ON YEMEN'S HOUSHI REBELS OVER RED SEA ATTACKS

Separately, American and British forces have repeatedly struck Houthi rebels in Yemen, who are also backed by Iran. This was in response to persistent Houthi missile and drone attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea, one of the world's most important shipping lanes.

The Houthis say their attacks are to put pressure on Israel to cease its campaign in the Gaza Strip. The U.S. and Britain say their goal is to protect free navigation and trade in the Red Sea, which has already seen a big drop in cargo traffic as a result of the attacks.

### THE WAR IN GAZA IS AT THE HEART OF IT ALL

All these events are linked to the war in Gaza, which began with Hamas' Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel. Palestinian militants killed some 1,200 Israelis and kidnapped around 250 that day. Israel responded with an air and ground campaign that has so far killed over 27,000 Palestinians.

The United States, Qatar and Egypt are trying to negotiate a cease-fire to free the remaining hostages and provide relief to the Palestinian people, most of whom are displaced from their homes. More than 100 captives were released during a weeklong truce in November in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

### HOW THE WAR COULD AFFECT THE REGION IN THE LONG TERM

The Israel-Hamas war is reverberating across the entire Middle East. The U.S. and Israel on one side and Iran and its militant allies on the other each see themselves as responding to and deterring aggression from the other. Israel views Iran as its greatest threat, while Iran considers its alliance of militant groups a way to pressure Israel and deter an attack by Israel or the United States.

Neither side is believed to be seeking a broader war, but a miscalculation could send the region spiraling toward one. The danger may be the biggest across the Israel-Lebanon border, where Israeli forces and the Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah have engaged in low-intensity fighting since the war in Gaza started.

## A woman stole a memory card from a truck.

### The gruesome footage is now key to an Alaska murder trial

By MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A woman with a lengthy criminal history including theft, assault and prostitution got into a truck with a man who had picked her up for a “date” near downtown Anchorage. When he left her alone in the vehicle, she stole a digital memory card from the center console.

Now, more than four years later, what she found on that card is key to a double murder trial set to begin this week: gruesome photos and videos of a woman being beaten and strangled at a Marriott hotel, her attacker speaking in a strong accent as he urged her to die, her blanket-covered body being snuck outside on a luggage cart.

“In my movies, everybody always dies,” the voice says on one video. “What are my followers going to think of me? People need to know when they are being serial-killed.”

About a week after she took the SD card, the woman turned it over to police, who said they recognized the voice as that of Brian Steven Smith, now 52, a South Africa native they knew from a prior investigation, court documents say.

Smith has pleaded not guilty to 14 charges, including first- and second-degree murder, sexual assault and tampering with evidence, in the deaths of Kathleen Henry, 30, and Veronica Abouchuk, who was 52 when her family reported her missing in February 2019, seven months after they last saw her.

Henry and Abouchuk were both Alaska Native women who had experienced homelessness. They were from small villages in western Alaska, Henry from Eek and Abouchuk from Stebbins.

Authorities say Henry was the victim whose death was recorded at the TownePlace Suites by Marriott, a hotel in midtown Anchorage. Smith was registered to stay there from Sept. 2 to Sept. 4, 2019; the first images showing her body were time-stamped at about 1 a.m. on Sept. 4, police said.

The last images on the card were taken early on Sept. 6 and showed Henry’s body in the back of a black pickup, according to charging documents. Location data showed that at the time the photo was taken, Smith’s phone was in the area of Rainbow Valley Road, along the Seward Highway south of Anchorage, the same area where Henry’s body was found several weeks later, police said.

As detectives interrogated Smith about the Marriott case, authorities said, he offered up more information to police who escorted him to a bathroom: He had killed another woman, and he went on to identify her — Abouchuk — from a photo and to provide the location of her remains, along the Old Glenn Highway north of Anchorage.

“With no prompting, he tells the troopers in the bathroom, ‘I’m going to make you famous,’” District Attorney Brittany Dunlop said during a court hearing last week. “He comes back in and says ... ‘You guys got some more time? You want to keep talking?’ And then discloses this other murder.”

Alaska State Troopers in 2018 incorrectly identified another body as that of Abouchuk, because Abouchuk’s ID had been discovered with it, for reasons that remain unclear. But with the information Smith provided, investigators re-examined the case and used dental records to confirm a skull with a bullet wound found in the area Smith identified was Abouchuk’s, authorities have said.

Smith’s attorney, Timothy Ayer, unsuccessfully sought to have the digital memory card’s evidence — or even mention of it — excluded at trial. The woman who turned in the card initially claimed she had simply found it on the street, and it wasn’t until a second interview that she confessed she had stolen the card from Smith’s truck while he tried to get money from an ATM and she had it for a week before giving it to police, he said.

For that reason, he argued, prosecutors would not be able to demonstrate the provenance of the 39 photos and 12 videos, establish whether they were originals or duplicates, or say for sure whether they had been tampered with.

“The state cannot produce a witness to testify that the video fairly and accurately depicts any act that actually happened,” Ayer wrote.

However, Third Judicial District Judge Kevin Saxby ruled late Friday that the woman can testify about

her possession of the card until she handed it over to police and that the recordings can be properly authenticated.

Henry's family has not spoken publicly about her death and efforts to reach relatives have not been successful. Abouchuk's family has not returned messages from The Associated Press.

"These were two Alaska Native women," Dunlop, then the assistant district attorney, said in 2019 after Smith was charged. "And I know that hits home here in Alaska, and we're cognizant of that. We treat them with dignity and respect."

Authorities said Smith, who is in custody at the Anchorage Correctional Facility, came to Alaska in 2014 and became a naturalized U.S. citizen the same month Henry was killed.

In a 2019 letter to the AP, he declined to discuss the case. He added that he was doing well: "I have lost weight, I have much less stress and I am sober."

His wife, Stephanie Bissland of Anchorage, and a sister acting as a family spokesperson in South Africa, both declined to comment until after the trial.

The trial, expected to last three to four weeks, was scheduled to begin Monday with jury selection.

Prosecutors had suggested the possibility of closing the courtroom to prevent the gruesome videos from being seen by the public. The Associated Press, the Anchorage Daily News, Alaska's News Source and Alaska Public Media objected to any such move in a letter to the court's presiding judge.

Afterward, Saxby said he has no intention of keeping the public from the courtroom, but safeguards will be in place to prevent those in the gallery or watching the trial's livestream from seeing them.

## **How Donald Trump went from a diminished ex-president to the GOP's dominant front-runner**

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NASHUA, N.H. (AP) — When he left the White House, Donald Trump was a pariah.

After years of bending Washington to his will with a single tweet, Trump was, at least for a moment, diminished. He was a one-term Republican president rejected by voters and then shunned by large swaths of his party after his refusal to accept his 2020 election defeat culminated in an insurrection at the U.S. Capitol that sent lawmakers running for their lives.

Some members of his Cabinet had discussed invoking the 25th Amendment, seeing him unfit to remain in office. He was banned from social media and became the first president to be impeached twice. And when he departed Washington, the nation's capital was still reeling from his supporters' violence and resembled a security fortress with boarded-up storefronts and military vehicles in the streets.

Three years later, Trump is on the cusp of a stunning turnaround. With commanding victories in the first two 2024 nominating contests and wide polling leads in the states ahead, Trump is fast closing in on the Republican nomination. Already, he is the first nonincumbent Republican to win the party's contests in both Iowa and New Hampshire, and he had the largest victory margin in Iowa caucus history. His standing is expected to improve this coming week with a win in Nevada's Republican caucuses, which his last major GOP rival, Nikki Haley, will skip in favor of a competing primary, which awards no delegates.

Trump did all this while facing 91 felony charges that range from mishandling highly classified documents and conspiring to overturn the results of the 2020 election, which he lost to Democrat Joe Biden, to paying off a porn star during his 2016 campaign. Trump is also facing a civil fraud case in New York that threatens his control of much of his business empire and was recently ordered to pay \$83.3 million for defaming a woman he was previously found liable for sexually abusing.

The story of how Trump became his party's likely nominee for a third straight presidential election is a reminder that there was an opening — however brief — when the GOP could have moved beyond him but didn't. It shows how little was learned from 2016, as his critics once again failed to coalesce around a single alternative. And it demonstrates — with long-standing implications for American democracy — how Trump and his campaign seized on his unprecedented legal challenges, turning what should have been an

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 56 of 61

insurmountable obstacle into a winning strategy.

"I think everybody got in the race thinking the Trump fever would break," said longtime Republican strategist Chip Saltsman, who chaired the campaign of one of Trump's rivals. "And it didn't break. It got hotter."

## A DERAILMENT

Trump campaign aides say their first sign of momentum was not a legal victory or a gaffe by a rival, but a trip to East Palestine, Ohio, in February 2023.

Following a lackluster 2024 campaign announcement a few months earlier and slow start, the former president received a rousing welcome from residents demanding answers after a train carrying toxic chemicals derailed, leading to evacuations and fears of air and water contamination. Trump was briefed by local officials, blasted the federal response as a "betrayal" and stopped by a local McDonald's.

"It kind of reminded people what it was they liked about Trump to begin with," said senior campaign adviser Chris LaCivita. Trump, whose surprise 2016 victory had been fueled by angry white working-class voters who felt the government had failed them, was again casting himself as the outsider fighting big business and Washington.

Biden didn't visit at the time, helping Trump draw a contrast. He has accepted an invitation from East Palestine's mayor to finally visit this month.

## THE CHARGES START ROLLING IN

If the derailment offered Republican voters a reminder of why they liked Trump, a series of criminal charges would reinforce their devotion to him.

Ralph Reed, chair of the influential Faith & Freedom Coalition and a presidential campaign veteran, happened to be at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Florida for a charity breakfast the morning Trump became the first former U.S. president to be indicted.

"It was like a bomb going off," he said. "You could feel the ground shift immediately.

But instead of calls for Trump to suspend his campaign, the response from Republicans was one of indignation. Trump portrayed himself as the victim of a politicized criminal justice system bent on damaging his reelection chances. Almost immediately, Republicans sprung to his defense.

His campaign was flooded with small-dollar donations and raised \$15.4 million in just two weeks. (When Trump was later booked on racketeering charges in Georgia and became the first former president to have his mug shot taken, the campaign brought in a record \$4.18 million that day.) Trump's allied super political action committee, which had struggled to raise money, saw a similar surge in contributions as Trump's poll numbers began to rise.

For Republican voters, the mounting charges confirmed Trump's loudly stated grievances that the system was rigged against him, driving many who had been considering other candidates to rally around him.

It was "a reminder that, at the end of the day, they wear a red jersey, and Joe Biden and his henchmen wear a blue jersey," said Trump senior campaign adviser Jason Miller.

Michael Telesca, a former schoolteacher from Hickory, North Carolina, who left his job to hike the Appalachian Trail, said last fall that the indictments and other attacks against Trump had transformed him from an ordinary Trump voter into an "ardent" supporter.

While he liked Trump's policies, "I am more fighting against the system that is attacking him relentlessly. ... There's a good portion of Republicans who say it's time for someone else. Here's the problem: If that happens, you've allowed the system to win."

The impact was immediately felt across rival campaigns, whose candidates were put in the awkward position of having to defend their chief opponent in order to avoid siding with Democratic prosecutors or Biden's Justice Department. As the indictments continued to roll in, Trump further dominated the media coverage, denying his competitors much-needed attention.

"It made him a victim, and nobody's better at playing the victim than Donald Trump," Reed said.

Trump turned his subsequent bookings and court appearances into spectacles that became fundamental to his campaign message. Indeed, some weeks, he voluntarily spent more time in the courtroom than in early voting states. Trump's team credits his decision to confront the charges head-on with helping ease voters' concerns about his electability.



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 57 of 61

"It was from that point on that it essentially had become impossible to beat Donald Trump in the Republican Party primary," LaCivita said.

## DESANTIS-IN-WAITING ... AND WAITING

For months, Trump's stiffest competition for the GOP nomination appeared to be the governor of Florida. Fresh off a landslide reelection victory in November 2022, Ron DeSantis was a rising conservative star and one of his party's only bright spots in a bruising midterm election cycle. Some polls showed voters preferred him to Trump, who was being blamed for backing extreme candidates who cost Republicans winnable seats.

But DeSantis chose to wait until May 2023 to launch his campaign, giving the former president and his allies a six-month head start.

Trump's senior advisers urged him not to attack DeSantis until later in the race. But Trump, rebuffing their guidance, came out with his derisive "DeSanctimonious" before the midterm vote. The super PAC ads began last March.

"We made a big bet," said MAGA Inc. CEO Taylor Budowich. "We decided to go after him early and define him before he could define himself." That included pouring millions into ads hitting DeSantis for previously backing Social Security cuts.

For some top Trump aides, beating DeSantis was personal. A handful had worked for the governor previously, and some were burned by his actions. Even those who left on good terms were intimately familiar with his strengths and weaknesses and what would make him tick.

To contrast DeSantis' awkward interactions with voters, Trump's campaign began planning photo ops at pizza joints and diners that showcased the former president interacting with his fans.

Ridicule was also part of the strategy, including a memorable "pudding fingers" MAGA Inc. ad that highlighted unsavory reporting on DeSantis' eating habits, and accusations DeSantis wore lifts in his boots.

To blunt the governor's momentum, the super PAC also aired attack ads on networks such as CNN, trying to target more moderate voters considering the governor.

"MAGA Inc's national buys were targeted at national polls because that was the barometer of strength at that time — we were able to simultaneously drive down his standing in primary and general election polling," Budowich said.

Interviews with voters suggested those who had been open to a Trump alternative ultimately realized they preferred the original better.

"DeSantis, he can talk from here all day long," said Gary Leffler, a general contractor from West Des Moines, Iowa, as he pointed to his head. "Fact-wise, policy-wise, all this other stuff, he's pretty solid."

But Trump, Leffler added as he moved his fist to his heart, "talks from here. And that's a gear that DeSantis doesn't have."

## MCCARTHY'S PILGRIMAGE TO MAR-A-LAGO

Rival campaign aides said Trump's road to the 2024 GOP nomination began just three weeks after the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021. That was when Kevin McCarthy, who was the Republican leader of the U.S. House, traveled to Mar-a-Lago and posed for a widely shared photo next to a grinning Trump at the moment that Trump was at his weakest.

Former U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney, an outspoken GOP critic of Trump, would later write in her book that McCarthy told her he had been summoned because Trump was depressed and not eating. (Trump said he was actually angry and "eating too much.")

But the normalizing episode signaled the party was not ready to give up on Trump.

"I thought it was the kiss of death for McCarthy, for the party and for the country," said Mike DuHaime, a senior adviser to the 2024 presidential campaign of former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, another Trump critic. "It breathed new life into Trump."

## RISKY BETS THAT PAID OFF

From the start, Trump acted like the front-runner, declining invitations to multicandidate events and refusing to debate.

Trump's absence blunted viewers' interest and left his lower-polling rivals fighting one another instead

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 58 of 61

of him.

"You've got to give credit to the Trump campaign," said Saltsman, who chaired the 2024 campaign of Mike Pence, who was Trump's vice president. "They treated it like they were an incumbent running for reelection."

Miller, the Trump adviser, said steering clear of the debates was part of a broader effort to focus on Biden. Trump went after the Democrat over the economy, the border and wars in Europe and the Middle East.

At the same time, Trump's team worked aggressively behind the scenes to line up endorsements that would signal his continued dominance of the party and the strength of his new campaign. It has been widely praised as far more disciplined and professional than past efforts that were plagued by infighting.

Trump invested "hundreds and hundreds of hours" in relationship development, said Brian Jack, a senior campaign aide who has led the outreach. Trump worked the phones, hosted dinners and invited officials to ride aboard his private plane.

He also astutely weaponized the endorsements. In April, as DeSantis was making a much-publicized trip to Washington before his expected campaign announcement, Trump's team released a set of new endorsements from Florida politicians. Later, Trump taunted Haley, an ex-South Carolina governor and his U.N. ambassador, before the New Hampshire primary by flying in a group of South Carolina officials who were backing his candidacy.

Marc Short, a top adviser to Pence's campaign, also pointed to Trump's more than 200 midterm endorsements. While Trump had mixed success that November, he proved a powerful kingmaker in GOP primary races that often devolved into fealty contests.

"Everyone saw the candidates he endorsed in their primaries won their primaries, signaling to others that, 'I better show my allegiance to Trump or I'm going to be in trouble,'" Short said.

Beyond the endorsements, Trump's team also worked closely with state parties as they set delegate allocation rules, encouraging winner-take-all contests and other changes that would ultimately benefit a front-runner.

"We were closing doors to our opponents in the Republican nomination seven months ago before they even realized that was happening," LaCivita said.

## THE LOYALTY FACTOR

As the first nominating contests neared, Trump's team worked to harness the dedication of his loyal supporters. The move paid off particularly well in Iowa, where historically frigid temperatures cut expected caucus attendance in half.

Trump's team rewarded its volunteers with perks such as VIP tickets to his rallies and gold-embroidered hats. Some, like John Goodrich, who lives in suburban Des Moines and knocked on 300 doors, received personal phone calls to thank them for their efforts.

"I was just thrilled," Goodrich said of the caucus day call. Trump "was very thankful for the help" and asked him about his family and his expectations for the night. "It just made me feel good that he would turn to just someone who was more or less a door-to-door salesman for him to get my opinion."

In both Iowa and New Hampshire, Trump's team also marveled at how DeSantis and Haley spent their time and money going after each other, largely sparing him from attacks.

In the end, DeSantis came in a distant second in Iowa, the state on which he had staked his campaign. He dropped out shortly afterward. Haley, who finished second in New Hampshire, has pledged to remain in the race through March, but her path forward remains tenuous.

## What to know about the US strikes in Iraq and Syria and its attacks with the UK in Yemen

By BASSEM MROUE, LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — British forces on Saturday joined their American allies in new attacks against militia in Yemen. The U.S. military earlier launched strikes on dozens of sites manned by Iran-backed fighters in western Iraq and eastern Syria in retaliation for a drone strike in Jordan in late January that killed three

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 59 of 61

U.S. service members and wounded dozens.

Tensions have been rising in the region since the Israel-Hamas war started on Oct. 7. A week later, Iran-backed fighters, who are loosely allied with Hamas, began carrying out drone and rocket attacks on bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria. A deadly strike on the desert outpost known as Tower 22 in Jordan near the Syrian border further increased tensions.

## WHAT HAPPENED IN YEMEN?

The United States and Britain said they launched a barrage of strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen from fighter jets and warships in the Red Sea.

The strikes hit 36 Houthi targets in 13 locations, according to the U.S. and U.K. militaries. It is the third time in two weeks that the U.S. and Britain have conducted a large joint operation to strike Houthi weapon launchers, radar sites and drones.

The strikes came in response to almost daily missile or drone attacks against commercial and military ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, and New Zealand supported the latest wave of strikes intended to "defend lives and the free flow of commerce in one of the world's most critical waterways."

## WHAT JETS WERE USED IN THE YEMEN STRIKES?

The Houthi targets were struck by U.S. F/A-18 fighter jets from the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier, by British Typhoon FGR4 fighter aircraft and by the Navy destroyers USS Gravelly and the USS Carney firing Tomahawk missiles from the Red Sea, according to U.S. officials and the U.K. Defense Ministry.

## WHO WAS TARGETED IN SYRIA AND IRAQ, AND WHY?

The strikes on Friday came in retaliation for the drone strike that killed three U.S. troops in Jordan on Jan. 28.

U.S. forces struck 85 targets in seven locations in a strategic region where thousands of Iran-backed fighters are deployed to help expand Iran's influence from Tehran to the Mediterranean coast.

U.S. bases in Syria's eastern province of Deir el-Zour and the northeastern province of Hassakeh have come under attack for years. The Euphrates River cuts through Syria into Iraq, with U.S. troops and American-backed Kurdish-led fighters on the east bank and Iran-backed fighters and Syrian government forces to the west.

Bases for U.S. troops in Iraq have come under attack too.

Iran-backed militias control the Iraqi side of the border and move freely in and out of Syria, where they man posts with their allies from Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah and other Shiite armed groups.

## WHAT WAS HIT IN IRAQ AND SYRIA? HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE KILLED?

The U.S. military said the barrage of strikes hit command and control headquarters; intelligence centers; rockets and missiles, drone and ammunition storage sites; and other facilities connected to the militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, which handles Tehran's relationship with, and arming of, regional militias.

Syrian opposition activists said the strikes hit the Imam Ali base near the border Syrian town of Boukamal, the Ein Ali base in Quriya, just south of the strategic town of Mayadeen, and a radar center on a mountain near the provincial capital that is also called Deir el-Zour.

Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said 29 rank-and-file fighters were killed in those strikes.

The attacks also hit a border crossing known as Humaydiya, where militia cross back and forth between Iraq and Syria, according to Omar Abu Layla, a Europe-based activist who heads the Deir Ezzor 24 media outlet. He said the strikes also hit an area inside the town of Mayadeen known as "the security quarter."

Iraqi government spokesperson Bassim al-Awadi said the border strikes killed 16 people and caused "significant damage" to homes and private properties.

The Popular Mobilization Force, a coalition of Iran-backed militia that is nominally under the control of the Iraqi military, said the strikes in western Iraq hit a logistical support post, a tanks battalion, an artillery post and a hospital. The PMF said 16 people were killed and 36 wounded, and that authorities were

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 60 of 61

searching for other missing people.

**WILL IRAN-BACKED FIGHTERS RETALIATE?**

Iran and groups it backs in the region aim to put pressure on Washington to force Israel to end its crushing offensive in Gaza, but do not appear to want all-out war. The defeat of Hamas would be a major setback for Tehran, which considers itself and its allies the main defenders of the Palestinian cause.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group for Iran-backed groups, said it carried out two explosive drone attacks Saturday on bases housing U.S. troops in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil and a post in northeast Syria near the Iraqi border.

The only Iran-backed faction that has been escalating are the Houthi rebels in Yemen, and they have made clear that they have no intention of scaling back their campaign.

## Today in History: February 5

### Senate acquits Donald Trump in first impeachment

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Feb. 5, the 36th day of 2024. There are 330 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 5, 2020, the Senate voted to acquit President Donald Trump, bringing to a close the third presidential trial in American history, though a majority of senators expressed unease with Trump's pressure campaign on Ukraine that resulted in the two articles of impeachment. Just one Republican, Mitt Romney of Utah, broke with the GOP and voted to convict.

On this date:

In 1811, George, the Prince of Wales, was named Prince Regent due to the mental illness of his father, Britain's King George III.

In 1917, the U.S. Congress passed, over President Woodrow Wilson's veto, an act severely curtailing Asian immigration.

In 1918, during World War I, the Cunard liner SS Tuscania, which was transporting about 2,000 American troops to Europe, was torpedoed by a German U-boat in the Irish Sea with the loss of more than 200 people.

In 1922, the first edition of Reader's Digest was published.

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed increasing the number of U.S. Supreme Court justices; the proposal, which failed in Congress, drew accusations that Roosevelt was attempting to "pack" the nation's highest court.

In 1971, Apollo 14 astronauts Alan Shepard and Edgar Mitchell stepped onto the surface of the moon in the first of two lunar excursions.

In 1973, services were held at Arlington National Cemetery for U.S. Army Col. William B. Nolde, the last official American combat casualty before the Vietnam cease-fire took effect.

In 1983, former Nazi Gestapo official Klaus Barbie, expelled from Bolivia, was brought to Lyon (lee-OHN'), France, to stand trial. (He was convicted and sentenced to life in prison -- he died in 1991.)

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, granting workers up to 12 weeks unpaid leave for family emergencies.

In 1994, white separatist Byron De La Beckwith was convicted in Jackson, Mississippi, of murdering civil rights leader Medgar Evers in 1963, and was immediately sentenced to life in prison.

In 2008, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a guru to the Beatles who introduced the West to transcendental meditation, died at his home in the Dutch town of Vlodrop; he was believed to be about 90.

In 2012, Eli Manning and the New York Giants one-upped Tom Brady and the New England Patriots, coming back with a last-minute score to win 21-17 in Super Bowl XLVI.

In 2014, CVS Caremark announced it would pull cigarettes and other tobacco products from its stores.

In 2017, Tom Brady led one of the greatest comebacks in sports history, highlighted by a spectacular



# Groton Daily Independent

**Monday, Feb. 05, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 226 ~ 61 of 61**

Julian Edelman catch that helped lift New England from a 25-point hole against the Atlanta Falcons to the Patriots' fifth Super Bowl victory, 34-28, the first ever in overtime.

In 2018, Jerome Powell was sworn in as the 16th chairman of the Federal Reserve.

In 2022, on the eve of the celebration of her 70th anniversary on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II offered her support to have the Duchess of Cornwall become known as Queen Camilla, a significant decision in shaping the future of the British Monarchy.

In 2023, Beyoncé won her 32nd Grammy to become the most decorated artist in the history of the award.

Today's birthdays: Tony-winning playwright John Guare is 86. Financial writer Jane Bryant Quinn is 85. Actor David Selby is 83. Football Hall of Famer Roger Staubach is 82. Movie director Michael Mann is 81. Rock singer Al Kooper is 80. Actor Charlotte Rampling is 78. Racing Hall of Famer Darrell Waltrip is 77. Actor Barbara Hershey is 76. Actor Christopher Guest is 76. U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm is 65. Actor-comedian Tim Meadows is 63. Actor Jennifer Jason Leigh is 62. Actor Laura Linney is 60. Rock musician Duff McKagan (Guns N' Roses) is 60. World Golf Hall of Famer Jose Maria Olazabal is 58. Actor-comedian Chris Parnell is 57. Rock singer Chris Barron (Spin Doctors) is 56. Singer Bobby Brown is 55. Actor Michael Sheen is 55. Actor David Chisum is 54. Country singer Sara Evans is 53. Country singer Tyler Farr is 40. Actor-singer Darren Criss is 37. Actor Alex Brightman is 37. Actor Henry Golding is 37. Rock musician Kyle Simmons (Bastille) is 36. Actor Jeremy Sumpter is 35. Drummer Graham Sierota (Echosmith) is 25.