

Groton Daily Independent

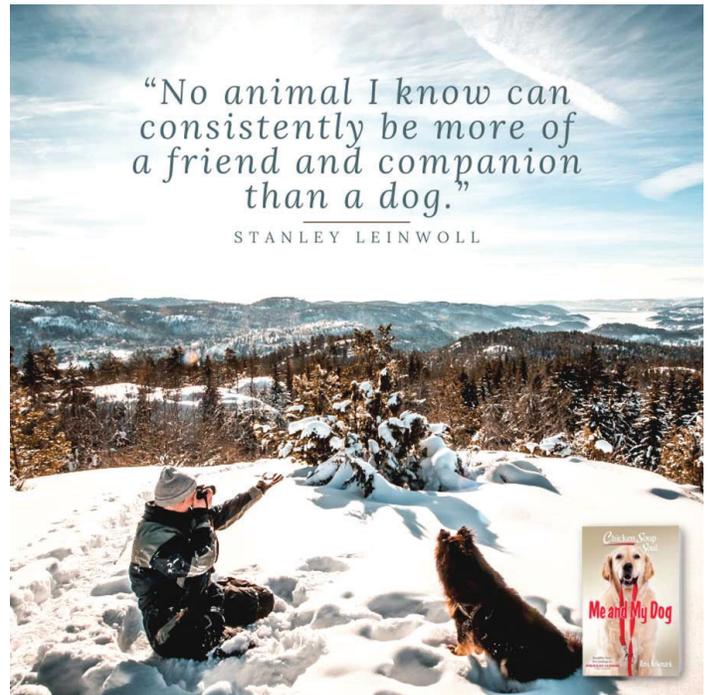
Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 1 of 91

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [3- Names Released in Charles Mix County Fatal Crash](#)
- [4- Gov. Noem Signs Bills to Streamline State Government into Law](#)
- [5- Gov. Noem Signs Pro-2A Bills into Law](#)
- [5- Gov. Noem Signs Compact Bills into Law](#)
- [6- South Dakota is Airing "The Mount Rushmore" of Commercials During the Big Game](#)
- [7- City Council Meeting Agenda](#)
- [8- Brown County Commission Meeting Agenda](#)
- [9- Obit: Dennis Furman](#)
- [10- That's Life/Tony Bender: The Mighty Quinn](#)
- [11- SDDOT Seeks Public Input for Proposed U.S. Highway 12 Reconstruction Project Over Moccasin Creek in Aberdeen](#)
- [11- IF:Local Women's Gathering at Rose Hill Church](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: Landowner protection bills advance as carbon pipeline controversy continues](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: Ellsworth bombers participate in Middle East airstrikes](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: Switch to primaries for attorney general, secretary of state advances to House](#)
- [16- SD SearchLight: Intense opposition to U.S. Senate immigration deal quickly emerges](#)
- [18- SD SearchLight: Bill requiring public schools, libraries to publish policies on obscene books passes committee](#)
- [19- Weather Pages](#)
- [23- Daily Devotional](#)
- [24- Subscription Form](#)
- [25- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [26- News from the Associated Press](#)

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.

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



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.
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.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.
© 2024 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 2 of 91

1440

In partnership with [smartasset™](#)

A second atmospheric river in four days has brought record rains to southern California since it pushed inland late Sunday and Monday, knocking out power to over a million households and killing at least three people from downed trees. Some areas of the state saw more rain in one day than is seen in an average year.

King Charles III has been diagnosed with cancer, according to a statement from Buckingham Palace yesterday. The palace has not specified the type or the stage of cancer but noted the 75-year-old

king had begun regular treatments. The cancer was detected during his recent treatment for a benign enlarged prostate; however, the palace confirmed it was not prostate cancer.

Dartmouth College announced yesterday it will begin requiring next year's class of prospective students to submit standardized test scores for admission, the first Ivy League school to reverse a pandemic-era policy making tests optional.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 66th Grammy Awards hauls in 16.9 million viewers, a 34% increase from 2023. Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car" hits No. 1 on iTunes Top Songs chart after Grammys performance.

The United Football League, which merged the XFL and USFL, will kick off its inaugural season March 30. Police say new evidence emerged to reopen investigation that led to five current and former NHL players being charged with sexual assault last week.

New Jersey's MetLife Stadium tapped to host 2026 men's FIFA World Cup final; Team USA will kick off its group stage from Los Angeles' SoFi Stadium.

Science & Technology

Researchers submit plans to build the world's largest particle accelerator; the 56-mile loop would straddle the French-Swiss border, reach energies almost eight times greater than the Large Hadron Collider.

Machine-learning algorithm deciphers multiple passages from charred manuscript buried by the first-century eruption of Mount Vesuvius. First word was identified in October as part of a student-led competition.

Analysis of 300-year-old sponges suggests world has already warmed by 1.7 degrees Celsius since preindustrial times, much greater than current assessments; controversial claim implies widely used temperature baselines are incorrect.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.3%, Dow -0.7%, Nasdaq -0.2%), S&P 500 retreats from record high; US 10-year Treasury yield rises to 4.2% in biggest two-day climb since June 2022.

Novo Nordisk parent to buy drug contract manufacturer Catalent for \$16.5B, including debt, to expand supply of weight-loss drug Wegovy. Search engine Yandex to sell Russian operations for \$5.2B, marking the largest corporate exit from Russia since the country's invasion of Ukraine.

Snapchat parent Snap to cut 10% of workforce, or roughly 540 employees. Samsung chairman Jay Lee acquitted of alleged financial crimes in 2015 merger case.

Politics & World Affairs

Death toll rises to at least 122 from weekend wildfires in Chile's central region of Valparaíso, with at least 370 people still missing.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, seeks to advance potential hostage deal between Israel and Hamas. Iran-backed militia group claims responsibility for drone strike in eastern Syria that killed at least six US-allied Kurdish fighters.

Jury deliberations begin in trial of the mother of convicted Michigan high school shooter in what is the first time a parent of a US school shooter faces charges directly in connection with an attack.

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

Names Released in Charles Mix County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Hwy 44, Mile marker 310, 2 miles east of Platte, SD

When: 3:50 p.m., Friday, February 2, 2024

Driver 1: Blake Henry Veurink, Male, 34, from Harrison, SD, Minor injuries

Vehicle 1: 1994 Peterbilt 379

Driver 2: Willard H. Barton, Male, 97, from Corsica, SD, Fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2002 Chevrolet Avalanche

Charles Mix County, S.D.- A 97 year old Corsica, South Dakota man died Friday afternoon in a two-vehicle crash in Charles Mix County.

Preliminary crash information indicates Willard H. Barton, the driver of a 2002 Chevrolet Avalanche was traveling eastbound on SD Hwy 44 about 2 miles east of Platte, SD. For unknown reasons Barton crossed the center line and collided with an oncoming 1994 Peterbilt tractor/trailer driven by Blake H. Veurink of Harrison, SD.

The semi entered the north ditch where it overturned onto its side and came to rest. The Chevrolet Avalanche came to rest in the middle of the highway facing a northerly direction. Mr. Barton was pronounced deceased at the scene. He was not wearing a seatbelt. Mr. Veurink was transported to a nearby hospital with minor injuries. He was wearing a seatbelt.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

Gov. Noem Signs Bills to Streamline State Government into Law

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem signed the following 29 bills to streamline state government into law:

SB 2 removes provisions for establishing a uniform method for calculating high school credit received from completing a postsecondary course;

SB 4 revises provisions regarding township contracts for snow removal;

SB 19 rescinds rulemaking authority pertaining to the process for publishing required voter registration numbers;

SB 21 rescinds rule-making authority for the annual report of the number of voters removed from a county's voter registration list;

SB 23 exempts an electric vehicle charging station from being subject to a civil fine for overcharging;

SB 24 increases the maximum user fee for a participant submitting to wear a drug patch under the 24/7 sobriety program;

SB 33 repeals the Petroleum Release Compensation Board;

SB 37 revises provisions regarding repair and maintenance of mail routes;

SB 38 amends the amount a merchant or place of business may assess against returned checks;

SB 41 modifies an administrative procedure for revoking a nonresponsive insurance producer's license;

SB 59 provides for the downgrade of commercial driver licenses and commercial learners permits upon notice of certain drug and alcohol violations;

SB 60 updates references to certain regulations regarding medical qualifications for certain commercial drivers;

SB 65 modifies time limits for collection efforts for debts owed to the state;

HB 1003 updates a reference to the Internal Revenue Code for purposes of higher education savings plans;

HB 1004 updates the official code of laws;

HB 1005 revises the manner of citing the Administrative Rules of South Dakota;

HB 1006 increases the amount of time permitted the Interim Rules Review Committee to review final permanent rulemaking materials;

HB 1011 revises the membership of the South Dakota Capitol Complex Restoration and Beautification Commission;

HB 1018 revises certain references to the Internal Revenue Code;

HB 1020 revises the method by which completion of a required suicide awareness and prevention training is verified;

HB 1026 clarifies the requirement for the construction or expansion of a municipal campground or tourist accommodation facility;

HB 1030 updates statutory and regulatory references pertaining to water pollution;

HB 1031 updates the development and implementation of conservation district standards;

HB 1050 updates references to certain federal motor carrier regulations;

HB 1051 makes technical changes to provisions regarding the compensation of agents;

HB 1055 raises the appraisal value of surplus property that may be sold by a political subdivision without notice;

HB 1063 amends the valuation service used to value vehicles;

HB 1068 allows disabled veterans to obtain a standard issue county motor vehicle or motorcycle license plate; and,

HB 1074 expands eligibility to practice as a dental hygienist under the collaborative supervision of a dentist.

Governor Noem has signed 40 bills into law this legislative session.

Gov. Noem Signs Pro-2A Bills into Law Signs Pro-Hunting and Ag Bills

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Kristi Noem signed two pro-Second Amendment bills into law. SB 39 prohibits a homeowners' association from placing restrictions on firearms or firearm ammunition. And HB 1035 extends the period of renewal for an enhanced permit to carry a concealed pistol.

"South Dakota is a Second Amendment haven," said Governor Noem. "These two bills strengthen our reputation as the most pro-Second Amendment state in the nation. I will always be proud to stand for the God-given right of every American to keep and bear arms."

Governor Noem also signed the following three pro-hunting and agriculture bills into law:

SB 22 amends language regarding the licensing period for a grain buyer;

SB 54 updates hunting and fishing residency requirements; and,

HB 1033 addresses the administration of State Conservation Commission functions by the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Gov. Noem Signs Compact Bills into Law

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Kristi Noem signed two compact bills into law. HB 1013 adopts the advanced practice registered nurse compact. And HB 1015 adopts the social work licensure compact.

"South Dakota's economy is continuing to thrive, and these bills will help us continue to grow our workforce," said Governor Noem. "These compacts cut government red tape and make it easier for more folks to get to work right here in South Dakota."

South Dakota is Airing “The Mount Rushmore” of Commercials During the Big Game

More than a one-hit wonder, Travel South Dakota leverages the spotlight of football’s biggest day to address a common misconception and beckon travelers to explore deeper

PIERRE, S.D. – Travel South Dakota will make its first-ever big game ad debut this year with a commercial spot reminding viewers that in addition to Mount Rushmore National Memorial, there's so much more to discover.

In a creative effort to combat this “one hit wonder” misperception, Travel South Dakota collaborated with 2000’s celebrated one-hit-wonder band Nine Days to rework their hit single “Absolutely (Story of a Girl)” into a revamped “Absolutely (Story of a State),” a catchy way of touting South Dakota’s many exciting offerings.

The 30-second commercial will make its debut during the big game on February 11, 2024, through broadcast, cable, and CTV live in select markets, with additional markets airing an extended 60-second cut with even more reasons to visit South Dakota. Priority markets include Denver, Colorado; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Omaha, Nebraska; Des Moines, Iowa; Kansas City, Missouri; and Rapid City and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The commercial will continue to run in many of the key markets into late February.

Building upon its existing marketing campaign, “So Much South Dakota, So Little Time,” Travel South Dakota has harnessed the nostalgia associated with the band’s wildly popular song and music video, while illustrating the wonder, vast experiences, and diverse corners of the state. The remix-turned-television-commercial was developed and conceptualized in collaboration with ad agency Karsh Hagan. The team worked with the band’s original songwriter, John Hampson, to collaboratively rewrite lyrics to “Story of a State” that highlight the wonders of South Dakota.

“The big game presents heightened opportunity to reach an engaged audience of potential travelers in target markets who oftentimes focus more attention on the tv commercials than the game itself,” said Jim Hagen, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Tourism. “We intend to continue to find unprecedented ways to plant South Dakota’s flag in the ground to pique curiosities and get people talking about South Dakota like never before.”

In 2023, South Dakota’s tourism economic impact numbers hit all-time records with visitation and visitor spending. With Nine Days singing about “so much to explore, so much space” in this revamp, the commercial illustrates how South Dakota uniquely offers the increasingly rare element of surprise that complements meaningful travel through diverse, underrated and often spontaneous experiences beyond its iconic tourism attractions.

Total cost for the weeks-long media buy in the key seven markets is \$1.19 million.

More than Mount Rushmore, South Dakota boldly welcomes travelers to shed negative misconceptions, explore beyond its one-hit wonders, and embrace the undiscovered all four seasons.

The full commercial will air on game day, alongside teasers on Travel South Dakota’s social media channels leading up to the debut and a webpage dedicated to the effort. The department will continue utilizing the video content alongside their “So Much South Dakota, So Little Time,” campaign.

For more information about Travel South Dakota, visit TravelSouthDakota.com.

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Travel South Dakota and the South Dakota Arts Council. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen.



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 7 of 91

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

February 6, 2024 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Discussion Regarding Childcare
4. Discussion Regarding Purchase of Wastewater Camera
5. Department Reports
6. Discussion Regarding Vacating Portions of West 7th Avenue and North Lincoln Street
7. Skating Rink Discussion
8. Updated Safe Room Cost Estimate
9. Contract with Payment Service Network (PSN) for Payment Portal
10. Allied Health Insurance Refund for Lower-than-Expected Claim Costs
11. Closing Documents for Water Project – Maguire Iron, Inc.
 - a. Change Order No. 4 (Final)
 - b. Pay Request No. 3 (Final)
 - c. Certificate of Substantial Completion
12. Discussion Regarding Building Inspector/Code Enforcement
13. Baseball Complex Advertisement Sign Pricing
14. Minutes
15. Bills
16. Discussion Regarding Summer Salaries
17. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
18. Hire Summer Baseball/Softball Employees
19. Adjournment

Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 8 of 91

**BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY
February 6, 2024 8:45 A.M.**

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity of Public Comment
4. Rachel Kippley, Fair/Fairgrounds/Parks Manager
 - a. Open Bids for Expo Roof
5. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
 - a. Load Limit Resolution
 - b. Department Update
6. Discuss and Set FOIA Fees
7. Dave Lunzman, Sheriff/Coroner
 - a. Jail Income and Expenses Report
 - b. Taser Agreement
8. Approve Housing & Redevelopment Commission of Brown County
9. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of January 30, 2024
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Request
 - e. Claim Assignment
 - f. Lease
 - g. Landfill Tonnage Report
 - h. Special Malt Beverage License
 - i. ATM Contract for Brown County Fair
 - j. Authorize Advertising for Retail Malt Beverage Transfers
10. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
11. Other Business
12. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1 (872) 240-3311

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission but may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board).

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at

<https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>

The Life of Dennis Furman

Memorial services for Dennis Furman, 73, of Groton will be on Sunday, February 18 at 2:00pm at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel. Shane Alberts will officiate. Military honors will be provided by Groton American Legion Post #39. Inurnment will follow in the spring at Union Cemetery, Groton.

Dennis passed away February 2, 2024 at Avera St. Luke's Hospital, Aberdeen, SD.

Dennis Harvey was born on August 18 1950 in Britton, SD to John and Ester (Smith) Furman. He attended school in Kidder, SD and graduated in 1969. Dennis was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1970 where he served in Korea on the DMZ for two years. Upon returning home, he worked in the Kidder, Britton and Amherst areas, then enrolled in Lake Area Vo-Tech where he earned a degree in Agri-Business. He continued in this line of work until his retirement in 2012. During his working years, he was a member of the SD National Guard for 34 years serving with the 740th Transportation Co. and had two tours in Iraq 1990 and 2003.

On December 2, 1972 he married the love of his life Marilee Severance in Zell, SD and were married for 51 years. Together they were blessed with four children, making their home in Groton SD.

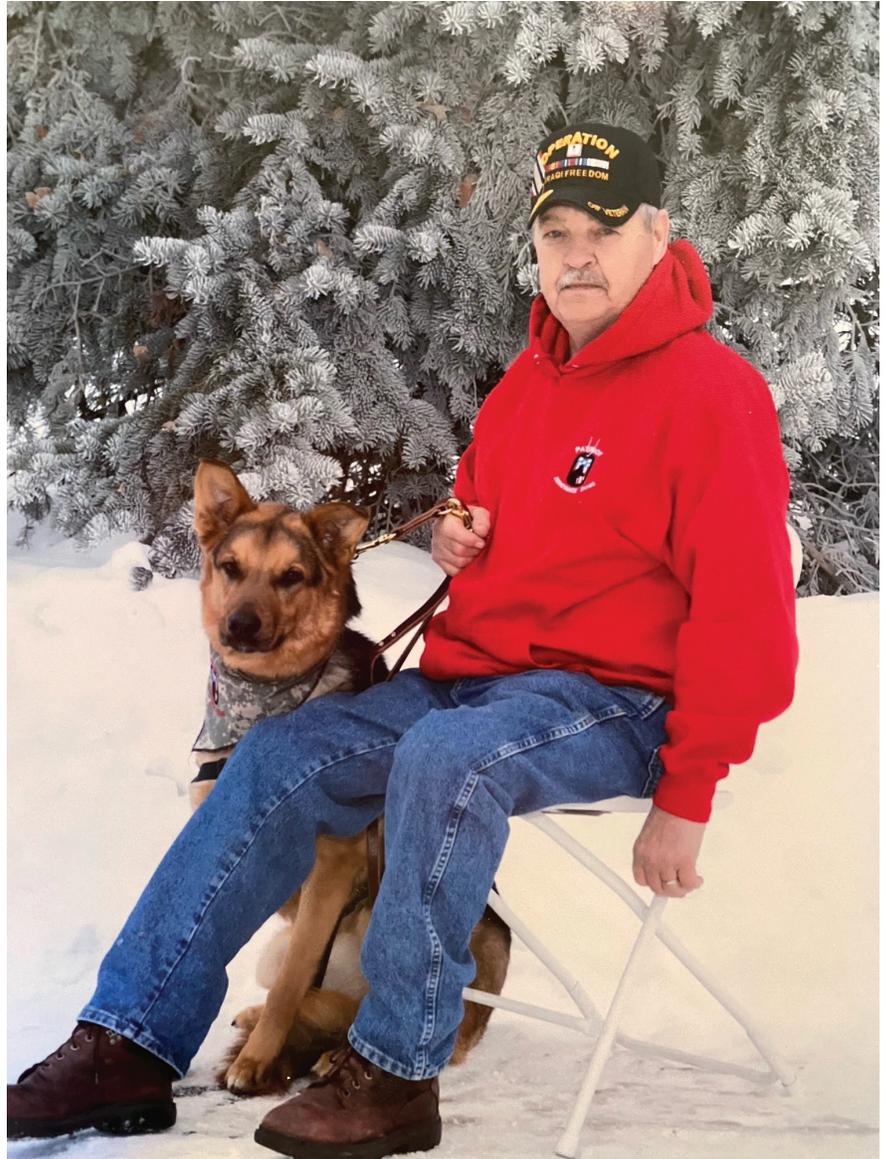
Dennis was a member of the Groton Fire Dept, Groton City Council, and Lions Club.

He enjoyed spending quality time with his family camping, fishing, vacationing and farm work.

If any advice was ever needed on most any subject, Dennis was the go-to man. He always had a way with stories and had a lesson planted in everything he shared.

Celebrating his life is his wife Marilee of Groton, his son Jamie (Heidi) Furman of Aberdeen, SD, Nathan Furman of Groton, grandchildren Haile (Jeremy) Grabowska, Corbin, Isaac, Grayson, Shealee, Sophia and Saylor; his sister Carolyn (Jim) Robbins of Milton, KS; brothers Roger (Lavonne) Furman of Britton, SD, Mick (Jeanne) of Britton; brothers-in-law Jim Robbins, Milton, KS, Rob (Laura) Severance of Gillette, WY, sisters-in-law, Karman Furman Ellendale, ND, Caroline Furman, Britton, SD, Susan Furman, Milbank, SD and Cheri Severance, Aberdeen SD and many nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his parents and two daughters, Jennifer Furman and Jessica Furman, sister Joy Lynn, brothers Keith, Skip, David and Russell.



That's Life/Tony Bender: The Mighty Quinn

Writer's note: I can't believe it's been 10 years. If you're struggling, dial 988, the suicide crisis hotline.

I once talked to a woman who had lost her son. He must have been 15. Maybe 16. I don't remember. I will remember forever what she said between the silences that dominated the conversation, between the pauses that take measure of the pain.

"It was hard," she said. Simple, profound, starkly elegant, it was all that she could say, all that was necessary.

Sunday morning, Julie appeared in the doorway to my sanctuary as I was staring at my computer wondering what to write this week. In town, graduates were readying robes and tassels, preparing for life. School is out. Summer is here. Much-needed rain spawned lush green growth.

"Quinn Trindle is dead," she told me. Joe Frazier in his prime could not have hit me harder. She read a Facebook post from Quinn's sister, Molly. It was suicide.

We looked at each other helplessly. Julie in the doorway, me in my chair, but really, on the floor, on the canvas. I think I moaned, but was otherwise incoherent. As if coherence has a place at times like this, with news like this. She closed the door slowly and left me alone.

We had mourned Quinn's loss to us years ago, when Pat, Joan, Riley, Molly and Quinn moved from Ashley to Ft. Benton, Mont. No one mourned more than Dylan. Quinn was his best friend, the kind of friend every young boy should have—the kind you usually find only in the movies, or in stories, heroic in their devotion, epic in their loyalty and hugeness of heart. And these things Quinn Trindle was.

I do not know, cannot know, the inner workings of a friendship like that. These are sacred mysteries, known only to the boys who form these bonds. From the outside, it seemed they found each other through non-conformity. They each marched—meandered, really—to the beat of eclectic drumming, rhythms that made sense only to them.

Quinn was a mighty wrestler. During Pee-Wee matches, he would wade through opponents, a wiry buzz saw of energy, and then he would cheer on Dylan, who had none of Quinn's acumen for the sport. The losses mounted for Dylan, but each time, after each defeat, Quinn would throw his arm around his friend and encourage him. "You're getting better," he would say.

It would have been easy for Dylan to resent the gold medals Quinn wore home from each meet. Easy for Quinn to move on to new friendships in the circle of winners. Neither of them were wired that way.

In February, Quinn finished second in the Montana State Wrestling Tournament at 135 pounds.

Pat and Joan were our friends, free-thinking, funny, cantankerous and wise. When they left it was a loss, a void as vast as the 700 miles between us, that can never be filled. But, for Dylan, it was much harder. Friends like Quinn Trindle come along just once in a lifetime, if ever.

Who can know what causes a boy to end his life before it has really begun. Is it possible to be so beloved and not know it?

A friend posted this on Facebook: "Alright buddy, I'm going to write one last goodbye... I'll miss you bro, from all the good times, to the gossip and all the plans we had... You were my closest friend, I don't think I could tell anyone half the stuff I've told you... and I'll miss all the times we shared... all the stupid stuff we've done, all the smart stuff we've done... Oh, and one other thing... we're keeping your spot in the Bro Circle warm... Love you, man... Rest in peace..."

His girlfriend wrote, "R.I.P., my beloved. I will never forget all the amazing times we've had together. I will never stop loving you. You are my one and only love. You are my first love and we've had a love that will always last. I wish I could have told you I love you a lot more."

I stared at the blurry computer screen. I usually write my column on Sundays, but this time I couldn't—couldn't write about that. About this. But I got up at 5 a.m. on Monday to face it.

It is 6 a.m. now. Dylan just drove up from the overnight Grad Bash, the crunch of gravel beneath the tires. I began breathing again, knowing he was home.

SDDOT Seeks Public Input for Proposed U.S. Highway 12 Reconstruction Project Over Moccasin Creek in Aberdeen

ABERDEEN, SD - The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) will hold a public meeting open house on Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2024, from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. CT to inform area residents of the proposed U.S. Highway 12 reconstruction project over Moccasin Creek in Aberdeen. The public meeting open house will be held at Best Western Ramkota, located at 1400 8th Ave. N.W. in Aberdeen. The open house will be informal allowing for one-on-one discussion with design staff.

Representatives from SDDOT will be available to answer questions, discuss the project, and receive community input. Information will be available on the acquisition of right-of-way and relocation assistance. A short presentation will be shared at 5:30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information and gather public input. Area residents, business owners, and daily commuters are encouraged to attend and participate in the public meeting open house. This project is being developed in compliance with state and federal environmental regulations.

For those who cannot attend the open house or desire additional information on the overall study, information is available online at https://dot.sd.gov/projects-studies/projects/public-meetings#listItemLink_1968. The website also allows for online written comments to be submitted. Written comments on the public meeting will be accepted until Friday, Feb. 23, 2024.

Notice is further given to individuals with disabilities that this open house is being held in a physically accessible place. Any individuals with disabilities who will require a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the open house/public hearing/public meeting/board meeting/commission meeting should submit a request to the department's ADA Coordinator at 605-773-3540 or 1-800-877-1113 (Telecommunication Relay Services for the Deaf). Please request the accommodations no later than two business days prior to the meeting in order to ensure accommodations are available.

IF:Local Women's Gathering at Rose Hill Church

Registration is open for Rose Hill Church's 2024 women's gathering on February 23 and 24 at 12099 Rose Hill Road, Langford SD. Tickets are limited to 60 attendees. The cost is \$15/person. Register now at <https://www.rosehillefc.com/events/>

Our IF:Local gathering is an in-person, livestreamed event that allows women and girls (14 & older) time to reset and be reconnected to God's thoughtful intention and design of women. The national IF:Gathering, based out of Dallas, TX, will be streamed live to Rose Hill Church and is committed to gathering women from across the nation from all denominations, generations, and cultures.

All sessions are unique worship sets, speakers, and breakout sessions. We will begin Friday evening at 5:30 pm with pizza from Snapper's Dry Bean, then gather at 6 pm for Session 1 and 8 pm for Session 2. Saturday kicks off with coffee at 8:30 am, Session 3 begins at 9 am, Session 4 at 11:00 am followed by a Snapper's box lunch at 12:30. The afternoon will include IF:Table conversations and the final Session 5 from 2:30 pm-4:30 pm. We will hear from speaker like Jennie Allen, Toni Collier, David Platt and many more. A full list of all the speakers and music artists can be found at <https://www.ifgathering.com/if2024/>.

Follow our local event on Facebook @IF:LocalRoseHillChurch. If you have any questions, please reach out to Paula Jensen 605-228-5963 or visit www.rosehillefc.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Landowner protection bills advance as carbon pipeline controversy continues

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - FEBRUARY 5, 2024 8:14 PM

PIERRE — A committee of state lawmakers endorsed three bills Monday that would protect some landowner rights but would not prevent a proposed carbon dioxide pipeline.

The committee considered five bills that would impact the pipeline project. Three passed the House Commerce and Energy Committee and two failed.

The three bills now headed to the full House of Representatives would add protections for private property owners when pipeline companies conduct surveying, ensure better terms for landowners in agreements with pipeline companies, and add financial protections for landowners subjected to eminent domain.

One of the defeated bills would have prevented carbon pipelines from using eminent domain, and the other would have required carbon pipelines to have a regulatory permit before pursuing eminent domain.

The bills come after the state's elected utility regulators denied Iowa-based Summit Carbon Solutions' pipeline permit application last year, citing the route's conflicts with some county ordinances that require minimum distances between pipelines and existing features. Summit has said it plans to reapply.

The multi-billion-dollar pipeline would capture carbon dioxide emissions produced by 51 ethanol plants in five states and transport it for underground storage in North Dakota. Carbon dioxide traps heat in the atmosphere, contributing to climate change, and federal tax credits are available for sequestering carbon.

\$500, guaranteed notice

One bill that passed the committee 10-1 amends the state's laws regarding land surveys on private property for public utility projects.

"This bill grants substantial benefits to landowners," Rep. Will Mortenson, R-Fort Pierre, told the committee. But he added, "This bill isn't going to stop any project from getting done."

The bill stipulates that any person or entity looking to conduct an examination or survey on private property must have a pending or approved siting permit application with the state.

Secondly, the bill mandates a 30-day written notice to the property owner. The notice must include a detailed description of the property areas to be examined, the anticipated date and time of entry, the duration of presence on the property, the types of surveys and examinations to be conducted, and the contact information of the person or agent responsible for the entry.

"I think these are common courtesies," Mortenson said. "When are you coming? How long are you going to be there?"

Furthermore, the bill introduces financial compensation for landowners. Entities seeking to enter private property for surveys would have to make a one-time payment of \$500 to the property owner as compensation for entry, in addition to covering any damage caused during the examination.

Property owners would also be given the right to challenge the survey or examination by filing an action in circuit court within 30 days of receiving the written notice. Additionally, upon request, the results of the survey or examination would have to be shared with the property owner.

The legislation excludes the state or its political subdivisions from the requirements, focusing instead on private entities.

Various agriculture groups supported the bill, but Summit Carbon Solutions raised concerns.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 13 of 91

Summit lobbyist Justin Bell acknowledged the bill would not end the pipeline project, "but we still believe it's a bad law."

"As far as I know, there's not another state in the nation that requires compensation," Bell said.

Mortenson said he's willing to take on that distinction.

"If we're an outlier in being the fairest to landowners, that's the kind of outlier I want to be," he said.

Steve Willard, lobbying on behalf of electric utilities, reminded lawmakers the bill "affects all of us," referring to the various kinds of utilities.

\$1 per foot, 50-year max agreements

Another bill that passed 8-3 – also introduced to the committee by Mortenson – specifies how carbon pipeline easements are to be granted, recorded and terminated. An easement is an agreement to access private land.

Among the legislation's key provisions: Carbon pipeline agreements would not be allowed to exceed 50 years and would automatically terminate if not used for the transportation of carbon dioxide within five years from their effective date. Landowners would be entitled to annual compensation for granting the easement, set at a minimum of \$1 per foot of pipeline each year the pipeline is active.

"More voluntary easements, that should be our goal in this building," Mortenson said.

When pipeline companies can't reach voluntary agreements with landowners, the other option is eminent domain, a process that involves going to court to access the land and determine a fair price.

Various agriculture groups also supported the bill, which they said compares favorably to existing laws governing wind turbines.

Summit Carbon Solutions lobbyist Brett Koenecke said the company has concerns, primarily because "wind is creating something," while "a pipeline is transportation."

"They are fundamentally different things," he said, adding that "ongoing payments under this law are a significant concern for my client."

Bill Van Camp, a lobbyist for ethanol producer Ringneck Energy, which is a Summit Carbon Solutions partner, said the bill would force plants to pass the additional costs on to corn farmers.

Recouping legal fees

Another bill that passed 8-3 would require entities using eminent domain to cover some legal costs for landowners under certain conditions.

Rep. Karla Lems, R-Canton, owns some land the carbon pipeline would cross. She said while introducing the bill to lawmakers that the bill would help "level the playing field" between landowners and companies using eminent domain.

The bill says that if the final amount awarded to the property owner to access their land is at least 20% higher than the offer made when the entity sued the landowner, the entity must reimburse the landowner for attorney fees.

Summit Carbon Solution lobbyist Brett Koenecke opposed the bill, "because it's not likely at all to result in the positive changes proponents are seeking."

"You can't come with your best offer before you've had those communications," he said, referring to the back and forth that takes place in negotiations.

Several other pipeline-related bills are pending during the current legislative session, which is in its fifth of nine weeks.

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

Ellsworth bombers participate in Middle East airstrikes

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - FEBRUARY 5, 2024 2:58 PM

B-1 bombers attached to Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City took part in airstrikes Friday in Iraq and Syria.

"The mission we conducted validated that we can respond to any threat anywhere on the globe," said a statement from Col. Derek Oakley, 28th Bomb Wing commander at Ellsworth.

The attack struck more than 85 targets with more than 125 precision munitions, according to a news release from Ellsworth.

The action was a response to the earlier deaths of three U.S. soldiers and injuries suffered by dozens of others inflicted by a drone attack in Jordan supported by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, according to the Pentagon.

The B-1 bombers from Ellsworth's 28th Bomb Wing took off from Dyess Air Force Base in Texas, because the Ellsworth airfield remains closed after a Jan. 4 crash.

Ellsworth's airfield opened temporarily Jan. 25 so several B-1s could fly to Dyess, the Air Force has said, and the airfield closed immediately afterward while the crash investigation continues.

The crash occurred while two B-1s were flying in a training formation. The lead aircraft landed, but the second plane crashed "during the landing phase," according to the Air Force. All four crew members ejected before the crash and were treated for non-life threatening injuries.

Switch to primaries for attorney general, secretary of state advances to House

Scaled-down proposal would also let governor candidates choose own running mates while leaving other nominations to conventions

BY: JOHN HULT - FEBRUARY 5, 2024 1:01 PM

Primary voters would pick their party's nominees for attorney general and secretary of state under a bill that cleared a state House committee Monday morning.

House Bill 1198 is the third attempt in recent years – and the second in 2024 – to take candidate selection for some offices out of the hands of party conventions.

Rep. Tyler Tordsen, R-Sioux Falls, presented his latest proposal during a House State Affairs Committee hearing less than a month after his resolution with similar aims failed in the same room.

Currently, legislative, federal and gubernatorial candidates are selected by primary voters in South Dakota. The state is one of three that still chooses its candidates for the remaining constitutional offices – lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, auditor, treasurer, commissioner of school and public lands, and public utilities commissioners – at a convention of party delegates.

Tordsen's initial effort to change that would have placed a constitutional amendment on the 2024 ballot asking voters to switch some nominations to a primary system. That proposal, House Joint Resolution 5001, failed 8-5 during the second week of the legislative session.

"I've spent the last few weeks listening and learning," Tordsen said Monday morning.

Sweeping in all the non-primary offices and putting the change in the state constitution was a bridge too far for many opponents, Tordsen said. The Legislature cannot adjust constitutional amendments.

Tagging the highest-profile offices and placing the change into a statute that can be adjusted "strikes the balance" that Tordsen said would make the idea more palatable for the opposition.

The bill adds primary contests for attorney general and secretary of state, and would allow gubernatorial candidates to pick their own running mate for lieutenant governor.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 15 of 91

Proponents: Primary is a fairer system

Potter County GOP Precinct Committeeman Larry Eliason returned to the committee Monday to make the same case for support he made three weeks ago. The 2022 GOP convention saw now-Secretary of State Monae Johnson bump that office's former leader, Steve Barnett, from the general election ballot. Now-Attorney General Marty Jackley beat back a challenge, as well.

Eliason doesn't care about any of that, he told the committee. His issue was about who was in the room for those votes. His was one of 10 small counties with no delegate at the 2022 event, as those counties don't have the party leadership necessary to participate.

"There were more than 4,300 Republicans who voted in the primary that were not represented at the convention," Eliason said.

Former Attorney General Mark Barnett told the committee that the one primary he lost – to now-U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds in a 2002 race for governor – was "the fairest" of all his electoral victories across decades as attorney general and circuit court judge.

In his other races as attorney general, he said, he didn't need to bother appealing to regular voters. All he needed to do was convince a handful of party leaders to give him the nod.

"Although I've benefited from the convention process, I always thought, 'This is a pretty slick way to get in. I don't have to do much,'" Barnett said.

Opponents: Current process works

Opponents had a different take.

Sen. John Wiik, R-Big Stone City, serves as the GOP chairman for South Dakota. Winning at convention involves a lot of travel and relationship building, Wiik argued. He was one of several opponents to decry the possibility of outside campaign funding being used to influence primary races. Buying ads is easier than building relationships with party leaders, Wiik said.

"I don't believe in shortcuts," Wiik said.

Wiik also asked the committee why Tordsen's bill only targets two statewide offices.

"What does it say about the rest of our constitutional officers?" Wiik said.

The precinct representatives who go to conventions are elected by fellow Republicans, R. Shawn Tornow told the committee. Tornow has been a legislator and currently leads the Minnehaha County GOP.

"These are elected positions that are showing up as a part of the process, and they are casting their votes as part of the vetting process," Tornow said.

After debate closed, Dell Rapids Republican Rep. Jon Hansen tried to kill every piece of the bill except the one that would clear a path to what he called a "consensus" position – that gubernatorial candidates, not convention-goers, should pick their running mates.

He said the other changes of HB 1198 amount to "throwing a grenade" into the GOP in South Dakota.

"This is really reactionary politics. It's a knee-jerk reaction to one rough convention," Hansen said.

Hansen's motion failed. Instead, the committee chose to consider a motion to pass the bill from Rep. Roger Chase, R-Huron, who brought a bill in 2023 to put all constitutional offices on the primary ballot.

"This is a compromise from what we saw last year, and from what we saw earlier this year," Chase said.

The committee voted 10-3 to send Tordsen's bill to the full House for consideration.

The "no" votes came from Hansen, Rep. Kirk Chaffee, R-Whitewood, and Rep. Rebecca Reimer, R-Chamberlain.

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

Intense opposition to U.S. Senate immigration deal quickly emerges

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - FEBRUARY 5, 2024 6:20 PM

WASHINGTON — The proposed global security funding legislation that includes major bipartisan updates to immigration policy encountered opposition from members of both parties Monday, especially Republicans upset by the Biden administration's handling of border security, charting a tumultuous path for passage in the Senate this week.

The deal on immigration policy, negotiated for months by a bipartisan trio of senators, aims to stem migration at the Southern border. It spurred bipartisan ire in both chambers after its introduction Sunday night as some Republicans said it would not force the Biden administration to take more action and some Democrats argued it would undermine the asylum system.

U.S. Sen. Steve Daines, who chairs the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the campaign arm for Senate Republicans, blamed the Biden administration for rolling back Trump-era immigration policies.

"President Biden could have secured the border on Day One of his presidency and chose not to and the disastrous results speak for themselves," the Montana Republican said in a statement.

President Joe Biden told reporters Monday that the bill would give him tools he needed to control the border.

His critics call the border "out of control," he said.

"Well guess what? Everything in that bipartisan bill gives me control, gives us control," he said during a campaign stop in Las Vegas.

The bill "still meets the needs" of people seeking to immigrate legally, he added.

The bill's supporters, including Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, urged critics to accept the deal.

"This bipartisan agreement is not perfect, but given all the dangers facing America, it is the comprehensive package our country needs right now," Schumer, a Democrat of New York, said on the Senate floor Monday.

A procedural vote is set for Wednesday, which Schumer called "the most important (vote) that the Senate has taken in a very long time."

Even though Schumer and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, support the immigration deal and the \$118.28 billion supplemental package to aid Ukraine, Israel, Indo-Pacific region and U.S. border security, many senators are expressing their displeasure after the nearly 400-page bill was released late Sunday.

The immigration deal was 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.

Changes would include raising the bar for migrants to claim asylum, creating a temporary procedure to shut down the border at particularly active times and an end to the practice of allowing migrants to live in the United States while they wait for their cases to be heard by an immigration judge, among other policies.

"Our immigration laws have been weak for years," Lankford said in a statement Sunday. "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to close our open border and give future administrations the effective tools they need to stop the border chaos and protect our nation."

The Senate will consider the immigration overhaul and global aid package as a single bill after Senate Republicans insisted on tying the supplemental aid package for policy changes at the Southern border.

Many Senate Republicans reject deal

Several Republican senators came out against the package, less than 24 hours after it was introduced.

On X, formerly known as Twitter, Republican Sens. Mike Braun of Indiana, Tom Cotton of Arkansas, Ted Budd of North Carolina, Mike Lee of Utah, Marco Rubio and Rick Scott of Florida, Josh Hawley of Missouri, Roger Marshall of Kansas and J.D. Vance of Ohio already said they will not vote for the package.

Sen. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee called to instead pass a hard-right immigration bill the House passed

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 17 of 91

last year known as H.R. 2. That bill would resume the construction of a barrier along the Southern border and reestablish Trump-era immigration policies.

Republican Sen. Deb Fischer of Nebraska said in a statement that she would not support the bill because it "falls short" of securing the border.

In a Fox News appearance Monday, GOP Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin expressed displeasure at the immigration bill, which he said "appears even worse than we feared."

Alabama's GOP Sen. Katie Britt said in a statement that she is not supportive of the bill because of the president's current immigration policies at the Southern border.

"At every step along the way, President Biden has made it clear that he doesn't want to end the border crisis – he wants to enable it," she said. "Ultimately, this bill would not effectively block President Biden from executing that very agenda, and I won't support it."

Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican, is pushing for a process to add amendments "to try to improve the bill," he said in a statement. He added that if amendments are not allowed, then "the bill will die because of process."

"Like many others, I am open-minded on steps we can take to make the bill stronger," Graham said. "That can only come through the amendment process."

Even Maine's Sen. Susan Collins, a moderate in the Senate Republican Caucus, did not indicate whether she would support the package.

In a statement, Collins, the top Republican on the Senate Committee on Appropriations, said she was pleased that her provisions to speed up work permits for migrants were included in the immigration section of the supplemental package.

The union that represents about 18,000 U.S. Border Patrol agents has endorsed the bill.

Brandon Judd, president of the National Border Patrol Council, said the bill's enforcement provisions "will give U.S. Border Patrol agents authorities codified, in law, that we have not had in the past."

"While not perfect, the Border Act of 2024 is a step in the right direction and is far better than the current status quo," Judd said.

Latino Democrats also object

Adding to the bill's detractors, two Latino Democratic senators voiced opposition to the bill Monday. They argued it contains many hard-right policies reminiscent of the Trump administration and does not include a pathway to citizenship for undocumented people brought into the country as children, often referred to as Dreamers.

"Major chunks of this legislation read like an enforcement wish list from the Trump administration, and directly clash with the most basic tenets of our asylum system," New Jersey Democratic Sen. Bob Menendez said in a statement.

California's Democratic Sen. Alex Padilla said he strongly supported the bill's foreign military and humanitarian aid funding, "but not at the expense of dismantling our asylum system while ultimately failing to alleviate the challenges at our border."

The global security supplemental includes \$60 billion to support Ukraine in its war against Russia; \$14.1 billion in assistance for Israel; and \$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.

Outlook worse in House

House Republicans, who hold a slim majority in that chamber, have already thrown cold water on the package.

Hours after the bill was released, House Speaker Mike Johnson wrote on X that the Senate bill is "dead on arrival" in the House.

"I've seen enough," the Louisiana Republican said. "This bill is even worse than we expected, and won't

come close to ending the border catastrophe the President has created.”

Rep. Mark Green of Tennessee, chair of the House Homeland Security Committee who moved articles of impeachment for Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, said in a statement that he will “vehemently oppose any agreement that legitimizes or normalizes any level of illegal immigration.”

A vote on the House floor for the impeachment of Mayorkas, which is driven by House Republicans’ disagreement over policies at the Southern border, could come as early as Wednesday.

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

Bill requiring public schools, libraries to publish policies on obscene books passes committee

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - FEBRUARY 5, 2024 11:14 AM

PIERRE — A bill that would require school districts and public libraries to publish policies on restricting minors from accessing obscene materials or books unanimously passed the state House Education Committee on Monday.

Rep. Mike Stevens, R-Yankton, said the bill strikes a balance between local control and ensuring parents or concerned citizens have a path to object to available books.

The bill would expand an already existing law addressing obscene material online to physical books. It does not enforce a specific policy for handling book concerns, but requires schools and libraries to publish policies on their website or annually in the local newspaper.

“Many of our public schools and libraries already do this,” Stevens told lawmakers. “So, this will not be anything necessarily new to them.”

The bill received support from the state Department of Education, parents, and some education organizations, some of whom called the bill a “common sense solution.”

One opponent, a resident from Rapid City, testified against the bill, concerned that it would be a step toward a larger book banning movement in the state.

Representatives on the committee said the bill is part of an ongoing conversation about children accessing books with sexually explicit content.

“I don’t think this is going to solve the problem like we think it’s going to,” said Rep. Bethany Soye, R-Sioux Falls, who voted in favor of the bill. “We don’t want this to just be the end of the discussion. There’s going to need to be follow-up on this.”

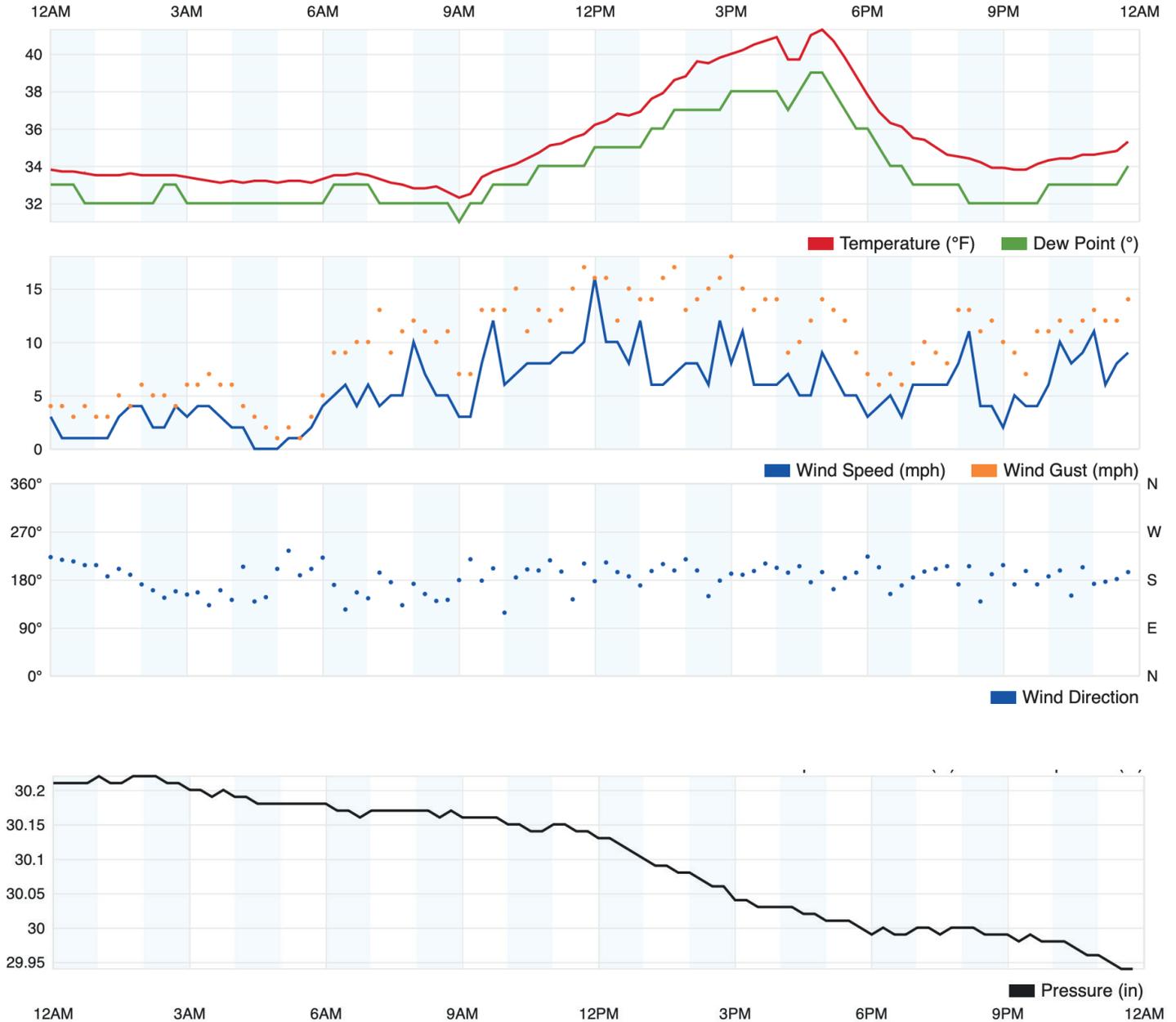
The bill now heads to the House floor for further consideration.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 19 of 91

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 20 of 91

Tue Feb 6	Wed Feb 7	Thu Feb 8	Fri Feb 9	Sat Feb 10	Sun Feb 11	Mon Feb 12
45°F 37°F	52°F 40°F	45°F 29°F	33°F 23°F	32°F 22°F	33°F 23°F	34°F 22°F
S 8 MPH	E 16 MPH 60%	SSW 18 MPH 70%	NW 16 MPH 70%	NNW 15 MPH 30%	NW 10 MPH	W 12 MPH



More Fog Tonight ... Precipitation on the Way

February 5, 2024
1:37 PM

<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
Highs: 43 - 51°F	Highs: 42 - 53°F	Highs: 38 - 46°F	Highs: 30 - 35°F
Rain Changing to Snow			

National Weather Service

A storm system crossing the area will bring increasing chances for rain on Wednesday, with a change over to snow from west to east on Thursday into Friday. It is still a bit too early to determine potential snowfall amounts.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 21 of 91

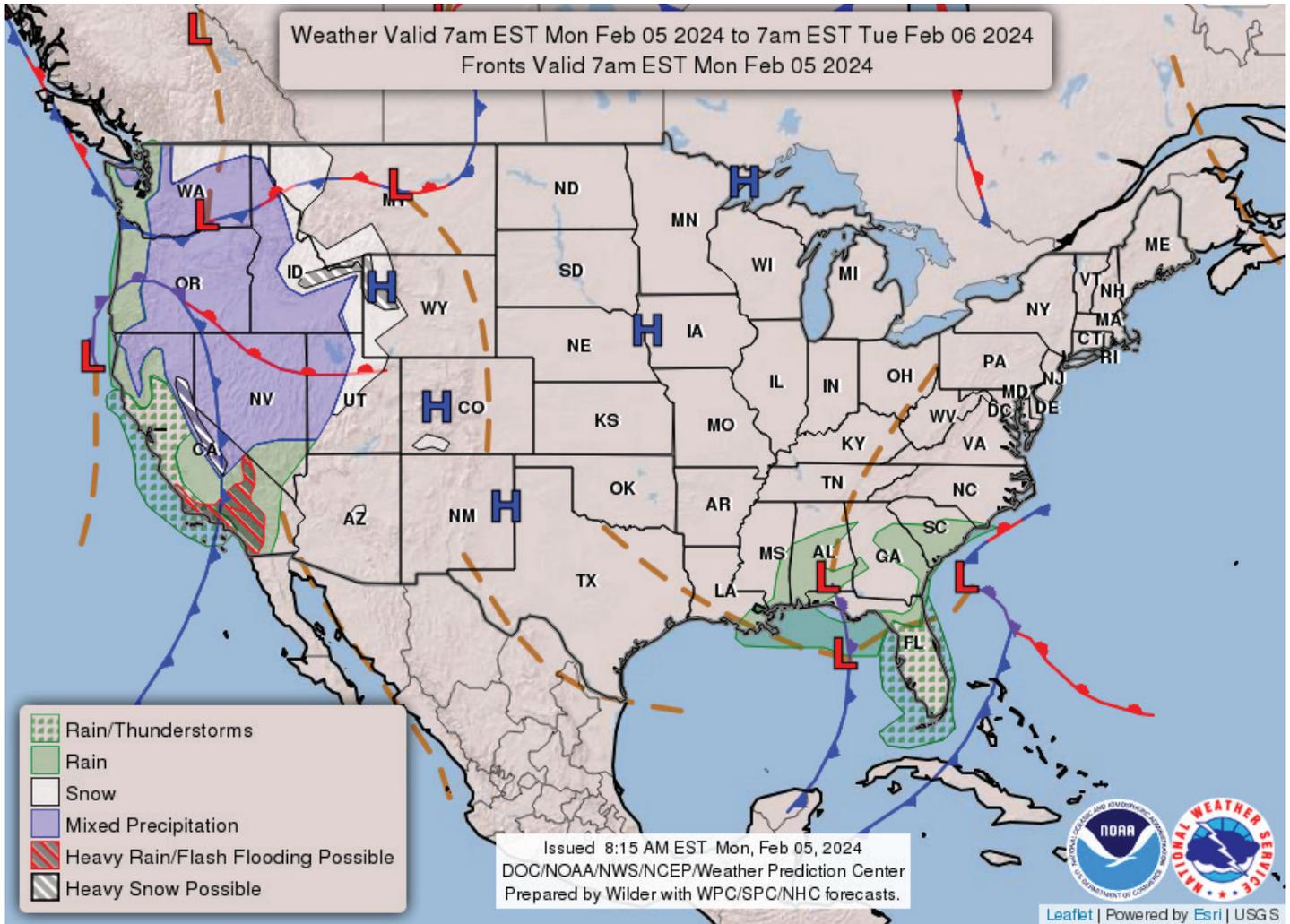
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 42 °F at 4:52 PM
Low Temp: 32 °F at 9:04 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 2:54 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 1 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 58 in 1987
Record Low: -33 in 1907
Average High: 26
Average Low: 3
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.12
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.67
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:47:19 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:44:11 am



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 22 of 91

Today in Weather History

February 6, 1959: A man from Gary in Deuel County was in critical condition with frozen hands, feet, and arms after spending the night in his car in subzero weather.

February 6, 1987: Record warmth occurred across all of central, north-central, and northeast South Dakota and west-central Minnesota, with highs in the mid-50s to the lower 60s. Aberdeen, Kennebec, Mobridge, Pierre, Sisseton, Timber Lake, Watertown, and Wheaton all set record highs on this date in 1987. Pierre recorded the warmest temperature for the day with 62 degrees.

1807 - It was the famous "Cold Friday" in the Midwest and South. The temperature did not rise above zero in Ohio and Kentucky. (David Ludlum)

1958: The Munich air disaster occurred when British European Airways Flight 609 crashed on its third attempt to take off from a slush-covered runway at Munich-Riem Airport, West Germany. On the plane was the Manchester United football team, nicknamed the "Busby Babes," along with supporters and journalists. Twenty of the 44 on the aircraft died at the scene. The injured, some unconscious, were taken to the Rechts der Isar Hospital in Munich, where three more died, resulting in 23 fatalities with 21 survivors.

1978: A massive nor'easter buried the northeastern U.S. Storm totals' cities, including 18 inches in New York City, 16 inches at Philadelphia, and 14 inches in Baltimore. The Boston MA area received 25 to 30 inches in "The Great New England Blizzard." The mayor outlawed travel in the city for an entire week.

1987 - Brownsville, TX, was deluged with seven inches of rain in just two hours, and flooding in some parts of the city was worse than that caused by Hurricane Beulah in 1967. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Arctic cold invaded the south central and eastern U.S. Sixteen cities reported new record low temperatures for the date. Squalls in the Great Lakes Region produced a foot of snow at Arcade NY in three hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Forty-one cities in the western U.S. reported new record low temperatures for the date. Lows of -30 degrees at Ely NV and -33 degrees at Richfield UT were all-time records. Morning lows of 31 degrees at San Francisco CA and -15 degrees at Reno NV were records for February. Logan Canyon UT was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 54 degrees below zero, and Craig CO hit 51 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - A second cold front brought more heavy snow to the high elevations of Oregon, with 12 inches reported at Sunset Summit. Ten inches of snow blanketed Crater Lake and Mount Bachelor. Heavy snow also blanketed northeastern Nevada and parts of Washington State. In Nevada, up to a foot of snow was reported between Spring Creek and Lamoille. Stevens Pass WA received 14 inches of snow in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010: On February 5-6, a severe nor'easter, commonly referred to as Snowmageddon, impacted the east coast from North Carolina to New York. Some snowfall amounts include; 32.9 inches at Washington Dulles International Airport; 28.5 inches at the Philadelphia International Airport; 21.1 inches at the Pittsburgh International Airport; 18.2 in Atlantic City; Trace in Central Park.

2020: The Esperanza Base, the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, 63°23'S, reached 18.3°C (64.94°F), February 6th, 2020. The 18.3°C sets a new, all-time high temperature for the continent of Antarctica. The previous record was 17.5°C in 2015, also at Esperanza. Please Note: A verification process needs to be done before certifying as a new record.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

USING EVERYTHING FOR THE LORD

Shauna was on her way home from work, tired from a stressful day. The road was icy, and the curves dangerous. Suddenly the car began to skid and plunged into a river crusted with ice.

A truck with four men also returning from work was following some distance behind her. When they saw what had happened, they stopped their truck, and with no hesitation, dove into the icy water to rescue her.

One of the four men was Terry Kelly. Terry did not know how to swim and had a withered right arm that was almost useless. Nevertheless, he knew he wanted to do something. And he did.

The men found the car locked, and Shauna, on the inside losing consciousness, was struggling in fear. But, Terry was able to get his small, withered arm through a window that was partially open, and unlock the door. The men were then able to rescue and revive Shauna.

Though many would have questioned the value of, or perhaps ridiculed, Terry's withered arm, it worked wonders when it had to.

Paul said, "Give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body (even a withered arm?) as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God."

God has a unique plan for each of our lives. And He wants to do through us what He has not or cannot do through anyone else. Whatever He asks us to do is within the gifts and abilities He has given us. His plan for each of us may even include what we may consider our "defects."

Prayer: Lord, we are all "perfect" in Your sight for the work that You are calling us to do. May we look beyond what we see to what You see as our worth to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. Romans 6:13



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

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 24 of 91

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
- Colored \$79.88/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months..... \$26.63
- 6 Months..... \$31.95
- 9 Months..... \$42.60
- 12 Months..... \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 25 of 91



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: 17 Hrs 8 Mins 38
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.05.24

1 15 17 24 29 2

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,850,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 23
Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.05.24

7 26 39 43 46 12

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 38 Mins 38
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.03.24

17 20 26 27 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$40,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 38
Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.05.24

1 7 35 52 54 20

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 7
Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.05.24

1 2 27 30 67 9

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$228,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 7
Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 26 of 91

News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Arlington 61, Dell Rapids St Mary 42
Baltic 56, Colman-Egan 31
Bon Homme 71, Menno 35
Centerville 67, Irene-Wakonda 28
Elkton-Lake Benton 35, Canistota 25
Ethan 61, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 46
Flandreau 71, Garretson 32
Freeman 67, Gregory 30
Lyman 62, Chamberlain 38
Sioux Valley 42, Hamlin 37
Sioux Valley 42, Lyman 37
St Francis 67, Crazy Horse 12
Sully Buttes 51, Stanley County 30
Sunshine Bible Academy 38, Colome 25
Tea 53, Canton 25
Todd County 53, Mobridge-Pollock 38
Vermillion 71, Madison 43
Viborg 56, Alcester-Hudson 44
Wakpala 76, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 39
Wall 83, Newell 43
Waubay/Summit 53, Wilmot 32

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Baltic 68, Colman-Egan 38
Bridgewater-Emery 77, Scotland 54
Centerville 74, Irene-Wakonda 42
Dell Rapids St Mary 80, Arlington 49
Edgemont 69, Oelrichs 36
Hamlin 80, Sioux Valley 48
Lennox 73, Tri-Valley 39
Leola-Frederick High School 71, Ellendale, N.D. 59
Marty 76, Avon 66
Mitchell Christian 82, Sunshine Bible Academy 54
North Central 75, McIntosh 54
Stanley County 67, Bennett County 39
Tea 62, Canton 40
Todd County 67, Mobridge-Pollock 54

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

Justice Department proposes major changes to address disparities in state crime victim funds

By CLAUDIA LAUER and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

The Justice Department proposed changes Monday to rules governing state-run programs that provide financial assistance to violent crime victims in order to address racial disparities and curb the number of subjective denials of compensation.

The proposal from the Justice Department's Office for Victims of Crime, a major overhaul to how states across the U.S. currently handle victims compensation claims, comes less than a year after an Associated Press investigation exposed that Black victims were disproportionately denied in many states — often for subjective reasons rooted in implicit biases that are felt across the criminal justice system.

If adopted, the changes would bar states from considering a victim's criminal history and eliminate some of the most subjective reasons for denials in many states.

"Certain populations may be more likely to have criminal history due to unjustified disparate treatment in the criminal justice system or due to criminal conduct induced through force, fraud, or coercion, such as unlawful acts that traffickers compelled their victims to commit, and this can result in unjustifiably disproportionate denial of claims for those populations," according to the proposal.

Thousands of Americans each year turn to the state-run victim compensation programs that provide financial assistance to victims of violent crime. The money is used to help with funeral expenses, physical and emotional therapy, lost wages, crime-scene cleanup and more.

But the AP found last year that in 19 out of the 23 states willing to provide racial data, Black victims were disproportionately denied compensation. In Indiana, Georgia and South Dakota, Black applicants were nearly twice as likely as white applicants to be denied. From 2018 through 2021, the denials added up to thousands of Black families each year collectively missing out on millions of dollars in aid.

Thousands of people are denied compensation every year for often subjective reasons that scrutinize victims' behavior before or after a crime. The AP found that Black victims were nearly three times as likely to be denied for these reasons, including a category often called "contributory misconduct" where programs sometimes, without evidence, accuse victims of causing or contributing to their own victimization.

The proposed changes would strictly limit when a state program can deny a person for misconduct including requiring that states put into law or policy what is specifically considered contributory conduct and the process they use to decide if it is being applied in a denial. The proposal also clarifies that state programs should not claw back money victims receive from crowdfunding sources such as GoFundMe among other changes.

Pamela White, whose son Dararius Evans was killed in 2019, was initially denied compensation by Louisiana's program because officials blamed her son for his own death. She received few details of how the state came to that conclusion and had to take out a personal loan to cover his funeral expenses while she appealed the decision. She eventually won.

White said Monday that she was happy to hear about the proposed rule changes from the federal government.

"Why make things difficult when someone is already going through a hard time?" White said. "I'm thankful that (the proposal) has happened because murders are still taking place. You know, parents are still going to have to bury their children."

Over the last decade, several states have passed laws or made administrative regulation changes to limit some of the most subjective kinds of denials. Other states have passed laws expanding access to the funding or adding covered expenses.

Many of those changes came after victims and advocates protested, testified and urged lawmakers to change the rules.

Lenore Anderson, president and co-founder of Alliance for Safety and Justice, which organizes victims to advocate for criminal justice reforms, praised the federal office and the proposed changes.

"These proposed reforms are a long time coming. Too many victims across the country have faced ex-

traordinary barriers trying to get help in times of crisis," she said, noting the proposals align with criticisms advocates have been hearing from victims for decades. "The Office for Victims of Crime is really focused on expanding victim access. They are really focused on securing fair access to help that is desperately needed in times of crisis. This is thoughtful rulemaking that should be applauded."

Anderson and other advocates have pushed for federal rule changes that would require state programs to all adhere to a victim-centered approach to considering claims. The proposals would do that in several areas including the bar on considering previous criminal histories and removing administrative hurdles like barring most requirements for notarized portions of applications.

Many of the items in the proposal Monday give states more room to expand services and approve claims. The proposal would allow states to apply a broader definition to medical or mental health expenses to allow people in rural areas with fewer licensed providers to find care or to allow for Native American healing practices to be covered expenses. The proposal would allow for a broader definition of who would be eligible to include people beyond a close familial relationship to a victim and allow for states to create broader definitions of allowable property damage expenses that contribute to victim safety.

The publication of the proposed rule changes opens a 60-day public comment period. It can take several months to process those comments and submit final rule changes.

South Dakota man charged with murder for allegedly running down chief deputy during police chase

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

South Dakota prosecutors charged a Sioux Falls man on Monday with first-degree murder and aggravated eluding in the death of a deputy who was struck while putting out spikes during a police chase.

Joseph Gene Hoek, 40, was ordered held without bail at his first court appearance in the death of Moody County Chief Deputy Ken Prorok, 51, of Wentworth, who died during the pursuit on Friday.

People close to Hoek described him as being on a "downward spiral" marked by drug use and escalating threats of violence, Special Agent Jeffrey Kollars of the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation wrote in a court filing dated Sunday.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley is prosecuting the case himself. He said he still needs to investigate any mitigating factors, then sit down with Prorok's family, and then with the sheriff and his deputies, before deciding whether to seek the death penalty.

"I believe the attorney general should lead from the front and I've always tried to do that," Jackley told The Associated Press. "Especially when it involves a law enforcement officer that gave the ultimate sacrifice."

Hoek's attorney, Manuel De Castro, told AP his initial impression is that Hoek was "overcharged," and that "there are some mental health issues that need to be explored." But he said he's still gathering information.

"I know it's an emotional case for everybody involved. But we'll go from there," he said.

Kollars wrote that Madison police responded Friday afternoon to a call about a man, identified as Hoek, making "homicidal threats" near the business where the caller worked. Police spotted his car and tried to stop him, but Hoek sped off on Highway 34 toward Interstate 29, according to the agent.

The chase reached 115 mph (185 kph). Prorok stopped to deploy stop spikes across Highway 34. But a witness said he saw the approaching car intentionally swerve and strike the chief deputy before it went into the ditch and flipped, the agent wrote. Hoek ran off on foot. The witness followed Hoek, ran him down and detained Hoek until officers arrived, the filing said.

Prorok died at the scene. Hoek was checked at a hospital but was not seriously hurt.

Kollars wrote that he interviewed Hoek after he waived his right to remain silent. The agent wrote that Hoek told him he had gone to the business to collect from the caller, who he said owed him money.

"When Hoek was told that a Deputy Sheriff was killed by his actions and decisions, he responded that he didn't believe me," the agent wrote. But Hoek had claimed that he has problems with anxiety and panic attacks that sometimes affect his memory, the agent said.

Investigators who searched the car found suspected THC vapes, suspected marijuana paraphernalia and

"blunts," and containers of cold medicine, the agent wrote. Outside the car they found an apparent bong and an unopened bottle of liquor, he said.

When asked about drugs, Hoek told authorities he suffered from pain and that he had obtained the prescription narcotic pain reliever hydrocodone on some emergency room visits. But he said many doctors denied him the medications he wanted. He said he had used medical marijuana for anxiety "days prior" and had been prescribed the anti-anxiety drug Xanax but couldn't recall the last time he used it.

Hoek also said he had been kicked out of several relatives' homes but did not specify why.

The person who called police told investigators Hoek had been a "family friend" who "started scaring him" and "started acting weird lately," which led the person to obtain no-contact and no-trespass orders last month, the agent wrote.

Hoek's mother told investigators that she believed her son "was suffering from mental health issues and was self-medicating," but was smart enough to fool mental health professionals who evaluated him, so he would get released quickly with no help. She also said he was addicted to dextromethorphan, a cough medicine that is sometimes abused.

One person said Hoek's "downward spiral" escalated after she obtained an order for protection against him last month and that he became "increasingly physically violent," the agent wrote.

South Dakota food tax debate briefly resurfaces, then sinks

By JACK DURA Associated Press

Arguments over eliminating South Dakota's food tax resumed this month — a top issue in recent years that quickly ended Monday with the Senate's defeat of a ballot proposal for voters.

Democratic Senate Minority Leader Reynold Nesiba proposed a November 2024 ballot measure for voters to lower the food tax to zero and to repeal a four-year sales tax cut passed last year. The temporary tax cut was a major issue of the 2023 session.

In an interview, Nesiba called his proposal "revenue-neutral" and eliminating the food tax "highly popular." His measure would allow the Legislature more control over the process than a separate, proposed 2024 ballot initiative to repeal the grocery tax, he said. Voters are likely to pass that initiated measure, he said.

Some lawmakers grumbled about the initiative process in a hearing on Friday.

"Voters are smart, but they're not here studying these issues and knowing where all our sales tax dollars go and what needs to be funded and all those other inputs. That's why they send us here," Republican Sen. Joshua Klumb said.

Republican Sen. John Wiik cited last session's food tax battle, saying, "I have no desire to spend another session trying to push a rope up a hill.

"This Legislature passed record tax relief last year, and I have no desire to roll that tax rate back up," Wiik told the Senate.

Senate debate quickly ended. The measure died in a 5-27 vote.

In 2022, Republican Gov. Kristi Noem campaigned for reelection on a promise to repeal the grocery tax, but the Legislature instead passed the temporary sales tax cut of about \$104 million per year. In her December budget address, Noem asked lawmakers to make the tax cut permanent.

The GOP-held House of Representatives quickly passed a bill last month to that effect, but Senate budget writers soon tabled it.

On Thursday, Republican House Majority Leader Will Mortenson told reporters "we're going to continue to work with our partners in the Senate and see if we can find a way forward on it."

Nothing is dead until the session ends, he added.

Bills go to Noem to criminalize AI-generated child sexual abuse images, xylazine in South Dakota

By JACK DURA Associated Press

South Dakota is poised to update its laws against child sexual abuse images to include those created by artificial intelligence, under a bill headed to Republican Gov. Kristi Noem.

The bill, which is a combined effort by Republican Attorney General Marty Jackley and lawmakers, also includes deepfakes, which are images or videos manipulated to look like a real person.

In an interview, Jackley said some state and local investigations have required federal prosecution because South Dakota's laws aren't geared toward AI.

The bill includes mandatory, minimum prison sentences of one, five and 10 years for first-time offenses of possession, distribution and manufacturing, respectively.

The GOP-held House of Representatives passed the bill with others in a 64-1 vote on Monday. The Republican-supermajority Senate previously passed the bill unanimously.

Another bill on Jackley's legislative agenda also is headed to Noem, to make the animal sedative xylazine a controlled substance.

Last year the Office of National Drug Control Policy designated the combination of xylazine and deadly fentanyl as an "emerging threat." Jackley has said xylazine has "become a national epidemic" and has appeared in South Dakota, mainly in Sioux Falls.

Xylazine can cause health problems in humans, including difficulty breathing, dangerously low blood pressure, a slowed heart rate, wounds that can become infected and even death, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The bill, which allows xylazine for veterinary use, would create penalties of up to two years in prison and/or a \$4,000 fine for possession and use of xylazine.

The Senate passed the bill unanimously on Monday, after the House did the same last month. The South Dakota Health Department and Jackley brought the bill.

Noem highlighted the xylazine issue in her State of the State address last month.

UK leader Rishi Sunak says King Charles III's cancer was caught early

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said Tuesday that he was "shocked and sad" to learn that King Charles III has cancer, but is relieved that the illness was caught early.

Buckingham Palace announced Monday evening that the king has begun outpatient treatment for an undisclosed form of cancer. It was found during his recent treatment for an enlarged prostate but is not connected to that condition, the palace said.

"Thankfully, this has been caught early," Sunak told BBC radio, adding that as prime minister he would "continue to communicate with him as normal."

"He'll just be in our thoughts and our prayers. Many families around the country listening to this will have been touched by the same thing and they know what it means to everyone," Sunak said. "So we'll just be willing him on and hopefully we get through this as quickly as possible."

Less than 18 months into his reign, the 75-year-old monarch has suspended public engagements but will continue with state business — including weekly meetings with the prime minister — and won't be handing over his constitutional roles as head of state.

The palace said Charles, who has generally enjoyed good health, "remains wholly positive about his treatment and looks forward to returning to full public duty as soon as possible."

Charles became king in September 2022 when his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, died at the age of 96 after 70 years on the throne.

News of the king's diagnosis comes as his daughter-in-law Kate, Princess of Wales, recovers from abdominal surgery that saw her hospitalized for about two weeks.

Kate is still taking a break from royal duties as she recovers. Her husband, Prince William, who is heir to the throne, also took time off to help look after her and the couple's three children, but is due to preside over an investiture ceremony at Windsor Castle and a charity dinner on Wednesday.

The king's younger son, Prince Harry, who quit royal duties in 2020 and moved to California, has spoken to his father about the diagnosis and "will be traveling to the U.K. to see His Majesty in the coming days," said the office of Harry and his wife, Meghan. British media reported that he was en route Tuesday from Los Angeles.

Charles took the throne intending to preside over a slimmer monarchy with fewer senior royals carrying out ceremonial public duties. But with Charles and Kate both temporarily sidelined, Prince Harry self-exiled to California and Prince Andrew largely banished from view because of his friendship with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, the royal "firm" risks becoming severely overstretched.

William and Charles' wife Queen Camilla are both expected to take on extra public engagements during the king's treatment. There are no current plans to call on the "counsellors of state" — senior royals, including the queen and the heir to the throne — to deputize for the monarch on constitutional duties such as signing legislation and receiving ambassadors.

World leaders sent Charles good wishes, including U.S. President Joe Biden, who tweeted: "Jill and I join the people of the United Kingdom in praying that His Majesty experiences a swift and full recovery."

Charles departed from royal tradition with his openness about his prostate condition. For centuries Britain's royal family remained tight-lipped about health matters.

Disclosing information about his cancer diagnosis — albeit in a limited way — is another break with tradition.

Buckingham palace said that the king "has chosen to share his diagnosis to prevent speculation and in the hope it may assist public understanding for all those around the world who are affected by cancer."

Blinken seeks progress on Gaza cease-fire-for-hostages deal in meetings with Egyptian mediators

By MATTHEW LEE, WAFAA SHURAFI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Cairo on Tuesday for a meeting with Egyptian leaders that U.S. officials said would concentrate on negotiating a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war in exchange for the release of hostages held by the militants.

Blinken's visit also comes amid growing concerns in Egypt about Israel's stated intentions to expand the combat in Gaza to areas on the Egyptian border that are crammed with displaced Palestinians.

Israel's defense minister has said Israel's offensive will eventually reach the town of Rafah, on the Egyptian border, where more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have sought refuge and are now living in increasingly miserable conditions.

U.N. humanitarian monitors said Tuesday that Israeli evacuation orders now cover two-thirds of Gaza's territory, driving thousands more people every day toward the border areas.

Egypt has warned that an Israeli deployment along the border would threaten the peace treaty the two countries signed over four decades ago. Egypt fears an expansion of combat to the Rafah area could push terrified Palestinian civilians across the border, a scenario Egypt has said it is determined to prevent.

Blinken, who was meeting Tuesday with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, has said repeatedly that Palestinians must not be forced out of Gaza.

During his latest trip, Blinken is seeking progress on a cease-fire deal, on potential normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, and on preventing an escalation of regional fighting.

On all three fronts, Blinken faces major challenges. Hamas and Israel are publicly at odds over key elements of a potential truce. Israel has dismissed the United States' calls for a path to a Palestinian state, and Iran's militant allies in the region have shown little sign of being deterred by U.S. strikes.

Egypt — along with Qatar, where Blinken will be later Tuesday — have been trying to mediate an agreement between Israel and Hamas that would lead to the release of more hostages in return for a several-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 32 of 91

week-long pause in Israeli military operations. The outlines of such a deal were worked out by intelligence chiefs from the U.S., Egypt, Qatar and Israel late last month and have been presented to Hamas, which has not yet formally responded.

U.S. officials said Blinken is hoping to get an update on Hamas' response to the proposal in both Cairo and Doha. Blinken will then travel to Israel to brief Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his War Cabinet on Wednesday about what he heard from the Arab leaders.

As on his previous four trips to the Mideast since the Gaza war began, Blinken's other main goal is to prevent the conflict from spreading, a task made exponentially more difficult by stepped up attacks by Iran-backed militias in the region and increasingly severe U.S. military responses in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and the Red Sea that have intensified since last week.

Blinken met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Monday evening, shortly after arriving in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Saudi officials have said the kingdom is still interested in normalizing relations with Israel in a potentially historic deal, but only if there is a credible plan to create a Palestinian state.

Blinken "underscored the importance of addressing humanitarian needs in Gaza and preventing further spread of the conflict," and he and the crown prince discussed "the importance of building a more integrated and prosperous region," the State Department said in a statement.

But any such grand bargain appears a long way off as the war still rages in Gaza.

The Palestinian death toll from nearly four months of war has reached 27,585 according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory, with the bodies of 107 people brought to hospitals over the past day. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count but says most of the dead have been women and children.

The war has leveled vast swaths of the tiny enclave and pushed a quarter of residents to starvation.

U.N. humanitarian monitors said Tuesday that Israel's evacuation orders in the Gaza Strip now cover two-thirds of the territory, or 246 square kilometers (95 square miles). The affected area was home to 1.78 million Palestinians, or 77% of Gaza's population, before Hamas' Oct. 7 cross-border raid that ignited the war.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, said in its daily report that the newly displaced only have about 1.5-2 liters (50-67 ounces) of water per day to drink, cook and wash. It also reported a significant increase in chronic diarrhea among children.

Parents of babies face a particularly difficult challenge because of the high cost or lack of diapers, baby formula and milk.

Zainab Al-Zein, who is sheltering in the central town of Deir al-Balah, said she had to feed her 2.5-month-old daughter solid food, such as biscuits and ground rice, well ahead of the typical 6-month mark because milk and formula were not available.

"This is known, of course, as unhealthy eating, and we know that it causes her intestinal distress, bloating and colic," al-Zein said. "As you can see, 24 hours like this, she cries and cries continuously."

Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war until Israel crushes Hamas' military and governing abilities and wins the return of the 100-plus hostages still held by the militant group.

Hamas and other militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the 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.

Meeting with troops on Monday, Netanyahu said Israel had defeated 18 of Hamas' 24 battalions, without providing evidence. "We are on the way to absolute victory, and I want to tell you that we are committed to it and we will not give it up."

Another ship in the Red Sea has been attacked by a suspected Yemen Houthi rebel drone

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — A ship traveling through the southern Red Sea was attacked by a suspected Yemen Houthi rebel drone early on Tuesday, authorities said, the latest assault in their campaign targeting vessels over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The attack happened west of the Yemeni port of Hodeida, and the projectile caused "slight damage" to the vessel's windows on the bridge, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations said. A small vessel had been nearby the ship before the attack, it added.

The private security firm Ambrey identified the vessel as a Barbados-flagged, United Kingdom-owned cargo ship. No one was hurt onboard the vessel, which suffered "minor damage," the firm said.

Later, a military spokesman of the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, claimed in a statement that the rebel forces attacked two separate vessels, one American and one British, in the Red Sea. He provided no evidence to support the claim.

One of the ships the Houthis claimed attacking, the Morning Tide, matched details provided by Ambrey. Tracking data showed it to be in the Red Sea near the reported attack.

The Morning Tide's owner, British firm Furadino Shipping, told The Associated Press no one was hurt in the attack and the ship was continuing onward to Singapore.

Since November, the rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea over Israel's offensive in Gaza against Hamas. But they have frequently targeted vessels with tenuous or no clear links to Israel, imperiling shipping in a key route for trade among Asia, the Mideast and Europe.

In recent weeks, the United States and the United Kingdom, backed by other allies, have launched air-strikes targeting Houthi missile arsenals and launch sites for its attacks.

The U.S. and Britain struck 36 Houthi targets in Yemen on Saturday. An air assault Friday in Iraq and Syria targeted other Iranian-backed militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in retaliation for a drone strike that killed three U.S. troops in Jordan.

The U.S. military's Central Command separately acknowledged an attack Monday on the Houthis, in which they attacked what they described as two Houthi drone boats loaded with explosives.

American forces "determined they presented an imminent threat to U.S. Navy ships and merchant vessels in the region," the military said. "These actions will protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S. Navy vessels and merchant vessels."

Live updates | Israel's evacuation orders cover 2/3 of Gaza, leaving Palestinians crammed in Rafah

By The Associated Press undefined

Israel's evacuation orders in the Gaza Strip now cover two-thirds of the territory, or 246 square kilometers (95 square miles), United Nations humanitarian monitors said Tuesday.

More than half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people is now crammed into the town of Rafah on the border with Egypt and surrounding areas, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said.

The Health Ministry in Gaza said the known Palestinian death toll is at 27,478 people after nearly four months of war. A quarter of Gaza's residents are now starving and 85% of the population has been driven from their homes, with hundreds of thousands crammed in makeshift tent camps.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman shortly after arriving in the kingdom Monday. It's Blinken's fifth visit to the Mideast since the war in Gaza broke out on Oct. 7, when Hamas stormed into southern Israel. The assault killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and militants abducted around 250 others.

Currently:

— An argument over the Middle East conflict leaves a Jewish student hospitalized in Berlin.

- What to know about the situation in the Middle East this week.
- The U.S. warns of further retaliation if Iran-backed militias continue their attacks.
- Find more of AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>.

Here's the latest:

ISRAEL'S EVACUATION ORDERS COVER MORE THAN 2/3 OF THE GAZA STRIP

JERUSALEM — Israel's evacuation orders in the Gaza Strip now cover two-thirds of the territory, or 246 square kilometers (95 square miles), United Nations humanitarian monitors said Tuesday.

The affected area was home to 1.78 million Palestinians, or 77% of Gaza's population, before the Israel-Hamas war erupted on Oct. 7, triggered by a deadly Hamas attack on southern Israel.

Early on in the war, Israel's military began ordering Palestinians in the northern half of the territory to leave their homes, ostensibly to get out of the way of eventual ground combat. At the same time, Israeli aircraft continued to attack in the southern half, where residents had been told to take refuge. Israel says it only goes after Hamas targets and argues that Hamas is responsible for harm to civilians because it operates from within civilian sites.

Gaza health officials have put the Palestinian death toll in the territory at more than 27,000. They don't differentiate between combatants and civilians in the count, but have said two-thirds are women and children.

Over the course of the war, evacuation orders eventually expanded to parts of the south, including the city of Khan Younis and surrounding areas, the current focus of Israel's ground offensive. Tens of thousands of people have fled and continue to flee from there, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said Tuesday in its latest daily report on the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

More than half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people is now crammed into the town of Rafah on the border with Egypt and surrounding areas, OCHA said.

Less rain forecast but historic Southern California storm still threatens flooding and landslides

By JOHN ANTCZAK, CHRISTOPHER WEBER and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Rainfall from one of the wettest storms in Southern California history was to ease off Tuesday, but forecasters warned that floods were still possible and soaked ground raised the threat of potentially deadly landslides.

The slow-moving storm that parked itself over the region on Monday, dumping record amount of rain on parts of Los Angeles, could linger into Wednesday, the National Weather Service said. Scattered showers and some possible thunderstorms would bring light to moderate rain, but there was still the threat that many places could see brief, fierce downpours dumping a half-inch to an inch (1.3 to 3 centimeters) of rain in an hour.

Authorities warned people to remain on high alert and most of Southern California remained under flood watches. Swollen and fast-moving creeks and rivers "increase the risk for drowning and the need for swift water rescues," the weather service said.

The storm plowed through Northern California over the weekend, killing three people who were crushed by falling trees, then lingered over the south. It was the second storm fueled by an atmospheric river to hit the state over the span of days.

On Monday, it deluged Los Angeles with rain, sending mud and boulders down hillsides dotted with multimillion-dollar homes while people living in homeless encampments in many parts of the city scrambled for safety.

Near the Hollywood Hills, floodwaters carried mud, rocks and household objects downhill through Studio City, city officials said. Sixteen people were evacuated and several homes were red-tagged.

"It looks like a river that's been here for years," said Keki Mingus, whose neighbors' homes were damaged. "I've never seen anything like it."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 35 of 91

Drake Livingston who lives in the Beverly Crest neighborhood, was watching a movie around midnight when a friend alerted him to flooding.

"We looked outside and there's a foot-and-a-half of running water, and it starts seeping through the doors," said Livingston, whose car was found submerged in mud Monday morning.

Downtown Los Angeles received nearly 7 inches (18 centimeters) of rain by Monday night, nearly half the yearly average of 14.25 inches (36 centimeters). It was already the third-wettest two-day period since 1877, the service said.

The danger wasn't over despite a projected dip in the rainfall, warned Ariel Cohen, meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service bureau in Los Angeles.

"The ground is extremely saturated, supersaturated," he said at a Monday afternoon news conference. "It's not able to hold any additional water before sliding. It's not going to take much rain for additional landslides, mudslides, rockslides and other debris flows to occur."

In LA, an evacuation order remained in place for some residents of a canyon area that was scarred by a 2022 fire. The area was at increased risk of mud and debris flows because the area was burned bare of brush and trees that could hold it back, authorities said.

The Los Angeles Fire Department said 1,000 firefighters had dealt with more than 300 mudslides in addition to more than 100 reports of flooding and rescues of motorists stranded in vehicles on inundated roadways.

Shelters added beds for the city's homeless population of nearly 75,000 people.

Tony Sanz spent the night in a city park before seeking higher ground around dawn as floodwaters were rising around his tent.

"Boy did it rain last night," he said Monday afternoon hunkered down in a tent layered with tarps on a sidewalk outside a supermarket. He spied the cloudy skies during a break in the downpours and wondered, "Is that it? I hope that's it."

Crews rescued people from swift-moving water in various parts of Southern California, including 16 people and five cats in Los Angeles County alone, authorities said.

About an hour's drive east of Los Angeles, two homeless people were rescued Monday after spending the night on a small island in the Santa Ana River in San Bernardino.

"They were cold and exhausted from a night out stranded on this little patch of dirt that was in the middle of the river," said Capt. Nathan Lopez of the San Bernardino County Fire Department. A dog and two cats were also saved.

Authorities also reported several spills Monday, including the discharge of about 5 million gallons (18.9 million liters) of raw sewage in the Rancho Dominguez area surrounding Compton. Most of the untreated sewage went into a channel leading to the Pacific Ocean and the city closed a 7-mile (11-kilometer) stretch of Long Beach to recreational swimming,

Over the weekend, the storm inundated streets and brought down trees and prompted water rescues in the San Francisco Bay area.

Among those who died were two men killed by fallen trees Sunday in Carmichael, a suburb of Sacramento, and in Boulder Creek in Santa Cruz County. Police were investigating the death of another man in Yuba City, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco, who was found under a redwood tree in his backyard Sunday.

Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for most of coastal Southern California and on Monday, President Joe Biden promised to provide any needed federal help.

"We'll get any help on the way as soon as you guys request it," he told Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass in a telephone call.

Blinken returns to Mideast in push for hostage deal and postwar plan for Gaza, but obstacles loom

By MATTHEW LEE, WAFAA SHURAFU and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Saudi Arabia's crown prince Monday at the start of his fifth visit to the Middle East since the outbreak of the war in Gaza, hoping to press ahead with a potential cease-fire deal and postwar planning while tamping down regional tensions.

But on all three fronts he faces major challenges: Hamas and Israel are publicly at odds over key elements of a potential truce. Israel has dismissed the United States' calls for a path to a Palestinian state, and Iran's militant allies in the region have shown little sign of being deterred by U.S. strikes.

In Gaza, meanwhile, Hamas has begun to reemerge in some of the most devastated areas after Israeli forces pulled back, an indication that Israel's central goal of crushing the group remains elusive. Video footage from the same areas shows vast destruction, with nearly every building damaged or destroyed.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said the military would continue to conduct operations in northern Gaza for many months and press ahead with its main offensive in the south, where it has been locked in heavy fighting for weeks, until it has "full reign" over the entire territory.

He said the offensive will eventually reach the town of Rafah, on the Egyptian border, where some 1.5 million displaced Palestinians have sought refuge. Egypt has said an Israeli deployment along the border would threaten the peace treaty the two countries signed over four decades ago.

Blinken met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman shortly after arriving in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Saudi officials have said the kingdom is still interested in normalizing relations with Israel in a potentially historic deal, but only if there is a credible plan to create a Palestinian state.

Blinken "underscored the importance of addressing humanitarian needs in Gaza and preventing further spread of the conflict," and he and the crown prince discussed "the importance of building a more integrated and prosperous region," the State Department said in a statement.

But any such grand bargain appears a long way off as the war still rages in Gaza, where 113 bodies were brought to hospitals in the last 24 hours alone, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory. Another 205 people were wounded, the agency said.

The fatalities bring the overall Palestinian death toll from nearly four months of war to 27,478. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count but says most of the dead have been women and children.

The war has leveled vast swaths of the tiny enclave, displaced 85% of its population of 2.3 million Palestinians and pushed a quarter of residents to starvation.

HAMAS RETURNS TO WAR-BATTERED STREETS

A video circulating online Monday showed masked gunmen leading a line of shirtless detainees past bombed-out buildings in northern Gaza, forcing them to shout out that they are thieves. The Associated Press was not able to independently confirm the incident, but it is consistent with AP reporting.

It was the latest sign that Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since seizing power from rival Palestinian forces in 2007, is reasserting control in parts of the north. Residents say Hamas-led security forces, which numbered in the tens of thousands before the war, have begun to reappear in some areas where they focus on distributing civil salaries and cracking down on looters.

The Israeli military says it has launched targeted operations in northern Gaza over the last week to prevent Hamas from rebuilding its capabilities.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war until Israel crushes Hamas' military and governing abilities and wins the return of the 100-plus hostages still held by the militant group after the Oct. 7 cross-border raid that ignited the war.

Hamas and other militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the 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.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 37 of 91

Meeting with troops on Monday, Netanyahu said Israel had defeated 18 of Hamas' 24 battalions, without providing evidence. "We are on the way to absolute victory, and I want to tell you that we are committed to it and we will not give it up."

CEASE-FIRE TALKS ADVANCE, BUT GAPS REMAIN

The United States, Qatar and Egypt have drawn up a proposal for a cease-fire of several weeks and the phased release of the remainder of the hostages.

But Hamas, which has yet to publicly respond to the proposal, has said it won't release any more captives until Israel ends its offensive. The militants are expected to demand the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners in return — demands Netanyahu has publicly ruled out.

The war has ignited tensions across the region, with a flurry of strikes and counterstrikes raising the risk of a wider conflict.

Israel and Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah militant group trade fire across the border on a daily basis, and in recent weeks apparent Israeli strikes have killed senior Hezbollah commanders.

A drone attack launched by Iran-backed militants killed three U.S. soldiers near the Jordan-Syria border last week, prompting a wave of retaliatory U.S. strikes. The United States and Britain have also carried out strikes on the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen in response to their attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea, which the rebels portray as a blockade of Israel.

Town manager quits over anti-gay pressure in quaint New Hampshire town

By NICK PERRY and KATHY McCORMACK Associated Press

LITTLETON, N.H. (AP) — The quaint town of Littleton, New Hampshire, is seeing more tourists, drawn to a main street of shops and restaurants where rainbow colors and gay pride symbols can be seen alongside American flags. Its population of 6,000 is growing younger and more diverse, supporting LGBTQ-themed art and a local theater's gay-themed musical.

The culture change doesn't sit well with town selectboard member Carrie Gendreau, who also serves as a Republican state senator. Last year, she said that "homosexuality is an abomination" and spoke of regulating art on public property, prompting a backlash and now the resignation of the town manager, whose late son was gay.

"My son is not an abomination," Jim Gleason told the selectboard in January, to a standing ovation, when he announced his last day was Friday. He accused Gendreau of creating a toxic work environment by repeatedly making derogatory comments about gay people. Friday also was Gendreau's deadline to file for reelection to the board, but she didn't, so her three-year term ends in March.

A former mill town in the White Mountains, Littleton reversed a long decline in part through art. Tourists come now for antiques, galleries, boutiques and "the world's longest candy counter." They also look at the bronze statue of Pollyanna, erected outside the public library to honor the 1913 book by local author Eleanor H. Porter, whose main character came to define relentless optimism.

Pollyanna's motto "Be Glad!" — which hangs from banners up and down Main Street — has been tested as townspeople found themselves debating over inclusion, tolerance and equality.

The controversy began in August, after three small murals funded by a diversity, equity and inclusion grant appeared on the side of a building that houses a restaurant and clothing store. Covering boarded-up windows, the murals show a white iris against a color wheel, two birch trees bending under a night sky, and a dandelion reaching skyward from an open book.

"What went up was not good," said Gendreau, urging the selectboard's audience to research what such symbols really mean. "I don't want that to be in our town. I don't want it to be here."

The board then sought an attorney's advice on what they could do to regulate artistic expression on town property and Gendreau gave several interviews, telling The Boston Globe that the iris painting carried "demonic hidden messages."

The artist, Meg Reinhold, said her "We Are Joy" painting was inspired by Iris, the Greek goddess of

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 38 of 91

rainbows. She told The Associated Press in an email that she hoped to “evoke feelings of joy and empowerment,” add beauty to Littleton, and celebrate people living with pride in the LGBTQ+ community.

“If a viewer looks at these works and sees demons and darkness, what does that tell us about how they view the world?” Reinhold said.

Gleason, who answered to the board as town manager, said he tried to resolve matters. When a woman approached him demanding to stop the November production of “La Cage aux Folles” — depicted on screen as “The Birdcage” — he said she was free to protest outside the theater or not buy a ticket.

She responded by invoking his son, saying “He’s in hell with the devil where he belongs,” recalled Gleason, and he said Gendreau tried to justify the the comments. The woman later admitted sending Gleason a photo of him clipped from a newspaper with derogatory language written across his face. A judge granted Gleason a restraining order against her.

As fears of a public art ban spread, selectboard meetings drew large crowds.

Ronnie Sandler, 75, an out lesbian all her adult life, said she spoke up at a selectboard meeting last fall because some of her friends told her they were scared.

“I have never felt any hatred or anything targeted at me in all of those years,” she told the AP. “Back in the late ‘70s, my girlfriend and I used to walk around in Littleton holding hands.”

A group of local business owners led by auto dealership manager Duane Coute submitted a letter signed by more than 1,000 people from Littleton and across the country urging the board to abandon “a path so detrimental to business.”

“Our community is so much stronger because of this situation,” Coute said.

New Hampshire’s Democratic-led congressional delegation stressed “how integral public art and cultural expression are to the economic wellbeing and competitiveness of towns like Littleton and similar communities throughout New Hampshire.” Surrounding towns adopted inclusivity-equality resolutions.

Some people backed Gendreau.

“She speaks for those stakeholders who are afraid to speak out due to personal retribution. She speaks out for those who are afraid for their own personal safety,” Nick De Mayo of nearby Sugar Hill, in Gendreau’s Senate district, wrote in a letter to the editor.

Others called the whole experience disappointing and disgraceful.

“It’s coming from a very small group of people. Unfortunately, that small group of people hold elected office and have some degree of power within the town,” said Kevin Silva, a physician who has lived in Littleton for about 20 years.

The board ultimately announced that they never sought an art ban. Selectboard member Linda MacNeil drew a standing ovation when she said “Whether we agree with the content or not, art is part of the fabric of history and should not be censored.” Roger Emerson, chairperson of the three-member board, did not take a position on the subject.

Gleason, 65, expressed amazement during his resignation speech at an outpouring of support for his defense of the arts, and urged his fellow townspeople to keep working “for civil rights and equality for all.”

“Keep up the fight,” he told the audience in a quavering voice. “You’ve got a beautiful town.”

Gleason, who was hired in 2021 following a similar job in Florida, told the AP he’s been thinking of his son Patrick, who died of pancreatic cancer in 2016.

“I believe he’d be proud of his dad for standing up, not just for him, but for everybody in the LGBTQIA+ community, and anyone who has been marginalized or discriminated against in terms of that process,” Gleason said. “This is one of those moments. We don’t always get them in life.”

Gendreau didn’t answer directly when asked for comment on the controversy, but she suggested she wasn’t done trying to change her community. “There’s a lot of undertones that need to get corrected,” she said.

Biden is going small to try to win big in November. That means stops for boba tea, burgers and beer

By ZEKE MILLER AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is going small to try to win big in November.

With 10 months to go until Election Day, the Democratic incumbent is all in on minimalist events — visits to a boba tea store, a family's kitchen and a barbershop, for example — rather than big rallies.

Never much of an orator, Biden is leaning into his strength as a retail politician honed over more than 50 years in elected office. But the strategy also reflects what his team sees as a changed media landscape, where TikTok videos and Instagram stories can reach voters more effectively than television ads and speeches.

Last month in Raleigh, North Carolina, Biden picked up burgers and fries from Cook Out and brought takeout to what his campaign described as a "kitchen table conversation" at the home of Eric Fitts, who works in the local school system and benefited from the administration's student loan forgiveness programs.

Biden's campaign taped the visit, which was closed to reporters, and later released curated snippets online. But the highlight for the president's team was unplanned. One of Fitts' sons, Christian, shared a 57-second video on TikTok, offering a behind-the-scenes look at Biden's drop-by, including the president admiring photos on the family's fridge and his limo pulling out of their driveway.

The post quickly attracted millions of views, and Biden's campaign was happy to steer reporters to it even though the campaign itself doesn't use TikTok due to national security concerns.

"You have to go to the places where people are," said Biden deputy campaign manager Rob Flaherty. He added that in an era when people consume media on different platforms that cater to individual tastes, it's harder than ever for campaigns to reach the voters they need.

For Biden, those voters are often the least engaged with the political process — younger, more racially diverse than the country at large and unenthused about a likely rematch between Biden and former President Donald Trump.

"We have to widen the aperture of what the president's time is good for, and who he's talking to and why," Flaherty said.

Biden kicked off the presidential election year with a pair of big speeches near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, and in Charleston, South Carolina, meant to lay out the choice for voters in November. His campaign says he'll continue to hold set-piece events, especially closer to the summer once voters begin to tune in, but they see as much — if not more — value in smaller interactions.

Biden's less-than-electric speaking style and sometimes rambling speeches at larger events have become fodder for Trump and GOP critics to feed into the notion that the 81-year-old president is not up to another four years in the White House. Trump, by contrast, rarely holds retail events, preferring his signature rallies before large crowds of supporters — many of whom wait hours to get in — or appearances at sporting events.

The campaign hopes Biden's go-small strategy is a way to show the American people a different side of the president that will help boost his lagging poll numbers.

It began in earnest this year with a series of stops at small businesses in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, where the president marveled over the selection at a local cycling store and chatted up the owner at a running specialty shop as he worked to highlight the effects of his economic policies. Fond of sweets, Biden asked an employee at a nearby coffee house whether they make smoothies, and one was promptly whipped up for him.

It's not all about the softer side of politics. Biden aides say their goal is for the president — or those he's meeting with — to amplify the president's message too.

In Emmaus, Biden recounted to reporters that one of the business owners he spoke with had confided to him that "I can look at my kid now and say: 'It's going to be OK. We're going to make it.'"

"I just came away from this really reassured that what we've done has had an impact not just here in

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 40 of 91

Eastern Pennsylvania ... but throughout the country. And we're going to do more," he said. "The job is not finished."

Two weeks later, at a taproom in Superior, Wisconsin, the teetotaling Biden mingled with about two dozen patrons, several swigging beer during the mid-afternoon stop, after speaking at a neighboring brewery about the turnaround in the economy.

"Doing these stops allows the campaign to showcase this side of Biden that has always broken through the noise for the voters who aren't glued to cable news," said Kate Berner, a former deputy communications director to Biden in the White House.

At the Black-owned Regal Lounge in Columbia, South Carolina, Biden recently mingled with the barbers, staff and patrons ahead of the state's Feb. 3 Democratic primary. Secret Service asked one barber to put down his razor while the president was within arm's reach, sparking a few sideways glances and some chuckles.

In Michigan last week, ahead of the state's Feb. 27 contest, Biden's campaign gave a local businessman a ride in the president's armored limousine from the tarmac alongside Air Force One to a local restaurant.

And on Monday, a day before Nevada's primary, Biden swung by an Asian American-owned boba tea shop in Las Vegas and a hotel on the iconic strip to meet and greet a small gathering of workers of the state's influential culinary union.

Democratic strategist Teddy Goff, a veteran of the Obama presidential campaigns, said Biden's team recognizes that "you're fighting for people's attention and you're not just fighting against Donald Trump."

"You're also playing against ESPN and very funny people on TikTok and whatever else people might casually watch in their spare time," he added. He added that candidates can turn viewers off if they aren't true to themselves.

"You got to figure it out a way that works for you, that's going to make someone want to pay attention to you in that environment where they'd literally be doing anything else other than listening to a politician."

Biden has always excelled at retail politicking, which Flaherty called a "specific advantage" over Trump that the campaign wants to capitalize on. Those viral moments — and even the ones that are only shared in smaller circles — add up, Flaherty said.

"I would rather have 100 outside voices saying Joe Biden is great than one piece of content from us saying Joe Biden is great," he said.

Pakistan is electing a new parliament. Here are the key players ahead of the vote

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan is holding elections for a new parliament on Thursday. No less than 44 political parties are vying for a share of the 266 seats that are up for grabs in the National Assembly, or the lower house of parliament, with an additional 70 seats reserved for women and minorities.

But in a country where civilian governments have been upended by military takeovers and where the army has ruled the nation for half of its 76 years of independence, it's often the traditional elites that have called the shots.

Here are the key players ahead of the country's elections.

FORMER PRIME MINISTER NAWAZ SHARIF, PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE

Business mogul, multi-millionaire and three-time premier, Nawaz Sharif hails from one of the top two families that have dominated Pakistani politics for decades. His Pakistan Muslim League party won landslide victories in 2007 and 2013. But the 74-year-old Sharif has never completed a term in office and was ousted from power each time: once by the military, once by the Supreme Court, and once by the president.

Like other Pakistani former prime ministers, Sharif has been dogged by legal cases and prison sentences. A Pakistani court in 2020 issued an arrest warrant and threatened to declare him a fugitive from justice if he didn't return from self-imposed exile in the United Kingdom to face corruption charges. Despite the years of controversies, he enjoys immense popularity and musters thousands of supporters at party rallies.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 41 of 91

He has a clear path to a fourth term in office after courts overturned his convictions and prison sentences after his return to the country last October. With his archrival and nemesis Imran Khan now in prison, the stage appears set for a reversal of fortunes from the 2018 election, when Sharif was battling legal cases and Khan became prime minister. With Khan behind bars, analysts predict another victory for Sharif.

GEN. ASIM MUNIR, THE POWERFUL ARMY CHIEF

Pakistan's military has always cast itself as the ultimate arbiter in key government decisions, though often one behind the scenes. The current army chief, Gen. Asim Munir, a fitness fanatic and former spymaster, is not on the ballot but as the head of military, he still wields huge influence.

Munir has kept a lower profile than his predecessors but has orchestrated military trials for civilians and a crackdown on foreign nationals living in the country illegally. The move, denounced by international and local rights groups, has mainly targeted 1.7 million Afghans living in Pakistan. Munir, who is in his 50s, was also behind a retaliatory airstrike inside Iran in a tit-for-tat series earlier this month that sharply escalated tensions between Tehran and Islamabad.

His uncompromising stance has a profound impact on bilateral relations, political stability and regional security. He also has a personal stake in keeping imprisoned Imran Khan out of the picture. Munir ran the country's spy agency during Khan's term in office but was fired without an explanation by the then-premier.

FORMER PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN, PAKISTAN TEHREEK-E-INSAF PARTY

A former cricket star turned Islamist politician, Imran Khan triumphed on an anti-corruption, anti-establishment platform in the 2018 election to form a coalition government. But his premiership was problematic as his administration cracked down on opposition figures. Some said that religious minorities came under attack because of his concessions to radical clerics; his critics and rights groups said he failed to protect freedom of speech.

Khan, 71, also drew nationwide condemnation after seemingly blaming a rise in sexual violence on women "wearing very few clothes." On the international stage, he berated the United States as ungrateful for Pakistan's help in fighting global terror, and called al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden, killed in a 2011 U.S. raid in Pakistan, a "martyr" — an honorable term for someone slain in battle.

Khan was ultimately ousted by parliament in April 2022, a move he tried to fight with street protests and claimed it was engineered by Washington and his opponents. He now has more than 150 legal cases against him and has been imprisoned since August, with four convictions for graft, revealing state secrets and breaking marriage laws. He has been sentenced to three, 10, 14 and seven years, to be served concurrently. His legal convictions have barred him from contesting the elections but his party is running and he still has a mass grassroots following.

FORMER PRIME MINISTER SHEHBAZ SHARIF, PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE

Shehbaz Sharif, 72, the younger brother of Nawaz Sharif, succeeded Imran Khan as prime minister in April 2022. He was previously three times the chief minister of Punjab, the largest and most influential province that is also home to half of the country's population of 240 million. He led their party while his brother was in self-exile in London and became premier when a no-confidence vote in parliament ousted Khan from power.

During Sharif's term in office, Pakistan was struck by unprecedented rainfall and flash floods in the summer of 2022 that killed 1,700 people and devastated the nation, at one point submerging a third of the country. However, he did not declare a national emergency until late August, when the death toll was in the hundreds.

He also struggled to manage the worst economic crisis in Pakistan's history and only secured a bailout from the International Monetary Fund by agreeing to a substantial increase in energy tariffs that led to price hikes on everyday goods. That made both him and the party unpopular. Under Pakistan's constitution, Sharif stepped down when parliament was dissolved last August and a caretaker prime minister took over until the election. If their party wins on Thursday, Sharif will likely play a key role in his brother's Cabinet.

BILAWAL BHUTTO-ZARDARI, PAKISTAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

The youngest hopeful for Pakistan's next prime minister is Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, the son of the assassinated former Premier Benazir Bhutto and grandson of the country's first democratically elected prime

minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who led the nation in the 1970s and was overthrown and executed by the military.

Both Bhutto-Zardari's mother and grandfather still command huge reverence among party supporters, handing him a captive audience. He became chairman of his family's political party days after his mother was killed in 2007 during her third bid for premiership. Bhutto-Zardari's life in politics was also shaped by his father, Asif Ali Zardari, who served as Pakistan's president, a mostly ceremonial post, from 2008 to 2013.

He won his first parliamentary seat in 2018 and became foreign minister after Imran Khan was ousted as prime minister. The Bhutto power base is in southern Sindh province, an agricultural and commercial hub, but his party is unlikely to get enough votes to get him the premiership. It could still be part of a Sharif-led coalition government. Bhutto-Zardari, 35, has vowed to end the personal vendettas that characterize Pakistan's politics and has also urged for investment in climate resilience as a key to the nation's survival.

Imprisoned mom wins early release but same relief blocked for some other domestic violence survivors

By CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press/Report for America

LINCOLN, Ill. (AP) — Women stream into the courtroom and sit shoulder to shoulder, coats bunched and bags on laps. Crystal Martinez, a human trafficking survivor, enters accompanied by a guard. Her face breaks into a teary smile at the sight of benches full of supporters.

Martinez, who has been incarcerated for more than two years in Illinois' largest prison for women for shooting a man, was being resentenced under a rare Illinois law allowing judges to reduce jail time for some domestic violence survivors.

Martinez's supporters hoped her case would indicate what other survivors of gender-based violence in Illinois could expect when a new law took effect last month that broadened who is eligible for resentencing. Instead, a recent Illinois Supreme Court ruling prompted panic that the law wouldn't apply to many of them because they had pleaded guilty in their original cases.

Women who have experienced abuse are much more likely to be incarcerated than those who have not.

Sentencing reforms for survivors of domestic violence are rare in the United States. Only New York and California have statutes comparable to Illinois' law, although similar reform efforts are underway in several other states.

To many gathered in the courthouse north of Chicago on Dec. 15, Martinez's case represented not only her freedom but also a measure of how prosecutors could address other petitions. More than a dozen organizations, including the Illinois State Rifle Association, backed the 31-year-old mother of five in a letter to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office pushing for a sentence reduction.

From age 15, Martinez "was forced into prostitution where she was beaten without mercy, raped to no end and impregnated by her abuser," her lawyer, Zac Ciullo, explained to Judge Lauren Edidin.

So when she saw another woman being abused in 2019, she intervened. A licensed concealed carry holder, Martinez shot and wounded a man she said was beating his girlfriend.

In August 2021, Martinez pleaded guilty to aggravated battery and was sentenced to eight years.

After months of work with Ciullo, Alexis Mansfield of Ascend Justice and the Women's Justice Institute, and more, Martinez stood to tell her story. She asked the judge to reconsider her sentence, taking the events of her life into account.

"I didn't want to stand there and watch him beat her like I've been beaten," Martinez told Edidin. "I just was trying to do the right thing."

Her oldest daughter, Nevaeh Martinez, read a hand-written statement in court.

"All I want is for her to come home and be happy," the 14-year-old said.

"I just want to be home with my children. They need me just like I need them," Martinez told Edidin. She asked for the minimum sentence, which would cut two years off her total. The judge agreed.

"Trauma changes your brain," Edidin told her. "Today, you took your power back."

Martinez is scheduled for release on May 17.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 43 of 91

In late November, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that the defendant in People vs. Angela Wells was ineligible for resentencing because she had taken a plea deal. That decision threatened to jeopardize Martinez's bid to be resentenced, as she had also pleaded guilty. She was allowed to proceed only because her resentencing hearing was already scheduled when the high court made its ruling.

Most criminal cases in the U.S. are resolved through plea bargaining, especially for defendants who cannot afford bail.

Illinois State Senator Robert Peters, who sponsored the gender-based violence resentencing law that went into effect in January, said the Wells decision contradicts the intent of the law.

"We need to recognize that there's multiple Crystals that exist out there. Not just one person, but hundreds of people," Peters said.

Unless new legislation is passed or the U.S. Supreme Court overturns Wells, Cook County will not be able to consider the resentencing petitions of defendants who pleaded guilty, said Michelle Mbekeani of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, the prosecuting arm of Illinois' most populous county.

"Going forward, Wells ties everyone's hands," Mbekeani said.

Weeks after her resentencing hearing, Martinez told The Associated Press that the years she is getting back with her family mean everything to her.

"To be incarcerated here with children on the outside, it's like walking around with your heart outside your body," she said during a follow-up interview at Logan Correctional.

Black and Hispanic women are more likely to be imprisoned than white women and are affected disproportionately by family separation due to incarceration.

Martinez, who identifies as Latina, said this translates into worse outcomes in the criminal justice system.

"They don't look at women of color as vulnerable and victims. They look at us like we're perpetrators, like we intentionally are from the wrong side of the tracks," Martinez said.

The Chicago native said she didn't share her experiences as a human trafficking survivor in her original sentencing because her lawyer warned it would invite stigma associated with prostitution. "It was my word against everybody, and I felt like I was a nobody."

Martinez said her experience is not unique behind bars. "Believe it or not, pretty much every woman I've spoken to here has been a survivor," she said.

With just months left on her sentence, Martinez said her mind is spinning with plans to get a car, an apartment and a job.

"It's nerve wracking," she said. "I'm overthinking, overanalyzing. I can't sleep."

But she is trying to take it day by day. She has already been offered two jobs working with survivors and is hoping she will be out in time for Nevaeh's eighth grade graduation.

Martinez said prosecutors and judges should keep an open mind when dealing with gender-based violence survivors requesting a new sentence.

"Your decision making is impacted by what you've been through in your life," she said. "It's more than just the facts. There's a person that you're going to sentence. Life is on the line."

Key events in the life of King Charles III

LONDON (AP) — King Charles III has been diagnosed with an unspecified type of cancer. Buckingham Palace says the 75-year-old king has begun outpatient treatment.

Some key dates in Charles' life:

Nov. 14, 1948 — Charles is born on the royal estate at Sandringham, the first child of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip.

Feb. 6, 1952 — Princess Elizabeth becomes Queen Elizabeth II upon the death of her father, King George VI.

July 1, 1969 — Charles is formally invested as the Prince of Wales.

July 29, 1981 — He marries Lady Diana Spencer to become the first royal heir since 1660 to marry an Englishwoman.

June 21, 1982 — Birth of first son, William Arthur Philip Louis.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 44 of 91

Sept. 15, 1984 — Birth of second son, Harry (Henry Charles Albert David).
June 15, 1992 — Andrew Morton's book "Diana: Her True Story" says Charles has had a long-term affair with a married woman, Camilla Parker Bowles.
Dec. 9, 1992 — He separates from Princess Diana.
Aug. 28, 1996 — Charles and Diana divorce.
Aug. 31, 1997 — Diana is killed in a Paris automobile crash.
Feb. 10, 2004 — Charles announces his engagement to marry Camilla Parker Bowles.
April 8, 2005 — He marries Camilla in a civil ceremony; she takes title of Duchess of Cornwall.
April 29, 2011 — His son, Prince William, is married to Kate Middleton.
December 2011 — Charles is hospitalized for treatment for a blocked coronary artery.
June 2013 — He is admitted to a hospital for an exploratory operation on his abdomen.
July 22, 2013 — He becomes a grandfather for the first time with the birth of Prince George, William and Kate's oldest child. Two more children — Charlotte and Louis — follow for the couple.
May 19, 2018 — His second son, Harry, marries American actor Meghan Markle.
April 9, 2021 — Charles' father, Prince Philip, dies at 99.
May 10, 2022 — Charles stands in for Queen Elizabeth II for the first time during the state opening of Parliament, after she had to pull out of the event, citing mobility problems. The delegation of the role, one of the queen's most important duties, was seen by many as the clearest sign that a transition of the monarchy was underway.
Sept. 8, 2022 — Charles becomes king upon the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II.
May 6, 2023 — He is crowned alongside Queen Camilla in a ceremony at Westminster Abbey.
March 29, 2023 — Charles travels to Berlin on his first state visit as king.
Nov. 7, 2023 — He delivers the King's Speech for the first time at the state opening of Parliament.
Jan. 26, 2024 — Charles enters a London hospital for a three-day stay for treatment of a benign enlarged prostate.
Feb. 5, 2024 — Buckingham Palace announces that Charles has cancer and will receive outpatient treatment.

Donald Trump deploys his oft-used playbook against women who bother him. For now, it's Nikki Haley

By LAURIE KELLMAN and BILL BARROW Associated Press
MAULDIN, S.C. (AP) — Hillary Clinton. Nancy Pelosi. Kamala Harris. Liz Cheney. Carly Fiorina. And for now, Nikki Haley.

The former South Carolina governor is the latest in a long line of women — historically some of Republican Donald Trump's most stubborn challengers — for whom the former president saves a special playbook. It's centered around intimidation, combined with a now-familiar brand of vulgarity, nicknames and other insults he deploys for men, too.

But where he tries to emasculate his male opponents, Trump works in put-downs about the appearance of women, their emotional balance and their intelligence. He mispronounces their names. He seemed to confuse two politicians who are women. And he questions their right to challenge him.

Trump's nickname for Haley, a Republican who served as his own ambassador to the United Nations, is "Birdbrain."

"Who the hell was the impostor?" Trump railed after the New Hampshire primary against Haley, who acknowledged his victory but has refused to drop out of the GOP presidential nomination fight. "When I watched her in the fancy dress that probably wasn't so fancy, I said, 'What's she doing? We won.'"

Haley, who lost in Iowa and New Hampshire but has vowed to stay in the race through her home state's first-in-the-South GOP primary Feb. 24, shot back that Trump threw a "tantrum" because he feels threatened.

"It's not just that he's running against Nikki Haley," said Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for Ameri-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 45 of 91

can Women and Politics at Rutgers. "It's because she's even deigning to challenge him ... He goes after women for their appearance, for their gender."

In fact, Trump has bragged about dominating women, an assumption challenged when one refuses to step aside.

"You can do anything" to women when you're famous, Trump said on the "Access Hollywood" tape that threatened his 2016 campaign. And yet Trump defeated Clinton with 39% of women voters casting their ballots for him. Trump's share of women voters increased in 2020 to 44%, even as he lost to President Joe Biden — in part because Biden gained support among men, according to a Pew Research Center survey of people confirmed to have voted in those elections.

Haley, for her part, has mostly taken Trump's sexism in stride. She told CNN on Sunday that he was respectful to her when she served as his ambassador to the United Nations, but now is "flawed."

A spokesperson for the Trump campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

Here's a look at Trump's approach to women he sees as obstacles and the latest reactions in the 2024 campaign.

HILLARY CLINTON

She was a "nasty woman," didn't look presidential and her voice gave Trump a headache, according to Trump.

But the defining visual of Trump's approach to Clinton, his Democratic rival in the 2016 presidential election, came at a debate Oct. 9, 2016, in St. Louis, Missouri, two days after The Washington Post reported the contents of the "Access Hollywood" tape.

As Clinton answered questions during the town hall-style event, the 6-foot-3 Trump repeatedly hovered over and behind the 5-foot-5 former senator and secretary of state. He loomed so close, she wrote later, "my skin crawled."

During a rally in North Carolina a few days after the debate, Trump appeared to hark back to the moment. "When she walked in front of me. Believe me, I wasn't impressed," he said.

NANCY PELOSI

Trump as president called the House speaker, "Crazy Nancy," refusing to shake her hand at the State of the Union address after the House had impeached him.

She called him worse things — questioning his "manhood" in one meeting with Democrats, "as if manhood could ever be associated with him."

In 2019, she issued a smirk-and-clap to him when he arrived to deliver the State of the Union speech, a moment preserved in an iconic photo. The next year, she openly scoffed at him on-camera as he spoke. Then she ripped up a copy of his speech on-camera behind his back and held up the pieces for all to see.

Haley has stepped up her questions about Trump's mental fitness since a Jan. 19 speech when he repeatedly seemed to confuse her with Pelosi. She uses it to highlight her calls for mental competency tests for politicians — her way to highlight both Trump's and Biden's ages (77 and 81, respectively).

KAMALA HARRIS

Trump barely mentioned Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine when he was Clinton's running mate in 2016. But four years later, the president had plenty to say about Biden's vice presidential pick, Kamala Harris.

Trump almost immediately called her "nasty," and said that "nobody likes" Harris. That comment taps into a common standard of likability that is applied to women in leadership far more often than men. He also told voters in North Carolina it would be "an insult to our country" if Harris became the first female president.

LIZ CHENEY

Former Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming continues to draw Trump's wrath even after she lost her House seat in a primary last year.

Cheney was one of 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump after the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol building, and she's declared it her mission to prevent Trump from returning to the presidency. Doing so, she warned late last year, would mean the U.S. could become a dictatorship. Trump

called her, "Crazy Liz Cheney."

CARLY FIORINA

Trump mocked former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina's appearance in a 2015 interview with Rolling Stone.

"Look at that face," he said of Fiorina, who was then part of the field running for the GOP presidential nomination. "Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?"

WOMEN WHO AREN'T POLITICIANS BUT GET UNDER TRUMP'S SKIN

No one rankles Trump quite like women who face him in court. Last month in New York, a judge threatened to throw the former president out of a courtroom for ignoring warnings to keep quiet while writer E. Jean Carroll testified that he shattered her reputation after she accused him of sexual assault in a Manhattan department store.

Trump's mutterings during the proceedings — "it is a witch hunt" and "it really is a con job" — came while the jury was in the courtroom. Earlier, without the jury present, Trump could be seen slamming his hand on the defense table when the judge refused a request.

The drama culminated expensively Jan. 27 when the jury said Trump must pay Carroll \$83.3 million for his social media attacks against her. That's on top of a \$5 million sexual assault and defamation verdict last year from another jury in a case brought by Carroll.

Stephanie Clifford, better known as adult film actress Stormy Daniels, incensed Trump during legal proceedings stemming from a \$130,000 payment she received from Trump attorney Michael Cohen to silence her about an alleged affair with Trump in 2006. Trump denied that and began calling her "horseface."

ON THE 2024 CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Haley has carefully calibrated her candidacy as a woman.

She frequently references her high heels. She recalls defeating older, more powerful men on her way to the South Carolina governor's office. And she talks about the need to raise "strong girls" into "strong women."

That tack allows Haley to deflect Trump's aggression, hitting back with a smile and letting her supporters draw their own conclusions.

Laura Schroder, a 39-year-old mother of three, brought her children to see Haley recently at a Mauldin, South Carolina, rally. "He's very immature," she said of Trump, "and so clearly scared to lose to powerful woman."

Haley herself makes a similar argument, such as one jab to chide Trump for refusing to debate her.

"Man up, Donald," she says, "I know you can do it."

Trump's fate and an obscure section of the Constitution collide at Supreme Court

By MARK SHERMAN and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — From civil rights to privacy, the 14th Amendment has been a foundation for forging the norms of American law and democracy. But one of its provisions, adopted after the Civil War in 1868, has gotten almost no attention until now: That's Section 3, the part that's meant to keep former officeholders who "engaged in insurrection" from ever regaining power.

The Supreme Court on Thursday will be taking its first look at the insurrection clause in a case in which the stakes couldn't be higher.

Former President Donald Trump is the leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. But Republican and unaffiliated voters in Colorado argue that Trump is disqualified from being president again because he engaged in insurrection by trying to overturn his loss in the 2020 election, culminating in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. The Colorado case was one of several filed around the country seeking to block Trump from state ballots.

The voters say that if Trump can't be president again, he shouldn't be on the ballot, and the Colorado Supreme Court agreed in a first-of-its kind decision.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 47 of 91

The case seems certain to bring on a collision of law and politics that the Supreme Court typically likes to avoid, but in this case, cannot ignore.

Trump appealed the Colorado ruling and that case will be argued on Thursday. The issue has come up elsewhere, but Colorado's court is the only one to rule against the former president. Maine's Democratic secretary of state also has determined that Trump shouldn't be on that state's primary ballot. Both the Maine and Colorado decisions are on hold pending the outcome in the Supreme Court.

The justices will be dealing with a handful of legal issues that include whether Trump did, in fact, engage in insurrection and whether the presidency is covered by the constitutional provision at issue.

Here is a look at the issues the court will confront:

WHO DECIDES?

There are several ways in which the court could avoid a definitive ruling, even though both sides say it's vitally important for the court to make a final decision now about Trump's eligibility for the ballot.

The justices could issue a ruling that applies only to Colorado or say the issue is not yet ripe for a decision.

They also could conclude that the political branches of government and voters, and not the court, should decide whether to put Trump on the ballot.

Trump's attorneys raise the prospect of a national checkerboard of presidential elections if the issue is left to politicians, where some states' leaders might allow voters to choose the likely Republican nominee and some might not.

Attorneys for the voters trying to remove Trump from the ballot argue that the question is too important to be left to politics. It's one of following the plain language of the Constitution, which applies to everyone, regardless of how much political support they may have.

Still, there's a way for the court to toss the question to one group of politicians that would work slightly differently.

DOES CONGRESS HAVE A SAY?

Section 3 allows Congress to restore someone's eligibility by a two-thirds vote. But it says nothing about whether Congress has to do anything at the start of the process, before states can start applying the provision.

In 1869, after many people were already barred from office under the measure, Salmon Chase, the then-chief justice of the United States, found that there has to be congressional legislation creating a process to find someone covered by Section 3. Chase was acting as an appellate judge in an era when justices "rode circuit" before the creation of federal appeals courts.

A few months earlier, though, Chase took the opposite position in a case involving Jefferson Davis. Chase's contradictory assessments about Section 3, separated only by a few months, "are almost impossible to reconcile," law professor Gerard Magliocca has written.

Trump's attorneys and allies argue Congress needs to act, rather than leaving eligibility decisions to what they contend could be partisan courts. The attorneys seeking to disqualify Trump contend that Section 3 of the 14th amendment is just like its other provisions, ready to be applied without the need for additional legislation.

Some legal experts warn that kicking the fraught issue to a politically polarized Congress is perilous. It might mean the issue is not dealt with until Jan. 6, 2025, if Trump wins at the ballot box in November and Congress has to certify his election.

That "would risk catastrophic political instability, chance disenfranchising millions of voters, and raise the possibility of public violence," warns one friend of the court brief filed by legal experts.

DOES THE AMENDMENT EVEN APPLY TO TRUMP OR ANY CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT?

This is where things get technical.

Section 3 reads: "No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Con-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 48 of 91

stitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.”

Notice what office isn't specifically mentioned in the text — the presidency (or vice presidency).

Trump's attorneys argue that means the provision doesn't apply to presidents. The only reference to other officials is "officer of the United States," a term that appears elsewhere in the Constitution and, they contend, doesn't apply to the president. They also point out that the provision bars insurrectionists who took an oath to "support the Constitution." At his inaugural, Trump pledged to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution" in an oath "in which the word 'support' is nowhere to be found," his lawyer wrote. Finally, nothing in the text says someone can't be a candidate for these offices, so the court can't ban Trump from the ballot.

The attorneys trying to remove Trump contend this is just clever wordplay. The Supreme Court, they note, has never agreed with the highly technical argument that the president is not "an officer of the United States." The president isn't named in the text of Section 3, they argue, because the president is obviously an officer of the United States — why, they ask, would the drafters of the 14th Amendment want to bar low level oath-breakers from returning to office but allow one to become the leader of the country?

As for the oath, they wrote that dictionaries from the time of the nation's founding and Civil War era listed "support" and "defend" as synonyms for each other. If anything, they noted, "the President's oath is more demanding than mere 'support.'"

And the core of their case is that state courts like Colorado's have a duty to ensure that only qualified candidates are on the ballot. That means they can strike Trump for violating Section 3, just as they would remove someone who didn't meet the constitutional standard of being a natural-born citizen.

DID TRUMP ENGAGE IN INSURRECTION?

This might be the least technical of all the aspects of the case, but it also is highly contested.

Relying on the work of the congressional committee that investigated the Jan. 6 attack, the lawyers arguing to keep Trump off the ballot recite volumes of evidence of Trump's actions that they say incited the deadly attack, including his speech on that same day in which he urged supporters to "fight like hell."

They note that, in the post-Civil War period, Section 3 was used against not only people who fought for the Confederacy but against those who organized on its behalf and even issued rhetorical support for the uprising.

Trump's attorneys counter that the congressional Jan. 6 report is one-sided and that Trump in no way "engaged" in insurrection. They argue he didn't enter the Capitol, didn't tell his supporters to be violent and called for them to be peaceful at one point in his speech on the Ellipse and then in two subsequent tweets.

Instead, Trump's lawyers argue, the president was simply engaging in free speech to talk about an election he honestly believed had been stolen from him.

This is the most politically significant portion of the case. Even if the high court lets Trump stay on the ballot, the decision could play a major part in this year's presidential campaign, if it has anything to say about Trump's culpability for Jan. 6.

Nevada will hold presidential primaries and caucuses, creating voter confusion but little suspense

By MICHELLE L. PRICE, JONATHAN J. COOPER and GABE STERN Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The presidential primary campaign heads west to Nevada this week, where dueling caucuses and primaries are creating confusion among voters but little uncertainty about the expected results.

Nikki Haley will run in Tuesday's Republican primary, which won't count for the GOP nomination, while Donald Trump is the only major candidate in Thursday's Republican caucuses, which does. The split races have effectively relegated the third state on the GOP calendar to national irrelevance.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 49 of 91

The former U.N. ambassador has rejected the caucuses as unfair and set up by the state party to deliver a victory for the former president. Her campaign balked at the \$55,000 fee the Nevada GOP was charging candidates to participate in the caucuses.

"We have not spent a dime nor an ounce of energy on Nevada. We made the decision early on that we were not going to pay \$55,000 to a Trump entity to participate in a process that is rigged for Trump," Haley campaign manager Betsy Ankney told reporters on Monday. "Nevada is not and has not been our focus."

Haley's campaign dismissed any concerns about how she might fare in the symbolic primary and has instead focused on her home state of South Carolina and its Feb. 24 primary.

Trump, meanwhile, is expected to pick up all of Nevada's 26 Republican delegates in Thursday's contest. He needs to accrue 1,215 delegates to formally clinch the party's nomination but could reach that number in March.

"If your goal is to win the Republican nomination for president, you go where the delegates are. And it baffles me that Nikki Haley chose not to participate," Trump's senior campaign adviser Chris LaCivita said in an interview.

There will also be a Democratic primary on Tuesday that President Joe Biden is expected to easily win against author Marianne Williamson and a handful of less-known challengers. Rep. Dean Phillips of Minnesota will not be on the ballot.

Though the president faces little danger of losing the primary, he campaigned in the Western state Sunday and Monday to start energizing voters ahead of November, when Nevada will be a key swing state.

Speaking Sunday in North Las Vegas, Biden described a potential second Trump presidency as a "nightmare."

Trump's campaign advisers also see the primary as an opportunity to test-drive their general election operation.

"It's a national campaign and this is what national campaigns do," LaCivita said. "We don't forget anybody. We don't take anything for granted."

The caucuses, to be held Thursday evening, are expected to heavily favor Trump. With his strong grassroots support, Trump already has an advantage when caucuses are held instead of primaries. The contests require organizing supporters around a state and prodding them to show up in-person at an appointed hour.

But Nevada's GOP tipped the scales even further, passing changes that barred any super PACs, like the kind former candidate and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis was relying on, from helping candidates. The Nevada GOP also barred Republicans from running in the primary election, where they could show support among a broader number of voters, if they wanted to compete in the party-run caucuses.

Nevada's early-state role is overlooked during election cycles because of its distance from Washington and the notoriety of other early contests in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina.

The state's longtime locals do not have the same tradition of playing a decisive role, having only been an early state since 2008, when the late Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a skilled political power broker, got his home state a slot at the top of the presidential primary calendar.

Nevada's population moves around a lot, and the state is fast growing, drawing people who may not be familiar with its relatively nascent role.

But setting all that aside, the state has been extra neglected this year with an incumbent president running in the Democratic race, a former president running in the Republican race and his only major challenger mostly ignoring the state.

South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott and former Vice President Mike Pence had also opted to run in the Nevada primary before they ended their campaigns. Because of the timing of their announcements, their names will still appear as an option on the ballots — along with a quirk under Nevada law that allows voters to choose "none of these candidates."

Nevada lawmakers added "none of these candidates" as an option in all statewide races as a way post-Watergate for voters to participate but express dissatisfaction with their choices. "None" can't win an elected office but it came in first in primary congressional contests in 1976 and 1978. It also finished ahead

of both George Bush and Edward Kennedy in Nevada's 1980 presidential primaries.

Senate Republicans resist advancing on border policy bill, leaving aid for Ukraine in doubt

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

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing a torrent of criticism from conservatives, Senate Republicans on Monday resisted advancing on a bipartisan proposal intended to clamp down on illegal border crossings, signaling a likely defeat in Congress that would leave leaders with no clear path to approve wartime aid for Ukraine.

In a dramatic turnaround, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell recommended to GOP senators in a closed-door meeting that they vote against the first procedural vote Wednesday, according to two people familiar with the meeting who were not authorized to talk publicly about it and spoke anonymously.

It came just hours after the Kentucky Republican had urged colleagues on the Senate floor that "it's now time for Congress to take action." But McConnell has struggled to marshal his conference to support the package of \$118 billion package of border enforcement policy and funding for Ukraine, Israel and other U.S. allies.

Senate negotiators on Sunday night released the text of the bill, hoping that the details would win over skeptics. The carefully negotiated deal represented a rightward shift in Senate negotiations over border measures, yet the backlash was still intense from conservatives. They savaged the border policy proposal as insufficient, with former President Donald Trump leading the charge.

"This is a gift to the Democrats. And this sort of is a shifting of the worst border in history onto the shoulders of Republicans," Trump, the likely Republican presidential nominee, said Monday on "The Dan Bongino Show." "They want this for the presidential election so they can now blame the Republicans for the worst border in history."

As they returned to the Capitol Monday, many Senate Republicans — even those who have expressed support for Ukraine aid and the contours of the border policy changes — raised doubts they would support advancing the package. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has planned to hold a key test vote Wednesday.

"The actions here in the next few days are an inflection point in history," the New York Democrat said in a floor speech. "The security of our nation and of the world hangs in the balance."

Schumer worked closely with McConnell on the border security package after the Republican leader had insisted on the pairing as a way to win support for Ukraine aid. The Democratic leader urged his colleagues across the aisle to "tune out the political noise" and vote yes.

"For years, years our Republican colleagues have demanded we fix the border. And all along they said it should be done through legislation. Only recently did they change that when it looks like we might actually produce legislation," Schumer said.

But Republicans expressed deep divisions on the bill. During a 90-minute, closed-door meeting Monday evening, their discussion turned to shouting.

"Time out!" said Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst, a retired lieutenant general in the Iowa Army National Guard, during one exchange. "At ease!"

GOP senators emerged saying they were not likely to vote to move forward during the Wednesday test vote and wanted to debate changes to the bill — a demand that would further delay any definitive action on the legislation.

"I think the Wednesday vote is going to be, for most of our members, too early," said South Dakota Sen. John Thune, the second-ranked Republican leader.

Sen. Roger Wicker, a Mississippi Republican, predicted that the Wednesday tally would fall short of the 60 votes needed. After exiting an earlier meeting with other GOP leaders, he told reporters, "I think the proposal is dead."

Both McConnell and Schumer have emphasized for months the urgency of approving tens of billions of dollars for Ukraine's fight, saying that the U.S.'s ability to buttress democracies around the world was at

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 51 of 91

stake. Yet with the funding stuck in Congress, the Defense Department has halted shipments of ammunition and missiles to Kyiv.

House Speaker Mike Johnson has already called the proposal "dead on arrival" if it passes the Senate, but Biden urged the Republican speaker to "pay attention to what the Senate's doing."

Biden, speaking to reporters at a Las Vegas meeting with members of a culinary union, noted that Congress has not approved his funding requests for more Border Patrol agents and immigration judges to handle the number of migrants. "We need help," he said. "Why won't they give me the help?"

The White House has also said Biden would veto a House bill that would only send military aid to Israel, criticizing it as a "cynical political maneuver" that excludes funding for Ukraine, the border and other national security needs.

Johnson, along with the rest of the House's top GOP leaders, said in a joint statement Monday they were opposed to the legislation because "it fails in every policy area needed to secure our border and would actually incentivize more illegal immigration."

The statement from Johnson and Reps. Steve Scalise, Tom Emmer and Elise Stefanik pointed to a provision in the bill that would grant work authorizations to migrants who qualify to enter the asylum system. They also argued that it would endorse a "catch and release" policy by placing migrants who enter the asylum system in a monitoring program while they await the final decision on their asylum claim.

Under the proposal, migrants who seek asylum 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.

The National Border Patrol Council, the union that represents Border Patrol agents, on Monday endorsed the proposal and said it would drop illegal border crossings nationwide. The group in 2020 endorsed in Trump and has been highly critical of Biden's border policies.

But the House Republican leaders said, "Any consideration of this Senate bill in its current form is a waste of time."

Still, the GOP's chief negotiator on the bill, Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, implored his colleagues to take another look at the legislation and even expressed openness to re-opening negotiations.

"Right now it's work in progress," he told reporters. "So I'm not willing to do a funeral on it -- the House side, they've already conducted the funeral."

Several Democrats have also come out against the bill and take issue with the restrictions on asylum seekers. Immigration advocates have also said the bill would cut off important due process rights for people who have fled to the U.S. to escape often harrowing violence.

But Democrats have largely warmed to the idea of tougher border measures.

Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, the lead Democratic negotiator for the bill, said, "I think this country is crying out for the parties to stop fighting over immigration and just get something done that's going to better control the border and fix our broken immigration system."

South Koreans stay calm as they see showmanship in the North's escalating threats

By JIWON SONG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea's recent escalation of threats and more tests of weapons aimed at South Korea haven't done much to upset the calm in the nation's capital.

"We learned to be numb," said Renee Na, a 33-year-old office worker in Seoul who was one of a dozen South Koreans who sounded more indifferent than scared when talking with The Associated Press.

"Our generation grew up seeing North Korea use nuclear provocations as showmanship to maintain the stability of its regime," Na said. "When they act up, it doesn't feel like a real threat, but more like an annual event they stage when they need to shore up internal unity or want outside help."

That's a stark contrast to recent comments from Pyongyang, where leader Kim Jong Un said in January

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 52 of 91

that his nation was abandoning its fundamental objective of peaceful reconciliation with South Korea. He also repeated a threat to annihilate the South if provoked.

At the same time, North Korea has conducted a streak of weapons testing, including what it described as simulated nuclear attacks on the South.

Worries about a direct provocation were amplified after the North fired hundreds of artillery shells into waters near its disputed western sea boundary with South Korea, prompting the South also to fire.

For now, there's concern in South Korea — but not alarm.

And it's nothing like 1994, when waves of panicked crowds emptied stores of instant ramen and rice after a North Korean negotiator threatened to turn Seoul into a "sea of fire."

North Korea has mastered a cycle of raising tensions with weapons demonstrations and threats before eventually offering negotiations aimed at extracting concessions. The result is that many South Koreans believe North Korea is using its old playbook to get attention during an election year in South Korea and the United States.

There's widespread doubt that North Korea, an autocracy that values the survival of the Kim dynasty over anything else, would risk war with U.S.-backed South Korea. Washington has warned repeatedly that the North's use of nuclear weapons would result in the end of Kim's rule.

The fast-paced, competitive nature of life in South Korea makes it easy for many to ignore North Korean threats. And public interest here in North Korea tends to mirror the rise and fall in tensions.

"Personally, I don't think Kim Jong Un currently has a reason or ability to wage war," said Min Seungki, another Seoul resident. "The North Koreans clearly see a South Korean government that is unfavorable to them. They are also trying to be noticed by (Donald) Trump and the Republicans, who they prefer over the Biden administration, which didn't show much interest in dealing with them."

But there's also a sense that South Korea has few options to counter the leverage Kim has with his nuclear arsenal. Years of missile launches and other weapons tests have moved Kim much closer to his goal of having a nuclear arsenal that could viably strike both his neighbors and the United States.

South Koreans are increasingly worried Washington may hesitate to defend the South if Kim has more missiles with the range to strike the U.S. mainland.

South Koreans' security anxieties have long been kept in check by the U.S.-South Korea alliance and by past inter-Korean projects such as South Korean tours to the Diamond Mountain resort and the jointly operated Kaesong factory park, said Han-Wool Jeong, director of the Korea People Research Institute. Those joint economic projects, pushed by past liberal governments in Seoul, were halted as inter-Korean ties worsened under subsequent conservative governments.

Jeong said many now believe South Korea's security depends entirely on the U.S.-South Korea alliance.

Since taking office in 2022, conservative South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has moved to expand the South's combined military exercises with the United States and Japan to cope with the North's evolving threats. He has also sought stronger assurances from Washington that the United States will decisively protect its ally if North Korea attacked with nuclear weapons.

But those steps have not slowed Kim's weapons demonstrations, which likely reflect confidence over his steady weapons advancement and his strengthened ties with Russia.

Some South Korean experts have called for the U.S. to more dramatically show its defense commitment to its ally, including returning the tactical U.S. nuclear weapons withdrawn from the South in the 1990s. Others insist the South should pursue a nuclear deterrent of its own.

While many analysts downplay the possibility of a war on the peninsula, some believe Kim may choose to raise pressure on the South with a direct but contained military action.

The poorly marked sea boundary — the site of skirmishes and attacks in past years — could be a crisis point. Both Koreas in recent months have breached their 2018 military agreement to reduce border tensions, which had established buffers and a no-fly zone.

"It's clear North Korea wants to use the April parliamentary elections to create momentum in South Korea for Yoon's removal from office and could possibly conduct a large provocation to increase military

tensions to the maximum and try to influence voters to oppose Yoon's hard line," said Bong Youngshik, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Yonsei university.

The animosity between the Koreas is keenly felt by Kim Giho, a fisherman on the western border island of Yeonpyeong, where a North Korean artillery bombardment killed four people in 2010.

"When tensions rise like this, our boats can't move in and out of sea, and that hurts our livelihoods," Kim said. "We are again evacuating to shelters with our military resuming firing drills and that really raises our sense of isolation, tension and fear. It's especially traumatizing for older people who experienced the shelling of 2010."

King Charles III is being treated for cancer and will temporarily halt his public duties

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's King Charles III has been diagnosed with cancer and has begun treatment, Buckingham Palace said Monday. Less than 18 months into his reign, the 75-year-old monarch will suspend public engagements but will continue with state business, and won't be handing over his constitutional roles as head of state.

The palace didn't disclose what form of cancer the king has, but said it's not related to his recent treatment for a benign prostate condition.

The palace said "a separate issue of concern was noted" during Charles' treatment for an enlarged prostate last month, when he spent three nights in a London hospital.

"Diagnostic tests have identified a form of cancer," it said in a statement.

"His Majesty has today commenced a schedule of regular treatments, during which time he has been advised by doctors to postpone public-facing duties," the palace said. "Throughout this period, His Majesty will continue to undertake State business and official paperwork as usual."

The king is being treated as an outpatient, the palace said.

It said Charles, who has generally enjoyed good health, "remains wholly positive about his treatment and looks forward to returning to full public duty as soon as possible."

The palace added that the king "has chosen to share his diagnosis to prevent speculation and in the hope it may assist public understanding for all those around the world who are affected by cancer."

Charles became king in September 2022 when his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, died at the age of 96 after 70 years on the throne.

News of the king's diagnosis comes as his daughter-in-law Kate, Princess of Wales, recovers from abdominal surgery that saw her hospitalized for about two weeks.

Kate is still taking a break from royal duties as she recovers. Her husband, Prince William, who is heir to the throne, also took time off to help look after the couple's three children, but is due to preside over an investiture ceremony at Windsor Castle and a charity dinner on Wednesday.

Charles took the throne intending to preside over a slimmer monarchy with fewer senior royals carrying out ceremonial public duties. But with Charles and Kate both temporarily sidelined, Prince Harry self-exiled to California and Prince Andrew largely banished from view because of his friendship with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, the royal "firm" risks becoming severely overstretched.

The king personally called both William and Harry — as well as his siblings Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward — to share news of his health.

Harry, who quit royal duties in 2020, has spoken to his father about the diagnosis and "will be traveling to U.K. to see His Majesty in the coming days," said the office of Harry and his wife, Meghan.

U.K. political leaders sent messages of support. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak tweeted: "Wishing His Majesty a full and speedy recovery. I have no doubt he'll be back to full strength in no time and I know the whole country will be wishing him well."

U.S. President Joe Biden, traveling in Las Vegas on Monday, said he had just learned about Charles's diagnosis and said he hopes to speak with him, "God willing."

"I'm concerned about him," Biden told reporters.

The president later posted on X, formerly known as Twitter: "Navigating a cancer diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship takes hope and absolute courage. Jill and I join the people of the United Kingdom in praying that His Majesty experiences a swift and full recovery."

Charles departed from royal tradition with his openness about his prostate condition. For centuries Britain's royal family remained tight-lipped about health matters.

When U.K. monarchs had real power, news of illness was withheld for fear it might weaken their authority. The habit of secrecy lingered after royals became constitutional figureheads.

The British public wasn't told that Charles' grandfather, King George VI, had lung cancer before his death in February 1952 at the age of 56, and some historians have claimed that the king himself wasn't told he was terminally ill.

In the final years of Elizabeth's life, the public was told only that the queen was suffering from "mobility issues." The cause of her death was listed on the death certificate simply as "old age."

Pat Price, founder of the Catch Up With Cancer campaign, said millions shared the "collective concern" for the king's health.

"The king's openness about his battle with cancer is a powerful reminder that one in two of us may face cancer at some point in our lives," Price said.

Record-setting storm that killed 3 dumps rain on Los Angeles; flash flood alerts still in effect

By JOHN ANTCAZAK, CHRISTOPHER WEBER and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A storm of historic proportions dumped a record amount of rain over parts of Los Angeles on Monday, sending mud and boulders down hillsides dotted with multimillion-dollar homes while people living in homeless encampments in many parts of the city scrambled for safety.

About 710,000 people statewide were without power Monday evening.

The storm was the second one fueled by an atmospheric river to hit the state over the span of days.

Virtually all of Southern California was under flash flood advisories and watches, including the Los Angeles area, where between 5 and 10 inches (12.7 to 25.4 centimeters) of rain had fallen and more was expected, according to the National Weather Service. At the downtown measuring station, 6.7 inches of rain had fallen by Monday afternoon, nearly half the yearly average of 14.25 inches. It was already the third-wettest two-day period since 1877, the service said.

So far officials have attributed three deaths to the storm that first hit Northern California. Crews rescued people from swift-moving water in various parts of Southern California on Monday, including 16 people and five cats in Los Angeles County alone, authorities said.

Also rescued were two homeless people who spent the night on a small island in the Santa Ana River in San Bernardino, about 55 miles (88.51 kilometers) east of Los Angeles, authorities said.

"They were cold and exhausted from a night out stranded on this little patch of dirt that was in the middle of the river," said Capt. Nathan Lopez of the San Bernardino County Fire Department. A dog and two cats were also saved.

At a news conference, authorities said rain would taper off in intensity on Tuesday, but the threat of flooding remained high.

"The ground is extremely saturated, supersaturated," said Ariel Cohen, meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service bureau in Los Angeles. "It's not able to hold any additional water before sliding. It's not going to take much rain for additional landslides, mudslides, rockslides and other debris flows to occur."

Near the Hollywood Hills, floodwaters carried mud, rocks and household objects downhill through Studio City, damaging at least two homes, city officials said. Sixteen people were evacuated.

"It looks like a river that's been here for years," said Keki Mingus, whose neighbors' homes were damaged. "I've never seen anything like it."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 55 of 91

The Los Angeles Fire Department said 1,000 firefighters were contending with 49 debris flows, 130 reports of flooding, half a dozen structure fires and several rescues of motorists stranded in vehicles.

Drake Livingston who lives in the Beverly Crest neighborhood, was watching a movie around midnight when a friend alerted him to flooding.

"We looked outside and there's a foot-and-a-half of running water, and it starts seeping through the doors," said Livingston, whose car was found submerged in several feet of mud in the morning.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass urged residents to avoid driving, warning of fallen trees and electrical lines on flooded roadways.

Shelters were adding beds for the city's homeless population of nearly 75,000 people.

Tony Sanz spent the night in a city park before seeking higher ground around dawn as floodwaters were rising around his tent.

"Boy did it rain last night," he said Monday afternoon hunkered down in a tent layered with tarps on a sidewalk outside a supermarket. He spied the cloudy skies during a break in the downpours and wondered, "Is that it? I hope that's it."

Not yet, according to forecasters.

The weather service predicts up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rainfall across Southern California's coastal and valley areas, with 14 inches (35 centimeters) possible in the foothills and mountains over the next two days.

Authorities also reported several spills Monday, including the discharge of about 5 million gallons of raw sewage in the Rancho Dominguez area surrounding Compton. Most of the untreated sewage went into a channel leading to the Pacific Ocean and the city closed a 7-mile (11.27-kilometers) stretch of Long Beach to recreational swimming,

Earlier in the day, commuters stepped through several inches of floodwater as they rushed to catch trains at Union Station in downtown Los Angeles.

Most Los Angeles public schools remained open, but some districts were closed. The weather also prompted the closure of Knott's Berry Farm, Six Flags Magic Mountain and SeaWorld San Diego theme parks and a rare early closure of Disneyland.

Over the weekend, the storm inundated streets and brought down trees and prompted water rescues in the San Francisco Bay area.

Among those who died were two men killed by fallen trees Sunday in Carmichael, a suburb of Sacramento, and in Boulder Creek in Santa Cruz County. Police were investigating the death of another man in Yuba City, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco, who was found under a redwood tree in his backyard Sunday.

Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for most of coastal Southern California, while emergency shelters were opened.

Off the coast of Long Beach, 19 people were rescued Sunday after the 40-foot sailboat they were traveling in lost its mast amid gale-force winds, said Brian Fisk of the Long Beach Fire Department.

Heavy snow was falling throughout the Sierra Nevada and motorists were urged to avoid mountain roads.

Much of the state was still drying out from the initial atmospheric river-powered storm that blew in last week. Atmospheric rivers are relatively narrow plumes of moisture that form over an ocean and can produce torrential amounts of rain as they move over land.

Both atmospheric rivers were called a "Pineapple Express" because they originated near Hawaii.

Since last winter, 46 atmospheric rivers have made landfall on the U.S. West Coast, pulling the state out of a yearslong drought, according to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography's Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes. Nine were categorized as strong, two were extreme and one was exceptional.

Better equipment and communications are among Maui police recommendations after Lahaina wildfire

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER, REBECCA BOONE and CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press HONOLULU (AP) — Nearly six months after a wildfire destroyed the historic town of Lahaina, the Maui Police Department said Monday it is working on improving its response to future tragedies, including by obtaining better equipment and stationing a high-ranking officer in the island's communications center during emergencies.

The changes are among 32 recommendations listed in a preliminary "after-action" report that looks at what went well and what didn't during the chaotic events of Aug. 8, when the deadliest U.S. wildfire in over a century leveled Lahaina, the one-time capital of the former Hawaiian Kingdom, and killed at least 100 people.

"The Maui Police Department, in collaboration with other emergency response agencies, worked tirelessly to ensure the safety of our residents, coordinate evacuations, and provide support to those in need," the report said. "The bravery and resilience demonstrated by our officers, personnel, fellow first responders, and members of the community who continued to assist the community while suffering losses themselves, have been nothing short of extraordinary."

Many of the report's recommendations call for better equipment and updates to technology, from getting officers earpieces they can use when high winds make it hard to hear their radios to equipping patrol cars with breaching kits to remove downed trees or utility poles from roadways.

Others focus on improving communications between emergency personnel and officers themselves, such as stationing a high-ranking officer — a lieutenant or higher — in the communications center to help relay information to police commanders. The report also suggested giving officers in the field more briefings during recovery efforts.

The fire is being investigated by outside experts at the behest of the Hawaii attorney general's office. The investigation, by the Fire Safety Research Institute, is expected to take several more months to complete.

During a news conference Monday, police Chief John Pelletier said the after-action report would be distributed to law enforcement agencies around the country to help them better prepare for catastrophes. He defended its thoroughness, noting it had been reviewed by two outside agencies and that it would not be finalized for up to another year, to give time to incorporate suggestions.

"There's been a lot of Monday-morning quarterbacks and a lot of folks that say 'coulda-shoulda-woulda,' but if you weren't there, then you don't know," Pelletier said. "And if you think you can do better, MPD is hiring."

Pelletier described the extensive efforts made to find the remains of three people who are still listed as missing in the wildfire.

"We created strategies of where they might have escaped to and then we sent anthropological teams to go to those estimated escape routes and then we got excavators to go through the rubble," he said. "Any lead that is given to us, we will pursue, and the search is not over."

The wildfire was driven by high winds from a hurricane passing far to the south and spread quickly through dry, invasive grasses.

Residents fled through black smoke that blotted out the sun, frequently encountering roadblocks or traffic jams where police blocked roads due to fire or downed power lines. Communications failed. In the chaos, some people jumped over a sea wall and sought refuge in the ocean, while others remained in their vehicles and died as heat and flames overtook them.

Audio recordings of 911 calls, obtained by The Associated Press through public records requests, reflected the confusion and terror many residents faced as they were trapped in their cars or homes and unsure of where they should go. Inundated with calls, and with police and firefighters all occupied, the dispatchers became increasingly powerless to render help, resorting to offering advice like "leave if you have to leave."

Video from body cameras showed police going to great lengths to try to help. One officer sprinted from house to house, alerting people to the approaching inferno, while another coughed and swore as he drove

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 57 of 91

past burning buildings with people he rescued crammed in the back seat.

Forty-two victims were found inside structures, 15 were found in cars, 39 were outdoors, and one person was found in the ocean, according to the report. Some of the remains collected were as small as a quarter.

More than 50 victims were identified by collecting DNA from biological relatives, Sgt. Chase Bell told the news conference, but one person who was reported missing had no biological relative to provide a DNA sample. Authorities obtained a hairbrush she had used from a family friend and identified her using DNA analysis of hair follicles, Bell said.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation. An AP investigation found it might have started in an overgrown gully beneath Hawaiian Electric Co. power lines, where an initial fire burned in the morning and then rekindled in high winds that afternoon.

Eagles will host NFL's first regular-season game in Brazil on Friday, Sept. 6

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The Philadelphia Eagles will be the host team for the NFL's first regular-season game in Brazil on Friday, Sept. 6 — a day after the 2024 season opener, Commissioner Roger Goodell said Monday.

Goodell addressed gambling, officiating, diversity, the Rooney Rule and much more — including Taylor Swift's romance with Travis Kelce — in an nearly one-hour news conference held inside the Las Vegas Raiders' locker room before players and coaches from the defending champion Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers met the media for Super Bowl opening night.

Goodell made news when he said the Eagles will play in Sao Paulo against a to-be-named opponent. It'll be the first time in 54 years the NFL has played a game on Friday night of its opening weekend. The Los Angeles Rams hosted the St. Louis Cardinals on Friday, Sept. 18, 1970.

The game will be played at the Corinthians Arena, home to Brazilian soccer team SC Corinthians. The stadium was used in both the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. The Eagles' opponent, along with the kickoff time, will be announced closer to when the 2024 schedule is revealed this spring.

Five regular-season games will be played internationally in 2024.

Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London will host games featuring the Chicago Bears and the Minnesota Vikings. The Jacksonville Jaguars will return to Wembley Stadium as part of their multiyear commitment to playing in Britain.

The Carolina Panthers will play in Munich, Germany at Allianz Arena — home of Bayern Munich.

GAMBLING

Integrity of the game was a hot topic now that the Super Bowl is being held in the nation's gambling capital, a decade after Goodell was adamant that legalized sports betting could lead to suspicions of games being fixed.

"It's our number one objective: Gambling and outside of gambling, the integrity of our game is critical," Goodell said. "And so we spend a lot of time focusing on that: educating, making sure that all of our personnel are aware of our gambling policies in this case or any other policy that can affect the integrity of our game. Ultimately, that's our primary job."

Goodell said about 25 league employees had violated the league's gambling policy, while "roughly 13 players" have faced discipline.

"We take this incredibly seriously," Goodell said. "We understand the risk. We did not make the decision. Ultimately the decision was a decision by the Supreme Court. They legalized sports betting. We have to adapt. We have to embrace it. We have been cautious. We have been very thoughtful, I think, in our approach."

ROONEY RULE

The NFL has nine minority head coaches after the latest hiring cycle, the most in league history. Increasing diversity in leadership positions has been a priority for the league, and Goodell said 51% of the league's employees are either "people of color or women."

Asked if any consideration has been given to eliminating the Rooney Rule — a thought some minority

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 58 of 91

coaches and others have expressed — Goodell said it'll remain "for the foreseeable future." The rule requires teams to interview at least one minority candidate for head coach openings.

"Not having it be necessary would be a wonderful world for us," Goodell said. "I personally believe it's still necessary."

GOODELLS ARE SWIFTIES

Goodell, his wife and their 22-year-old twin daughters have been Swifties since attending one of her concerts. He welcomes her interest in the NFL and the attention it brings her fans.

The commissioner brushed aside the conspiracy theory that Swift's relationship with Kelce is scripted.

"I couldn't have scripted that one," Goodell said, calling that talk "nonsense."

How climate change contributes to wildfires like Chile's

By ED DAVEY Associated Press

At least 123 people have been killed by wildfires in central Chile, leading its president to declare two days of national mourning. The devastation comes soon after Colombia declared a disaster over wildfires. Scientists say climate change makes the heat waves and drought now hitting South America more likely — and both contribute to wildfires by drying out the plants that feed the blazes.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CHILE?

The fires in Chile came amid a heat wave that pushed temperatures in the capital city of Santiago to about 37 degrees Celsius (nearly 100 degrees Fahrenheit). Extreme heat bakes moisture from wood, turning it into ideal fuel. Fires take hold more rapidly, and also burn with more intensity. Just a few extra degrees can be a tipping point that makes the difference between a mild fire season and a severe one.

Edward Mitchard, a forests expert at the University of Edinburgh School of Geosciences in Scotland, said climate change "makes the world hotter, which means that plants evaporate more water through them and soils get drier."

It only takes a few days of very dry, hot weather for leaves to feel crisp and dry, he said. "That's fuel that burns very well," he said, adding: "Drier soil means fires are hotter and last longer."

A Nature study showed that fire seasons are an average of 18.7% longer in length due to climate change. That means an increased window for disastrous fires to start.

WHAT ROLE DO GLOBAL WEATHER CYCLES PLAY?

The increased number of droughts as global rain cycles are interrupted means whole regions can be left unusually parched and more vulnerable to ignition.

"Climate change has made droughts more common," said Mitchard. "And that's especially happened in South America this year.

"We've had the most extreme drought ever recorded in the Amazon basin, and if you have droughts in the Amazon basin, you also get less rainfall in the south of South America."

In Chile's case, some unusually heavy rains last year are thought to have increased the growth of brush that makes perfect kindling for fires.

On top of this has come the El Niño weather pattern, the natural and periodic warming of surface waters in the Pacific that affects weather around the globe. In South America, it's meant increased temperatures and drought this year.

Climate change makes stronger El Niños more likely, said Mitchard, and droughts caused by it are likelier to be more intense. Last month, Colombia's government declared a disaster over dozens of wildfires associated with the weather phenomenon.

And the huge amount of carbon released by forest fires itself increases global warming.

ARE FOREST FIRES GETTING WORSE?

The World Resources Institute used satellite data to calculate that wildfires now destroy about 11,500 square miles of forest annually (30,000 square kilometers), an area about the size of Belgium and about twice as much as 20 years ago.

And the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has found that globally, extreme heat waves happen

five times more often because of human-caused global warming. Fire seasons are thus drier with higher temperatures. These are ideal conditions for forest fires to take hold.

Hundreds of people are missing as the death toll from Chile's wildfires reaches 123

By PATRICIA LUNA and MANUEL RUEDA Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Volunteers in central Chile tried to remove charred metal, broken glass and other debris Monday from neighborhoods devastated by wildfires over the past several days, as officials raised the death toll to 123. Hundreds of people remain missing.

The fires appeared to have diminished by Monday morning after burning intensely since Friday on the eastern edge of the city of Viña del Mar. Two other towns in the Valparaíso region, Quilpé and Villa Alemana, also have been hit hard, and President Gabriel Boric said Sunday that at least 3,000 homes had been burnt down in the area.

An additional 10 victims were added to the death toll on Monday afternoon, said Marisol Prado, the director of Chile's Forensic Medical Service.

Prado said that many bodies were in bad condition and difficult to identify, but added that forensic workers would be taking samples of genetic material from people who have reported missing relatives.

Viña del Mar's Mayor Macarena Ripamonti said that at least 370 people have been reported missing in the city of about 300,000 residents.

The fires ravaged several neighborhoods that had been precariously built on the mountains that loom to the east of Viña del Mar, which is also a popular beach resort.

Officials have suggested that some of the wildfires around the city could have been intentionally provoked. Dry weather, strong winds and low humidity helped the fires spread faster, Boric said.

Priscila Rivero, a chef from the neighborhood of Alto Miraflores, said that it took about 15 minutes for the flames to travel from a neighboring hill to her home.

She said she rushed her children to safety when she saw the fire approaching, but by the time she returned to salvage some of her possessions her house was burning, with licks of flame emerging from the windows.

"It's the place where we have lived all our lives" Rivero said. "It's so sad to see it destroyed, and to lose our memories, our photos, the pictures from my parents' wedding, but some of that will remain in our hearts."

Later Monday, a statement from U.S. President Joe Biden said "Jill and I are deeply saddened by the loss of life and devastation caused by the ongoing wildfires in Chile."

"My administration is in contact with our Chilean partners, and the United States is ready to provide necessary assistance to the Chilean people," he said.

Schools and other public buildings in Viña del Mar and in the capital city of Santiago are currently serving as depots, where people are taking donations of water, food, candles and shovels for the victims of the fires.

In Viña del Mar and the nearby towns of Villa Alemana and Quilpé, police have asked people who have not been affected by the fires to stay at home so that rescue crews can move around with more ease.

Hundreds of people affected by the fires returned to their homes on Monday to search through the debris. Many have said they prefer to sleep near their homes in order to prevent looters from taking what is left of their possessions, or from claiming the land their homes were built on.

In the neighborhood of Villa Independencia, on Viña del Mar's eastern periphery, Marco Delgadillo tried to clear rubble from his home, which he built 25 years ago, when the area was first settled haphazardly by workers without construction permits.

The furniture in Delgadillo's house had been devoured by the flames and the walls were blackened by smoke, but they still stood.

The construction worker said he would rebuild and urged the municipal government to help him fix the

collapsed roof of his home before winter starts in the southern hemisphere.

"We don't have any other choice," Delgadillo said. "Buying a new plot of land is unaffordable right now."

US labor official says Dartmouth basketball players are school employees, sets stage for union vote

By JIMMY GOLEN and RALPH D. RUSSO AP Sports Writers

A National Labor Relations Board regional official ruled on Monday that Dartmouth basketball players are employees of the school, clearing the way for an election that would create the first-ever labor union for NCAA athletes.

All 15 members of the Dartmouth men's basketball team signed a petition in September asking to join Local 560 of the Service Employees International Union, which already represents some other employees at the Ivy League school in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Unionizing would allow the players to negotiate not only over salary but working conditions, including practice hours and travel.

"Because Dartmouth has the right to control the work performed by the Dartmouth men's basketball team, and the players perform that work in exchange for compensation, I find that the petitioned-for basketball players are employees within the meaning of the (National Labor Relations) Act," NLRB Regional Director Laura Sacks wrote.

In a statement, Dartmouth basketball player representatives Cade Haskins and Romeo Myrthil called the ruling "a significant step forward for college athletes," adding, "we are excited to see how this decision will impact college sports nationwide." They also announced plans to form the Ivy League Players Association for basketball players across the league.

"We believe that other athletes will recognize the opportunities this ruling presents and will be inspired to follow suit," the statement said. "This association aims to foster unity, advocate for athletes' rights and well-being, and create a platform for collaborative decision-making. We look forward to working with our fellow Ivy League athletes to bring positive change to the landscape of college sports and the Ivy League."

The NCAA and universities across the country have been steadfast in insisting their athletes are students, not employees. College sports leaders have even lobbied Congress for a federal law that would codify that classification as the NCAA faces a federal lawsuit in Pennsylvania on the subject.

The Service Employees International Union petitioned the labor board on behalf of the Dartmouth players last year. SEIU international president Mary Kay Henry said they remain in full support of the unionization effort.

"This is an historic step forward for economic justice, racial justice, and union rights — not just for college athletes but for millions of young people across our country whose work is not valued like it should be," she said in a statement.

The case is being closely watched, coming at a time when the NCAA's bedrock amateur athlete model is facing multiple challenges in court.

"It's the first step to potential employee status for college athletes," said Gabe Feldman, a sports law professor at Tulane.

The school can still appeal the regional director's decision to the national board, which is what happened when members of the Northwestern football team held a union election in 2014.

In that case, the ballots were impounded pending a ruling. Now, an election can be held and ballots counted while an appeal is pending. The Northwestern ballots were destroyed after the NLRB, which only governs private employers, decided that allowing the football players at the only private school in the Big Ten would skew the labor market in the conference.

In that case, the NLRB did not address the question of whether the players were employees. All eight Ivy League schools are private and do not grant athletic scholarships. Feldman said that could increase the likelihood the full board will uphold the ruling.

"But on the flip side, if Dartmouth men's basketball players are employees, not only what athletes are not employees, but does this make the music students employees?" Feldman said. "So this may open the door too far?"

There is a complaint before a different NLRB body in California that claims football and basketball players at Southern California should be deemed employees of the school, the Pac-12 Conference in which they play and the NCAA. That hearing resumes later this month.

In a 2021 memo, the NLRB's top lawyer said college athletes should be considered employees.

"The freedom to engage in far-reaching and lucrative business enterprises makes players at academic institutions much more similar to professional athletes who are employed by a team to play a sport," NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo wrote.

During a four-day hearing in October, Dartmouth argued that the players shouldn't be considered employees because athletics are part of the academic mission of the school, like performing in the orchestra or even playing club sports.

"At Dartmouth, students' primary objective is learning," school attorney Joe McConnell said then. "Dartmouth has adopted policies reflecting that students who participate in intercollegiate athletics are students first and athletes second."

The college also said the men's basketball program loses money. Attorneys for the players countered that the school's numbers leave out important and lucrative revenue streams that the basketball team contributes to. What's more, the players say it's not whether the team turned a profit: What matters is if the program brings in revenue, and also whether coaches have control over the players.

The collegiate sports model based on amateurism is facing numerous legal and political threats, along with the NLRB ruling. The NCAA is facing at least six antitrust lawsuits, including one brought last week by attorneys general from Tennessee and Virginia that challenges how recruits can be compensated for name, image and likeness.

The model has been crumbling, most significantly after a 2021 Supreme Court ruling that opened college sports up to additional — though still limited — kinds of pay. In response, the NCAA loosened rules to permitted players to profit from their celebrity.

"I think they're all different sides to a similar threat," Feldman said. "And the threat is the loss of control over the ability to restrict compensation to athletes. And we are closer than we've ever been to a system where college athletes not only receive significant additional compensation, but also have a vote in how much compensation they receive."

Major League Baseball Players Association executive director Tony Clark said in a statement that the ruling shows "college athletes are employees, entitled to basic rights and fair compensation for their labor that has created a multibillion-dollar industry."

"Today's landmark NLRB ruling will improve the lives of all college athletes for generations to come," Clark's statement said. "In the history of the sports labor movement, change has always been initiated by the courageous efforts of Players who decided to stand up and demand their fair share."

Justice Department proposes major changes to address disparities in state crime victim funds

By CLAUDIA LAUER and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

The Justice Department proposed changes Monday to rules governing state-run programs that provide financial assistance to violent crime victims in order to address racial disparities and curb the number of subjective denials of compensation.

The proposal from the Justice Department's Office for Victims of Crime, a major overhaul to how states across the U.S. currently handle victims compensation claims, comes less than a year after an Associated Press investigation exposed that Black victims were disproportionately denied in many states — often for subjective reasons rooted in implicit biases that are felt across the criminal justice system.

If adopted, the changes would bar states from considering a victim's criminal history and eliminate some

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 62 of 91

of the most subjective reasons for denials in many states.

"Certain populations may be more likely to have criminal history due to unjustified disparate treatment in the criminal justice system or due to criminal conduct induced through force, fraud, or coercion, such as unlawful acts that traffickers compelled their victims to commit, and this can result in unjustifiably disproportionate denial of claims for those populations," according to the proposal.

Thousands of Americans each year turn to the state-run victim compensation programs that provide financial assistance to victims of violent crime. The money is used to help with funeral expenses, physical and emotional therapy, lost wages, crime-scene cleanup and more.

But the AP found last year that in 19 out of the 23 states willing to provide racial data, Black victims were disproportionately denied compensation. In Indiana, Georgia and South Dakota, Black applicants were nearly twice as likely as white applicants to be denied. From 2018 through 2021, the denials added up to thousands of Black families each year collectively missing out on millions of dollars in aid.

Thousands of people are denied compensation every year for often subjective reasons that scrutinize victims' behavior before or after a crime. The AP found that Black victims were nearly three times as likely to be denied for these reasons, including a category often called "contributory misconduct" where programs sometimes, without evidence, accuse victims of causing or contributing to their own victimization.

The proposed changes would strictly limit when a state program can deny a person for misconduct including requiring that states put into law or policy what is specifically considered contributory conduct and the process they use to decide if it is being applied in a denial. The proposal also clarifies that state programs should not claw back money victims receive from crowdfunding sources such as GoFundMe among other changes.

Pamela White, whose son Dararius Evans was killed in 2019, was initially denied compensation by Louisiana's program because officials blamed her son for his own death. She received few details of how the state came to that conclusion and had to take out a personal loan to cover his funeral expenses while she appealed the decision. She eventually won.

White said Monday that she was happy to hear about the proposed rule changes from the federal government.

"Why make things difficult when someone is already going through a hard time?" White said. "I'm thankful that (the proposal) has happened because murders are still taking place. You know, parents are still going to have to bury their children."

Over the last decade, several states have passed laws or made administrative regulation changes to limit some of the most subjective kinds of denials. Other states have passed laws expanding access to the funding or adding covered expenses.

Many of those changes came after victims and advocates protested, testified and urged lawmakers to change the rules.

Lenore Anderson, president and co-founder of Alliance for Safety and Justice, which organizes victims to advocate for criminal justice reforms, praised the federal office and the proposed changes.

"These proposed reforms are a long time coming. Too many victims across the country have faced extraordinary barriers trying to get help in times of crisis," she said, noting the proposals align with criticisms advocates have been hearing from victims for decades. "The Office for Victims of Crime is really focused on expanding victim access. They are really focused on securing fair access to help that is desperately needed in times of crisis. This is thoughtful rulemaking that should be applauded."

Anderson and other advocates have pushed for federal rule changes that would require state programs to all adhere to a victim-centered approach to considering claims. The proposals would do that in several areas including the bar on considering previous criminal histories and removing administrative hurdles like barring most requirements for notarized portions of applications.

Many of the items in the proposal Monday give states more room to expand services and approve claims. The proposal would allow states to apply a broader definition to medical or mental health expenses to allow people in rural areas with fewer licensed providers to find care or to allow for Native American healing practices to be covered expenses. The proposal would allow for a broader definition of who would

be eligible to include people beyond a close familial relationship to a victim and allow for states to create broader definitions of allowable property damage expenses that contribute to victim safety.

The publication of the proposed rule changes opens a 60-day public comment period. It can take several months to process those comments and submit final rule changes.

A look at events surrounding the devastating earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria a year ago

By ANDREW WILKS Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — A year ago, a devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Turkey and northwestern Syria, causing widespread destruction and the loss of over 59,000 lives.

A massive rebuilding effort is still trudging along a year later but many questions remain about the future of the devastated areas.

WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED?

The Feb. 6, 2023, quake struck shortly after 4 a.m. and lasted for 85 seconds. It was followed by more than 570 aftershocks within 24 hours — including a magnitude 7.5 temblor to the north of the original epicenter in Turkey's Kahramanmaraş province.

According to the latest government figures released on Friday by Turkey's Environment and Urbanization Minister Mehmet Ozhaseki, some 680,000 homes either collapsed or were left too damaged to live in, leaving hundreds of thousands in desperate need of shelter.

The disaster led to a massive international rescue and aid operation involving dozens of countries and organizations. Early on, the hardest-hit areas were hard to get to, forcing residents to grab what tools they could to dig through the rubble. Rescue efforts in both countries were hampered by a lack of manpower and equipment. Damage to roads and airports, as well as bad weather, also obstructed the arrival of rescuers and aid.

In Syria's northwestern Idlib province, the White Helmets rescue organization blamed the international community for the delays while the Turkish government faced criticism for its slow response, with many people waiting days for help.

Aid to Idlib, an opposition-held enclave, was initially restricted to one border crossing between Turkey and Syria, with the first aid shipment following the quake taking three days to reach survivors.

MOUNTING CASUALTIES AND DESTRUCTION

While TV images of survivors being pulled from the rubble raised hopes, the death toll climbed inexorably. The final count in Turkey reached 53,537 dead, the Interior Ministry said on Friday. The quake displaced some 3 million people and 11 provinces in Turkey were declared emergency zones.

In Syria, the United Nations said 6,000 people lost their lives, the majority in Idlib. Other estimates put the number higher. The earthquake followed more than a decade of civil war that had severely damaged Syria's infrastructure. Some of the worst quake-hit areas were also those most devastated by the conflict, including the city of Aleppo.

The World Bank estimated the damage caused at \$34.2 billion in Turkey and \$5.1 billion in Syria. However, the cost of rebuilding and the impact on the economy was much greater — at least \$100 billion in Turkey's case.

CONSTANT SEISMIC RISKS

Turkey is crisscrossed by fault lines, making it one of the world's most earthquake-prone countries. The East Anatolian fault system, where the disaster occurred, is near where the Anatolian, Arabian and African tectonic plates come together.

The deadliest quake to hit Turkey in recent memory prior to last February's was the 1999 magnitude 7.6 tremor that struck south of Istanbul, killing an estimated 18,000 people.

In 2020, the country suffered several major quakes, including the last serious one on the East Anatolian fault — a magnitude 6.7 quake in the city of Elazığ that killed 41.

The East Anatolian fault had last seen a quake of magnitude 7 or greater in 1822, when at least 10,000

were killed in Syria's Aleppo.

WHY WAS THE DESTRUCTION SO HUGE?

Turkey strengthened building codes after the 1999 Istanbul quake but experts say that lax enforcement, poor planning and alleged irregularities since then aggravated the 2023 disaster. Also, use of substandard material and lack of proper inspections during Turkey's construction boom in the past years made matters worse, according to experts.

In Hatay, the worst-hit province, many settlements there were built on risky alluvial ground. Additionally, government amnesties for shoddy construction allowed transgressors to pay fines rather than tear down or fix dangerous buildings.

The delayed search and rescue operation also led to a greater loss of life, according to critics.

MONTHS LATER, LITTLE AID TRICKLED INTO SYRIA

In the weeks after the earthquake, humanitarian aid started flowing into Syria and a U.N. appeal raised nearly \$387 million in pledges.

But months later, as other crises emerged, priorities for Syria appeared to fall by the wayside. To this day, humanitarian agencies are struggling to draw the world's attention back to the war-ravaged country as they face donor fatigue and shrinking budgets.

Last June, an annual international donor conference held in Brussels for Syria saw lukewarm results and the following month, the World Food Program announced it was slashing its aid in the war-wrecked country. In January, WFP ended its main food assistance scheme for Syria.

In many places, rubble remains where it fell as people struggle to survive in tents and prefabricated containers a year after the quake. Some 4 million people rely on humanitarian assistance amid a surge in violence in northern Syria.

Senate border bill would upend US asylum with emergency limits and fast-track reviews

By JAVIER ARCIGA AND ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

JACUMBA HOT SPRINGS, Calif. (AP) — Nearly every day since September, hundreds of migrants from China, Colombia and other countries have wiggled through openings in the border wall with Mexico and walked dirt trails to surrender to U.S. agents and seek asylum. Some days, more than 1,000 arrive in the boulder-strewn mountains near San Diego, alone.

While they wait to be processed and given a court date, they live in tents and makeshift structures of tree branches in scattered campsites. These encampments would likely vanish under a Senate bill that would make sweeping changes to immigration laws, including allowing a border emergency authority that would restrict asylum when arrests for illegal crossings hit certain thresholds.

In addition to the emergency authority, the bill released Sunday aims to have asylum officers screen applicants within 90 days of their arrival in the country using a tougher standard and, for those who pass, decide cases within another 90 days. Cases would ideally be decided in six months instead of six years, as is common in a court system backlogged with more than 3 million cases. It would do so largely by spending \$4 billion to hire more than 4,300 asylum officers who would take on the work now reserved for immigration judges.

The \$118 billion bill, which combines border security with aid for Ukraine and Israel, faces opposition from Donald Trump and his allies, who consider it weak, and from some Democrats and progressives who think it would gut the asylum process at grave human cost. If it overcomes long odds, the legislation would radically upend how asylum is handled at the border. Asylum, once a policy afterthought, is now the border's dominant challenge.

Overwhelmed border agents have been unable to quickly process surrendering migrants in Jacumba Hot Springs and elsewhere along the border, forcing them to wait outside for hours or days. In fierce winds on Friday, they rubbed their hands over small campfires and sat closely together in tents to generate body heat. Paramedics aided a young crying girl with a high fever.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 65 of 91

"I am happy to have arrived here because I want to achieve my biggest dreams, be a better person and provide for my family," said Juan Andres Valverde of Colombia, who reported getting robbed by authorities in Mexico.

His advice to other migrants: "If you're able to do it, then do it. The truth is that it isn't easy to get here."

Mbala Glodi, 42, arrived in Jacumba Hot Springs, a tiny border town east of San Diego, after crossing the border illegally in September. Like the vast majority of those arriving, he was quickly released with a court date. After spending time in New York City's shelters, a church found a family to take him in Vermont.

"Things were difficult (in the United States) in the beginning," Glodi, a former student protester who says he faced government repression in his native Angola, said by phone Monday from Vermont. "After getting accustomed, all will turn out well with God's help."

He's due in court May 5.

Samuel Schultz, a volunteer who distributes food and other supplies to migrants in Jacumba Hot Springs, said he is perplexed as to why U.S. authorities don't allow people in at official land crossings, free of the risks of hypothermia, because they are eventually released. "They let them in anyway," he said.

But under the Senate legislation, asylum would be suspended for those who cross illegally when arrests for illegal crossings average 5,000 per day over seven days along the Mexican border, or 4,000 at the Homeland Security Department's discretion. The last month that daily arrests were below 5,000 was February 2021. Asylum would also be suspended if arrests top 8,500 in a single day.

The "border emergency authority" could be in effect no more than 270 days in its first year, 225 days in its second year and 180 days in its third and final year. Unaccompanied children would be exempt.

Biden administration officials acknowledge that Mexico's help would be critical for the new emergency powers, as it was during a public health emergency from March 2021 to May 2023. U.S. authorities expelled people who crossed the border from Mexico more than 2.7 million times during that time, denying rights to seek asylum on grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The legislation would allow Homeland Security to continue using humanitarian parole, including the Biden administration's policy to allow up to 30,000 people a month from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela if they apply online with a financial sponsor and arrive at an airport.

It would also allow 1,400 people to seek asylum daily at official land crossings with Mexico in a "safe and orderly manner," even when a border emergency is in effect. That would effectively preserve an online appointment system introduced in January 2023 that allows up to 1,450 people to enter the United States each day at land crossings.

U.S. authorities currently dole out about 400 appointments a day at a border crossing in San Diego under CBP One, as the online system is named. Families line up in Tijuana, Mexico, with suitcases and paperwork showing appointments at 5 a.m., 1 p.m. and 8 p.m. Many try for weeks or even months to land a time in the oversubscribed system.

Maria del Rosario Lanza, 42, crossed the border in San Diego with a CBP One appointment in January 2023, beginning an asylum case that will likely take years to decide. She came with her sister and her sister's 8-year-old grandnephew, who was riding on the back of his father's motorcycle in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa in 2019 when an assailant fatally shot his father. They fled after flooding destroyed their home.

The Honduran woman lived in Chicago and Washington before settling in Fort Worth, Texas. Her next court date is Jan. 5.

"God is with me," she said Monday.

Family of Black girls handcuffed by Colorado police, held at gunpoint reach \$1.9 million settlement

By COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — The four Black girls lay facedown in a parking lot, crying “no” and “mommy” as a police officer who had pointed her gun at them then bent down to handcuff two of their wrists. The youngest wore a pink tiara as she held onto her teenage cousin’s hand.

The 6-year-old Lovely watched as her mother, Brittney Gilliam, was led to a patrol car in handcuffs after she shouted in frustration at the police, who mistakenly believed the car Gilliam was driving was stolen.

Over three years later, the Denver suburb of Aurora has agreed to a \$1.9 million settlement with Gilliam and the girls to resolve a lawsuit that claimed the police officers’ actions were evidence of “profound and systematic” racism, a lawyer for the family, David Lane, announced Monday.

The settlement saved the girls the trauma of having to relive what happened during a trial, Lane said. The money will be evenly divided among Gilliam and the four girls, with the girls’ portions being placed into annuities so the money will grow by the time they access it when they turn 18, Lane said.

“All parties are very satisfied with this settlement,” he said.

In a written statement, the city confirmed a deal had been reached.

“The Aurora Police Department remains committed to strengthening the relationship with the community through accountability and continuously improving how it serves the public,” it said.

That summer day in 2020 was supposed to be a fun girls’ day out for Gilliam, her daughter, her sister and two nieces. It instead became a traumatic ordeal.

An investigation by prosecutors found no evidence the officers committed any crimes, in part because they found they were following their training for conducting a high-risk stop of what they suspected was a stolen vehicle. However, they said the incident was “unacceptable and preventable” and urged police to review their policies to ensure nothing like it happens again.

One of the officers who stopped the car, Darian Dasko, was suspended for 160 hours. He and the other officer, Madisen Moen, still work for the department.

Video of the young girls lying facedown and being put in handcuffs triggered outrage following protests over racial injustice earlier this decade sparked by the killing of George Floyd.

This settlement also marks the latest Aurora has been forced to pay out over police misconduct. The city settled for \$15 million in 2021 with the parents of Elijah McClain. The 23-year-old Black man was killed in 2019 after he was stopped as he walked down the street, placed in a neck hold and injected with a sedative. One police officer also was convicted in his death and two others were acquitted. Two paramedics were also convicted.

A state civil rights investigation — launched amid outrage over McClain’s death and released after Gilliam’s lawsuit was filed — found a deeply engrained culture of racially biased policing in the department.

Lane said he hopes the settlement sends a message to law enforcement nationwide that they need to use discretion in how they respond to situations.

“You can’t be robocop and be an effective cop. You have to use common sense,” he said.

Gilliam’s girls’ day out had started with a trip to a nail salon, but they arrived to find it closed. As Gilliam sat in her car searching her phone for another salon to visit, officers approached with their guns drawn and ordered her and a passenger to roll down their windows and put their hands out.

The officers could not see who else was inside because the SUV had tinted windows, according to the prosecutors’ investigation. But eventually, everyone was ordered out and put on the ground.

Gilliam shouted, “You don’t have to do all that. You don’t have to do all that,” body camera video shows.

“OK. OK, we’ll deal with that,” Dasko replied.

“Don’t tell me it’s okay!” Gilliam shot back.

About a dozen bystanders gathered to watch, some taking out phones to record it.

The video showed police seeming confused about how to handle the situation when they realized children were inside the SUV. Moen had graduated from the police academy two days before. She hesitated about what to do after the girls were on the ground, asking other officers who arrived later if she should

handcuff them all. Another officer advised her to handcuff some of them.

Soon after, another officer seen in the footage said it was time to deescalate the situation, telling one of the handcuffed girls, "You're going to be with your momma. You're going to be okay. Alright? Alright? We'll get you out in a second, sweetheart. It's for our safety." The body camera footage then shows Gilliam being led to a patrol car, hands cuffed behind her back.

Amid shouting and crying, police soon realized their mistake. While the department's system notified them that Gilliam's Dodge with Colorado license plates was stolen, the vehicle that was actually stolen was a motorcycle with the same license plate number in Montana.

Officers kept their guns drawn for about three-and-a-half minutes, and they removed the girls' handcuffs after about eight-and-a-half minutes, once they realized the car wasn't stolen, according to prosecutors.

For the first year, Gilliam said the encounter with police left her full of rage, angry she could not do anything to help the girls.

"Mentally, it destroyed me because I felt like not only am I not safe, these kids aren't safe," she said in an interview before the settlement was announced, recalling how it felt to be held on the ground in handcuffs.

Her daughter, whom she said was previously a "joyous" child, began acting out and became withdrawn. Lovely would not talk about what had happened. Gilliam eventually realized her daughter was afraid of upsetting her further.

But exactly a year later almost to the minute, Gilliam gave birth to another daughter. She said she felt God was trying to wake her up and that she needed to let go of her anger.

"I felt like I wanted justice, but at the same point, I couldn't be angry," she said. "All I wanted to do was heal."

Pennsylvania Capitol protest against state investing in Israel bonds ends with arrests

By MARK SCOLFARO Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Police took into custody more than 100 people protesting the Pennsylvania state government's investments in Israel on Monday, shutting down a demonstration on the steps of the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg.

A spokesperson for the Department of General Services, which includes the Pennsylvania Capitol Police, said 126 people were taken into custody at what he described as an unpermitted, unauthorized demonstration. They were ordered to disperse before being arrested, issued citations for trespassing and then released, said spokesperson Troy Thompson.

The protestors, many wearing T-shirts that said "divest from genocide," clapped and chanted during the protest, which organizers said was targeted at the state Treasury Department's investment in Israel bonds.

One large sign said the state should reinvest that tax money in health care, housing, schools and climate. There were chants of "free Palestine" before and after they were arrested.

The event was organized by Jewish Voice for Peace, the Philly Palestine Coalition and the Pennsylvania Council on American-Islamic Relations. It began Monday morning outside the Capitol but moved to the Rotunda by early afternoon.

Lilah Saber, a participant in the protest, said it was solely focused on the state's investment in Israel bonds.

"We did not plan on being arrested, but we were arrested," Saber said.

Pennsylvania Treasurer Stacy Garrity, a Republican, said state treasurers of both parties have invested in Israel bonds for more than 30 years. The state's share of Israel bonds rose by \$20 million after the Hamas attack that began the war in Gaza and is currently \$56 million, Garrity said in a statement released by her office.

The state also holds about \$8 million in other Israel-based securities. Together with the \$56 million, that amounts to about 0.14% of the funds the Treasury Department actively manages, Garrity said.

Indiana community mourns 6 siblings killed in house fire

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — Members of a northern Indiana community mourned and searched for answers Monday as they gathered for the funeral of six siblings killed in a house fire.

The Smith siblings — 11-year-old Angel, 10-year-old Demetris, 9-year-old Davida, 5-year-old Deontay, 4-year-old D'Angelo and 17-month-old Faith — died after a fire engulfed their South Bend home on Jan. 21. Six photographs of the children and six flower arrangements lined the stage for the funeral held at the Century Center convention space.

"We all want answers," Mayor James Mueller said during the service. "It's hard to even fathom how this could happen. Why could this happen? How could this be prevented so it could never happen again?" Mueller asked.

"There's never going to be an answer that's adequate when you lose children, to have their lives cut far, far too short," the mayor said.

Fire officials said the siblings were trapped by flames on the second floor of the home in South Bend, a city of about 100,000 people located just south of the Michigan state line. Their father survived the blaze. He told firefighters that he tried to rescue the children but was forced back by heavy smoke and wind-driven flames.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Community leader Lynn Coleman talked about the impact the "Smith6" have had on their community since their deaths.

"They've brought people together across this community — Black, white, Hispanic, Asian, young, old, rich, poor," Coleman said at the funeral. "They've connected people that would've never talked with each other. They've caused people to come together to say, 'What can I do to help?'"

1st Russians are fined or jailed over rainbow-colored items after LGBTQ+ 'movement' is outlawed

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — The first publicly known cases have emerged of Russian authorities penalizing people under a court ruling that outlawed LGBTQ+ activism as extremism, Russian media and rights groups have reported, with at least three people who displayed rainbow-colored items receiving jail time or fines.

The Supreme Court ruling in November banned what the government called the LGBTQ+ "movement" operating in Russia and labeled it as an extremist organization. The ruling was part of a crackdown on LGBTQ+ people in the increasingly conservative country where "traditional family values" have become a cornerstone of President Vladimir Putin's 24-year rule.

Russian laws prohibit public displays of symbols of extremist organizations, and LGBTQ+ rights advocates have warned that those displaying rainbow-colored flags or other items might be targeted by the authorities.

On Monday, a court in Saratov, a city 730 kilometers (453 miles) southeast of Moscow, handed a 1,500-ruble (roughly \$16) fine to artist and photographer Inna Mosina over several Instagram posts depicting rainbow flags, Russia's independent news site Mediazona reported. The case contained the full text of the Supreme Court ruling, which named a rainbow flag the "international" symbol of the LGBTQ+ "movement."

Mosina and her defense team maintained her innocence, according to the reports. Mosina said the posts were published before the ruling, at a time when rainbow flags were not regarded by authorities as extremist, and her lawyer argued that a police report about her alleged wrongdoing was filed before the ruling took force. The court ordered her to pay the fine nonetheless.

Last week, a court in Nizhny Novgorod, some 400 kilometers (248 miles) east of Moscow, ordered Anastasia Yershova to serve five days in jail on the same charge for wearing rainbow-colored earrings in public, Mediazona reported. In Volgograd, 900 kilometers (559 miles) south of Moscow, a court fined a man 1,000 rubles (about \$11) for allegedly posting a rainbow flag on social media, local court officials reported Thursday, identifying the man only as Artyom P.

The crackdown on LGBTQ+ rights in Putin's Russia has persisted for more than a decade.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 69 of 91

In 2013, the Kremlin adopted the first legislation restricting LGBTQ+ rights, known as the "gay propaganda" law, banning any public endorsement of "nontraditional sexual relations" among minors. In 2020, constitutional reforms pushed through by Putin to extend his rule by two more terms included a provision to outlaw same-sex marriage.

After sending troops into Ukraine in 2022, the Kremlin ramped up a campaign against what it called the West's "degrading" influence, in what rights advocates saw as an attempt to legitimize the war. That year, the authorities adopted a law banning propaganda of "nontraditional sexual relations" among adults, effectively outlawing any public endorsement of LGBTQ+ people.

Another law passed in 2023 prohibited gender transitioning procedures and gender-affirming care for transgender people. The legislation prohibited "medical interventions aimed at changing the sex of a person," as well as changing one's gender in official documents and public records. It also amended Russia's Family Code by listing gender change as a reason to annul a marriage and adding those "who had changed gender" to a list of people who can't become foster or adoptive parents.

"Do we really want to have here, in our country, in Russia, 'Parent No. 1, No. 2, No. 3' instead of 'mom' and 'dad'?" Putin said in September 2022. "Do we really want perversions that lead to degradation and extinction to be imposed in our schools from the primary grades?"

The Grateful Dead make Billboard chart history despite disbanding in 1995

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A day after Taylor Swift made music history at the Grammy Awards, a band formed long before she was born made their own history: The Grateful Dead have broken the record for the most Top 40 albums to chart on the Billboard 200.

The Grateful Dead pulled out ahead of Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra with 59 total Top 40 entries on the chart Monday following the No. 25 debut of their archival release "Dave's Picks, Volume 49: Frost Amphitheatre, Stanford U., Palo Alto, CA (4/27/85 & 4/28/85)." Elvis and Sinatra are stuck at 58 albums apiece.

It's a remarkable run, made even more special since the group disbanded following the death of Jerry Garcia in 1995. Forty-one of the band's 59 entries in the Top 40 have happened since 2012, thanks to the popularity of the series of archival albums compiled by David Lemieux.

Lemieux in a statement credited the Dead for recording so many live shows and "the loyalty and passion of the many Dead Heads who have made this record possible." He said it "could be the most unlikely and unexpected record in music history."

The record could be further solidified: Another volume in the Dave's Picks series will be released in April, capturing the band's May 1977 shows at the Palladium in New York City.

Bob Beckwith, retired firefighter in famous image with Bush after 9/11, dies at 91

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Bob Beckwith, a retired firefighter whose chance encounter with the president amid the rubble of ground zero became part of an iconic image of American unity after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, has died. He was 91.

Beckwith died Sunday night in hospice care after dealing with cancer in recent years, his wife, Barbara Beckwith, said Monday.

Wearing his old firefighter helmet from Ladder Company 164 in Queens, the Long Island resident stood with President George W. Bush as he delivered a rousing speech to weary responders three days after hijackers crashed airplanes into the twin towers of the old World Trade Center, killing 2,753 people.

"He was just lucky. He was at the right place, at the right time, and that's why he's famous," Barbara Beckwith said Monday by phone from the couple's home in Baldwin, a suburb about 30 miles from Manhattan. "But he was a regular guy. Well-liked and quiet. Just a regular Joe."

Beckwith was 69 years old and retired for seven years following a 30-year career when he rushed to

help with search-and-rescue efforts as scores of other current and former first responders did in the hours and days after the attacks.

Beckwith said he was simply looking for a good vantage point to see the president as he surveyed the destruction. But Bush made an unexpected detour and hopped aboard the crushed Engine Co. 76 truck where he was standing, Beckwith recalled to the AP on the 10th anniversary of the attacks in 2011.

Barbara Beckwith said her husband helped the president get up on the fire truck and was about to let himself down when Bush intervened, assuring his spot in history.

"The president said to him, 'Where are you going?'" she recounted. "'You're going to be right here with me.'"

Bush addressed firefighters, police officers and others through a bullhorn, his arm draped around Beckwith at one point.

"I can hear you, the rest of the world hears you, and the people who knocked down these buildings will hear all of us soon," the president said as the crowd chanted, "USA! USA!"

The moment, which was captured in video and photos by The Associated Press and other news outlets, became an enduring image of resilience following the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil. It even landed Beckwith on the cover of Time magazine, a keepsake he proudly displayed at his home for years.

Beckwith's wake will be Friday, and he will be buried Saturday on Long Island, where he raised a family that includes six children, 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Bush, who remained in contact with the family over the years and even checked in as Beckwith's health worsened, was among those who called Monday morning to send condolences, his wife said.

In a statement, the former president said Beckwith's "courage represented the defiant, resilient spirit of New Yorkers and Americans" following the attacks.

"When the terrorists attacked, Bob suited back up and, like so many brave first responders, raced toward the danger to save and search for others," Bush wrote Monday. "I was proud to have Bob by my side at Ground Zero days later and privileged to stay in touch with this patriot over the years."

New York City Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh called the famous image "both inspiring and heart-breaking" and said efforts by Beckwith and other former first responders was a "testament to their devotion" to the department.

"Bob is one of the heroes of 9/11 who stood tall for America, New York City and all New Yorkers," the Uniformed Firefighters Association, a union representing NYC firefighters, wrote on X, formerly Twitter, on Monday. "He spent many hours searching for the members we lost on that fateful day in 2001."

No verdict after first day of deliberations in trial of Michigan school shooter's mom

By ED WHITE Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) — A Michigan jury went home Monday after a full day of deliberations in a novel trial against a school shooter's mother who could go to prison if convicted of involuntary manslaughter for the deaths of four students in 2021.

The jury will return Tuesday for a second day.

Prosecutors say Jennifer Crumbley had a duty under Michigan law to prevent her son from harming others. She's accused of making a gun and ammunition accessible at home and failing to get help for Ethan Crumbley's mental health.

Jennifer Crumbley didn't disclose to Oxford High School that the family had a new 9 mm handgun that Ethan Crumbley had used with her at a shooting range just a few days before the attack, according to evidence.

About four hours into deliberations Monday, the jury sent a note to the judge asking if it could "infer anything" from prosecutors not presenting Ethan Crumbley or others to explain specifically how he got the gun from home.

"The answer is no. You're only allowed to consider the evidence that was admitted in the case," Oakland

County Judge Cheryl Matthews said.

On Nov. 30, 2021, school staff was concerned about a violent drawing of a gun, bullet and wounded man, accompanied by desperate phrases, on Ethan Crumbley's math assignment. But he was allowed to stay in school, following a roughly 12-minute meeting with the parents, 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" could have saved the lives of Hana St. Juliana, Tate Myre, Justin Shilling and Madisyn Baldwin, the prosecutor said.

The shooter pleaded guilty to murder and terrorism and is serving a life sentence. His mother wanted to call him as a defense witness during the trial, but his lawyers said he would invoke his right to remain silent. Ethan Crumbley still might appeal his sentence.

During her closing argument last week, 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 his wife, 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."

The jury of six men and six women includes some gun owners or people who grew up with firearms in their home.

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. James Crumbley faces trial in March.

In a journal found by police in his backpack, Ethan Crumbley, who was 15 at the time, 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.

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

CLIMATE GLIMPSE: Fires in Chile, California rains and Spain drought spread pain of weather extremes

Associated Press undefined

Camila Lange, who is 7-months-pregnant, on Monday sat with her husband and dog in what used to be their home in Vina del Mar, Chile. Hundreds of homes in the central coastal area of the South American nation have been destroyed in fires that have killed at least 112 people.

Weather and climate extremes — wildfire, drought and flooding — are taking a toll around the world. Here's some of what's happening now.

— In Chile, firefighters are battling huge forest fires stoked by hot and dry conditions. The fires are burning with the highest intensity around the city of Vina del Mar, where a famous botanical garden founded in 1931 was destroyed by flames. Several neighborhoods on the eastern edge of the popular beach resort of 300,000 people were devoured by flames and smoke, trapping some people in their homes.

— In California, the second of back-to-back moisture-packed atmospheric rivers is taking aim at Southern

California, unleashing mudslides, flooding roadways and knocking out power to about 1.4 million people in the Los Angeles area. Up to 9 inches (23 centimeters) of rain had already fallen by Monday, with more expected, according to the National Weather Service.

In Northern California, the storm inundated streets and brought down trees and electrical lines Sunday across the San Francisco Bay Area, where winds topped 60 mph (96 kph) in places.

— In Spain, people have been struggling to find drinking water as the country tries to cope with a record drought. Officials in the northeast region of Catalonia declared a drought emergency on Thursday, with reservoirs that serve 6 million people, including the population of Barcelona, at under 16% of their capacity, a historic low.

— Meanwhile, some scientists say that studying Caribbean sea sponges, which can live hundreds of years, is leading them to theorize that the world may have warmed more than generally thought since pre-Industrial times.

— Finally, does the prospect of increasingly powerful tropical storms mean we need a new category to describe their intensity? Some experts say we do and are proposing a Category 6 for hurricanes that exceed 192 miles per hour (309 kilometers per hour).

Dial it up to Category 6? As warming stokes storms, some want a bigger hurricane category

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

A handful of super powerful tropical storms in the last decade and the prospect of more to come has a couple of experts proposing a new category of whopper hurricanes: Category 6.

Studies have shown that the strongest tropical storms are getting more intense because of climate change. So the traditional five-category Saffir-Simpson scale, developed more than 50 years ago, may not show the true power of the most muscular storms, two climate scientists suggest in a Monday study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. They propose a sixth category for storms with winds that exceed 192 miles per hour (309 kilometers per hour).

Currently, storms with winds of 157 mph (252 kilometers per hour) or higher are Category 5. The study's authors said that open-ended grouping doesn't warn people enough about the higher dangers from monstrous storms that flirt with 200 mph (322 kph) or higher.

Several experts told The Associated Press they don't think another category is necessary. They said it could even give the wrong signal to the public because it's based on wind speed, while water is by far the deadliest killer in hurricanes.

Since 2013, five storms — all in the Pacific — had winds of 192 mph or higher that would have put them in the new category, with two hitting the Philippines. As the world warms, conditions grow more ripe for such whopper storms, including in the Gulf of Mexico, where many storms that hit the United States get stronger, the study authors said.

"Climate change is making the worst storms worse," said study lead author Michael Wehner, a climate scientist at the Lawrence Berkley National Lab.

It's not that there are more storms because of climate change. But the strongest are more intense. The proportion of major hurricanes among all storms is increasing and it's because of warmer oceans, said University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy, who wasn't part of the research.

From time to time, experts have proposed a Category 6, especially since Typhoon Haiyan reached 195 mph wind speeds (315 kilometers per hour) over the open Pacific. But Haiyan "does not appear to be an isolated case," the study said.

Storms of sufficient wind speed are called hurricanes if they form east of the international dateline, and typhoons if they form to the west of the line. They're known as cyclones in the Indian Ocean and Australia.

The five storms that hit 192 mph winds or more are:

— 2013's Haiyan, which killed more than 6,300 people in the Philippines.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 73 of 91

- 2015's Hurricane Patricia, which hit 215 mph (346 kph) before weakening and hitting Jalisco, Mexico.
- 2016's Typhoon Meranti, which reached 195 mph before skirting the Philippines and Taiwan and making landfall in China.
- 2020's Typhoon Goni, which reached 195 mph before killing dozens in the Philippines as a weaker storm.
- 2021's Typhoon Surigae, which also reached 195 mph before weakening and skirting several parts of Asia and Russia.

If the world sticks with just five storm categories "as these storms get stronger and stronger it will more and more underestimate the potential risk," said study co-author Jim Kossin, a former NOAA climate and hurricane researcher now with First Street Foundation.

Pacific storms are stronger because there's less land to weaken them and more room for storms to grow more intense, unlike the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean, Kossin said.

So far no Atlantic storm has reached the 192 mph potential threshold, but as the world warms more the environment for such a storm grows more conducive, Kossin and Wehner said.

Wehner said that as temperatures rise, the number of days with conditions ripe for potential Category 6 storms in the Gulf of Mexico will grow. Now it's about 10 days a year where the environment could be right for a Category 6, but that could go up to a month if the globe heats to 3 degrees Celsius (5.4 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. That would make an Atlantic Category 6 much more likely.

MIT hurricane expert Kerry Emanuel said Wehner and Kossin "make a strong case for changing the scale," but said it's unlikely to happen because authorities know most hurricane damage comes from storm surge and other flooding.

Jamie Rhome, deputy director of the National Hurricane Center, said when warning people about storms his office tries "to steer the focus toward the individual hazards, which include storm surge, wind, rainfall, tornadoes and rip currents, instead of the particular category of the storm, which only provides information about the hazard from wind. Category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson scale already captures 'catastrophic damage' from wind so it's not clear there would be a need for another category even if the storms were to get stronger."

McNoldy, former Federal Emergency Management Agency Director Craig Fugate, and University of Albany atmospheric sciences professor Kristen Corbosiero all say they don't see the necessity for a sixth and stronger storm category.

"Perhaps I'll change my tune when a rapidly intensifying storm in the Gulf achieves a Category 6," Corbosiero said in an email.

With a single word — 'lover' — Trump employs familiar playbook in tweaking his investigators

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Each time Donald Trump refers to a Georgia prosecutor's colleague as her "lover," he's invoking a strikingly familiar turn of phrase.

After all, Trump as president repeatedly used the same word to mock two FBI officials, including an agent who helped lead the Russia election interference probe, after revelations that the pair had an extramarital relationship and had traded pejorative text messages about him.

Throughout years of scrutiny from prosecutors, culminating in 91 felony counts, Trump has repeatedly sought to deflect attention from himself by making the personal lives of investigators ripe for derision and ridicule. He's jumped on allegations of affairs and leveled claims of bias against agents, prosecutors and judges. He's also been quick to exploit the sometimes questionable decision-making, or occasional outright protocol breaches, by officials investigating him as a means to try to discredit entire inquiries.

The strategy underscores the extent to which Trump views his four criminal cases as battles to be won not just in a courtroom but in the court of public opinion, where attacks on officials — both for groundless reasons but also for actual judgment lapses and unforced errors — are capable of shaping perception of

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 74 of 91

investigations and distracting from the underlying allegations of the probes.

"Prosecutors in the law enforcement apparatus generally are not built to respond to those types of attacks. The Department of Justice policy is: we do not try cases in the public domain. We don't respond to every single thing that a defendant says," said Reid Schar, a former federal prosecutor who led the corruption case against ex-Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

He added: "The entire conceptual framework that Trump has moved to is not one that DOJ or frankly state-level prosecutors, for the most part, are used to playing in."

Trump has most recently seized on revelations of a romantic relationship between Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis and an outside lawyer, Nathan Wade, she hired to help manage the case.

Willis acknowledged the relationship in a court filing Friday but said there was no basis to dismiss the case or to remove her from the prosecution charging Trump and 18 others with plotting to subvert Georgia's 2020 election. On Sunday, responding to the filing, Trump posted on Truth Social about Willis and her "lover" and alleged that they had "perpetrated a conspiracy" to enrich themselves and cheat and interfere in the 2024 race.

"This case is a Hoax, just like Russia, Russia, Russia (and all of the rest!), and everybody in America knows it," he wrote.

Claims of an inappropriate relationship were first raised last month by a lawyer for a Trump co-defendant who said it created a conflict of interest. Even before Friday's filing, Trump sensed an avenue to attack. "The Lovers knew that I did nothing wrong," he wrote in a Jan. 19 post, adding that "the Lovebirds should face appropriate consequences."

As president, Trump similarly exploited news that Peter Strzok, a lead agent in the investigation into whether the 2016 Trump campaign had coordinated with Russia, and FBI lawyer Lisa Page had sent each other negative text messages about Trump during the Russia probe and had an extramarital relationship.

One such text, referring to the prospect of a Trump victory, said, "We'll stop it." (Strzok, who was fired over the texts, later said he was referring to the will of the American voters and not to any step the FBI would take to interfere in the election.)

The Justice Department inspector general called the texts troubling but also found no evidence that any investigative decisions were motivated by partisan bias. That didn't stop Trump from accusing Strzok and Page of "treason," or many of his supporters from agreeing with Trump that the entire investigation had been a "witch hunt."

"Trump has shown the ability to affect public opinion in a way that may not get him out of the legal trouble he's facing — it's still going to be up to judges and juries — but it certainly seems to be enhancing his political viability, as unbelievable as that is," said Greg Brower, a former assistant FBI director in the congressional affairs office.

Strzok has said he was the subject of more than 100 Trump tweets, telling The Associated Press in 2020 that "being subjected to outrageous attacks up to and including by the president himself, which are full of lies and mischaracterizations and just crude and cruel, is horrible."

Other figures in the Russia probe provoked Trump's ire, including Christopher Steele, the ex-British spy who compiled a dossier of salacious and unproven rumors about Trump. He also fumed at the FBI, which among other things was faulted for submitting flawed applications to surveil an ex-Trump aide.

In 2017, days after being fired by Trump as director of the FBI, James Comey sent a friend a memo documenting a private Oval Office conversation he'd had with the president that unnerved him. The goal, Comey later admitted, was to have the content shared with the media so that Trump's actions could be exposed and because he thought it might prompt the appointment of a special counsel.

The Comey memo revealed that Trump had asked him to end an investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn. The act laid bare Trump's determination to exert his will on the FBI and became part of special counsel Robert Mueller's broader investigation into whether he had obstructed justice.

But to Trump and his supporters, the disclosure became an opening to attack Comey as a "leaker." A Justice Department inspector general report concluded that Comey had violated FBI policy but said that,

contrary to Trump's claims, he had not illegally disclosed classified material.

Mueller himself had his personal life picked over, with Trump seeking his termination over perceived conflicts — Mueller years earlier had sought a membership refund from a Trump golf club in Virginia — that aides told the president were frivolous.

Former Justice Department prosecutor Christopher Mattei, who prosecuted former Connecticut Gov. John Rowland and more recently represented families of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre in a lawsuit against Infowars host Alex Jones, said he was concerned Trump "had poisoned a significant part of the population" to believe public officials routinely act out of personal bias.

"To the extent he's been successful in suggesting to people that our public officials and leadership who have taken an oath to perform their duty really aren't doing that — yeah, that's concerning," he said.

The NFL long had shunned Las Vegas. Now the city will host the league's biggest game

By MARK ANDERSON AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A meeting scheduled in the 1980s between the NFL and sportsbook directors sparked hope in Las Vegas that their relationship would soon take a much more positive turn after decades during which the league kept the city at arm's length.

When all it turned out to be was a league official telling the casinos they would each be charged \$25,000 a year to televise NFL games, longtime sportsbook director Jimmy Vaccaro knew the relationship would remain frosty for the foreseeable future.

"In the long run, we thought there's no sense fighting these people because they can turn off the switch and there are no football games on," Vaccaro said. "So you just have to eat it and go from there."

Now the NFL can't get enough of Las Vegas. The Raiders have been playing near the Strip at Allegiant Stadium since 2020, and on Sunday the stadium will host the Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers in the Super Bowl, the most visible sign that the league has come to embrace both the city and the growing gambling industry. The city has also hosted the NFL draft and two Pro Bowls.

"The relationship developed very quickly," said Jay Kornegay, vice president of race and sports operations at Westgate Las Vegas. "To us, it felt like it was a 180-degree turn. For decades, it was a precarious type of relationship. We talked to each other a number of times over the decades, but it was very clear their stance on sports gambling, and we certainly respected that."

Las Vegas bookmakers, business executives and government officials largely took a pragmatic view when it came to how they worked with the NFL, a key reason the transition to a much warmer relationship has been smooth.

They could've taken the NFL's snubs much more personally, and in fact, the league made two decisions that especially didn't sit well.

One was in the 2003 when the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority asked to run a TV commercial during the Super Bowl touting the city. The NFL refused to air the ad, even though it didn't mention gambling.

Authority CEO and President Steve Hill wasn't in charge of the agency at the time, but in speaking with several people about the ad being nixed, he learned some were genuinely surprised and insulted.

But Hill added, chuckling: "I also think there was a fair amount of feigned surprise. It just plays wrong. Hey, this is going to draw free attention to us, which it did. And we played it up. It's not the end-of-the-world kind of thing, so let's play hurt and get some free media."

The famous Las Vegas slogan "What happens here, stays here" was in the rejected commercial. It debuted that year, and Hill said the Super Bowl ad controversy was especially fortuitous in driving home the idea for tourists craving a place with relaxed rules and no judgement.

Then in 2015, then-Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo was scheduled to headline a fantasy football convention at the Venetian that the NFL put the kibosh on because it was on casino property. Romo, who

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 76 of 91

as CBS's No. 1 game analyst will be calling this Super Bowl, unsuccessfully sued the league.

Las Vegas bookmakers, in the meantime, forged ahead and even worked with the NFL and other leagues when they discovered suspicious bets or line changes.

"They liked it when we told them what we thought when they wanted to question something, but that meant nothing after that," Vaccaro said.

Two events swung the pendulum the other way.

NFL owners in 2017 approved the Raiders' plans to relocate from Oakland, California, to Las Vegas. A year later, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, opening the door to legalized sports betting beyond Nevada.

Suddenly, the NFL had a much different relationship with Las Vegas.

"It's a totally new world," UNLV history professor Michael Green said. "It's a complete flip-flop."

At a Super Bowl event in December, league Commissioner Roger Goodell said he wouldn't have imagined being in Las Vegas to promote the league's premier event 10 years ago.

"You've become Sports Town USA, you really have," Goodell told the crowd. "That vision was set out. That vision was clear. We wanted to be a part of it, and I think when that happened, everything seemed to change."

The crowd was polite as Goodell spoke, but the change in demeanor came from the NFL's side. Las Vegas never relented on its commitment to legalized sports betting.

Goodell was correct, however, about the steps the city took to become a major player in the sports world. In addition to the Raiders' move, Las Vegas joined the NHL and WNBA and won a combined three championships in both leagues. Baseball's Oakland Athletics are on their way, and LeBron James has spoken openly about wanting to own an NBA team here.

Getting the Raiders was the key to the improved ties between the league and city. A secretive 2015 meeting that included Bo Bernhard, then the UNLV International Gaming Institute executive director, and Raiders owner Mark Davis planted the seed. Bernhard ended up producing a white paper that Davis took to the league to show Las Vegas would be a valuable host city.

"I was just there at the beginning, like the coin toss in football," Bernhard said. "A lot of really powerful people got it to the goal line."

One of those was Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, who made the case to his peers to open the Las Vegas market. "He felt pretty strongly that this was going to be a success," Hill said.

The owners approved the move by a 31-1 vote. Only the Miami Dolphins' Stephen Ross voted against it.

"It's a great sports town, a great city," Jones said. "It has borne out to be one of the most successful things that we've done was joining Las Vegas with the NFL."

When the Supreme Court overturned PASPA, suddenly states beyond Nevada were lining up to legalize sports betting. Now it's legal in 38 states, and in 2021 the NFL announced it had partnered with four sports betting companies.

"I saw this coming," said Baird Fogel, a California attorney who works with the sports betting industry. "That's why I got into it. I'm not saying I'm Nostradamus, but the amount of revenue we're talking about couldn't be ignored anymore."

David Highhill, NFL general manager of sports betting, acknowledged the league had little choice but to embrace the new reality. The Super Bowl not only is in Las Vegas, but sports betting ads will air during the game.

"It was our job to make sure we react to the world around us," Highhill said. "I think what we really focused on were what were our key priorities. So, No. 1, continue to protect the integrity of the game."

He said the fact there were several player suspensions in 2023 for violating the league's sports betting policy highlights the NFL's commitment to ensuring games are on the level.

Las Vegas sportsbook directors have long argued protecting the integrity of events was equally important to them, and legalized betting makes it easier to detect if there are suspicious wagers or line movements.

So now the NFL and Las Vegas have embraced each other after decades of a strained relationship and

Goodell said this Super Bowl likely won't be the last in Nevada.

Still, the idea of the NFL's biggest game being next to the Strip is one that is still hard for many to believe. "I would've lost that bet," Vaccaro said. "There's no way. And you know what, it will be a monster week."

Opposition to the Senate border bill jeopardizes help for Afghans who aided U.S. troops

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The massive \$118 billion Senate border bill not only contains once-in-a-decade border security legislation and wartime aid to Israel and Ukraine, but also offers a chance for the U.S. to keep its promise to Afghans who worked alongside U.S. soldiers in America's longest war.

Tucked inside the sprawling package is a measure that would provide a long-awaited pathway to residency for tens of thousands of Afghan refugees who arrived in the U.S. on military planes after the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021.

But the measure may fail if members can't agree on the bill's larger, unrelated provisions. Democrats, especially members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, have voiced opposition for what they call the extreme, far-right border policies in the legislation that they say do nothing to help fix the country's broken immigration system.

Conservatives have said the package does not go far enough in limiting the number of daily migrant crossings at the southern border.

If it fails, it will represent yet another disappointment for the more than 76,000 Afghans currently living in the U.S. who remain in immigration limbo as a result of years of congressional inaction.

A small group of bipartisan lawmakers and advocacy groups have worked for nearly three years to get a House or Senate vote on a standalone bill, the Afghan Adjustment Act, that would prevent Afghans from becoming stranded without legal residency status when their humanitarian parole expires. But advocates have repeatedly faced strong opposition from some Republican lawmakers to vetting requirements for the refugees who were brought here and their family members still stranded in Kabul.

The bipartisan border deal offered long-awaited breakthrough. Both Republican and Democratic senators and their staff worked to bridge the divide and produce legislative text that both sides could support. The new proposal would couple measures enabling qualified Afghans to eventually apply for U.S. citizenship, as was done for refugees in the past, including those from Cuba, Vietnam and Iraq, with stricter and more expedited vetting processes.

"I think the most gracious thing would be to say there's been a lot of twists and turns, but I'm very happy with the result," Democratic Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, one of the lead sponsors of the effort, told The Associated Press on Monday. "And I'm very glad that it's included because this is an important signal that the United States stands by those who stand by us."

The U.S. government admitted the refugees on a temporary parole status as part of Operation Allies Welcome, the largest resettlement effort in the country in decades, with the promise of a pathway to life in the U.S. for their service.

"Our position is that Afghans stood by us for 20 years and over the past three years, they've been asked to take a backseat to every other bill," said Shawn VanDiver, a Navy veteran and head of #AfghanEvac, a coalition supporting Afghan resettlement efforts. "And so it is really nice to see that they're included in this one."

But hopes for fulfilling that promise to longtime allies of America's mission in Kabul could be short-lived. Republican leaders in the House have declared the bill a non-starter, and even passage through the Senate, where the deal was negotiated, is an uphill climb.

As proponents of the Afghan provision await the fate of the package, they are trying to remain cautiously optimistic that their campaign is making headway.

VanDiver, who has worked with the State Department on this issue since the U.S. withdrawal, said that he has heard a lot of excitement from Afghan allies and their family members in the last 12 hours about

the inclusion in the package.

"The worst part about it is that it is now on us to manage expectations," he said. "These folks have already been through so much and it's frankly embarrassing that we can't figure out how to give them the permanency that they've earned."

Zelenskyy signals a shakeup of Ukraine's military leadership is imminent at a critical point in war

By ILLIA NOVIKOV and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he is thinking about dismissing the country's top military officer as part of a broader leadership shakeup, a possibility that has shocked the nation fighting a war to end Russia's invasion and also worried Ukraine's Western allies.

Zelenskyy confirmed in an interview with Italian broadcaster RAI TV released late Sunday that he was thinking about removing Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the popular commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces. He said he was contemplating the move to ensure the country remains led by individuals who are "convinced of victory" against Russia.

"A reset, a new beginning is necessary," Zelenskyy said. The review is "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 were his first acknowledgement of Zaluzhnyi's possible firing. The potential ouster of the general already has caused an uproar in Ukraine and delighted the Kremlin as the war approaches its second anniversary.

Zaluzhnyi is widely respected among Ukrainian service members and considered a national hero. He is credited with stalling Russia's full-scale invasion in the early days of the war and expertly pushing back Moscow's troops.

Kyiv Mayor Vitalii Klitschko criticized the possibility of Zaluzhnyi's firing, saying it was due to the general's leadership that "many Ukrainians truly trust the armed forces."

"Today is a moment when politics might prevail over reason and country's interests," Klitschko said on social media. The mayor of Ukraine's capital city has been a vocal critic of Zelenskyy. The presidency in turn has accused Klitschko's office of inefficiencies.

It is unclear who might replace Zaluzhnyi and if his successor would command the same level of respect from Ukraine's troops and foreign defense leaders. His firing could risk degrading morale at a critical time in the war.

According to Ukrainian and Western media reports, Zelenskyy asked Zaluzhnyi to resign last week, but the general refused. Zaluzhnyi has not commented publicly on the reports.

Tensions between him and the president have been rising since a much anticipated Ukrainian counter-offensive, which was launched in June with the help of an array of Western weapons, failed to produce major territory gains in Russian-occupied areas, disappointing allies.

Ukraine now is grappling with ammunition and personnel shortages while Russia is on the offensive, mounting relentless attacks. Four people were killed and at least one was injured in a Monday afternoon strike over the city of Kherson in southern Ukraine, the head of the local military administration said.

The need for a broad mobilization to beef up the number of Ukrainian troops has reportedly been one of the areas of disagreement between Zelenskyy and Zaluzhnyi.

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

A rift between Zaluzhnyi and Zelenskyy first broke into the open in the 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.

For his part, Zaluzhnyi has published two essays laying out his vision for how Ukraine can win the war. In his writings, he said it was critical for Ukraine to have air superiority, to extending its efficiency in countering enemy artillery, to build up reserves and to increase electronic warfare capabilities.

Dutch Defense Minister Kajsa Ollongren announced Monday that the Netherlands was preparing six additional F-16 fighter jets to give Ukraine on top of 18 the country previously pledged.

Ukraine's "aerial superiority is essential for countering Russian aggression," Ollongren said in a message on X, formerly Twitter. Denmark also has promised to donate 19 F-16s to Ukraine.

Lt. Gen. Serhii Naye, the commander of the Ukrainian military's joint forces, said Monday that the country was set to receive missiles with a range of 300 to 500 kilometers (186 to 310 miles) along with the F-16s as part of upcoming defense aid packages from its allies, according to Ukrainian news agency RBK-Ukraine.

Ukraine desperately needs more Western military assistance as Russian forces maneuver from many directions along the drawn-out war's 1,500-kilometer (900-mile) front line. House Republicans in the U.S. are moving forward with a military spending package that provides aid to Israel but leaves out more help for Ukraine. Zaluzhnyi's dismissal could fuel further 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.

The Ukrainska Pravda newspaper reported Monday that Zelenskyy also was considering the removal of General Staff Chief Serhii Shaptala.

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.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 80 of 91

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

None of them took action, part of a general silence in reaction to the group's arguments.

"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?'

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 81 of 91

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.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 82 of 91

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 non-partisan 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 Section 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.

Some Americans have become saddled with credit card debt as rent and everyday prices remain high

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — While the U.S. economy is broadly healthy, pockets of Americans have run through their savings and run up their credit card balances after battling inflation for more than two years.

Experts worry that members of these groups -- mostly lower- and middle-income Americans, who tend to be renters -- are falling behind on their debts and could face further deterioration of their financial health in the year ahead, particularly those who have recently resumed paying off student loans.

"The U.S. economy is currently performing better than most forecasters expected a year ago, thanks in large part to a resilient consumer," wrote Shernette McCloud, an economist with TD Economics, in a report issued Wednesday. "However, more recently that spending is increasingly being financed by credit cards."

Americans held more than \$1.05 trillion on their credit cards in the third quarter of 2023, a record, and a figure certain to grow once the fourth-quarter data is released by Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. next month. A recent report from the credit rating company Moody's showed that credit card delinquency rates and charge-off rates, or the percent of loans that a bank believes will never be repaid, are now well above their 2019 levels and are expected to keep climbing.

These worrisome metrics coincide with the average interest rate on a bank credit card of roughly 21.5%, the highest it's been since the Federal Reserve started tracking the data in 1994.

"Overall, the consumer is credit healthy. However, the reality is that there are starting to be some significant signs of stress," said Silvio Tavares, president and CEO of VantageScore, one of the country's two major credit scoring systems.

Most analyses of Americans' financial health tend to tell a tale of two consumers. On one side are the roughly two-thirds of Americans who own their homes and those who've invested in the stock market and done substantially well. They generally had the savings cushion necessary to weather high inflation. Delinquency rates on single-family homes remain at near historic lows and home prices have continued to climb.

But for the rest of America, things are looking rough.

"You have these noticeable pockets of consumers -- mostly middle- and lower-income renters who have not benefitted from the wealth effect of higher housing prices and stock prices -- who are feeling financial stress and that's driving up these delinquency levels. They've been hit very hard by inflation," said Warren Kornfeld, a senior vice president at Moody's, in an interview.

Kornfeld, who co-wrote a report last week looking at the climbing levels of delinquencies, expects them to keep climbing this year.

Consumers' financial health could play a big role in the 2024 election. President Joe Biden is running in part on his efforts to bring down costs for U.S. families. Republicans counter that Biden is to blame for higher costs in the first place.

One way to gauge this bifurcation of the American economy is by looking at the results of some major credit card companies. The customers of Capital One, Discover Financial and Synchrony have historically been those with lower credit scores, while American Express typically serves the wealthiest and well-to-do.

At Synchrony Bank, the largest issuer of retail co-brand credit cards, the charge-off rate jumped from 3.5% to 5.6% in a year. Meanwhile, roughly 4.7% of Synchrony customers are 30 days or more behind on their bills, which is also up from a year ago.

Discover's customers are carrying \$102 billion in balances on their credit cards, up 13% from a year earlier. Meanwhile, the charge-off rates and 30-day delinquency rates have climbed. Executives say they can see the impact of inflation.

"Think about a consumer that makes \$50,000 a year," said John Green, Discover's chief financial officer, at an investor conference in December. "When inflation outpaces your wage growth, they're making choices in terms of what they're going to spend, what bill they're going to pay and what they're going to frankly put on their table."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 84 of 91

Inflation peaked at 9.1% in June 2022 and is now slightly above 3%. But the costs of many goods and services remains elevated. A loaf of bread that cost \$1.54 in December 2020 cost \$2.02 at the end of last year, and a gallon of gas has risen from an average of \$2.17 to \$3.29 in the same timeframe, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Renters in particular have felt the pinch. The median rent for a property with up to two bedrooms has jumped from \$1,424 at the end of 2020 to \$1,713 at the end of last year, according to realtor.com.

VantageScore's Tavares worries that the recent reintroduction of student loan payments could more acutely impact these customers in their ability to repay their debts.

"Folks are scrambling to pay these obligations that they haven't had to pay in three years, and it's hitting exactly the demographic we are talking about here: the younger folk, less affluent folk," Tavares said.

American Express has also seen its charge-offs and delinquencies climb in the past year, but not as much as its competitors. Historically, AmEx has catered to customers with higher credit scores who pay off their cards at the end of each month. But even AmEx customers are now carrying a balance more regularly. AmEx's net charge-off rate last quarter was 2%, up from 1.2% a year earlier.

In the middle of the spectrum are JPMorgan Chase and Bank of America, two gigantic banks with large portfolios of customers. Their credit metrics have ticked up only modestly, likely because the banks' clients run the gamut of income levels and credit scores. But both banks have been setting more money aside to cover potential loan losses, mostly due to their credit card portfolios.

It's unlikely that Americans will see any relief from the banks or interest rates any time soon that would allow them to refinance these high interest debts. The Federal Reserve signaled Wednesday that its first interest rate cut is likely months away. Further, credit card interest rates tend to be extremely high compared to what the Fed charges for loans.

Further, reports on bank industry sentiment show that banks are being more conservative in giving out loans, which means it will be less likely that these Americans will be able to refinance their high credit card bills into lower interest loans.

Economists at the moment feel the financial strain felt by these lower income Americans is not likely to spill over broadly into the broader economy, at least at the moment. But economists and experts see these rising delinquencies as one of the growing risks to the economy this year, especially if student loans become too much for younger, debt-burdened Americans to handle.

"Rising delinquencies, while they do require monitoring, are not quite sounding alarm bells," TD Economics' McLeod wrote in their report.

Biden's vow of affordable internet for all is threatened by the looming expiration of subsidies

By KAVISH HARJAI Associated Press

President Joe Biden recently traveled to North Carolina to promote his goal of affordable internet access for all Americans, but the promise for 23 million families across the U.S. is on shaky ground.

That's because a subsidy that helps people with limited resources afford internet access is set to expire this spring.

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which provides \$30 a month for qualifying families in most places and \$75 on tribal lands, will run out of money by the end of April if Congress doesn't extend it further.

"I think this should be high priority for Congress," North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, a Democrat who has worked with a bipartisan group of governors to promote the program, said in a phone interview. "To many families, \$30 a month is a big deal."

It matters a lot to Shirleen Alexander of Charlotte, who said the money she saves through the ACP goes toward her grocery bills. It also offsets some of the stress she feels over medical bills.

"If they took (ACP) away, it would be like taking food out of my mouth," said Alexander, a senior citizen on a fixed income. "I need the service, and some of my senior citizen friends need it, as well."

The program is key to the Biden administration's plans to make the internet available to everyone, which

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 85 of 91

the president has touted repeatedly as he has ramped up his reelection campaign. He has likened it to the Rural Electrification Administration, the New Deal program that delivered electricity to much of rural America in the 1930s.

"Our goal is to connect everyone in America to affordable, reliable high-speed Internet by the year 2030, everyone in America, just like Franklin Roosevelt did a generation ago with electricity," President Biden said in Raleigh last month.

So far, only 43% of eligible households nationwide have signed up for the ACP subsidy. But the program has enabled people who have signed up to avoid the kinds of financial trade-offs Alexander described, said Brian Vo, chief investment officer of Connect Humanity, a nonprofit promoting widespread internet access. It also gives them access to vital services such as telehealth, remote schooling and work, he said.

"If you put ACP and affordability in the context of the social determinants it drives and the economic value created, the benefits far outweigh the cost of \$30 per household," Vo said.

If the program expires, participating families, including nearly 900,000 in North Carolina, will either lose internet access or have to pay more to stay connected.

North Carolina is among the top states in the country when it comes to taking advantage of the ACP, according to an AP analysis of the program. More than 50% of eligible households in the state are enrolled in the program.

A bipartisan group of lawmakers recently proposed a bill to sustain the ACP through the end of 2024 with an additional \$7 billion in funding — one billion more than what Biden asked Congress to appropriate for the program at the end of last year. However, no votes have been scheduled to move the bill forward and it's unclear if the program will be prioritized in a divided Congress.

In the meantime, the Federal Communications Commission has already taken steps to wind the program down. It has instructed internet providers to send notices about the projected end of the program and announced that it will stop accepting new enrollees after February 7.

Nate Denny, the deputy director for broadband for North Carolina, said he's "extremely worried" about the winding down of the subsidy program, especially as the state is set to receive a total of \$1.5 billion from the federal government. Most of that money will be awarded to internet providers to build internet infrastructure in areas that need it most.

"The ACP has a tremendous effect on adoption, but it also has a huge impact on the state's ability to stretch available infrastructure funding," Denny said.

The ACP reduces the amount of grant money an internet provider needs to build into lower-income communities because it provides the assurance of a steady customer base, according to state broadband leaders the AP spoke with and an analysis from nonprofit Common Sense Media and consulting firm Boston Consulting Group.

"With the ACP's help, internet providers are seeing more willing subscribers, more beneficiaries of their investments that then help them stretch their capital further, and thusly stretch state investments, as well," Denny said.

The infrastructure money comes from a pot of \$42.5 billion allocated for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program, the cornerstone of the Biden administration's efforts to close the digital divide for good.

In December, states submitted draft plans detailing lower-cost plans that providers who build networks using BEAD money will be required to offer qualifying families. Several states incorporated the ACP subsidies into those draft plans in ways that would lower the cost for internet access to zero for some customers.

Though those lower-cost plans wouldn't work as designed without support from the federal subsidy program, a spokesperson for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration said BEAD "will still connect everyone in America and ensure that newly connected households have access to affordable plans."

Several Biden administration officials, including Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, have highlighted the need for more funding for the program during trips across the country in recent months.

The state of North Carolina will do what it can to maintain affordable internet no matter what, the gov-

ernor said, but he hopes Congress will keep the subsidies coming to those who need them.

"We want to try to keep this program alive, and I still think the chance to do that is still there," Cooper said.

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 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 Sinead 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 by 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.

US porn actor who advocates for Palestinians visits Iran on trip unacknowledged by Tehran

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — An American porn actor who has advocated for Palestinians online during Israel's war on Hamas traveled to Iran and visited the former U.S. Embassy in Tehran, which was abandoned after the 1979 hostage crisis.

The visit by Whitney Wright as Iran imprisons Nobel Peace Prize laureate and women's rights activist Narges Mohammadi sparked heated criticism of the country's crackdown on women since the 2022 death in police custody of Mahsa Amini and the nationwide protests it sparked.

Wright filmed herself throughout Tehran despite her work in pornography exposing her in theory to criminal charges that carry the death penalty.

Wright did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press. But in remarks on social media, she described the U.S. Embassy as a place she "HAD to visit." Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard now runs it as a museum.

Iranian students backing Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini overran the compound after the 1979 Islamic

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 88 of 91

Revolution. Embassy staff members taken hostage were held for 444 days. A direct line can be drawn between that crisis and the tensions between Iran and the U.S. today.

"I'm sharing exhibits from a museum that are never seen," Wright wrote on Instagram. "It's not an endorsement of the government."

Wright has previously shared pro-Palestinian information online, including material supporting armed militancy against Israel.

As a U.S. citizen born in Oklahoma City, she would need a visa to visit Iran. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not respond to questions about the actor's trip.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani was asked about Wright during a Monday briefing and said he had no information about her.

The semiofficial Tasnim news agency, believed to be close to the Revolutionary Guard, quoted an anonymous official claiming the government issued Wright a visa while not being "aware about the nature of her immoral job."

The presence of a performer from the U.S. adult film industry immediately drew attention.

Iranian actor Setareh Pesiani cited Wright's visit to criticize Iran's hard-line government for its mandatory headscarf policy, which led to the 22-year-old Amini's arrest and death.

"You punish people of this country in various methods for removal of hijab but you allow a porn actress to come here for tourism!?" Pesiani wrote on Instagram.

Masih Alinejad, a U.S.-based activist who has faced assassination and kidnapping attempts by Iran, also denounced Wright's visit.

"We the women of Iran want be like Rosa Parks and not Whitney Wright," Alinejad wrote, referencing the U.S. civil rights icon. "The true warmongers are the agents of the Islamic Republic who will execute you if you be true to yourself."

In 2016, a British porn actor known as Candy Charms traveled to Iran, prompting immediate criticism. But there's been no media coverage of Wright's visit inside Iran, likely a sign of how tightly controlled journalists are after the 2022 demonstrations.

Then there's Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Iranian state media have seized on the U.S. support of Israel to criticize the U.S. and opponents of its theocracy. Abdolreza Davari, a media adviser to former hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has as well.

"Israel is absolute evil and filth," he wrote on X, formerly Twitter, in October. "We will stand by anyone who fights against Israel, even if that person is Mia Khalifa, a former porn star who has cleared her record of cruelty and corruption by openly supporting the oppressed Palestinian nation and fighting Zionist crimes."

Asked about Wright's visit, the U.S. State Department told the AP in a statement that it has warned Americans to avoid travel to Iran and "exercise increased caution due to the risk of wrongful detention." Americans and those with Western ties can find themselves detained and convicted in secret trials to later be used as bargaining chips in negotiations with Washington.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is a primary driver of instability across the Middle East region, and it has been since 1979," the State Department said. "If Iran actually cared about peace and stability in the Middle East region or the welfare of the people there, it would cease its support for terrorist organizations."

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 89 of 91

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.

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 90 of 91

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 nonpartisan 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.

Today in History: February 6

Queen Elizabeth II takes throne after death of father King George VI

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 6, the 37th day of 2024. There are 329 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 6, 1952, Britain's King George VI, 56, died at Sandringham House in Norfolk, England; he was succeeded as monarch by his 25-year-old elder daughter, who became Queen Elizabeth II.

On this date:

In 1778, during the American Revolutionary War, the United States won official recognition and military support from France with the signing of a Treaty of Alliance in Paris.

In 1788, Massachusetts became the sixth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1815, the state of New Jersey issued the first American railroad charter to John Stevens, who proposed a rail link between Trenton and New Brunswick. (The line, however, was never built.)

In 1862, during the Civil War, Fort Henry in Tennessee fell to Union forces.

In 1899, a peace treaty between the United States and Spain was ratified by the U.S. Senate.

In 1911, Ronald Wilson Reagan, the 40th president of the United States, was born in Tampico, Illinois.

In 1922, Cardinal Archille Ratti was elected pope; he took the name Pius XI.

In 1933, the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the so-called "lame duck" amendment, was proclaimed in effect by Secretary of State Henry Stimson.

In 1993, tennis Hall of Famer and human rights advocate Arthur Ashe died in New York at age 49.

In 1998, Carl Wilson, a founding member of The Beach Boys, died in Los Angeles at age 51.

In 2000, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton launched her successful candidacy for the U.S. Senate.

In 2008, the Bush White House defended the use of the interrogation technique known as waterboarding, saying it was legal, not torture, and had saved American lives.

In 2013, toy maker Hasbro Inc. announced that Monopoly fans had voted online to add a cat token to the board game, replacing the iron.

In 2018, casino mogul Steve Wynn resigned as chairman and CEO of Wynn Resorts amid sexual misconduct allegations.

In 2021, George P. Shultz, who was President Ronald Reagan's secretary of state as part of a long career in public service, died at his California home; he was 100.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 06, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 227 ~ 91 of 91

In 2022, Queen Elizabeth II celebrated the 70th anniversary of her ascendance to the British throne, an unprecedented reign that made her a symbol of stability in the United Kingdom.

In 2023, a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Turkey and Syria, toppling thousands of buildings and trapping residents under mounds of rubble; the death toll would eventually be more than 50,000.

Today's birthdays: Actor Mamie Van Doren is 93. Actor Mike Farrell is 85. Former NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw is 84. Singer Fabian is 81. Actor Michael Tucker is 79. Producer-director-writer Jim Sheridan is 75. Actor Jon Walmsley is 68. Actor Kathy Najimy is 67. Rock musician Simon Phillips (Toto) is 67. Actor-director Robert Townsend is 67. Actor Barry Miller is 66. Actor Megan Gallagher is 64. Rock singer Axl Rose (Guns N' Roses) is 62. Country singer Richie McDonald is 62. Singer Rick Astley is 58. Rock musician Tim Brown (Boo Radleys) is 55. Former ABC News anchor Amy Robach is 51. Actor Josh Stewart is 47. Actor Ben Lawson is 44. Actor Brandon Hammond is 40. Actor Crystal Reed (TV: "Teen Wolf") is 39. Actor Alice Greczyn (GREH'-chihn) is 38. Actor Anna Diop is 36. R&B singer/actor Tinashe is 31.