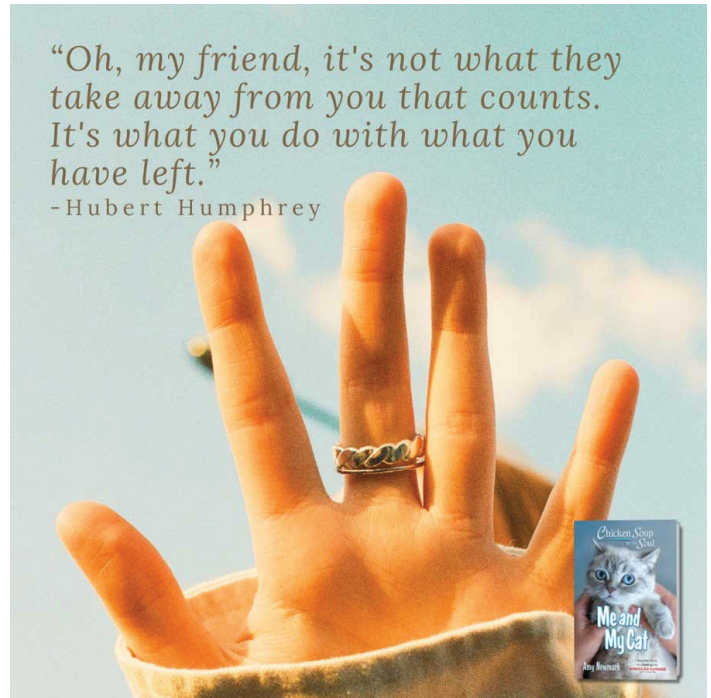


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Wednesday, April 24

Senior Menu: Turkey sub sandwich, lettuce and tomato macaroni salad, tropical fruit.
School Breakfast: French toast.
School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, corn.
Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.
United Methodist: Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
High School Baseball: Varsity vs. Madison at 7 p.m. in Groton.

Thursday, April 25

Senior Menu: Ham, sweet potatoes, vegetable blend Provence, baked apples dinner roll.
School Breakfast: Muffins.
School Lunch: Chicken strips, waffle fries.
Girls Golf at Redfield 10 a.m.
Middle School Spring Concert 7 p.m.

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

Friday, April 26

Senior Menu: Taco salad, Mexican rice with beans, breadstick, cherry fluff.
School Breakfast: Bagel bits.
School Lunch: Lasagna, corn, tea buns.
Track at Webster, 1 p.m.

Saturday April 27

Thrift Store open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.
High School Baseball: Varsity vs. Howard at 2 p.m. in Groton.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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1440

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The Senate last night voted 79 to 18 to pass a long-awaited package that combines \$95B of foreign aid to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan with other national security measures, including a possible TikTok ban. The Senate's approval of the package comes after the House passed it as four separate bills Saturday. President Joe Biden is expected to sign the package into legislation.

The US Justice Department announced yesterday it will pay nearly \$139M to settle claims by 139 women over the FBI's mishandling of sexual abuse allegations against former Team USA gymnastics doctor

Larry Nassar.

Former President Donald Trump's New York criminal trial over alleged falsified business records continued yesterday, featuring testimony from a former longtime head of the National Enquirer. Publisher David Pecker detailed a 2015 agreement he made with then-Trump lawyer Michael Cohen to purchase and not publish negative stories about Trump amid the 2016 presidential campaign. The trial pauses on Wednesdays and will resume tomorrow.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Taylor Swift's "Tortured Poets Department" sells 700,000 vinyl records, breaking the record for most vinyl sales in a week after just three days.

WNBA No. 1 draft pick Caitlin Clark to sign eight-year, \$28M contract with Nike, which includes a signature shoe and is the highest-ever sponsorship deal for a women's basketball player.

Grammy-winning artist Megan Thee Stallion accused in lawsuit of sexual harassment by her former cameraman. Multiple crewmembers injured during accident on set of Amazon MGM Studio's upcoming film "The Pickup".

Science & Technology

Microsoft releases Phi-3, framed as a "small" language model with almost 4 billion parameters; says it performs as well as OpenAI's GPT-3.5 in answering complex questions. Meta adds multimodal AI to its Ray-Ban smart glasses, allowing users to query AI based on items in the field of vision.

Scientists create artificial cells that change shape and respond to their surroundings like living cells; breakthrough has applications in regenerative medicine, drug delivery, and more.

Underground Antarctic experiment reportedly detects seven potential neutrino events; the particles are the most abundant in the universe but weigh nothing and rarely interact with matter.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +1.2%, Dow +0.7%, Nasdaq +1.6%) as investors sift through strong batch of earnings reports. Tesla reports 9% drop in Q1 revenue, the biggest year-over-year decline since 2012; announces new models ahead of timeline, with shares rising over 13% in after-hours trading.

The Federal Trade Commission votes 3-2 in approving final rule banning most employers from using noncompete clauses nationwide, effective in 120 days; FTC estimates about 30 million workers are currently prevented from joining competitors.

Modern-day convenience store Foxtrot abruptly closes all 33 stores across Chicago, Austin, Dallas, and Washington, DC; comes five months after its merger with Chicago boutique grocer Dom's Kitchen and Market.

Politics & World Affairs

Campus pro-Palestinian protests continue at a number of universities across the country; some call for the resignation of Columbia University President Minouche Shafik following student arrests.

UK lawmakers pass bill allowing officials to send certain migrants seeking asylum to Rwanda; officials say the policy is meant to deter the smugglers trafficking migrants to the country.

Argentina President Javier Milei announces country's first quarterly budget surplus in 16 years; the Libertarian Milei was elected in November on a platform of cutting spending and slowing runaway inflation, which had reached 100% year-over-year.

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.

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GROTON HISTORIC JAIL RESTORATION BENEFIT BRUNCH



SUNDAY,
APRIL 28TH
8AM-1PM
COMMUNITY
CENTER

Tracy is double winner at Rob Luecke Track Meet

Groton placed first in three events at the Rob Luecke Track Meet held Tuesday in Groton. Tracy won both the 100m and 200m dash while the girls 800m relay team also took first.

Mens Results

100 Meters: 1. Keegen Tracy, 11.23, 11. Lane Tietz, 11.94

200 Meters: 1. Keegen Tracy, 24.64, 11. Gage Sippel, 26.70

300m Hurdles: 14. Tristin McGannon, 53.28

4x100 Relay: 9. Colby Dunker, Gage Sippel, Lane Tietz, Tristin McGannon, 50.13

4x200 Relay: 7. Colby Dunker, Gage Sippel, Tristin McGannon, Blake Pauli, 1:43.69

SMR 1600m: 5. Lane Tietz, Colby Dunker, Keegen Tracy, Blake Pauli, 3:56.81

Shot Put: 2. Logan Ringgenberg, 41-06.75, 5. Holden Sippel, 39-03.25, 10. Karter Moody, 36-04.00, 31. Drew Thurston, 24-08.50

Discus: 5. Logan Ringgenberg, 123-07, 6. Holden Sippel, 121-10, 16. Karter Moody, 96-02, 30. Drew Thurston, 69-00

Javelin: 2. Colby Dunker, 132-01, 13. Karter Moody, 102-05, 17. Holden Sippel, 96-09, 19. Drew Thurston, 91-06, 28. Logan Ringgenberg, 65-07

Triple Jump: 16. Tristin McGannon, 30-06.00

Womens Results

100 Meters: 6. Laila Roberts, 13.34, 7. Rylee Dunker, 13.38, 23. Elizabeth Fliehs, 14.44, 27. Kayla Lehr, 14.61

200 Meters: 3. Laila Roberts, 29.54, 8. Elizabeth Fliehs, 31.08, 21. Kayla Lehr, 32.78

400 Meters: 8. Ashlynn Warrington, 1:11.36, 10. Elizabeth Fliehs, 1:13.63

800 Meters: 2. Faith Traphagen, 2:41.19

100m Hurdles: 2. McKenna Tietz, 17.94, 10. Talli Wright, 18.88, 16. Emerlee Jones, 19.69 18. Hannah Sandness, 20.15, 22. Teagan Hanten, 20.52

300m Hurdles: 4. McKenna Tietz, 53.83, 5. Emerlee Jones, 54.14, 9. Talli Wright, 56.04, 16. Teagan Hanten, 1:00.83, 19. Hannah Sandness, 1:08.44

4x100 Relay: 12. Laila Roberts, Rylee Dunker, McKenna Tietz, Jerica Locke, 1:01.63

4x200 Relay: 1. Laila Roberts, Rylee Dunker, Jerica Locke, Kella Tracy, 1:54.84

4x800 Relay: 3. Taryn Traphagen, Faith Traphagen, Kella Tracy, Ashlynn Warrington, 10:23.45

SMR 1600m: 4. Kella Tracy, Rylee Dunker, Jerica Locke, Taryn Traphagen, 4:52.35

Shot Put: 5. Emma Kutter, 31-01.00, 16. Faith Fliehs, 26-06.50, 24. Avery Crank, 24-07.75, 38. Emma Davies, 19-02.00

Discus: 12. Faith Fliehs, 84-10, 13. Emma Kutter, 80-04, 25. Avery Crank, 68-05.50, 39. Emma Davies, 46-00

Javelin: 4. Avery Crank, 80-07, 13. Ashley Johnson, 64-00, 14. Emma Kutter, 63-01, 17. Abby Yeadon, 35-04, 18. Emma Davies, 31-07

High Jump: 9. Emerlee Jones, 4-02.00

Long Jump: 24. Teagan Hanten, 11-05.75

Triple Jump: 12. Emerlee Jones, 28-00.00, 15. Teagan Hanten, 27-01.50

Guthmiller wins at Milbank Tournament

Carly Guthmiller won the Milbank Invitational golf tournament held Tuesday. She outdistanced the runner-up by three strokes to win with a score of 89. Carlee Johnson also medaled with a seventh place finish and a 100 score. Carly Gilbert was 12th with a 108, Mia Crank was 23rd with a 125, Rylie Rose was 24th with a score of 125 and Claire Schuelke placed 25th with a score of 130.

Madison won the meet with a 384 followed by Aberdeen Roncalli with 402, Groton Area with 422, Sioux Valley with 460 and Milbank with 469.



Fourth graders from Aberdeen and Groton learned different agriculture-based lessons during the Fourth Grade Ag Fair. The Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce partners with Groton FFA to put on the event, which aims to teach fourth grade students about the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. The annual event took place Tuesday at the Brown County Fairgrounds. (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)

Fourth Grade Ag Fair held in Aberdeen



Groton Area fourth graders from Sue Fjeldheim's class watch a demonstration at the Fourth Grade Ag Fair on Tuesday afternoon at the Brown County Fairground. (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)



From left: Groton Area juniors Karrah Johnson and Ashley Johnson discuss cow digestion at Tuesday's Fourth Grade Ag Fair. (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)



Paula Fogarty, area produce and farm mom, shows a group of Groton Area fourth graders a Nigerian dwarf goat during the Fourth Grade Ag Fair on Tuesday afternoon. (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)

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From left: Groton Area FFA members Hannah Monson, Paisley Mitchell and Ava Wienk presented to fourth graders from throughout the area at the Fourth Grade Ag Fair on Tuesday afternoon. (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)



Groton Area junior Nick Morris (center) shows a group of fourth graders dangers of having loose material near machinery. (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)



Groton Area junior Kaden Kampa (left) watches fire shoot out of the canister while junior Nick Morris controls the air compressor during the Fourth Grade Ag Fair on Tuesday afternoon. The demonstration shows what could happen if fire and a grain silo combine.

(Photo by Elizabeth Varin)



Groton Area FFA members demonstrate what happens when fire and a confined grain silo combine during Tuesday's Fourth Grade Ag Fair. (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)

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Groton Area fourth graders pose after finishing going from table to table at the Fourth Grade Ag Fair. (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)



Members of the Groton Area FFA Chapter pose after the last group makes their way through the barn at the Fourth Grade Ag Fair. (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)

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Debate begins on abortion-rights ballot measure as Mitchell event brings out both sides

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - APRIL 24, 2024 12:52 AM

MITCHELL — A proposed measure to reinstate abortion rights hasn't made the ballot yet, but the debate is underway.

About 100 people converged Tuesday evening on Dakota Wesleyan University for a discussion sponsored by the university's McGovern Center as part of its Courageous Conversation series.

The room was filled with attendees from both sides of the issue eager to dissect the measure, which seeks to secure abortion rights in South Dakota, reversing the effects of the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision that overturned Roe v. Wade. When that happened, a trigger law that the South Dakota Legislature had adopted in 2005 immediately banned abortions in the state except when necessary to save the life of the mother.

The ballot measure would amend the state constitution to legalize all abortions during the first trimester of pregnancy. It would allow regulations on abortion during the second trimester, but only in ways that are "reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman." In the third trimester, it would allow regulations up to a ban on abortions, with exceptions for the life or health of the pregnant woman.

Rick Weiland, whose Dakotans for Health group is spearheading the measure, pointed to a 2022 poll that found 76% of registered South Dakota voters support allowing abortion in cases of rape and incest. Meanwhile, he said, the state's current law has stripped women of the right to choose whether or not to carry "their rapist's fertilized embryo to term."

"And the Legislature refuses to address it," Weiland said. "You can't give a rapist's embryo more rights than a woman who has been raped."

State Rep. Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, who also serves as vice president of South Dakota Right to Life and attended the discussion via Zoom, said the amendment goes beyond rape and incest exceptions.

"Instead, what they wrote is an amendment that legalizes abortion past the point of viability, past the point where the baby can just be born outside the womb, and up until the point of birth," Hansen said.

He highlighted the exception for the health of the mother in the third trimester, which he said could include mental distress.

Hansen added that the ballot measure would prohibit the state from implementing health and safety regulations on abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy.

"It's like the wild, wild west with this abortion amendment," Hansen said.

OB-GYN Michael Krause, of Mitchell, said doctors would not use mental distress as a justification to perform abortions in the third trimester of pregnancy.

"That is totally false," he said. "It is harder on that mother, it is not healthier."

Patti Giebink, a Chamberlain-based OB-GYN and anti-abortion activist, said many women who receive abortions go on to regret them.

"Elective abortion is not health care," she said. "Because pregnancy is not a disease."

Sheryl Johnson, the state Democratic Party's presumptive nominee for U.S. House, said "people are confused" by the language in the state's abortion ban. She said one of her daughters had a miscarriage a couple of weeks after Roe was overturned, but when she went to the hospital, "they allowed her to go

home without receiving care.”

During the middle of the night, Johnson said, her son-in-law found her daughter collapsed on the bathroom floor, soaking from blood loss, and called an ambulance to take her back to the hospital.

“So as a mother, I am very angry about that, and yes, it may be that they’re just misinformed, but we’re going to have that. We’re going to have that misinformation,” Johnson said.

Giebink told South Dakota Searchlight the current state law is clear, that aborting an unviable pregnancy is legal, and that stories like Johnson’s are “fear-mongering.”

Weiland said the state’s current law is pushing women to pursue unsafe abortions outside of a medical setting. Hansen said the proposed amendment will perpetuate unregulated abortions.

Weiland told South Dakota Searchlight the proposed amendment already has plenty of signatures and will be on the November ballot. The petition needs 35,017 signatures from registered South Dakota voters by May 7. Meanwhile, the Legislature passed a law this past winter allowing petition signers to withdraw their signatures after the fact, and anti-abortion activists are conducting a coordinated signature-withdrawal effort.

In 2021, 93% of abortions occurred during the first trimester – that is, at or before 13 weeks of gestation, according to the CDC. An additional 6% occurred between 14 and 20 weeks, and about 1% were performed at 21 weeks or more.

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.

Eleven penitentiary inmates charged for March disturbances

Corrections officials ‘never lost control,’ Attorney General Marty Jackley says

BY: JOHN HULT - APRIL 23, 2024 4:25 PM

Two correctional officers were injured, a metal cell block gate was damaged and a handful of fires were set during a two-day disturbance at the South Dakota State Penitentiary last month.

But the situation was not a “riot,” Attorney General Marty Jackley said Tuesday morning.

“Prison officials never lost control,” Jackley said. He held a press conference at the Law Enforcement Center in Sioux Falls to announce charges against 11 inmates stemming from the disturbance.

The shutdown of tablet-based communications weeks beforehand had primed inmates for violence, Jackley confirmed.

“The tablet issue, I think, instigated or began the disagreement between the guard and the inmate,” he said. “And of course ...that guard had nothing to do with whether or not there would be tablets or not.”

Gov. Kristi Noem issued a written statement following Jackley’s press conference praising the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) and Jackley for leading the inquiry into the incidents of March 27 and 28.

“The safety and security of our corrections officers depends on holding those responsible for the violence accountable for their actions,” Noem said. “The Department of Corrections has been and will continue to be fully cooperative with all aspects of this investigation and prosecution as these charges move forward.”

Veteran officer, aiding new DOC employees, attacked after chapel

The details of the situation are laid out in an affidavit filed to support criminal charges against the 11 residents of the penitentiary’s East Hall, the wing of the 143-year-old building where the trouble took place. An affidavit is a document of sworn testimony — in this case from Division of Criminal Investigation Special Agent Jon Basche — used to request arrest warrants.

Everything started after church on the afternoon of March 27.

The veteran officer who’d be injured most severely during the unrest had volunteered to handle the mandatory lock-up and count that followed the 2:30 p.m. chapel service for East Hall’s “harder tiers.” Two

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of the officers assigned to East Hall were there for their first day at work, he told Agent Basche, and the inmates on the upper two of the cell block's five tiers had a history of being difficult.

Before he got to the "harder tiers," however, he noticed a gaggle of inmates standing against the wall on the third tier. That was unusual, he told the DCI agent.

He approached 45-year-old Joshua David Vortherms, who was standing with the group, and said, "Hey, boss. Where do you live?"

"The inmate replied 'go f*ck yourself,'" the affidavit said.

The officer asked Vortherms to go to his cell, but he refused with another four-letter word and demanded the officer "give us our phones back," the document said.

Vortherms allegedly hurried off at that point, prompting the officer to follow "at a walking pace" in order to "not make a scene." When he approached Vortherms to place him in hand restraints and put him against a wall to do so, Vortherms allegedly hit the officer twice. The officer fell to the ground, and he told the DCI agent he didn't remember much after that.

Another officer, this one with five months on the job, intervened to pull the veteran officer out of a headlock chokehold. The newer officer used pressure points, strikes and, eventually, a chokehold to get Vortherms off of his coworker, sustaining injuries as Vortherms threw elbows. Another coworker also intervened, and Vortherms was placed in restraints and escorted away.

The first two officers went to a local hospital for an evaluation; the first told the DCI agent he'd sustained a concussion and muscle sprains in his neck.

The altercation was captured by several security cameras, but the cameras did not record audio, the affidavit said.

Vortherms, when interviewed by two DCI agents, denied being the aggressor. When asked about his first victim losing consciousness, the affidavit says, he said, "Well that's because he's a f*cking idiot."

Fires on day two

Vortherms is charged with the four most serious offenses. He's facing two counts of aggravated assault for the first altercation, and two additional counts of simple assault against a law enforcement officer for allegedly swinging elbows at the newer officer who intervened.

On the first day of the unrest, following the first altercation, inmates one floor below began to yank and tear at a mesh on two gates on either end of the tier. The video camera at one of the gates was damaged, but other camera angles showed an inmate securing the south gate with a bedsheet to keep officers out, the court documents say, and showed others later pushing a metal storage locker through it.

"These actions created a large opening in the gate," the affidavit says.

Another inmate yanked at the mesh on the north gate "when other inmates were kicking and pulling the gate."

"The metal mesh was eventually torn away from the frame allowing inmates to pass through the gate," the affidavit says.

Inmates eventually returned to their cells, the affidavit says, though it does not specify how DOC staff got them to do so.

The following evening, four inmates allegedly started fires in East Hall from their cells shortly after 8:30 p.m. Two inmates in adjacent cells had lit items on fire, including towels, a denim jacket and a bedsheet, and at one point one of them passed a burning bedsheet to the other.

Jackley declined to say how the inmates lit the fires.

The burning items were later tossed onto a wheelchair outside the cell, the affidavit said, which also ignited. Staff extinguished that fire, as well as others started in at least two other cells.

Unanswered questions

Neither the affidavit, nor any of the words about it spoken during Jackley's press conference, explained how the DOC was able to quash the unrest.

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Jackley could not say how many inmates altogether were involved in the unrest, saying only that the 11 men charged had committed crimes.

As for the others, Jackley said, "The involvement might not have been to the level of criminal activity, it may be to the level that the Department of Corrections handles it administratively."

It's also unclear if any criminal behavior sparked the March 8 tablet communication shutdown. Gov. Noem said on March 28 that the tablets were being used for purposes that were "not good and not legal."

Family members of inmates have expressed frustration over the communication shutdown, with many saying they feel that all 3,600 South Dakota inmates spread across multiple facilities, and their families, are being punished for the actions of a few.

Inmates are currently allowed five phone calls per day, from either their tablets or wall phones, with 20-minute time limits. The tablet-based messaging functions remain disabled.

Jackley said the tablet changes in early March were "an administrative decision" from the DOC, and confirmed that the DCI is not investigating masses of inmates for tablet-related criminal activity prior to March 27.

Jackley said the tablets figure into his office's investigation only as they pertain to the alleged assaults, not because of anything they may have been used for before the March 8 shutdown.

He has no position on how the devices ought to be managed, he said, only on what the inmates allegedly did in response to their loss of texting and calling privileges.

"If a cable TV is not offered or tablet is not offered or something of that nature, the appropriate remedy is not to beat up a guard," Jackley said. "There will be consequences for that."

An email sent to DOC spokesperson Michael Winder on Tuesday was met with an auto-reply saying he'd be out of the office until Wednesday. The department has released information only through news releases, memos and emails since the disturbances and has not made anyone available for an interview.

Inmates facing charges

Eleven inmates were charged Tuesday with alleged crimes related to two days of unrest at the South Dakota State Penitentiary in March. All are presumed innocent until proven guilty, and none have yet made an initial court appearance.

Joshua David Vortherms, 45, is charged with aggravated assault against a corrections employee and simple assault against a corrections employee. The ag assault charges carry up to 25 years in prison; the simple assault charges carry up to two.

Six inmates were charged with intentional damage to property valued between \$2,500 and \$5,000, a felony punishable by up to five years in prison:

Lee David Bernard, 32.

Taylor Dallas Cook, 22.

Markos James Fernandez, 19.

John Wesley Lovejoy, 25.

Connor David Shockey, 20.

Chaske Michael White, 50.

Four inmates are charged with reckless burning, which carries up to 10 years in prison, and burning within a structure where a person is lawfully confined, which carries up to two.

James Ewing, 41.

Curtis Carpenter, 39.

Michael Hewitt, 41.

Mahlon Kirkie, 35.

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.

Reveal planned of contents found in South Dakota monument

BY: PAUL HAMMEL - APRIL 23, 2024 6:30 AM

LINCOLN, Nebraska — We'll soon know whether some documents buried inside a concrete monument erected by poet/author John Neihardt 100 years ago survived three floods and decades of harsh winters on the plains of northwest South Dakota.

On April 27, the contents of a time capsule embedded inside the monument will be revealed as part of the annual spring conference of the John Neihardt Foundation at Wayne State College in Nebraska.

1½-ton monument moved to Nebraska

The conference will focus on the 1923 construction of the homemade monument that honors the heroism of mountain man Hugh Glass, as well as the twists and turns that led to moving the 1½-ton concrete marker from near Lemmon, South Dakota, to the Neihardt State Historic Site in Bancroft, Nebraska.

Members of the Neihardt family, who retrieved the monument in October, aren't discounting the possibility that Mother Nature might have gotten the best of what was inside the time capsule. The poet/author, the poet laureate in perpetuity of Nebraska, said he left an "original manuscript" inside as well as other documents.

Coralie Hughes, a granddaughter of Neihardt, was mum during a recent email exchange about whether a valuable literary work was found inside, or whether — like the live TV opening of gangster Al Capone's vault in 1986 — nothing of value was found.

Story will be 'revealed'

"The story of Hugh Glass and Neihardt's Hugh Glass monument move to Nebraska will be revealed in its entirety," said Hughes in an email.

The monument was erected on private land in the area where Glass was reportedly mauled by a grizzly bear in 1823. Later, it had to be moved to accommodate the construction of the federal Shadehill Reservoir.

It was relocated a second time to move it away from an eroding bank of the lake, and then was flooded three times in its new location, according to Joseph Weixelman, a now-retired Wayne State College professor who took up Neihardt's challenge to revisit the Glass monument site in 2023.

He had given 50-50 odds that something survived a century inside the concrete obelisk that was labeled an "altar to courage."

Glass' amazing story of survival became the subject of a movie, "The Revenant," starring Leonardo DiCaprio. But long before that, in 1915, Neihardt wrote an epic poem, "The Song of Hugh Glass," as part of "A Cycle of the West," a collection of five poems about the settlement of the frontier.

Glass, in 1823, was reportedly mauled by a grizzly bear and left for dead by the rest of his party of trappers. But instead of dying on the vast frontier, Glass crawled and limped 200 miles to the nearest settlement, Fort Kiowa, on the Missouri River, vowing to avenge his abandonment.

In 1923, Neihardt drove the primitive dirt roads to the confluence of two branches of the Grand River and, with the help of a local rancher and the head of the South Dakota State Historical Society, built a stubby, concrete monument to Glass.

A challenge to return

Inside was buried a time capsule. In a 1923 article in the student newspaper of the Nebraska Normal College, Neihardt challenged students to revisit the monument in 2023, open the time capsule, recite portions of "The Song of Hugh Glass" and celebrate as mountain men might have.

Last summer, Weixelman and a handful of students took up the challenge, but uncertainty over who owned the monument and who could grant permission to crack into it prevented the Wayne State group from unlocking the mystery inside.

That led the Neihardt family to claim ownership. The Bureau of Reclamation approved their claim and allowed the family to remove the monument to the state historic site in Nebraska, where they opened it up in October.

The family opted to keep the contents secret until the 43rd annual spring conference of the Neihardt Foundation, being held this year at Wayne State. That is where Neihardt — a member of the Nebraska

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Hall of Fame and best known for "Black Elk Speaks" — graduated at age 15.

The conference, entitled "Monuments in Word, Deed and Stone," will focus on the effort to fulfill Neihardt's wishes to revisit the monument and open the time capsule.

Weixelman will speak, as will Lisa Nelson, a director of service learning at Wayne State, who were key in discovering the "challenge" to revisit the almost-forgotten monument.

A documentary of the quest, produced by Neihardt's great-granddaughter Alexis Petri, also will be shown at the event, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Ramsey Theater on the Wayne State Campus.

Weixelman, who retired shortly after the odyssey to South Dakota, said a new time capsule was left behind at the Grand River Museum in Lemmon. Among the items left inside were coins from 2022, a thumb drive holding several documents, a copy of the Wayne Stater student newspaper and a Godzilla toy.

"We did our best to put in things that will entertain people in 100 years," Weixelman said.

He said he plans to challenge Wayne State students to return again in 2123 to open the waterproof time capsule and again commemorate the story of Hugh Glass.

"I don't know what people will be thinking 99 years from now," he said. "Will there even be museums?"

Tickets for the spring conference are \$25 each, or \$15 for students and members of the Neihardt Foundation. They can be purchased via the website neihardtcenter.org/events

Paul Hammel is the senior reporter for the Nebraska Examiner. He has covered the Nebraska Legislature and Nebraska state government for decades. He started his career reporting for the Omaha Sun and was named editor of the Papillion Times in 1982. He later worked as a sports enterprise reporter at the Lincoln Journal-Star. He joined the Omaha World-Herald in 1990, working as a legislative reporter, then roving state reporter and finally Lincoln bureau chief. Paul has won awards from organizations including Great Plains Journalism, the Associated Press and Suburban Newspapers of America. A native of Ralston, Nebraska, he is vice president of the John G. Neihardt Foundation and secretary of the Nebraska Hop Growers.

NY judge spars with Trump lawyers over gag order in criminal trial

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - APRIL 23, 2024 4:50 PM

The judge overseeing Donald Trump's criminal case in New York appeared to strongly disagree Tuesday with the former president's lawyers' explanation for why he should be considered in compliance with a gag order in the case.

In a Tuesday morning hearing to determine whether to fine Trump for violating the order, Judge Juan Merchan warned Trump's legal team it was "losing all credibility with the court" for failing to provide any backing for its argument.

Trump has routinely posted on his social media platform, Truth Social, to complain about the case, despite a gag order that prohibits him from making public statements about potential witnesses.

Trump faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records for reimbursing his attorney and personal fixer at the time, Michael Cohen, for a \$130,000 payment to adult film star Stormy Daniels. It is the first criminal trial against a former U.S. president.

Trump has posted on social media to criticize Cohen and Daniels, as well as reposting articles and video clips that disparage the case entirely.

Trump attorney Todd Blanche argued Tuesday that many of Trump's posts were sharing others' content, including a clip from the Fox News host Jesse Watters that complained of supposed unfair treatment toward Trump.

Merchan asked Blanche why sharing content should be considered different from Trump using his own words to violate the order. The judge asked Blanche if there was case law to back up his argument.

Blanche said he had none and called it "common sense," according to reporters in the courtroom.

Trump was trying hard to comply with the gag order, Blanche said.

"You're losing all credibility with the court," Merchan responded, according to reports.

Prosecutors have asked Merchan to fine Trump \$1,000 for each violation of the gag order and to warn him that future violations could lead to jail time.

Merchan did not rule on the issue Tuesday.

After the trial wrapped for the day, Trump re-aired his complaints about the order.

"I think it's a disgrace, it's totally unconstitutional," Trump told reporters leaving the courtroom. "I'm not allowed to defend myself and yet, other people are allowed to say whatever they want about me. Very, very unfair."

Second day of testimony

The jury of 12 New Yorkers was absent for the arguments on the gag order but arrived to hear a second day of testimony from David Pecker, the former publisher of the tabloid National Enquirer.

Pecker had for years protected Trump from damaging stories, including those involving extramarital affairs, by buying the rights to such stories and not publishing them. The exercise is known as catch and kill. It is made possible by National Enquirer's practice, unlike mainstream news outlets, of paying sources for the rights to stories.

Prosecutors sought to establish Trump and Pecker had a deal that was aimed at protecting Trump's reputation into the 2016 election.

That would bolster prosecutors' argument that Trump paid Stormy Daniels, an adult film star who says she had an affair with Trump, in return for her silence in the closing weeks of the election.

Pecker testified Tuesday that he met with Trump and Cohen in 2015 and the three came to an "agreement among friends" that Pecker would seek to catch and kill potentially damaging stories to Trump.

He did so twice, he said.

He paid \$30,000 to a doorman at Trump Tower who shared a rumor that Trump fathered a child out of wedlock.

And he paid \$150,000 to a former Playboy model who said she had a long-term affair with Trump, he said, according to reports.

The tabloid also completely fabricated a story meant to help Trump, Pecker testified.

He said a 2016 story linking the father of Trump's then-rival for the GOP nomination, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy was "created" by manipulating unrelated photographs, NBC News reported.

Pecker said he took direction from Cohen on which primary opponents to target with negative stories.

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

U.S. Senate sends foreign aid bill to Biden as McConnell chides GOP 'isolationist movement'

Thune and Rounds vote yes; legislation includes requirement for Chinese company to sell TikTok

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - APRIL 23, 2024 2:40 PM

WASHINGTON — An additional \$95 billion in military and humanitarian assistance for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan cleared the U.S. Senate after a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers voted Tuesday to send it to President Joe Biden.

The 79-18 vote wrapped up months of debate within Congress about whether the United States should approve the aid or if it should turn inward amid rising global conflict. South Dakota Republicans John Thune and Mike Rounds both voted yes.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said during a press conference before the vote that he believed the strong support showed the GOP had "turned the corner on the isolationist movement."

McConnell also rebuked former Fox News TV personality Tucker Carlson for repeatedly criticizing Republicans for approving military aid to Ukraine.

"I think the demonization of Ukraine began by Tucker Carlson, who in my opinion ended up where he

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should have been all along, which is interviewing Vladimir Putin," McConnell said. "He had an enormous audience, which convinced a lot of rank-and-file Republicans that maybe this is a mistake."

The legislation, which includes a national security bill aimed at forcing the sale of the popular social media app TikTok by its Chinese parent company ByteDance, passed the U.S. House on Saturday in a series of four broadly bipartisan votes.

The legislation was then wrapped together and sent to the Senate as one package to speed up its approval in that chamber.

Biden plans to sign the measure as soon as it reaches his desk.

Biden spoke with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday "to underscore the United States' lasting commitment to supporting Ukraine as it defends its freedom against Russian aggression," according to a readout of the call from the White House.

"President Biden shared that his administration will quickly provide significant new security assistance packages to meet Ukraine's urgent battlefield and air defense needs as soon as the Senate passes the national security supplemental and he signs it into law," according to the readout.

McConnell sees 'a test on behalf of the entire nation'

McConnell gave a lengthy floor speech Tuesday before the vote defending the package as a way to bolster America's global leadership and support American jobs.

"Today, the Senate sits for a test on behalf of the entire nation — it's a test of American resolve, our readiness and our willingness to lead," McConnell said. "And the stakes of failure are abundantly clear."

The Kentucky Republican rebuked GOP lawmakers who have sought to delay or block the assistance, saying he would "not mince words when members of my own party take the responsibilities of American leadership lightly."

"So much of the hesitation and short-sightedness that has delayed this moment is premised on sheer fiction," McConnell said.

Investments in defense spending by the United States, he said, have led allies in Europe "to make historic investments of their own in collective defense," which in some countries "is outpacing our own."

American allies in Europe and the Indo-Pacific have collectively purchased more than \$1 billion in weapons produced in American factories by American workers, McConnell said.

"Do our colleagues really think that will continue if America decides that global leadership is too heavy a burden?" McConnell asked.

Humanitarian help

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Patty Murray, a Washington state Democrat, said securing the humanitarian aid in the package was a "red line" for her.

"At every stage of these negotiations, I made clear: Congress will not advance a supplemental that fails civilians," Murray said. "I will not let us turn our back on women and children who are suffering, and who are often hit hardest by the fallout of chaos and conflict."

That humanitarian assistance, Murray said, would go toward "civilians in Ukraine, Sudan, and Gaza, including kids who are caught in the crossfire, who are in desperate need of food and water and medical care."

Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins, ranking member on the Appropriations Committee, said the package would help bolster America's national security at a crucial time in world history.

"The threats that the U.S. faces from an aggressive Iran and its proxies, an imperialistic Russia and a hegemonic China are interconnected," Collins said. "How we respond to one affects how the other will operate."

Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders criticized leaders for not holding separate votes on the four bills in the package, as the House did, and urged them to hold votes on amendments that he said would improve the measure. Leaders ultimately did not hold amendment votes.

Sanders said he supports humanitarian aid, weapons for Ukraine and giving Israel more funding for

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defensive weapons, like the "Iron Dome to protect Israeli civilians from missile and drone attacks."

But Sanders rejected the legislation providing "\$8.9 billion in unfettered offensive military aid to the extremist Israeli government" and he sharply criticized Israel's leaders for limiting aid to civilians in Gaza.

"We are now in the absurd situation where Israel is using U.S. military assistance to block the delivery of U.S. humanitarian aid to Palestinians," Sanders said. "If that is not crazy, I don't know what is. But it's also a clear violation of U.S. law."

How funds are allocated

The emergency spending for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan appropriates the money to the U.S. departments of Defense, Energy and State. They would then use that funding to bolster military and humanitarian assistance to those three entities as well as other U.S. allies.

The \$95 billion in funding would be divided up with \$60.84 billion for Ukraine; \$26.38 billion for Israel, though \$9.15 billion of that total is for humanitarian assistance for Gaza and other "vulnerable populations;" and \$8.12 billion for Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific.

That spending is extremely similar to a package the Senate passed in February, but it was stalled in the House for months as Speaker Mike Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, plotted a path forward.

The fourth bill in the package, dubbed the 21st Century Peace through Strength Act, is a 184-page measure that bundles together the TikTok divestment bill; anti-fentanyl legislation; and sanctions against China, Iran and Russia.

That bill also includes the Rebuilding Economic Prosperity and Opportunity for Ukrainians Act, or Repo Act, that would allow the United States "to confiscate Russian sovereign assets that have been frozen in the United States and transfer them to assist in Ukraine's reconstruction efforts," according to a summary.

Lawsuit expected from ByteDance

The TikTok bill would require Chinese owner ByteDance to sell the social media company within one year of the bill becoming law. It's an attempt by lawmakers to reduce what some see as a national security risk to Americans' data privacy.

ByteDance is expected to file a lawsuit challenging the law once it's enacted.

Former President Donald Trump, now the Republican Party's presumptive presidential nominee, used a possible ban of the app to rebuke Biden over the weekend.

Trump, however, left out that he attempted something similar when he was in the Oval Office.

"Just so everyone knows, especially the young people, Crooked Joe Biden is responsible for banning TikTok," Trump wrote.

"Young people, and lots of others, must remember this on November 5th, ELECTION DAY, when they vote!" Trump added.

Trump attempted to ban TikTok in August 2020 through an executive order but was blocked by the courts.

"TikTok automatically captures vast swaths of information from its users, including Internet and other network activity information such as location data and browsing and search histories," according to Trump's executive order.

"This data collection threatens to allow the Chinese Communist Party access to Americans' personal and proprietary information — potentially allowing China to track the locations of Federal employees and contractors, build dossiers of personal information for blackmail, and conduct corporate espionage."

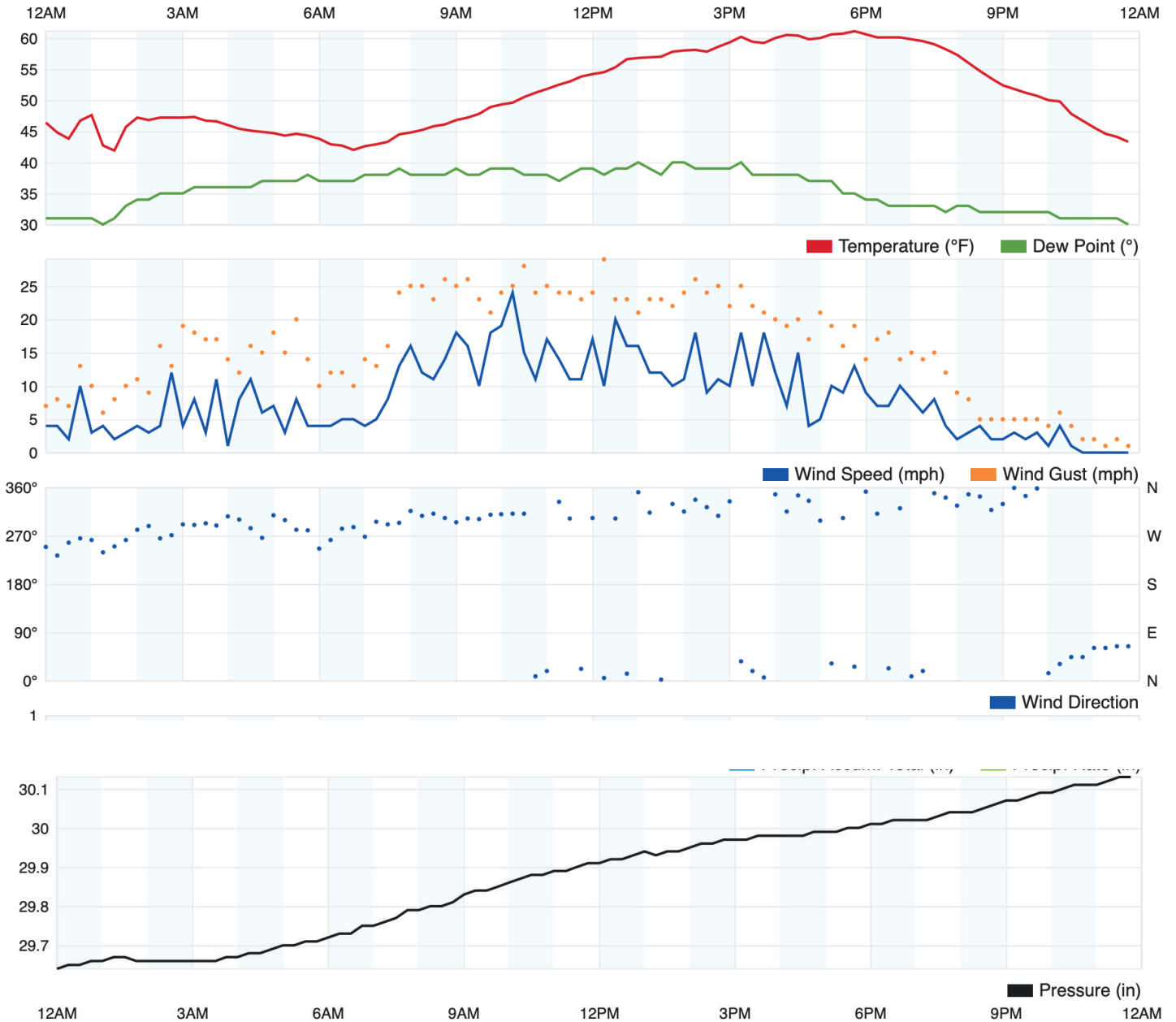
The bill forcing TikTok's parent company to sell the app or face a ban in the U.S. was added to the emergency spending package by House Republicans. It passed that chamber over the weekend on a 360-58 vote with 186 of the 'yes' votes coming from GOP lawmakers.

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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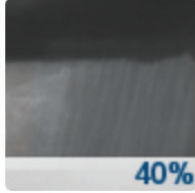
Today



Increasing Clouds

High: 69 °F

Tonight



Chance Showers and Breezy

Low: 48 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny and Breezy then Chance Showers and Windy

High: 71 °F

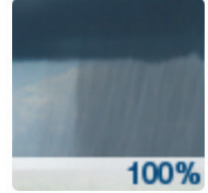
Thursday Night



Showers and Windy

Low: 49 °F

Friday



Showers

High: 58 °F



Winds Increasing Thursday With Rain Moving In Through Weekend

April 24, 2024
4:03 AM

Today

- Increasing clouds
- Highs: 65 to 73°

Tonight

- 15-30% chance of rain
- Lows: 44 to 49°

Thursday

- Increasing clouds & windy
 - Gusts 35 to 45 mph out of southeast
- 20-45% chance of rain, increasing Thursday evening
 - Thunderstorms possible
- Highs: 66 to 72°

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

	4/25 Thu								4/26 Fri				Maximum
	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	
Aberdeen	26	30	35	43	43	44	43	41	39	33	28	25	44
Britton	22	30	37	41	44	44	41	43	43	38	35	33	44
Brookings	21	24	30	31	35	36	36	39	38	36	35	36	39
Chamberlain	29	26	26	30	33	33	35	36	36	31	28	26	36
Clark	30	31	38	40	41	43	41	43	43	43	40	38	43
Eagle Butte	38	30	26	30	37	43	43	39	33	24	20	23	43
Ellendale	25	29	30	40	43	45	40	37	37	31	26	24	45
Eureka	35	36	35	35	40	41	40	39	37	31	28	26	41
Gettysburg	37	35	35	35	39	43	41	39	36	31	28	26	43
Huron	29	29	35	36	36	39	39	39	38	38	35	33	39
Kennebec	38	30	29	32	39	39	39	36	32	29	25	24	39
McIntosh	41	37	30	31	41	46	46	43	37	28	21	22	46
Milbank	15	18	25	28	33	33	35	38	37	33	35	33	38
Miller	33	32	35	38	40	40	38	38	35	32	29	28	40
Mobridge	36	32	30	30	38	40	40	38	32	25	22	21	40
Murdo	37	28	26	32	37	43	43	39	31	23	22	23	43
Pierre	38	30	26	30	36	41	41	40	32	26	23	20	41
Redfield	30	31	37	43	41	45	45	41	39	36	31	28	45
Sisseton	15	21	25	33	36	38	37	41	41	36	36	35	41
Watertown	21	26	35	35	37	38	37	38	37	36	36	35	38
Webster	26	31	38	43	45	47	45	47	45	40	41	40	47
Wheaton	20	21	28	30	35	36	32	36	36	35	35	36	36



Winds will increase Thursday out of the south/southeast, with gusts 35 to 45 mph possible, strongest east of the Missouri River.

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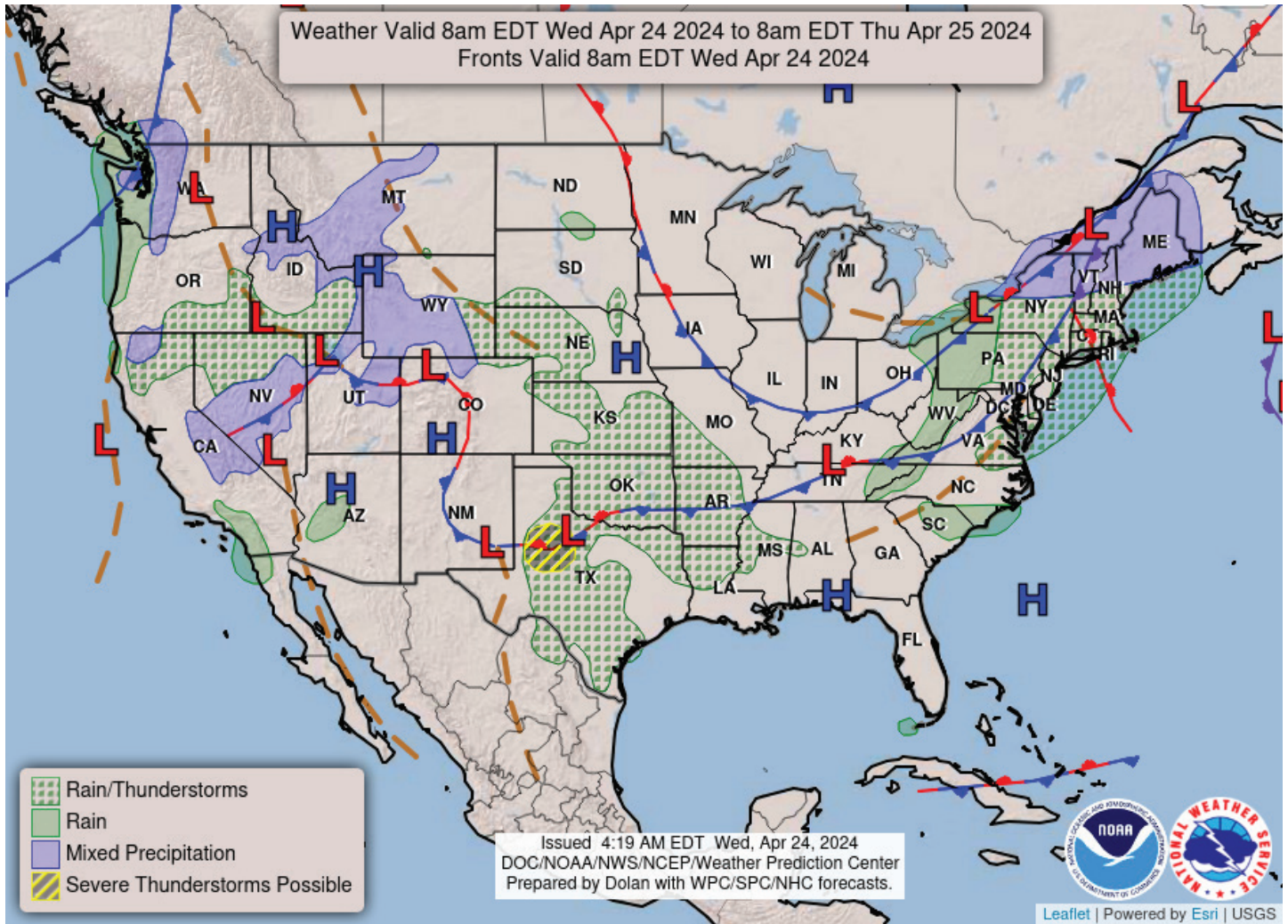
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 61 °F at 4:12 PM
Low Temp: 42 °F at 1:24 AM
Wind: 29 mph at 12:08 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 03 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 92 in 1962
Record Low: 17 in 1956
Average High: 62
Average Low: 35
Average Precip in April.: 1.36
Precip to date in April: 2.34
Average Precip to date: 3.42
Precip Year to Date: 3.29
Sunset Tonight: 8:32:13 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:26:57 am



Today in Weather History

April 24, 1948: A significant F2 tornado moved northeast from South of Castlewood to near Goodwin. Barns were destroyed on two farms. Also on this day, two other tornadoes were observed in South Dakota. One moved from Turner County on into Minnehaha County, injuring two people. The other touchdown 3 miles Southeast of Sioux Falls, destroying barns and other buildings on the west edge of Brandon.

1880: Several tornadoes affected parts of central and southwest Illinois. One tornado of F4 intensity touched down near Jerseyville and killed one person along the 18-mile path. Another F4 tornado passed just north of Carlinville and lifted near Atwater, destroying 50 buildings. Six people died in Christian County by an F5 tornado, which tracked from 9 miles southwest of Taylorville to near Sharpsburg.

1899 - Two women and one son lived to tell the story of being picked up by a tornado and carried more than a fourth of a mile, flying far above the church steeples, before being gently set down again. The young boy and one of the ladies said they had the pleasure of flying alongside a horse. The horse "kicked and struggled" as it flew high above, and was set down unharmed about a mile away. (The Weather Channel)

1908: Severe thunderstorms spawned eighteen tornadoes over across the Central Gulf Coast States claiming the lives of 310 persons. The state of Mississippi was hardest hit. A tornado near Hattiesburg, Mississippi killed 143 persons and caused more than half a million dollars damage. Four violent tornadoes accounted for 279 of the 310 deaths. The deadliest of the four tornadoes swelled to a width of 2.5 miles as it passed near Amite, Louisiana. The tornado also leveled most of Purvis Mississippi.

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Up to seven inches of rain drenched Virginia in three days. Morgantown WV received 4.27 inches in 24 hours, and flooding was reported in south central West Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure produced high winds and severe thunderstorms in the Southern Plains Region. Strong thunderstorm winds destroyed two mobile homes at Whitt TX injuring two persons. Winds associated with the low pressure system gusted to 70 mph at Guadalupe Pass TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Russell KS was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 101 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from Colorado to Wisconsin. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported at Sargeant NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern High Plains to north central Kansas. Thunderstorms spawned ten tornadoes, including one which injured four persons and caused 1.5 million dollars damage at Shattuck OK. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Wheeler TX, wind gusts to 85 mph southwest of Arnett OK, and 13.45 inches of rain near Caldwell TX, which resulted in the worst flooding in recent memory for that area. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: The temperature soared to a maximum of 70 degrees in Juneau, Alaska. This is the earliest record of 70-degree reading to occur in Juneau.

2010: April Tornado Outbreak- During a significant severe weather outbreak across the South on April 22-25, 142 tornadoes raked the region, including 77 on April 24 alone. Ten died from the long-track tornado that swept across Mississippi on April 24. A long-lived twister left a trail of destruction extending over 149 miles from Louisiana through Mississippi, resulting in 10 deaths and 75 injuries. This EF4 storm, which grew to a width of 1.75 miles, sported the fourth longest track in Mississippi history. This storm destroyed part of Yazoo City, Mississippi. The Swiss Reinsurance Company estimated insured damages with this outbreak at \$1.58 billion.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

SOWING SEEDS OF BEAUTY

Captain James Cook was one of the most famous British navigators. He sailed around the world many times. On each of his journeys he would take seeds of flowers that came from lovely English gardens.

Whenever his ship reached a port, he would disembark with his crew. While the crew enjoyed the city, he would take some of the seeds he brought with him and plant them in a garden near the port. Everywhere he went, he left a reminder of his visit by planting seeds that brought beauty to the lives of the people who lived in that city.

There is nothing more important for Christians to do than to share God's love and beauty. Wherever He leads us in our journey through life, He will give us many opportunities to "plant" seeds of His love, salvation and hope.

Paul reminds us that we Christians must be clothed in God's love. His love adds His beauty to our actions and makes whatever we do attractive to others. No matter what other gifts God may give us, we can all share His love in every word and deed.

Prayer: Lord, help us to always be mindful of the great love You have for us and as we do, be willing to go to any extreme to give that Love to others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. 1 Corinthians 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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.23.24

11 17 33 39 43 14

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$228,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 43
Mins 40 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.22.24

19 28 33 38 52 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$3,100,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 58 Mins 40
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.23.24

11 31 32 36 44 8

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 13 Mins 40
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.20.24

3 4 8 25 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$66,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 13 Mins 40
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.22.24

11 15 25 32 39 23

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 42 Mins 40
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.22.24

12 16 33 39 52 1

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$129,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 42 Mins 40
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Federal money eyed for Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in North Dakota

By JACK DURA Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Supporters of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in North Dakota are cheering new federal legislation to help build the library and to showcase artifacts of the 26th president, who as a young man hunted and ranched in the state during its territorial days.

Last week, North Dakota's three-member, all-Republican congressional delegation announced the bill to "authorize funding for the Library's continued construction and go towards ensuring the preservation of President Roosevelt's history and legacy." The bill's Interior Department grant is for \$50 million of one-time money, most of which "will go into creating the museum spaces in our facility," said Matt Briney, the library's chief communications officer.

The bill also enables and directs federal agencies to work with the library's organizers to feature Roosevelt items in the library's museum, he said.

In 2019, North Dakota's Republican-controlled Legislature approved a \$50 million operations endowment for the library, available after its organizers raised \$100 million in private donations for construction. That goal was met in late 2020.

The project has raised \$240 million in private donations, and complete construction costs \$333 million, Briney said. Covering the library's construction costs has not been an issue, he said.

Construction is underway near Medora, in the rugged, colorful Badlands where the young future president briefly roamed in the 1880s. Organizers are planning for a grand opening of the library on July 4, 2026, the United States' 250th anniversary of independence.

In a statement, the congressional delegation hailed the bill as "a wise investment in our nation's historical preservation." In the same press release, the bill drew praise from descendant Theodore "Ted" Roosevelt V and North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, who championed the library to the 2019 Legislature.

The bill would require a two-thirds match from state funds or non-federal sources, and it would prohibit the federal money from going toward the library's maintenance or operations.

Planned exhibits include a chronological view of Roosevelt's life, such as galleries of his early life, time in the Badlands, travels to the Amazon and his presidency, Briney said.

The 2023 Legislature approved a \$70 million line of credit for the library through the state-owned Bank of North Dakota, which Briney said library planners have not tapped.

That line of credit drew scrutiny last year from Republican state Rep. Jim Kasper, who called it a "\$70 million slush fund" that could leave taxpayers on the hook. Library CEO Ed O'Keefe has said the line of credit was intended as backstop to help ensure construction could begin.

In an interview, Kasper called the library, which he supported, "a beautiful thing for the state of North Dakota ... but I want private funds raised to pay for it."

"If there's going to be taxpayers' dollars that are used, then I'd rather have federal dollars used than taxpayers of North Dakota dollars," Kasper said. "Obviously there's still taxpayer dollars. But I really don't support any taxpayer dollars being used for the project, whether they're state or federal."

Other presidential libraries have been built with private donations or non-federal money. Some have received funds for construction and development from state and local governments and universities, then have been transferred to the federal government and run by the National Archives and Records Administration through that agency's budget, according to the National Archives' website.

The Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library will always be privately held, said Briney, who called the legislation's money "not necessarily uncommon."

11 inmates face charges related to an uprising at South Dakota prison

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Eleven inmates at the South Dakota State Penitentiary are facing charges in connection with disturbances last month at the prison in Sioux Falls, Attorney General Marty Jackley announced Tuesday.

"These were dangerous acts that injured two state correctional officers and caused significant damage to prison property," Jackley said in a news release. "Inmates found responsible will be held accountable for their actions."

Joshua David Vortherms, 45, faces the most serious charges — two counts each of aggravated and simple assault against a Department of Corrections employee. Court records do not list an attorney for Vortherms, who has been incarcerated since 2019 and is serving a 15-year term for vehicular homicide.

Four inmates are charged for allegedly starting fires during the disturbances. Six inmates face property damage counts.

Gov. Kristi Noem said last month that the disturbances happened after tablet computers were removed from inmates because they were being used for illegal purposes.

Former Green Bay player Kayla Karius leaves South Dakota to return to her alma mater as coach

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — Former Green Bay player Kayla Karius is returning to her alma mater to take over for Kevin Borseth, who retired two weeks ago.

Karius played for Green Bay from 2007-11, when she was known as Kayla Tetschlag. She coached South Dakota the last two seasons and posted a 37-29 record, including a 23-13 mark this year that included a WNIT appearance.

She will be introduced at a Thursday news conference.

"This is the premier women's basketball program in our state and is located in one of the most innovative and booming communities," Karius said Tuesday in a statement released by the school. "I look forward to carrying on a strong tradition of championships on the court and excellence in the classroom."

During her playing career, Karius helped Green Bay earn three NCAA Tournament berths and reach the Sweet 16 her senior season. She was named the 2011 Horizon League player of the year.

Before becoming South Dakota's head coach in 2022, Karius had stints as an assistant at South Dakota (2016-18), Wisconsin (2018-21) and Drake (2021-22).

"Kayla epitomized the Green Bay way as a player, and she is a rising star as a coach," athletic director Josh Moon said in a statement. "She will take this program to even greater heights. It's so special for our team to be able to be led by someone who has been in their shoes and believes to her core of the power of Green Bay basketball."

Karius takes over a Green Bay program that went 27-7 and reached the NCAA Tournament this season in Borseth's final year. Borseth went 821-316 in a 37-year head coaching career that included two stints at Green Bay as well as stops at Michigan Tech and Michigan. He ranks 16th among all Division I women's basketball coaches in total wins.

Borseth went 509-146 at Green Bay from 1998-2007 and 2012-24. Green Bay made 13 NCAA Tournament appearances under him.

Biden's long fight with Republicans over Ukraine aid has ended, but significant damage has been done

By AAMER MADHANI and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's long, painful battle with Republicans in Congress to secure urgently needed assistance for Ukraine will end Wednesday when he signs into law a \$95 billion war aid

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measure that also includes support for Israel, Taiwan and other allies.

But significant damage has been done to the Biden administration's effort to help Ukraine repel Russia's brutal invasion during the funding impasse that dates back to August, when the Democratic president made his first emergency spending request for Ukraine aid. Even with a burst of new weapons and ammunition, it is unlikely Ukraine will immediately recover after months of setbacks.

Biden is expected to quickly approve the transfer of an initial aid package of about \$1 billion in military assistance — the first tranche from about \$61 billion allocated for Ukraine, according to U.S. officials. It is expected to include air defense capabilities, artillery rounds, armored vehicles and other weapons to shore up Ukrainian forces who have seen morale sink as Russian President Vladimir Putin has racked up win after win.

In a statement after the Senate passed the package Tuesday night, Biden said he would sign it as soon as he receives it on Wednesday.

"This critical legislation will make our nation and world more secure as we support our friends who are defending themselves against terrorists like Hamas and tyrants like Putin," Biden said.

But longer term, it remains uncertain if Ukraine — after months of losses in Eastern Ukraine and sustaining massive damage to its infrastructure — can make enough progress to sustain American political support before burning through the latest influx of money.

"It's not going in the Ukrainians' favor in the Donbas, certainly not elsewhere in the country," said White House national security spokesman John Kirby, referring to the eastern industrial heartland where Ukraine has suffered setbacks. "Mr. Putin thinks he can play for time. So we've got to try to make up some of that time."

Russia now appears focused on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city. Russian forces have exploited air defense shortages in the city, pummeling the region's energy infrastructure, and looking to shape conditions for a potential summer offensive to seize the city.

House Speaker Mike Johnson delayed a vote on the supplemental aid package for months as members of his party's far right wing, including Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and Thomas Massie of Kentucky, threatened to move to oust him if he allowed a vote to send more assistance to Ukraine. Those threats persist.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell suggested his fellow Republicans' holding up the funding could have a lasting impact on Ukraine's hopes of winning the war.

"Make no mistake: Delay in providing Ukraine the weapons to defend itself has strained the prospects of defeating Russian aggression," McConnell said Tuesday. "Dithering and hesitation have compounded the challenges we face."

Former President Donald Trump, the presumptive 2024 presidential GOP nominee, has complained that European allies have not done enough for Ukraine. While he stopped short of endorsing the supplemental funding package, his tone has shifted in recent days, acknowledging that Ukraine's survival is important to the United States.

Indeed, many European leaders have long been nervous that a second Trump presidency would mean decreased U.S. support for Ukraine and for the NATO military alliance. The European anxiety was heightened in February when Trump in a campaign speech warned NATO allies that he "would encourage" Russia "to do whatever the hell they want" to countries that don't meet defense spending goals if he returns to the White House.

It was a key moment in the debate over Ukraine spending. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg quickly called out Trump for putting "American and European soldiers at increased risk." Biden days later called Trump's comments "dangerous" and "un-American" and accused Trump of playing into Putin's hands.

But in reality, the White House maneuvering to win additional funding for Ukraine started months earlier. Biden, the day after returning from a whirlwind trip to Tel Aviv following Hamas militants' stunning Oct. 7 attack on Israel, used a rare prime time address to make his pitch for the supplemental funding.

At the time, the House was in chaos because the Republican majority had been unable to select a speaker

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to replace Rep. Kevin McCarthy, who had been ousted more than two weeks earlier. McCarthy's reckoning with the GOP's far right came after he agreed earlier in the year to allow federal spending levels that many in his right flank disagreed with and wanted undone.

Far-right Republicans have also adamantly opposed sending more money for Ukraine, with the war appearing to have no end in sight. Biden in August requested more than \$20 billion to keep aid flowing into Ukraine, but the money was stripped out of a must-pass spending bill even as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy traveled to Washington to make a personal plea for continued U.S. backing.

By late October, Republicans finally settled on Johnson, a low-profile Louisiana Republican whose thinking on Ukraine was opaque, to serve as the next speaker. Biden during his congratulatory call with Johnson urged him to quickly pass Ukraine aid and began a months-long, largely behind-the-scenes effort to bring the matter to a vote.

In private conversations with Johnson, Biden and White House officials leaned into the stakes for Europe if Ukraine were to fall to Russia. Five days after Johnson was formally elected speaker, national security adviser Jake Sullivan outlined to him the administration's strategy on Ukraine and assured him that accountability measures were in place in Ukraine to track where the aid was going — an effort to address a common complaint from conservatives.

On explicit orders from Biden himself, White House officials also avoided directly attacking Johnson over the stalled aid — a directive the president repeatedly instilled in his senior staff.

For his part, Johnson came off to White House officials as direct and an honest actor throughout the negotiations, according to a senior administration official. Biden had success finding common ground with Republicans earlier in his term to win the passage of a \$1 trillion infrastructure deal, legislation to boost the U.S. semiconductor industry, and an expansion of federal health care services for veterans exposed to toxic smoke from burn pits. And he knew there was plenty of Republican support for further Ukraine funding.

At frustrating moments during the negotiations, Biden urged his aides to "just keep talking, keep working," according to the official, who requested anonymity to discuss internal discussions.

So they did. In a daily meeting convened by White House chief of staff Jeff Zients, the president's top aides — seated around a big oval table in Zients' office — would brainstorm possible ways to better make the case about Ukraine's dire situation in the absence of aid.

Steve Ricchetti, counselor to the president, and legislative affairs director Shuwanza Goff were in regular contact with Johnson. Goff and Johnson's senior staff also spoke frequently as a deal came into focus.

The White House also sought to accommodate Johnson and his various asks. For instance, administration officials at the speaker's request briefed Reps. Chip Roy, R-Texas, and Ralph Norman, R-S.C. — two conservatives who were persistent antagonists of Johnson.

All the while, senior Biden officials frequently updated McConnell as well as key Republican committee leaders, including Reps. Michael McCaul and Mike Turner.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Biden's instincts to resist pressuring Johnson proved correct.

"Joe Biden has a very good sense of when to heavily intervene and when to try to shape things," Schumer said.

In public, the administration deployed a strategy of downgrading intelligence that demonstrated Russia's efforts to tighten its ties with U.S. adversaries China, North Korea and Iran to fortify Moscow's defense industrial complex and get around U.S. and European sanctions.

For example, U.S. officials this month laid out intelligence findings that showed China has surged sales to Russia of machine tools, microelectronics and other technology that Moscow in turn is using to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other weaponry. Earlier, the White House publicized intelligence that Russia has acquired ballistic missiles from North Korea and has acquired attack drones from Iran.

The \$61 billion can help triage Ukrainian forces, but Kyiv will need much more for a fight that could last years, military experts say.

Realistic goals for the months ahead for Ukraine — and its allies — include avoiding the loss of major

cities, slowing Russia's momentum and getting additional weaponry to Kyiv that could help them go on the offensive in 2025, said Bradley Bowman, a defense strategy and policy analyst at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in Washington.

"In our microwave culture, we tend to want immediate results," Bowman said. "And sometimes things are just hard and you can't get immediate results. I think Ukrainian success is not guaranteed, but Russian success is if we stop supporting Ukraine."

The Latest | Germany will resume working with UN relief agency for Palestinians after a review

By The Associated Press undefined

Germany said Wednesday that it plans to follow several other countries in resuming cooperation with the U.N. relief agency for Palestinians in Gaza after the publication of an independent review of its neutrality.

The head of the Arab League hailed the report, saying it showed that Israel's allegations were baseless and part of a "systematic campaign" meant to end the mandate of the agency.

Israel says that hundreds of UNRWA workers are members of Palestinian militant groups, and claims the report understated the problem. Its allegations led to the suspension of contributions to UNRWA by the United States and more than a dozen other countries.

Also Wednesday, the Israeli military said it is redeploying two reserve brigades from Israel's northern border to Gaza for "defensive and tactical missions," as it prepares for an offensive in Rafah, which Israel describes as Hamas' last stronghold in the territory.

More than half of the territory's population of 2.3 million have sought refuge in Rafah.

The U.S. Senate passed a \$26 billion aid package late Tuesday that includes around \$9 billion in humanitarian assistance for Gaza, which experts say is on the brink of famine, as well as billions for Israel. President Joe Biden has promised to sign it immediately.

The Israel-Hamas war was sparked by the unprecedented Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel in which the militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250 hostages. Israel says the militants are still holding around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

The war in Gaza has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, around two-thirds of them children and women.

Currently:

- U.N. calls for investigation into mass graves uncovered at two Gaza hospitals raided by Israel
- U.S. Senate passes spending package with \$26 billion in humanitarian aid for Gaza and military aid for Israel
- Satellite photos suggest Iran air defense radar struck during apparent Israeli attack on Isfahan
- Students across the United States are upping their Gaza war protests
- Nepal asks visiting Qatari emir to help free Nepali student held hostage by Hamas

Here is the latest:

ISRAEL CARRIES OUT AIRSTRIKES ON BORDER AREAS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

BEIRUT — Israel's air force carried out a series of airstrikes on border areas in southern Lebanon Wednesday hours after Lebanon's militant Hezbollah said it fired dozens of rockets in retaliation for strikes a day earlier that killed two civilians.

Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV reported as many as 14 airstrikes Wednesday on the outskirts of the border villages of Aita al-Shaab and Ramia.

Israel's military spokesman said they are striking at Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon, adding that details will follow later.

Hezbollah earlier said that it fired dozens of rockets at the northern Israeli village of Shomera in retaliation for an airstrike the day before that killed a woman and a 10-year-old girl and also wounded six people.

Hezbollah also said that it fired two missiles at a building in the northern Israeli village of Avivim saying

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Israeli troops were taking positions inside it.

EGYPT ARRESTS ACTIVISTS AT PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTEST

CAIRO – Egyptian authorities have arrested around two dozen activists who held a protest outside a U.N. facility in Cairo in solidarity with Palestinians in war-torn Gaza, a rights lawyer said Wednesday.

Lawyer Khaled Ali said at least 18 activists, mostly women, were arrested Tuesday when police forces broke up the protest outside the regional office of the U.N. women's agency in Cairo's district of Maadi.

There was no comment from the government.

The protesters called for the protection of women in Gaza amid Israel's monthslong war on Hamas. They were also voicing solidarity for civilians in Sudan, which has been plunged into a destructive war between rival generals since April last year.

Among those detained were prominent rights lawyers Mahinour el-Masry and Ragia Omran, and activists Rasha Azab and Iman Ouf, Ali said. A couple of bystanders were also detained when police forces dispersed the protest, he added.

Though Egypt's government has condemned Israel's campaign in Gaza, it has largely banned public protests against the war. Criticism of the country's ties with Israel, with which it signed a peace accord in 1979, is highly sensitive.

Earlier this month, security forces arrested 10 activists who participated in a pro-Palestinian protest. They were later released.

ISRAELI MILITARY SAYS IT SHOT WOMAN WHO RAN AT SOLDIERS WITH A KNIFE

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military says its forces shot dead a Palestinian woman after she allegedly ran toward Israeli soldiers with a knife in the southern West Bank on Wednesday.

The military said the incident took place at Okfim junction near the Palestinian city of Hebron. No soldiers were injured in the attempted stabbing.

Palestinian authorities identified the slain woman as 20-year-old Maimuna Harahsheh.

Violence has surged in the West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war broke out on Oct. 7, when Hamas militants from Gaza broke into southern Israel, killing 1,200 people.

Rights groups and Palestinians say Israeli forces use excessive force against Palestinian suspects, a problem they say has worsened since the Israel-Hamas conflict erupted.

Since October, at least 487 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank, the Ramallah-based Health Ministry says.

Many Palestinians have been shot dead in armed clashes, some in attempted stabbing attacks, and others for throwing stones at troops. Several appear to have been shot dead while posing no apparent threat.

ARAB LEAGUE WELCOMES REPORT ON UNRWA NEUTRALITY

CAIRO — The head of the Arab League on Wednesday hailed the conclusion of an independent review of the neutrality of the U.N. relief agency for Palestinians.

Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit said the wide-ranging 48-page report by the independent panel showed that Israel's allegations were baseless and part of a "systematic campaign" meant to end the mandate of the agency, known as UNRWA.

The report, which was released earlier this week, found that Israel had never expressed concern about anyone on the staff lists it has received annually since 2011.

It said UNRWA has "robust" procedures to uphold the U.N. principle of neutrality, but it cited serious gaps in implementation.

Israel says that hundreds of UNRWA workers are members of Palestinian militant groups. Its allegations led to the suspension of contributions to UNRWA by the United States and more than a dozen other countries, but some have resumed contributions. Israel says the report ignored the severity of the problem.

In a statement, Aboul Gheit urged all countries that suspended funding to resume financial assistance for UNRWA which helps 6 million Palestinians. He said a review of these countries' position is a "humanitarian necessity and a moral duty," specifically urged UNRWA's largest donor, the U.S., to reconsider.

ISRAEL SENDS 2 BRIGADES TO GAZA AS IT PREPARES FOR RAFAH OFFENSIVE

TEL AVIV, Israel — The Israeli military said it is deploying two reserve brigades for missions in the Gaza

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Strip.

Wednesday's announcement came as Israel prepared for a ground invasion of Rafah, the southern Gaza city that Israel says is Hamas' last major stronghold.

More than half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million is sheltering in the city, and an offensive there has raised international concern over the potential harm to civilians. Israel has been gradually reducing the number of troops it has in the territory, but officials have said that was with the aim of regrouping as the army prepares to move into Rafah.

Israel considers an invasion there necessary to meet its war aim of destroying Hamas' military and governing capabilities.

In a statement Wednesday, the Israeli military said the brigades would be involved in "defensive and tactical missions" in Gaza, without elaborating. It said the soldiers have been studying the main lessons from the fighting in Gaza ahead of their deployment.

The military said the brigades had previously been operating along Israel's northern border, where the militant group Hezbollah and Israeli forces have been exchanging fire throughout the war in Gaza.

GERMANY WILL RESUME WORKING WITH U.N. AGENCY FOR PALESTINIANS

BERLIN – Germany said Wednesday it plans to follow several other countries in resuming cooperation with the U.N. relief agency for Palestinians in Gaza after the publication of an independent review of its neutrality.

Germany's foreign and development aid ministries said in a joint statement Wednesday that the recommendations of the report "must now be implemented promptly."

Among those recommendations were stronger oversight of UNRWA's leadership and greater international involvement in supporting the agency as it addresses neutrality issues.

The German statement said that "against this background and accompanying these reforms, the German government will shortly continue cooperation with UNRWA in Gaza, as Australia, Canada, Sweden and Japan, for example, already have done."

It said that Germany will consult closely with its "closest international partners" on the payment of further funds. Germany is a staunch ally of Israel.

London police contain 2 horses loose in the city. Several more believed to be on the run too

LONDON (AP) — London police have contained two military horses that were seen running around loose without riders in the heart of the U.K. capital on Wednesday morning. Several other horses are still believed to be on the loose.

Details remain sketchy as to what happened but British media is reporting that seven military horses initially got loose, with police working with army personnel to recapture them.

Reports have emerged that a taxi driver waiting near Buckingham Palace had his car window smashed by a spooked horse, while a parked double-decker tour bus had its windscreen damaged.

City of London police said two of the horses had been recaptured and that officers were waiting for a horse box from the British Army to collect the animals and take them to a veterinarian.

Images of the two horses, one of which is black and the other white, wearing saddles and bridles, were circulating across social media. The front of the white horse was covered in red.

They were seen running on the road near Aldwych, which is in between London's historic financial center and the West End, the hub of the capital's entertainment industry.

Police officers contained the horses about 4 miles (6 kilometers) east of central London, near Limehouse.

Ukraine gets a big boost of US aid. It still faces a long slog to repel Russia

By JILL LAWLESS and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A big, new package of U.S. military aid will help Ukraine avoid defeat in its war with Russia. Winning will still be a long slog.

The arms and ammunition in the \$61 billion military aid package should enable Ukraine to slow the Russian army's bloody advances and block its strikes on troops and civilians. And it will buy Ukraine time — for long-term planning about how to take back the fifth of the country now under Russian control.

"Ultimately it offers Ukraine the prospect of staying in the war this year," said Michael Clarke, visiting professor in war studies at King's College London. "Sometimes in warfare you've just got to stay in it. You've just got to avoid being rolled over."

The U.S. House of Representatives approved the package on Saturday after months of delays by some Republicans wary of U.S. involvement overseas. It was passed by the Senate on Tuesday, and President Joe Biden said he would sign it Wednesday.

The difference could be felt within days on the front line in eastern and southern Ukraine, where Russia's much larger army has been slowly taking territory against massively outgunned Ukrainian forces.

The aid approval means Ukraine may be able to release artillery ammunition from dwindling stocks that it has been rationing. More equipment will come soon from American stocks in Poland and Germany, and later from the U.S.

The first shipments are expected to arrive by the beginning of next week, said Davyd Arakhamia, a lawmaker with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Servant of the People party.

But opposition lawmaker Vadym Ivchenko, a member of the Ukrainian parliament's National Security, Defense and Intelligence Committee, said logistical challenges and bureaucracy could delay shipments to Ukraine by two to three months, and it would be even longer before they reach the front line.

While details of the shipments are classified, Ukraine's most urgent needs are artillery shells to stop Russian troops from advancing, and anti-aircraft missiles to protect people and infrastructure from missiles, drones and bombs.

What's coming first is not always what front-line commanders need most, said Arakhamia, the Ukrainian lawmaker. He said that even a military giant like the U.S. does not have stockpiles of everything.

"The logic behind this first package was, you (the U.S.) finds our top priorities and then you see what you have in the warehouses," Arakhamia said. "And sometimes they do not match."

Hope for future breakthroughs for Ukraine still hangs on more timely deliveries of Western aid, lawmakers acknowledge.

Many experts believe that both Ukraine and Russia are exhausted by two years of war and won't be able to mount a major offensive — one capable of making big strategic gains — until next year.

Still, Russia is pushing forward at several points along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front, using tanks, wave after wave of infantry troops and satellite-guided gliding bombs to pummel Ukrainian forces. Russia is also hitting power plants and pounding Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, which is only about 30 kilometers (some 20 miles) from the Russian border.

Ivchenko said the goal for Ukraine's forces now is to "hold the line" until the bulk of new supplies arrive by mid-summer. Then, they can focus on trying to recapture territory recently lost in the Donetsk region.

"And probably ... at the end of summer we'll see some movement, offensive movement of the Ukrainian armed forces," he said.

Some military experts doubt Ukraine has the resources to mount even small offensives very soon.

The U.S. funding "can probably only help stabilize the Ukrainian position for this year and begin preparations for operations in 2025," said Matthew Savill, director of military sciences at the Royal United Services Institute, a think tank.

In the best-case scenario for Ukraine, the American aid will give commanders time to reorganize and train its army — applying lessons learned from its failed summer 2023 offensive. It may also galvanize

Ukraine's allies in Europe to increase aid.

"So this just wasn't about Ukraine and the United States, this really affected our entire 51-country coalition," said U.S. Congressman Bill Keating, a Democrat who visited Kyiv on Monday as part of a four-member congressional delegation.

Zelenskyy insists Ukraine's war aim is to recapture all its territory from Russia — including Crimea, seized illegally in 2014. Even if the war ultimately ends through negotiation, as many experts believe, Ukraine wants to do that from as strong a position as possible.

Whatever happens on the battlefield, Ukraine still faces variables beyond its control.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump, who seeks to retake the White House in the November election, has said he would end the war within days of taking office. And the 27-nation Europe Union includes leaders like Hungarian President Viktor Orbán and Slovakian Prime Minister Richard Fico, who have opposed arming Ukraine.

Ukraine's allies have held back from supplying some arms out of concern about escalation or depleting their own stocks. Ukraine says that to win the war it needs longer-range missiles it could use for potentially game-changing operations such as cutting off occupied Crimea, where's Russia's Black Sea fleet is based.

It wants Army Tactical Missile Systems, known as ATACMs, from the U.S. and Taurus cruise missiles from Germany. Both governments have resisted calls to send them because they are capable of striking targets deep within Russian territory.

The new bill authorizes the president to send Ukraine ATACMS "as soon as practicable." It's unclear what that will mean in practice.

Sometimes, promised weapons have arrived late, or not at all. Zelenskyy recently pointed out that Ukraine is still waiting for the F-16 fighter jets it was promised a year ago.

Meanwhile, Russia is using its advantage in troops and weapons to push back Ukrainian forces, perhaps seeking to make maximum gains before Ukraine's new supplies arrive.

For weeks it has pummeled the small eastern city of Chasiv Yar, at the cost of 900 soldiers killed and wounded a day, according to the U.K. Ministry of Defense.

Capturing the strategically important hill town would allow them to move toward Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, key cities Ukraine controls in the eastern region of Donetsk. It would be a significant win for Russian President Vladimir Putin, who Western officials say is bent on toppling Ukraine's pro-Western government.

Russian pressure was aimed not just at gaining territory, but on undermining Zelenskyy and bolstering critics who say his war plan is failing, said Clarke of King's College London.

The U.S. aid package decreases the likelihood of a political crisis in Ukraine, and U.S. Speaker Mike Johnson deserves credit for pushing it through Congress, he said.

"He held history in his hands," Clarke said.

Blinken begins key China visit as tensions rise over new US foreign aid bill

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

SHANGHAI (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has begun a critical trip to China armed with a strengthened diplomatic hand following Senate approval of a foreign aid package that will provide billions of dollars in assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan as well as force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform — all areas of contention between Washington and Beijing.

Blinken arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday just hours after the Senate vote on the long-stalled legislation and shortly before President Joe Biden is expected to sign it into law to demonstrate U.S. resolve in defending its allies and partners. Passage of the bill will add further complications to an already complex relationship that has been strained by disagreements over numerous global and regional disputes.

Still, the fact that Blinken is making the trip — shortly after a conversation between Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping, a similar visit to China by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and a call between the

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U.S. and Chinese defense chiefs — is a sign the two sides are at least willing to discuss their differences.

Of primary interest to China, the bill sets aside \$8 billion to counter Chinese threats in Taiwan and the broader Indo-Pacific and gives China's ByteDance nine months to sell TikTok with a possible three-month extension if a sale is in progress. China has railed against U.S. assistance to Taiwan, which it regards as a renegade province, and immediately condemned the move as a dangerous provocation. It also strongly opposes efforts to force TikTok's sale.

The bill also allots \$26 billion in wartime assistance to Israel and humanitarian relief to Palestinians in Gaza, and \$61 billion for Ukraine to defend itself from Russia's invasion. The Biden administration has been disappointed in China's response to the war in Gaza and has complained loudly that Chinese support for Russia's military-industrial sector has allowed Moscow to subvert Western sanctions and ramp up attacks on Ukraine.

Even before Blinken landed in Shanghai — where he will have meetings on Thursday before traveling to Beijing — China's Taiwan Affairs Office slammed the assistance to Taipei, saying it "seriously violates" U.S. commitments to China, "sends a wrong signal to the Taiwan independence separatist forces" and pushes the self-governing island republic into a "dangerous situation."

China and the United States are the major players in the Indo-Pacific and Washington has become increasingly alarmed by Beijing's growing aggressiveness in recent years toward Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries with which it has significant territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea.

The U.S. has strongly condemned Chinese military exercises threatening Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a renegade province and has vowed to reunify with the mainland by force if necessary. Successive U.S. administrations have steadily boosted military support and sales for Taiwan, much to Chinese anger.

A senior State Department official said last week that Blinken would "underscore, both in private and public, America's abiding interest in maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. We think that is vitally important for the region and the world."

In the South China Sea, the U.S. and others have become increasingly concerned by provocative Chinese actions in and around disputed areas.

In particular, the U.S. has voiced objections to what it says are Chinese attempts to thwart legitimate maritime activities by others in the sea, notably the Philippines and Vietnam. That was a major topic of concern this month when Biden held a three-way summit with the prime minister of Japan and the president of the Philippines.

On Ukraine, which U.S. officials say will be a primary topic of conversation during Blinken's visit, the Biden administration said that Chinese support has allowed Russia to largely reconstitute its defense industrial base, affecting not only the war in Ukraine but posing a threat to broader European security.

"If China purports on the one hand to want good relations with Europe and other countries, it can't on the other hand be fueling what is the biggest threat to European security since the end of the Cold War," Blinken said last week.

China says it has the right to trade with Russia and accuses the U.S. of fanning the flames by arming and funding Ukraine. "It is extremely hypocritical and irresponsible for the U.S. to introduce a large-scale aid bill for Ukraine while making groundless accusations against normal economic and trade exchanges between China and Russia," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Tuesday.

On the Middle East, U.S. officials, from Biden on down, have repeatedly appealed to China to use any leverage it may have with Iran to prevent Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza from spiraling into a wider regional conflict.

While China appears to have been generally receptive to such calls — particularly because it depends heavily on oil imports from Iran and other Mideast nations — tensions have steadily increased since the beginning of the Gaza war in October and more recent direct strikes and counterstrikes between Israel and Iran.

Blinken has pushed for China to take a more active stance in pressing Iran not to escalate tensions in the Middle East. He has spoken to his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, several times urging China to tell Iran to restrain the proxy groups it has supported in the region, including Hamas, Lebanon's Hezbollah,

Yemen's Houthis and Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria.

The senior State Department official said Blinken would reiterate the U.S. interest in China using "whatever channels or influence it has to try to convey the need for restraint to all parties, including Iran."

The U.S. and China are also at deep odds over human rights in China's western Xinjiang region, Tibet and Hong Kong, as well as the fate of several American citizens that the State Department says have been "wrongfully detained" by Chinese authorities, and the supply of precursors to make the synthetic opioid fentanyl that is responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans.

China has repeatedly rejected the American criticism of its rights record as improper interference in its internal affairs. Yet, Blinken will again raise these issues, according to the State Department official.

Another department official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity to preview Blinken's private talks with Chinese officials, said China had made efforts to rein in the export of materials that traffickers use to make fentanyl but that more needs to be done.

The two sides agreed last year to set up a working group to look into ways to combat the surge of production of fentanyl precursors in China and their export abroad. U.S. officials say they believe they had made some limited progress on cracking down on the illicit industry but many producers had found ways to get around new restrictions.

"We need to see continued and sustained progress," the official said, adding that "more regular law enforcement" against Chinese precursor producers "would send a strong signal of China's commitment to address this issue."

Arrests follow barricades and encampments as college students nationwide protest Gaza war

By NICK PERRY and KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Standoffs between pro-Palestinian student protesters and universities grew increasingly tense on both coasts Wednesday as hundreds encamped at Columbia University faced a deadline from the administration to clear out while dozens remained barricaded inside two buildings on a Northern California college campus.

Both are part of intensifying demonstrations over Israel's war with Hamas by university students across the country demanding that schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies that are enabling its months long conflict. Dozens have been arrested on charges of trespassing or disorderly conduct.

Columbia's President Minouche Shafik in a statement Tuesday set a midnight deadline to reach an agreement with students to clear the encampment, or "we will have to consider alternative options."

That deadline passed without news of an agreement. Videos show some protesters taking down their tents while others doubled down in speeches. Rumors spread online that the deadline had been pushed to the morning, but the university declined to comment on whether that was true. The heightened tension arrived the night before U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson's trip to Columbia to visit with Jewish students and address antisemitism on college campuses.

Across the country, protesters at California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, some 300 miles (480 kilometers) north of San Francisco, started using furniture, tents, chains and zip ties to block the building's entrances Monday evening.

"We are not afraid of you!" the protesters chanted before officers in riot gear pushed into them at the building's entrance, video shows. Student Peyton McKinzie said she was walking on campus Monday when she saw police grabbing one woman by the hair, and another student having their head bandaged for an injury.

"I think a lot of students are in shock about it," she told The Associated Press.

Three students have been arrested, according to a statement from Cal Poly Humboldt, which shutdown the campus until Wednesday. An unknown number of students had occupied a second campus building Tuesday.

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The upwelling of demonstrations has left universities struggling to balance campus safety with free speech rights. Many long tolerated the protests, which largely demanded that schools condemn Israel's assault on Gaza and divest from companies that sell weapons to Israel.

Now, universities are doling out more heavy-handed discipline, citing safety concerns as some Jewish students say criticism of Israel has veered into antisemitism.

Protests had been bubbling for months but kicked into a higher gear after more than 100 pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had camped out on Columbia's upper Manhattan campus were arrested Thursday.

By late Monday at New York University, police said 133 protesters were taken into custody and all had been released with summonses to appear in court on disorderly conduct charges.

In Connecticut, police arrested 60 protesters — including 47 students — at Yale, after they refused to leave an encampment on a plaza at the center of campus.

Yale President Peter Salovey said protesters had declined an offer to end the demonstration and meet with trustees. After several warnings, school officials determined "the situation was no longer safe," so police cleared the encampment and made arrests.

In the Midwest on Tuesday, a demonstration at the center of the University of Michigan campus had grown to nearly 40 tents, and nine anti-war protesters at the University of Minnesota were arrested after police took down an encampment in front of the library. Hundreds rallied to the Minnesota campus in the afternoon to demand their release.

Harvard University in Massachusetts has tried to stay a step ahead of protests by locking most gates into its famed Harvard Yard and limiting access to those with school identification. The school has also posted signs that warn against setting up tents or tables on campus without permission.

Literature Ph.D. student Christian Deleon said he understood why the Harvard administration may be trying to avoid protests but said there still has to be a place for students to express what they think.

"We should all be able to use these kinds of spaces to protest, to make our voices heard," he said.

Ben Wizner, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union, said college leaders face extremely tough decisions because they have a responsibility to ensure people can express their views, even when others find them offensive, while protecting students from threats and intimidation.

The New York Civil Liberties Union cautioned universities against being too quick to call in law enforcement in a statement Tuesday.

"Officials should not conflate criticism of Israel with antisemitism or use hate incidents as a pretext to silence political views they oppose," said Donna Lieberman, the group's executive director.

Leo Auerbach, a student at the University of Michigan, said the differing stances on the war hadn't led to his feeling unsafe on campus but he has been fearful of the "hateful rhetoric and antisemitic sentiment being echoed."

"If we're trying to create an inclusive community on campus, there needs to be constructive dialogue between groups," Auerbach said. "And right now, there's no dialogue that is occurring."

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, physics senior Hannah Didehbani said protesters were inspired by those at Columbia.

"Right now there are several professors on campus who are getting direct research funding from Israel's ministry of defense," she said. "We've been calling for MIT to cut those research ties."

Protesters at the University of California, Berkeley, which had an encampment of about 30 tents Tuesday, were also inspired by Columbia's demonstrators, "who we consider to be the heart of the student movement," said law student Malak Afaneh.

Campus protests began after Hamas' deadly attack on southern Israel, when militants killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took roughly 250 hostages. During the ensuing war, Israel has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, according to the local health ministry, which doesn't distinguish between combatants and noncombatants but says at least two-thirds of the dead are children and women.

Pro-Palestinian student protests target colleges' financial ties with Israel

By COLLIN BINKLEY, STEVE LeBLANC and BIANCA VÁZQUEZ TONESS Associated Press

Students at a growing number of U.S. colleges are gathering in protest encampments with a unified demand of their schools: Stop doing business with Israel — or any companies that empower its ongoing war in Gaza.

The demand has its roots in a decades-old campaign against Israel's policies toward the Palestinians. The movement has taken on new strength as the Israel-Hamas war surpasses the six-month mark and stories of suffering in Gaza have sparked international calls for a cease-fire.

Inspired by ongoing protests and the arrests last week of more than 100 students at Columbia University, students from Massachusetts to California are now gathering by the hundreds on campuses, setting up tent camps and pledging to stay put until their demands are met.

"We want to be visible," said Columbia protest leader Mahmoud Khalil, who noted that students at the university have been pushing for divestment from Israel since 2002. "The university should do something about what we're asking for, about the genocide that's happening in Gaza. They should stop investing in this genocide."

Campus protests began after Hamas' deadly Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel, when militants killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took roughly 250 hostages. During the ensuing war, Israel has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, according to the local health ministry, which doesn't distinguish between combatants and noncombatants but says at least two-thirds of the dead are children and women.

WHAT DO THE STUDENTS WANT TO SEE HAPPEN?

The students are calling for universities to separate themselves from any companies that are empowering Israel's military efforts in Gaza — and in some cases from Israel itself.

The demands vary from campus to campus. Among them:

- ___ Stop doing business with military weapons manufacturers that are supplying arms to Israel.
- ___ Stop accepting research money from Israel for projects that aid the country's military efforts.
- ___ Stop investing college endowments with money managers who profit from Israeli companies or contractors.
- ___ Be more transparent about what money is received from Israel and what it's used for.

Student governments at some colleges in recent weeks have passed resolutions calling for an end to investments and academic partnerships with Israel. Such bills were passed by student bodies at Columbia, Harvard Law, Rutgers and American University.

HOW ARE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES RESPONDING?

Officials at several universities say they want to have a conversation with students and honor their right to protest. But they also are echoing the concerns of many Jewish students that some of the demonstrators' words and actions amount to antisemitism — and they say such behavior won't be tolerated.

Sylvia Burwell, president of American University, rejected a resolution from the undergraduate senate to end investments and partnerships with Israel.

"Such actions threaten academic freedom, the respectful free expression of ideas and views, and the values of inclusion and belonging that are central to our community," Burwell said in a statement.

Burwell cited the university's "longstanding position" against the decades-old Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

Protesters in the movement have drawn parallels between Israel's policy in Gaza — a tiny strip of land tucked between Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea that is home to about 2.3 million Palestinians — to apartheid in South Africa. Israel imposed an indefinite blockade of Gaza after Hamas seized control of the strip in 2007.

Opponents of BDS say its message veers into antisemitism. In the past decade alone, more than 30 states have enacted laws or directives blocking agencies from hiring companies that support the move-

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ment. Former Education Secretary Betsy DeVos called it a "pernicious threat" in 2019, saying it fueled bias against Jews on U.S. campuses.

Asked this week whether he condemned "the antisemitic protests," President Joe Biden said he did. "I also condemn those who don't understand what's going on with the Palestinians," Biden said after an Earth Day event Monday.

At Yale, where dozens of student protesters were arrested Monday, President Peter Salovey noted in a message to campus that, after hearing from students, the university's Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility had recommended against divesting from military weapons manufacturers.

President Minouche Shafik at Columbia said there should be "serious conversations" about how the university can help in the Middle East. But "we cannot have one group dictate terms," she said in a statement Monday.

MIT said in a statement that the protesters have "the full attention of leadership, who have been meeting and talking with students, faculty, and staff on an ongoing basis."

HOW MUCH MONEY ARE THE SCHOOLS RECEIVING?

On many campuses, students pushing for divestment say they don't know the extent of their colleges' connections to Israel. Universities with large endowments spread their money across a vast array of investments, and it can be difficult or impossible to identify where it all lands.

The U.S. Education Department requires colleges to report gifts and contracts from foreign sources, but there have been problems with underreporting, and colleges sometimes dodge reporting requirements by steering money through separate foundations that work on their behalf.

According to an Education Department database, about 100 U.S. colleges have reported gifts or contracts from Israel totaling \$375 million over the past two decades. The data tells little about where the money comes from, however, or how it was used.

Some students at MIT have published the names of several researchers who accept money from Israel's defense ministry for projects that the students say could help with drone navigation and missile protection. All told, pro-Palestinian students say, MIT has accepted more than \$11 million from the defense ministry over the past decade.

MIT officials didn't respond to an emailed request for comment.

"MIT is directly complicit with all of this," said sophomore Quinn Perian, a leader of a Jewish student group that is calling for a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war. He said there's growing momentum to hold colleges accountable for any role they play in supporting Israel's military.

"We're all drawing from the same fire," he said. "They're forcing us, as students, to be complicit in this genocide."

Motivated by the Columbia protests, students at the University of Michigan were camping out on a campus plaza Tuesday demanding an end to financial investments with Israel. They say the school sends more than \$6 billion to investment managers who profit from Israeli companies or contractors. They also cited investments in companies that produce drones or warplanes used in Israel, and in surveillance products used at checkpoints into Gaza.

University of Michigan officials said that they have no direct investments with Israeli companies, and that indirect investments made through funds amount to a fraction of 1% of the university's \$18 billion endowment. The school rejected calls for divestment, citing a nearly 20-year-old policy "that shields the university's investments from political pressures."

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE STUDENTS?

Students at Harvard and Yale are demanding greater transparency, along with their calls for divestment.

Transparency was one of the key demands at Emerson College, where 80 students and other supporters occupied a busy courtyard on the downtown Boston campus Tuesday.

Twelve tents sporting slogans including "Free Gaza" or "No U.S. \$ For Israel" lined the entrance to the courtyard, with sleeping bags and pillows peeking out through the zippered doors.

Students sat cross-legged on the brick paving stones typing away on final papers and reading for exams.

The semester ends in a couple of weeks.

"I would love to go home and have a shower," said Owen Buxton, a film major, "but I will not leave until we reach our demands or I am dragged out by police."

Olympian Kristi Yamaguchi is 'tickled pink' to inspire a Barbie doll

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

Like many little girls, a young Kristi Yamaguchi loved playing with Barbie. With a schedule packed with ice skating practices, her Barbie dolls became her "best friends."

So, it's surreal for the decorated Olympian figure skater to now be a Barbie girl herself.

"It's a huge, huge honor. I think a lot of pride comes along with it, not just recognizing the Olympic achievement, but also being recognized during AAPI Month and following in the footsteps of some incredible women that I idolize — Anna May Wong, Maya Angelou and Rosa Parks," Yamaguchi told The Associated Press. "It's hard to see me put in the category with them."

Yamaguchi, who became the first Asian American to win an individual figure skating gold medal, at the 1992 Winter Olympics, has been immortalized as a doll for Barbie's "Inspiring Women Series," Mattel announced Wednesday. The release is timed for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, in May.

This isn't Yamaguchi's first doll depiction. In the '90s, touring show Stars on Ice put out a line of dolls modeled after notable skaters. The Barbie version is a lot more detailed.

Mattel duplicated everything the then 20-year-old medalist wore at the Olympics in Albertville, France: the sparkling black-and-gold brocade outfit designed by Lauren Sheehan, the gold hair ribbon and even a red-and-white bouquet like Yamaguchi held atop the podium.

Yamaguchi said both she and Sheehan are "just so tickled pink."

She also is happy with the doll's visage.

"It looks like me for sure. You know, the eyes and just the shape of the face. And then, of course, the hair, for sure. I mean, it has the bangs that are the '90s," Yamaguchi said, chuckling.

She appreciates that the doll's release comes on the high heels of the blockbuster "Barbie" movie last year. Her daughters, ages 18 and 20, are fans of the Oscar-nominated film. Their initial reaction to their mother being a Barbie? Disbelief.

"When they found out I was getting a doll, they were kind of flabbergasted and being like, 'What? Like Mom, like how do you qualify? But that's way too cool for you,'" Yamaguchi said.

When Yamaguchi became a household name in the '90s, most Asian American children were growing up feeling like toys-aren't-us kids. If you were an Asian parent looking for an Asian doll in the U.S., you likely turned to independent mail-order companies or waited until you were visiting your country of heritage.

Since then, the toy market has evolved somewhat with big companies like Mattel diversifying and independent entrepreneurs filling the void. Two Asian doll lines — Jilly Bing and Joeydolls — launched within the last year, one by an Asian American mother and the other by an Asian Canadian mother. Both could not find dolls that looked like their daughters.

Sapna Cheryan, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington who served a year on Mattel's Barbie Global Advisory Council in 2018, said Asian Americans have long dealt with two stereotypes: the model-minority whiz kid or the perpetual foreigner. Toys can help dispel those myths, and instead signal acceptance and inclusivity.

Dolls modeled after real people can get people talking about their human counterparts. Cheryan applauded Barbie's choice of Yamaguchi.

"There are so many Asian American athletes but they're just not propped up in a way that athletes of other racial groups are," said Cheryan, who researches cultural stereotypes and their impact on race and gender disparities. "Having a match in terms of racial identification or gender or both," she said, is important in creating effective role models for kids.

Mattel has mostly garnered praise for its diversity efforts but it's had some missteps along the way. In 2021, the toy maker said it "fell short" by failing to include an Asian doll in a line of Tokyo Olympics-themed

Barbies. In January, there was some backlash to Asian “You Can Be Anything” Barbies that seemed stereotypical. One was a violinist and the other a doctor in panda scrubs.

Tying Yamaguchi to Barbie, a symbol of American pop culture, is especially remarkable considering what she and her family have dealt with as Japanese Americans. She has spoken about how her maternal and paternal grandparents were forced into U.S. incarceration camps in response to Japan’s 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

When she captured the gold over 50 years later, media coverage partially focused on why she didn’t seem to have many endorsement deals. In an AP article from 1992, a sports advertising executive blamed her Japanese heritage, citing an economic climate that was anti-Japan. “It’s wrong, wrong, wrong, but that is the way it is,” the executive said.

So while Barbie may seem like just a toy, it’s so much more for Yamaguchi.

“When kids see themselves or see someone who inspires them, then it just opens up their world and their imagination to what’s possible,” she said.

What to listen for during Supreme Court arguments on Donald Trump and presidential immunity

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court hears arguments Thursday over whether Donald Trump is immune from prosecution in a case charging him with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

It’s a historic day for the court, with the justices having an opportunity to decide once and for all whether former presidents can be prosecuted for official acts they take while in the White House.

But between a decades-old court case about Richard Nixon, and an obscure constitutional provision about presidential impeachments, there are likely to be some unfamiliar concepts and terms thrown about.

Here are some tips to help follow everything:

WHEN DOES THE SESSION START?

The court marshal will bang the gavel at 10 a.m. EDT and Chief Justice John Roberts will announce soon after the start of arguments in Donald J. Trump vs. United States of America, as the case is called.

The session easily could last two hours or more.

WHERE DO I FIND THE LIVESTREAM?

There are no cameras in the courtroom, but since the pandemic, the court has livestreamed its argument sessions. Listen live on apnews.com/live/trump-supreme-court-arguments-updates or the court’s website at www.supremecourt.gov. C-SPAN also will carry the arguments at www.c-span.org.

IMPEACHMENT CLAUSE

Expect to hear talk about the impeachment process and the relationship, if any, to criminal prosecution.

Central to Trump’s immunity argument is the claim that only a former president who was impeached and convicted by the Senate can be criminally prosecuted. Trump was impeached over his efforts to undo the election in the run-up to the violent riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. But he was acquitted, not convicted, by the Senate in 2021.

Trump’s lawyers cite as backup for their argument a provision of the Constitution known as the Impeachment Judgment Clause that says an officeholder convicted by the Senate shall nevertheless be “liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment and punishment” in court.

Prosecutors say the Trump team is misreading the clause and that conviction in the Senate is not a prerequisite for a courtroom prosecution.

WAIT, WHAT’S THIS ABOUT RICHARD NIXON?

There’s going to be plentiful discussion about Nixon but not necessarily for the reasons one might think.

Trump’s team has repeatedly drawn attention to a 1982 case, *Nixon v. Fitzgerald*, in which the Supreme Court held that a former president cannot be sued in civil cases for their actions while in office. The case concerned the firing of an Air Force analyst, A. Ernest Fitzgerald, who testified before Congress about

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cost overruns in the production of a transport plane.

Fitzgerald's lawsuit against Nixon, president at the time of the 1970 termination, was unsuccessful, with Justice Lewis Powell writing for the court that presidents are entitled to absolute immunity from civil lawsuits for acts that fall within the "outer perimeter" of their official duties.

Importantly, that decision did not shield presidents from criminal liability, though Trump's team says the same analysis should apply.

Special counsel Jack Smith's team is also likely to bring up a separate Supreme Court decision involving Nixon that they say bolsters their case — a 1974 opinion that forced the president to turn over incriminating White House tapes for use in the prosecutions of his top aides.

Prosecutors have also noted that Nixon accepted rather than declined a subsequent pardon from President Gerald Ford — a recognition by the men, they say, "that a former President was subject to prosecution."

DRONE STRIKES AND SEAL TEAM SIX

The justices are known to love presenting hypothetical scenarios to lawyers as a way of testing the outer limits of their arguments. Expect that practice to be on full display Thursday as the court assesses whether former presidents are entitled to absolute immunity.

Already, Trump's lawyers have warned that if the prosecution is permitted to go forward, it would open the floodgates to criminal charges against other presidents, such as for authorizing a drone strike that kills a U.S. citizen or for giving false information to Congress that leads the country into war.

In a memorable moment during arguments in January before a federal appeals court, a judge asked a Trump lawyer whether a president who ordered a Navy SEAL to assassinate a political rival could be prosecuted.

Look for Smith's team to try to draw a sharp distinction between acts that it says are quintessential exercises of presidential power — such as ordering a drone strike during war — to the acts that Trump is accused of in this case, such as participating in a scheme to organize fake electors in battleground states. Those acts, prosecutors say, are personal acts and not presidential ones.

A conservative quest to limit diversity programs gains momentum in states

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

A conservative quest to limit diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives is gaining momentum in state capitals and college governing boards, with officials in about one-third of the states now taking some sort of action against it.

Tennessee became the latest when the Republican governor this week signed legislation that would prohibit banks and other financial institutions from considering a customer's participation — or lack thereof — in "diversity, equity and inclusion training" or "social justice programming."

That came shortly after the Democratic governor in Kansas allowed legislation to become law without her signature that will prohibit statements about diversity, equity or inclusion from being used in decisions about student admissions, financial aid or employment at higher education institutions.

Last week, Iowa's Republican-led Legislature also gave final approval to a budget bill that would ban all DEI offices and initiatives in higher education that aren't necessary to comply with accreditation or federal law. The measure expands upon a directive last year from the Iowa Board of Regents to eliminate DEI staff positions.

Republican lawmakers in about two dozen states have filed bills seeking to restrict DEI initiatives this year. They are countered by Democrats who have sponsored supportive DEI measures in about 20 states. Altogether, lawmakers have proposed about 150 bills this year that would either restrict or promote DEI efforts, according to an Associated Press analysis using the legislation-tracking software Plural.

WHAT'S AT ISSUE?

Higher education institutions and many businesses have long devoted resources to improving diversity and inclusivity.

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More recently, conservative groups began raising concerns that DEI initiatives are promoting an agenda that elevates racial or gender identity over individual merit. Since 2022, about half a dozen conservative or libertarian organizations have offered model measures to state lawmakers to eliminate DEI offices or prohibit the use of DEI criteria in training programs or employment, academic and financial decisions.

Christopher Rufo, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and an architect of the movement, said in a recent article that the ultimate goal is to "abolish DEI in all American institutions."

The acronym DEI "has now been weaponized," said Paulette Granberry Russell, president of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. "And it's taking us, unfortunately, back to a time that failed to acknowledge the inequities that persist today based on discriminatory practices."

The Race and Equity Center at the University of Southern California has launched a "National DEI Defense Fund." Among other things, it provides free professional development courses where publicly funded DEI training has been banned.

ANTI-DEI LAWS

Republican-led Florida and Texas last year became the first states to adopt broad-based laws banning DEI efforts in higher education. Universities in Texas have since eliminated more than 100 DEI-related jobs and Florida universities also have been shedding positions.

Earlier this year, Republican governors in Alabama and Utah signed laws restricting diversity, equity and inclusion efforts not only in higher education but also in K-12 schools and throughout state government.

GOP governors in Idaho and Wyoming also signed legislation this year restricting the use of state funds for DEI efforts at higher education institutions. Other bills signed into law in Idaho and GOP-led Indiana prohibit the use of DEI statements in employment and admissions decisions at public colleges and universities.

A similar bill barring mandatory DEI statements in higher education passed Wisconsin's Republican-led legislature but got vetoed by the Democratic governor.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Facing political pressure, some universities have revised their practices regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.

University of Wisconsin regents agreed in December to shift at least 43 diversity positions to focus on "student success" and eliminate statements supporting diversity on student applications. The actions were part of a deal with lawmakers to release funding for pay raises and campus construction projects.

Large public university systems in Arizona, Georgia, Missouri and North Carolina are among those that have scrapped the use of diversity statements in employment decisions.

Oklahoma Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt signed an executive order in December barring state agencies and universities from supporting DEI programs that "grant preferential treatment based on one person's particular race, color, sex, ethnicity or national origin."

The University of Oklahoma said its DEI office closed April 1 and the remaining employees are being reassigned to new roles.

SUPPORTING DEI

Some Democratic-led states have forged ahead with legislation to expand their emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion in government and education.

Washington's Democratic governor signed a law this year that requires diversity, equity and inclusion concepts to be incorporated into updated state learning standards for public K-12 schools.

Legislation given final approval this month by Maryland's Democratic-led General Assembly requires the state's retirement system to employ a director of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Various budget proposals also would allot money to specific state DEI efforts. As one example: Oregon's Democratic governor signed legislation last week that provides \$50,000 to the Columbia River Gorge Commission for a diversity, equity and inclusion initiative.

Biden tries to navigate the Israel-Hamas war protests roiling college campuses

By WILL WEISSERT, MICHELLE L. PRICE and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Student protests over the war in Gaza have created a new and unpredictable challenge for President Joe Biden as he resists calls to cut off U.S. support for Israel while trying to hold together the coalition of voters he'll need for reelection.

The protests at Columbia University in New York and other campuses have captured global media attention and resurfaced questions about Biden's lagging support from young voters. His handling of the Middle East conflict is also being closely watched by both Jewish and Arab American voters in key swing states.

At best for Biden, the protests are a passing distraction while the White House presses forward with negotiations over a ceasefire and the release of hostages held by Hamas while pushing Israel to limit casualties with more than 34,000 Palestinians dead. At worst, they build momentum toward the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August, potentially triggering scenes of violence that could recall the unrest of protests against the Vietnam War during the party's convention there in 1968.

"If it ends with Columbia, that's one thing," said Angus Johnston, a historian focused on campus activism. "If this sends the national student movement to a new place, that's a very different situation."

Already, Biden's aides have had to work to minimize disruptions from antiwar protesters, holding smaller campaign events and tightly controlling access. Demonstrators forced his motorcade to change routes to the Capitol on his way to deliver the State of the Union, and they've thrown a red substance intended to symbolize blood near his home in Delaware.

The president could face more confrontations with students this spring. Morehouse College said Tuesday that Biden would appear at the iconic historically Black campus in May.

More than 100 pro-Palestinian demonstrators camped out at Columbia were arrested Thursday, with dozens more people arrested at other campuses. Many now face charges of trespassing or disorderly conduct. The protesters have demanded that their universities condemn Israel's assault on Gaza after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack and divest from companies that do business with Israel.

Some people have reported antisemitic chants and messages at and around the Columbia campus, and similar concerns have been reported at other universities. Some Jewish students say they've felt unsafe on campus. The White House, in a message Sunday to mark the Passover holiday, denounced what it called an "alarming surge" of antisemitism, saying it "has absolutely no place on college campuses, or anywhere in our country."

Four Jewish Democratic members of Congress toured Columbia's locked-down campus on Monday with members of the school's Jewish Law Students Association. They condemned that things had escalated to where Jewish students felt unsafe and the university canceled in-person classes Monday. Columbia said it would use hybrid remote and in-person learning through the end of the spring term.

Rep. Kathy Manning of North Carolina called on the Education Department and Justice Department to work with the White House "to ensure that all universities take steps necessary to keep Jewish students and faculty safe."

"This discrimination is simply unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue," she said.

Biden on Monday sought the same middle ground that he's staked out for months as he backs Israel's military operations with weapons shipments while also pushing Israel to limit civilian casualties and get more humanitarian aid into Gaza, where the United Nations has said there is a looming famine.

"I condemn the antisemitic protests," the president said at an Earth Day event. He then added, "I also condemn those who don't understand what's going on with the Palestinians."

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, a high-profile progressive who represents parts of the Bronx and Queens, spoke before Biden at the same event. She said it was "important that we remember the power of young people shaping this country" and praised "the leadership of those peaceful student-led protests."

Former President Donald Trump, Biden's presumptive Republican opponent in November, pointed to the

headlines and images coming out of Columbia to redirect focus from his criminal hush money trial in New York, telling reporters in the courthouse Tuesday that Biden bears the blame for the unrest.

"If this were me, you'd be after me. You'd be after me so much," he said. "But they're trying to give him a pass. But what's going on is a disgrace to our country, and it's all Biden's fault and everybody knows it."

In a sign of the political potency of the situation at Columbia, Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson planned to visit the school Wednesday and meet with Jewish students.

Joel Rubin, a former State Department official and Democratic strategist who has worked in Jewish politics for years, rejected critics blaming Biden "for everything that's gone wrong" but said the president would have to "make the argument for why the policy is the right one and let the chips fall where they may."

"If it were purely politics and polling, it would be a very hard one," Rubin said. "But I think Biden is making these decisions based on national security."

Biden graduated from Syracuse's law school in 1968, bypassing the campus convulsions over the Vietnam War. He distanced himself from that protest movement two decades later during his first run for president.

"I was married, I was in law school, I wore sports coats," Biden said in 1987. "You're looking at a middle-class guy. I am who I am. I'm not big on flak jackets and tie-dyed shirts. You know, that's not me."

Biden has been endorsed this year by many leading youth activist organizations and also built his campaign around key social issues — such as defending abortion rights, combating climate change and canceling student debt for millions — that they believe can energize voters under 30 who are more likely to be concerned about the president's approach to Gaza.

He was in Florida on Tuesday to capitalize on the momentum against nationwide abortion restrictions and criticize a state law soon to go into effect that will ban abortions after six weeks, before many women know they're pregnant. A day earlier, Vice President Kamala Harris held an event promoting abortion rights in swing state Wisconsin.

Safia Southey, a 25-year-old law student at Columbia who is Jewish, has been participating in the protest and sleeping at the encampment on the university's quad since Thursday. She believes outrage over the war will deflate Biden's chances against Trump because staunch supporters of Israel are more likely to support the presumptive Republican nominee.

"I think Biden has tried to be very strategic and it's backfired in a lot of ways," she said.

However, Southey said she'll vote for Biden "pretty much no matter what" in a matchup with Trump.

"The students who are upset, especially at these kind of universities, are smart enough to not stay home," she said. "I think that they're going to go out and vote, and they're going to go for the most strategic option, even if they're not happy for Biden. I think that they would do anything to make sure that Trump's not in office."

Democratic pollster Cornell Belcher was skeptical that campus demonstrations over Gaza would prove to be politically influential.

"What percentage of Americans are really in those narrow spaces, and how representative are they of a broader American audience, or even a broader youth audience?" he asked.

Johnston, the historian on student activism, said the current protests don't approach the size or intensity of demonstrations in the 1960s, when school officials were held hostage and campuses were vandalized.

But over the years, he said, "there's a lot of times where student protests have shaped the national debate."

Supreme Court to consider when doctors can provide emergency abortions in states with bans

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court will consider Wednesday when doctors can provide abortions during medical emergencies in states with bans enacted after the high court's sweeping decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

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The case comes from Idaho, which is one of 14 states that now ban abortion at all stages of pregnancy with limited exceptions. It marks the first time the Supreme Court has considered a state ban since Roe was reversed.

The Biden administration argues that even in states where abortion is banned, federal health care law says hospitals must be allowed to terminate pregnancies in rare emergencies where a patient's life or health is at serious risk.

Idaho contends its ban has exceptions for life-saving abortions but allowing it in more medical emergencies would turn hospitals into "abortion enclaves." The state argues the administration is misusing a health care law that is meant to ensure patients aren't turned away based on their ability to pay.

The Supreme Court has allowed the Idaho law to go into effect, even during emergencies, as the case played out.

Doctors have said Idaho's abortion ban has already affected emergency care. More women whose conditions are typically treated with abortions must now be flown out of state for care, since doctors must wait until they are close to death to provide abortions within the bounds of state law.

Meanwhile, complaints of pregnant women being turned away from U.S. emergency rooms spiked after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, according to federal documents obtained by The Associated Press.

Anti-abortion groups blame doctors for mishandling maternal emergency cases. Idaho argues the Biden administration overstates health care woes to undermine state abortion laws.

The justices also heard another abortion case this term seeking to restrict access to abortion medication. It remains pending, though the justices overall seemed skeptical of the push.

The Justice Department originally brought the case against Idaho, arguing the state's abortion law conflicts with the 1986 Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act, known as EMTALA. It requires hospitals that accept Medicare to provide emergency care to any patient regardless of their ability to pay. Nearly all hospitals accept Medicare.

A federal judge initially sided with the administration and ruled that abortions were legal in medical emergencies. After the state appealed, the Supreme Court allowed the law to go fully into effect in January.

The Supreme Court is expected to rule by the end of June.

US banning TikTok? Your key questions answered

The Associated Press undefined

No, TikTok will not suddenly disappear from your phone. Nor will you go to jail if you continue using it after it is banned.

After years of attempts to ban the Chinese-owned app, including by former President Donald Trump, a measure to outlaw the popular video-sharing app has won congressional approval and is on its way to President Biden for his signature. The measure gives Beijing-based parent company ByteDance nine months to sell the company, with a possible additional three months if a sale is in progress. If it doesn't, TikTok will be banned.

So what does this mean for you, a TikTok user, or perhaps the parent of a TikTok user? Here are some key questions and answers.

WHEN DOES THE BAN GO INTO EFFECT?

The original proposal gave ByteDance just six months to divest from its U.S. subsidiary, negotiations lengthened it to nine. Then, if the sale is already in progress, the company will get another three months to complete it.

So it would be at least a year before a ban goes into effect — but with likely court challenges, this could stretch even longer, perhaps years. TikTok has seen some success with court challenges in the past, but it has never sought to prevent federal legislation from going into effect.

WHAT IF I ALREADY DOWNLOADED IT?

TikTok, which is used by more than 170 million Americans, most likely won't disappear from your phone

even if an eventual ban does take effect. But it would disappear from Apple and Google's app stores, which means users won't be able to download it. This would also mean that TikTok wouldn't be able to send updates, security patches and bug fixes, and over time the app would likely become unusable — not to mention a security risk.

BUT SURELY THERE ARE WORKAROUNDS?

Teenagers are known for circumventing parental controls and bans when it comes to social media, so dodging the U.S. government's ban is certainly not outside the realm of possibilities. For instance, users could try to mask their location using a VPN, or virtual private network, use alternative app stores or even install a foreign SIM card into their phone.

But some tech savvy is required, and it's not clear what will and won't work. More likely, users will migrate to another platform — such as Instagram, which has a TikTok-like feature called Reels, or YouTube, which has incorporated vertical short videos in its feed to try to compete with TikTok. Often, such videos are taken directly from TikTok itself. And popular creators are likely to be found on other platforms as well, so you'll probably be able to see the same stuff.

"The TikTok bill relies heavily on the control that Apple and Google maintain over their smartphone platforms because the bill's primary mechanism is to direct Apple and Google to stop allowing the TikTok app on their respective app stores," said Dean Ball, a research fellow with the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. "Such a mechanism might be much less effective in the world envisioned by many advocates of antitrust and aggressive regulation against the large tech firms."

With public universities under threat, massive protests against austerity shake Argentina

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Raising their textbooks and diplomas and singing the national anthem, hundreds of thousands of Argentines filled the streets of Buenos Aires and other cities on Tuesday to demand increased funding for the country's public universities, in an outpouring of anger at libertarian President Javier Milei's harsh austerity measures.

The scale of the demonstration in downtown Buenos Aires appeared to exceed other massive demonstrations that have rocked the capital since Milei came to power.

Students and professors coordinated with the country's powerful trade unions and leftist political parties to push back against budget cuts that have forced Argentina's most venerable university to declare a financial emergency and warn of imminent closure.

In a sign unrest was growing in response to Milei's policies, even conservative politicians, private university administrators and right-wing TV personalities joined the march, defending the common cause of public education in Argentina that has underpinned the country's social progress for decades.

"It is historic," said Ariana Thiele Lara, a 25-year-old recent graduate protesting. "It feels like we were all united."

Describing universities as bastions of socialism where professors indoctrinate their students, Milei has tried to dismiss the university budget crisis as politics as usual.

"The cognitive dissonance that brainwashing generates in public education is tremendous," he said.

At the University of Buenos Aires, or UBA, halls went dark, elevators froze and air conditioning stopped working in some buildings last week. Professors taught 200-person lectures without microphones or projectors because the public university couldn't cover its electricity bill.

"It's an unthinkable crisis," said Valeria Añón, a 50-year-old literature professor at the university, known as UBA. "I feel sad for my students and for myself as professor and researcher."

In his drive to reach zero deficit, Milei is slashing spending across Argentina — shuttering ministries, defunding cultural centers, laying off state workers and cutting subsidies. On Monday he had something to show for it, announcing Argentina's first quarterly fiscal surplus since 2008 and promising the public the pain would pay off.

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"We are making the impossible possible even with the majority of politics, unions, the media and most economic actors against us," he said in a televised address.

On Tuesday, the footfall of protesters resounded in the city center. "Why are you so scared of public education?" banners asked. "The university will defend itself!" students shouted.

"We are trying to show the government it cannot take away our right to education," said Santiago Ciralo, a 32-year-old student in social communication protesting Tuesday. "Everything is at stake here."

Since last July, when the fiscal year began, the state has provided the University of Buenos Aires with just 8.9% of its total budget as annual inflation now hovers near 290%. The university says that's barely enough to keep lights on and provide basic services in teaching hospitals that have already cut capacity.

The university warned last week that without a rescue plan, the school would shut down in the coming months, stranding 380,000 students mid-degree. It's a shock for Argentines who consider a free and quality university education a birthright. UBA has a proud intellectual tradition, having produced five Nobel Prize winners and 17 presidents.

"I've been given access to a future, to opportunities through this university that otherwise my family and many others at our income level could never afford," said Alex Vargas, a 24-year-old economics student. "When you step back, you see how important this is for our society."

President Milei came to power last December, inheriting an economy in shambles after years of chronic overspending and suffocating international debt. Brandishing a chainsaw during his campaign to symbolize slashing the budget, he repeats a simple catchphrase to compatriots reeling from budget cuts and the peso's 50% devaluation: "There is no money."

Overall, Argentina puts 4.6% of its gross domestic product into education. Public universities are also free for international pupils, drawing legions of students from across Latin America, Spain and further afield. Critics of the system want foreign students to pay dues.

"Where I'm from, high-quality education is unfortunately a privilege, not a basic right," said Sofia Hernandez, a 21-year-old from Bogota, Colombia studying medicine at UBA. "In Argentina there is a model that I wish more countries could have."

The government said late Monday it was sending some \$24.5 million to cover maintenance costs at public universities and another \$12 million to keep medical centers operating.

"The discussion is settled," presidential spokesperson Manuel Adorni said.

University authorities disagreed, saying the promised transfer — which they still have not received — covers a fraction of what they need. For UBA, that means a 61% annual budget cut.

The teachers also need attention, said Matías Ruiz, UBA's treasury secretary. They have seen their income decline in value more than 35% in the past four months. Staff salaries can be as low as \$150 a month. Professors juggle multiple jobs to scrape by.

"We've had funding and salary freezes under previous right-wing governments but these cuts are three times worse," said Ines Aldao, a 44-year-old literature professor at UBA.

The angry students, teachers and workers snaked through the capital's streets just hours after Milei declared economic victory from his presidential palace.

"We are building a new era of prosperity in Argentina," Milei told the public, boasting that Argentina had posted a quarterly fiscal surplus of 0.2% of gross domestic product.

A huge banner hanging over downtown Buenos Aires presented a choice: Milei or public education?

Senate overwhelmingly passes aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan with big bipartisan vote

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, STEPHEN GROVES and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate has passed \$95 billion in war aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, sending the legislation to President Joe Biden after months of delays and contentious debate over how involved the United States should be in foreign wars.

The bill passed the Senate on an overwhelming 79-18 vote late Tuesday after the House had approved

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the package Saturday. Biden, who worked with congressional leaders to win support, said in a statement immediately after passage that he will sign it Wednesday and start the process of sending weapons to Ukraine, which has been struggling to hold its front lines against Russia.

"Tonight, a bipartisan majority in the Senate joined the House to answer history's call at this critical inflection point," Biden said.

The legislation would also send \$26 billion in wartime assistance to Israel and humanitarian relief to citizens of Gaza, and \$8 billion to counter Chinese threats in Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific. U.S. officials said about \$1 billion of the aid could be on its way shortly, with the bulk following in coming weeks.

In an interview with The Associated Press shortly before the vote, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said that if Congress hadn't passed the aid, "America would have paid a price economically, politically, militarily."

"Very few things we have done have risen to this level of historic importance," he said.

On the Senate floor, Schumer said the Senate was sending a message to U.S. allies: "We will stand with you."

Schumer and Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell made passage of the legislation a top priority, agreeing to tie the Ukraine and Israel aid to help ensure passage and arguing there could be dire consequences for the United States and many of its global allies if Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggression is left unchecked. They worked with House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, to overcome seemingly intractable Republican opposition to the Ukraine aid, in particular — eventually winning large majorities in both chambers.

McConnell said in a separate interview before the vote that it "is one of the biggest days in the time that I've been here."

"At least on this episode, I think we turned the tables on the isolationists," McConnell said.

In the end, 31 Republicans voted for the aid package — nine more than when the Senate passed a similar version in February, and a majority of the Senate GOP conference. The House approved the package in a series of four votes on Saturday, with the Ukraine portion passing 311-112.

The \$61 billion for Ukraine comes as the war-torn country desperately needs new firepower and as Russian President Vladimir Putin has stepped up his attacks. Ukrainian soldiers have struggled as Russia has seized the momentum on the battlefield and gained significant territory.

Biden told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday the U.S. will send badly needed air defense weaponry as soon as the legislation is passed.

"The President has assured me that the package will be approved quickly and that it will be powerful, strengthening our air defense as well as long-range and artillery capabilities," Zelenskyy said in a post on X on Monday.

In an effort to gain more votes, Republicans in the House majority also added a bill to the foreign aid package that could ban the social media app TikTok in the U.S. if its Chinese owners do not sell their stake within a year. That legislation had wide bipartisan support in both chambers.

The TikTok bill was one of several tweaks Johnson made to the package the Senate passed in February as he tried to move the bill through the House despite significant opposition within his conference. Other additions include a stipulation that \$9 billion of the economic assistance to Ukraine is in the form of "forgivable loans"; provisions that allow the U.S. to seize frozen Russian central bank assets to rebuild Ukraine; and bills to impose sanctions on Iran, Russia, China and criminal organizations that traffic fentanyl.

Those changes appears to have brought some of the nine additional Senate Republicans on board, bringing support to more than half of McConnell's conference.

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, a longtime hawk who voted against the foreign aid package in February because it wasn't paired with legislation to stem migration at the border, was one of the Republicans who switched their votes. "If we don't help Ukraine now, this war will spread, and Americans who are not involved will be involved," Graham said.

The package has had broad congressional support since Biden first requested the money last summer.

But congressional leaders had to navigate strong opposition from a growing number of conservatives who question U.S. involvement in foreign wars and argue that Congress should be focused instead on the surge of migration at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance, a Republican who is a close ally to Donald Trump, said that despite the strong showing of support for funding Ukraine's defense, opposition is growing among Republicans.

"The United States is spread too thin," Vance said, "And that argument, I think, is winning the American people and it's slowly winning the Senate, but it's not going to happen overnight."

The growing fault line in the GOP between those conservatives who are skeptical of the aid and the more traditional "Reagan Republicans" who strongly support it may prove to be career-defining for the two top Republican leaders.

McConnell, who has made the Ukraine aid a top priority, said last month that he would step down from leadership after becoming increasingly distanced from many in his conference on the Ukraine aid and other issues. Johnson, who said he put the bills on the floor after praying for guidance, faces threats of an ouster after a majority of Republicans voted against the aid to Ukraine.

Johnson said after House passage that "we did our work here, and I think history will judge it well."

Opponents in the Senate, like the House, included some left-wing senators who are opposed to aiding Israel as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has bombarded Gaza and killed thousands of civilians. Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., voted against the package.

"We must end our complicity in this terrible war," Sanders said.

Senate passes bill forcing TikTok's parent company to sell or face ban, sends to Biden for signature

By HALELUYA HADERO AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate passed legislation Tuesday that would force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform under the threat of a ban, a contentious move by U.S. lawmakers that's expected to face legal challenges and disrupt the lives of content creators who rely on the short-form video app for income.

The TikTok legislation was included as part of a larger \$95 billion package that provides foreign aid to Ukraine and Israel and was passed 79-18. It now goes to President Joe Biden, who said in a statement immediately after passage that he will sign it Wednesday.

A decision made by House Republicans last week to attach the TikTok bill to the high-priority package helped expedite its passage in Congress and came after negotiations with the Senate, where an earlier version of the bill had stalled. That version had given TikTok's parent company, ByteDance, six months to divest its stakes in the platform. But it drew skepticism from some key lawmakers concerned it was too short of a window for a complex deal that could be worth tens of billions of dollars.

The revised legislation extends the deadline, giving ByteDance nine months to sell TikTok, and a possible three-month extension if a sale is in progress. The bill would also bar the company from controlling TikTok's secret sauce: the algorithm that feeds users videos based on their interests and has made the platform a trendsetting phenomenon.

TikTok did not immediately return a request for comment Tuesday night.

The passage of the legislation is a culmination of long-held bipartisan fears in Washington over Chinese threats and the ownership of TikTok, which is used by 170 million Americans. For years, lawmakers and administration officials have expressed concerns that Chinese authorities could force ByteDance to hand over U.S. user data, or influence Americans by suppressing or promoting certain content on TikTok.

"Congress is not acting to punish ByteDance, TikTok or any other individual company," Senate Commerce Committee Chairwoman Maria Cantwell said. "Congress is acting to prevent foreign adversaries from conducting espionage, surveillance, malign operations, harming vulnerable Americans, our servicemen and women, and our U.S. government personnel."

Opponents of the bill say the Chinese government could easily get information on Americans in other

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ways, including through commercial data brokers that traffic in personal information. The foreign aid package includes a provision that makes it illegal for data brokers to sell or rent "personally identifiable sensitive data" to North Korea, China, Russia, Iran or entities in those countries. But it has encountered some pushback, including from the American Civil Liberties Union, which says the language is written too broadly and could sweep in journalists and others who publish personal information.

Many opponents of the TikTok measure argue the best way to protect U.S. consumers is through implementing a comprehensive federal data privacy law that targets all companies regardless of their origin. They also note the U.S. has not provided public evidence that shows TikTok sharing U.S. user information with Chinese authorities, or that Chinese officials have ever tinkered with its algorithm.

"Banning TikTok would be an extraordinary step that requires extraordinary justification," said Becca Branum, a deputy director at the Washington-based Center for Democracy & Technology, which advocates for digital rights. "Extending the divestiture deadline neither justifies the urgency of the threat to the public nor addresses the legislation's fundamental constitutional flaws."

Sen. Ron Wyden, a Democrat who voted for the legislation, said he has concerns about TikTok, but he's also worried the bill could have negative effects on free speech, doesn't do enough to protect consumer privacy and could potentially be abused by a future administration to violate First Amendment rights.

"I plan to watchdog how this legislation is implemented," Wyden said in a statement.

China has previously said it would oppose a forced sale of TikTok, and has signaled its opposition this time around. TikTok, which has long denied it's a security threat, is also preparing a lawsuit to block the legislation.

"At the stage that the bill is signed, we will move to the courts for a legal challenge," Michael Beckerman, TikTok's head of public policy for the Americas, wrote in a memo sent to employees on Saturday and obtained by The Associated Press.

"This is the beginning, not the end of this long process," Beckerman wrote.

The company has seen some success with court challenges in the past, but it has never sought to prevent federal legislation from going into effect.

In November, a federal judge blocked a Montana law that would ban TikTok use across the state after the company and five content creators who use the platform sued. Three years before that, federal courts blocked an executive order issued by then-President Donald Trump to ban TikTok after the company sued on the grounds that the order violated free speech and due process rights.

The Trump administration then brokered a deal that had U.S. corporations Oracle and Walmart take a large stake in TikTok. But the sale never went through.

Trump, who is running for president again this year, now says he opposes the potential ban.

Since then, TikTok has been in negotiations about its future with the secretive Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, a little-known government agency tasked with investigating corporate deals for national security concerns.

On Sunday, Erich Andersen, a top attorney for ByteDance who led talks with the U.S. government for years, told his team that he was stepping down from his role.

"As I started to reflect some months ago on the stresses of the last few years and the new generation of challenges that lie ahead, I decided that the time was right to pass the baton to a new leader," Andersen wrote in an internal memo that was obtained by the AP. He said the decision to step down was entirely his and was decided months ago in a discussion with the company's senior leaders.

Meanwhile, TikTok content creators who rely on the app have been trying to make their voices heard. Earlier Tuesday, some creators congregated in front the Capitol building to speak out against the bill and carry signs that read "I'm 1 of the 170 million Americans on TikTok," among other things.

Tiffany Cianci, a content creator who has more than 140,000 followers on the platform and had encouraged people to show up, said she spent Monday night picking up creators from airports in the D.C. area. Some came from as far as Nevada and California. Others drove overnight from South Carolina or took a bus from upstate New York.

Cianci says she believes TikTok is the safest platform for users right now because of Project Texas,

TikTok's \$1.5 billion mitigation plan to store U.S. user data on servers owned and maintained by the tech giant Oracle.

"If our data is not safe on TikTok," she said. "I would ask why the president is on TikTok."

Casey and McCormick to face each other as nominees in Pennsylvania's high-stakes US Senate contest

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Democratic Sen. Bob Casey and Republican challenger David McCormick will face each other in Pennsylvania's high-stakes U.S. Senate contest this fall, as Tuesday's primary election put the men on track for a race that is expected to cost hundreds of millions of dollars and help decide control of the Senate next year.

Casey and McCormick won their respective party primary contests after they were uncontested and now enter what is likely to be a grueling, expensive and hard-fought 2024 general election campaign that culminates in the Nov. 5 vote.

Casey, seeking his fourth term, is perhaps Pennsylvania's best-known politician and a stalwart of the presidential swing state's Democratic Party — the son of a former two-term governor and Pennsylvania's longest-ever serving Democrat in the Senate.

McCormick is a two-time Senate challenger, a former hedge fund CEO and a Pennsylvania native who spent \$14 million of his own money only to lose narrowly to celebrity heart surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz in 2022's seven-way GOP primary. Oz then lost to Democratic Sen. John Fetterman in a pivotal Senate contest.

This time around, McCormick has consolidated the party around his candidacy and is backed by a super PAC that's already reported raising more than \$20 million, much of it from securities-trading billionaires.

McCormick's candidacy is shaping up as the strongest challenge to Casey in his three reelection bids. McCormick has worked to shore up support in the GOP base, and on Tuesday night hammered his message at his election night gathering in Pittsburgh that Casey is a do-nothing senator.

"We're now turning to the general election and here's the truth: Pennsylvania deserves better than Bob Casey, You deserve better," McCormick said. "Bob Casey's defining achievement in his political life, 30 years in political office, has been to be the son of Bob Casey Sr. That is what defines his political career."

Casey, in Washington on Tuesday to cast votes in favor of \$95 billion in war aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, said on social media that "there are 196 days until the general election, and we're going to win." Meanwhile, the state Democratic Party unveiled a minute-long digital ad slamming McCormick as a "millionaire hedge fund executive who is lying to Pennsylvanians."

The Senate candidates will share a ticket with candidates for president in a state that is critical to whether Democrats can maintain control of the White House and the Senate.

President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump won their party nominations easily after all major rivals dropped out. Both men made campaign trips to swing-state Pennsylvania in recent days, and voters can expect to see plenty of them, their TV ads and their surrogates campaigning over the next six months in a state that swung from Trump in 2016 to Biden in 2020.

Of note, however, could be the number of "uncommitted" write-in votes cast in the Democratic primary to protest Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war.

In the Senate contest, Democrats have attacked McCormick's opposition to abortion rights, his frequent trips to Connecticut's ritzy "Gold Coast" where he keeps a family home, and the focus on investing in China during his dozen years as an executive at the hedge fund Bridgewater Associates, including as CEO.

Casey has been a key player for Democrats trying to reframe the election-year narrative about the economy by attacking "greedflation" — a blunt term for corporations that jack up prices and rip off shoppers to maximize profits — as fast-rising prices over the past three years have opened a big soft spot in 2024 for Democrats. Indications that the U.S. economy avoided a recession amid efforts to manage inflation have yet to translate into voter enthusiasm for Biden.

McCormick, meanwhile, has accused Casey of rubber-stamping harmful immigration, economic, energy

and national security policies of Biden, and made a bid for Jewish voters by traveling to the Israel-Gaza border and arguing that Biden hasn't backed Israel strongly enough in the Israel-Hamas war.

Casey is one of Biden's strongest allies in Congress. McCormick and Trump have endorsed each other, but are an awkward duo atop the GOP's ticket after Trump savaged McCormick in 2022's primary in a successful bid to lift Oz to his primary win.

Democrats currently hold a Senate majority by the narrowest of margins, but face a difficult 2024 Senate map that requires them to defend incumbents in the red states of Montana and Ohio and fight for open seats with new candidates in Michigan and West Virginia.

A Casey loss could guarantee Republican control of the Senate.

Elsewhere on the ballot Tuesday, Pennsylvanians decided nominees for an open attorney general's office and two other statewide offices — treasurer and auditor general — plus all 17 of the state's U.S. House seats.

For attorney general, Republicans nominated Dave Sunday, York County's district attorney, in a two-way race while Democrats nominated former state Auditor General Eugene DePasquale of Pittsburgh in a five-person primary field.

Democrats also nominated Erin McClelland, a two-time congressional candidate in suburban Pittsburgh who has helped run various human services organizations, to challenge Republican state Treasurer Stacy Garrity, and they nominated state Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta of Philadelphia to challenge Republican state Auditor General Tim DeFoor. McClelland prevailed despite being heavily outspent by her party-endorsed rival.

For Congress, 44 candidates were on ballots, including all 17 incumbents. All three incumbents facing primary challengers — Republican Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick in suburban Philadelphia and Democratic Reps. Dwight Evans in Philadelphia and Summer Lee in a Pittsburgh-based district — won their races.

Lee's primary against challenger Bhavini Patel has shaped up as an early test of whether Israel's war with Gaza poses political threats to progressive Democrats in Congress who have criticized how it has been handled.

Republicans nominated state Rep. Ryan Mackenzie in a three-way race to challenge Democratic Rep. Susan Wild, whose Allentown-based district is closely politically divided, while Democrats nominated former TV news personality Janelle Stelson from among six candidates to challenge Republican Rep. Scott Perry in a Republican-leaning district in southern Pennsylvania.

Perry has become a national figure for heading up the ultra-right House Freedom Caucus during a speakership battle and his efforts to help Trump stay in power after losing the 2020 presidential election.

Tabloid publisher says he pledged to be Trump campaign's 'eyes and ears' during 2016 race

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, JENNIFER PELTZ, ERIC TUCKER and JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press
NEW YORK (AP) — A veteran tabloid publisher testified Tuesday that he pledged to be Donald Trump's "eyes and ears" during his 2016 presidential campaign, recounting how he promised the then-candidate that he would help suppress harmful stories and even arranged to purchase the silence of a doorman.

The testimony from David Pecker was designed to bolster the prosecution's premise of a decades-long friendship between Trump and the former publisher of the National Enquirer that culminated in an agreement to give the candidate's lawyer a heads-up on negative tips and stories so they could be quashed.

The effort was a way to illegally influence the election, prosecutors have alleged in striving to elevate the gravity of the history-making first trial of a former American president and the first of four criminal cases against Trump to reach a jury. The presumptive Republican presidential nominee in this year's race faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in connection with hush money payments meant to stifle embarrassing stories from surfacing in the final days of the 2016 campaign.

With Trump sitting just feet away in the courtroom, Pecker, the first witness, detailed his behind-the-scenes role in Trump's rise from political novice to the Republican nomination and the White House. He explained how he and the National Enquirer parlayed rumor-mongering into splashy tabloid stories that

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smearing Trump's opponents and, just as crucially, leveraged his connections to suppress seamy stories about Trump, including a porn actor's claim of an extramarital sexual encounter years earlier.

Pecker traced the origins of their relationship to a 1980s meeting at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, and said the friendship bloomed alongside the success of the real estate developer's TV show "The Apprentice" and the program's subsequent celebrity version.

Their ties were solidified during a pivotal August 2015 meeting at Trump Tower involving Trump, his lawyer and personal fixer Michael Cohen, and another aide, Hope Hicks, in which Pecker was asked what he and the publications he led could do for the campaign.

Pecker said he volunteered to publish positive stories about Trump and negative stories about his opponents. But that wasn't all, he said, telling jurors how he told Trump: "I will be your eyes and ears."

"I said that anything I hear in the marketplace, if I hear anything negative about yourself, or if I hear anything about women selling stories, I would notify Michael Cohen," so that the rights could be purchased and the stories could be killed.

"So that they would not get published, you mean?" asked prosecutor Joshua Steinglass.

"So that they would not get published, yes" Pecker replied.

To illustrate their point, prosecutors displayed a screenshot of various flattering headlines the National Enquirer published about Trump, including "Donald Dominates!" and "World Exclusive: The Donald Trump Nobody Knows." The jury was also shown disparaging and outlandish stories about Trump's opponents, including surgeon Ben Carson and Republican Sen. Marco Rubio.

Pecker painted Cohen as a shadow editor of the National Enquirer's pro-Trump coverage, directing the tabloid to go after whichever Republican candidate was gaining momentum.

"I would receive a call from Michael Cohen, and he would direct me and direct Dylan Howard on which candidate and which direction we should go," Pecker said, referring to the tabloid's then-editor.

Pecker said he underscored to Howard that the agreement with the Trump operation was "highly, highly confidential." He said he wanted the tabloid's bureau chiefs to be on the lookout for any stories involving Trump and said he wanted them to verify the stories before alerting Cohen.

"I did not want anyone else to know about this agreement I had and what I wanted to do," the ex-publisher added.

Cohen pleaded guilty in 2018 to federal charges related to his role in the hush money payments. He was once a confidant of Trump's, but their relationship deteriorated in spectacular fashion. Cohen is expected to be a star government witness, and he routinely posts profane broadsides against Trump on social media.

Trump's lawyers are expected to make attacks on Cohen's credibility a foundation of their defense, but in opening with Pecker, prosecutors hoped to focus attention on a witness with a less volatile backstory. Besides maintaining that Trump is innocent, Trump lawyer Todd Blanche told jurors that Cohen cannot be trusted and has "an obsession with getting Trump."

Pecker's testimony Tuesday followed a hearing earlier in the day in which prosecutors urged Judge Juan M. Merchan to hold Trump in contempt and fine him \$1,000 for each of 10 social media posts that they say violated an earlier gag order barring attacks on witnesses, jurors and others involved in the case.

Merchan did not immediately rule, but he seemed skeptical of defense arguments that Trump was merely responding in his posts to others' attacks and had been trying to comply with the order.

Prosecutors allege that Trump sought to illegally influence the 2016 race through a practice known in the tabloid industry as "catch-and-kill" — catching a potentially damaging story by buying the rights to it and then killing it through agreements that prevent the paid person from telling the story to anyone else.

In this case, that included a \$130,000 payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels to silence her claims of an extramarital sexual encounter that Trump denies. Prosecutors also described other arrangements, including one that paid a former Playboy model \$150,000 to suppress claims of a nearly yearlong affair with the married Trump, which Trump also denies.

In another instance, Pecker recounted a \$30,000 payment from the National Enquirer to a Trump Tower doorman for the rights to a rumor that Trump had fathered a child with an employee at Trump World Tower.

The tabloid concluded the story was not true, and the woman and Trump have denied the allegations. As Pecker described receiving the tip in court, Trump shook his head.

Pecker said upon hearing the rumor, he immediately called Cohen, who said it was "absolutely not true" but that he would look into whether the people involved had indeed worked for Trump's company.

"I made the decision to buy the story because of the potential embarrassment it had to the campaign and Mr. Trump," Pecker said.

When he told Cohen, Pecker said he thanked him, "And he said that the boss would be very pleased."

Asked by the prosecutor who he understood the boss to be, Pecker replied: "Donald Trump."

Explaining why he decided to have the National Enquirer foot the bill, Pecker recalled telling Cohen: "This can be a very big story. I believe it's important that it be removed from the marketplace."

If he published the story, Pecker said it would be "probably the biggest sale of the National Enquirer since the death of Elvis Presley."

Jurors viewed an internal Enquirer email and invoice describing the payments to the doorman to kill his story. One document describes the funds coming from the publication's "corporate" account. An invoice references an "immediate" \$30,000 bank transfer payment for "'Trump' non-published story."

Trump's 34 felony counts arise from reimbursements that prosecutors say Trump's company made to Cohen for hush money payments and that were falsely recorded as legal expenses.

The charges are punishable by up to four years in prison, though it's unclear whether Merchan would seek to put him behind bars. A conviction would not preclude Trump from becoming president again, but because it is a state case, he would not be able to pardon himself if found guilty. He has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

Testimony resumes on Thursday.

UN calls for investigation into mass graves uncovered at two Gaza hospitals raided by Israel

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Nations called Tuesday for "a clear, transparent and credible investigation" of mass graves uncovered at two major hospitals in war-torn Gaza that were raided by Israeli troops.

Credible investigators must have access to the sites, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters, and added that more journalists need to be able to work safely in Gaza to report on the facts.

Earlier Tuesday, U.N. human rights chief Volker Türk said he was "horrified" by the destruction of the Shifa medical center in Gaza City and Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis as well as the reported discovery of mass graves in and around the facilities after the Israelis left.

He called for independent and transparent investigations into the deaths, saying that "given the prevailing climate of impunity, this should include international investigators."

"Hospitals are entitled to very special protection under international humanitarian law," Türk said. "And the intentional killing of civilians, detainees and others who are 'hors de combat' (incapable of engaging in combat) is a war crime."

U.S. State Department spokesman Vedant Patel on Tuesday called the reports of mass graves at the hospitals "incredibly troubling" and said U.S. officials have asked the Israeli government for information.

The Israeli military said its forces exhumed bodies that Palestinians had buried earlier as part of its search for the remains of hostages captured by Hamas during its Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war. The military said bodies were examined in a respectful manner and those not belonging to Israeli hostages were returned to their place.

The Israeli military says it killed or detained hundreds of militants who had taken shelter inside the two hospital complexes, claims that could not be independently verified.

The Palestinian civil defense in the Gaza Strip said Monday that it had uncovered 283 bodies from a temporary burial ground inside the main hospital in Khan Younis that was built when Israeli forces were

besieging the facility last month. At the time, people were not able to bury the dead in a cemetery and dug graves in the hospital yard, the group said.

The civil defense said some of the bodies were of people killed during the hospital siege. Others were killed when Israeli forces raided the hospital.

Palestinian health officials say the hospital raids have destroyed Gaza's health sector as it tries to cope with the mounting toll from over six months of war.

The issue of who could or should conduct an investigation remains in question.

For the United Nations to conduct an investigation, one of its major bodies would have to authorize it, Dujarric said.

"I think it's not for anyone to prejudge the results or who would do it," he said. "I think it needs to be an investigation where there is access and there is credibility."

The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, said after visiting Israel and the West Bank in December that a probe by the court into possible crimes by Hamas militants and Israeli forces "is a priority for my office."

The discovery of the graves "is another reason why we need a cease-fire, why we need to see an end to this conflict, why we need to see greater access for humanitarians, for humanitarian goods, greater protection for hospitals" and for the release of Israeli hostages, Dujarric said Monday.

In the Hamas attack that launched the war, militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250 hostages. Israel says the militants are still holding around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

In response, Israel's air and ground offensive in Gaza, aimed at eliminating Hamas, has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, around two-thirds of them children and women. It has devastated Gaza's two largest cities, created a humanitarian crisis and led around 80% of the territory's population to flee to other parts of the besieged coastal enclave.

Tesla 1Q profit falls 55%, but stock jumps as company moves to speed production of cheaper vehicles

By TOM KRISHER and DAVID HAMILTON AP Business Writers

Tesla's first-quarter net income plummeted 55%, but its stock price surged in after-hours trading Tuesday as the company said it would accelerate production of new, more affordable vehicles.

The Austin, Texas, company said it made \$1.13 billion from January through March compared with \$2.51 billion in the same period a year ago.

Investors and analysts were looking for some sign that Tesla will take steps to stem its stock's slide this year and grow sales. The company did that in a letter to investors Tuesday, saying that production of smaller, more affordable models will start ahead of previous guidance.

The smaller models, which apparently include the Model 2 small car that is expected to cost around \$25,000, will use new generation vehicle underpinnings and some features of current models. The company said it would be built on the same manufacturing lines as its current products.

On a conference call with analysts, CEO Elon Musk said he expects production to start in the second half of next year "if not late this year."

New factories or massive new production lines won't be needed for the new vehicles, Musk said.

"This update may result in achieving less cost reduction than previously expected but enables us to prudently grow our vehicle volumes in a more capex efficient manner during uncertain times," the investor letter said.

But Musk gave few specifics on just what the new vehicles will be and whether they would be variants of current models. "I think we've said all we will on that front," he told an analyst.

He did say that he expects Tesla to sell more vehicles this year than last year's 1.8 million.

The company also appears to be counting on a vehicle built to be a fully autonomous robotaxi as the catalyst for future earnings growth. Musk has said the robotaxi will be unveiled on Aug. 8.

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Shares of Tesla rose 11% in trading after Tuesday's closing bell, but they are down more than 40% this year. The S&P 500 index is up about 5% for the year.

Morningstar analyst Seth Goldstein said the company gave guidance about its future that was clearer than in the past, allaying investor concerns about production of the Model 2 and future growth. "I think for now we're likely to see the stock stabilize," he said. "I think Tesla provided an outlook today that can make investors feel more assured that management is righting the ship."

But if sales fall again in the second quarter, the guidance will go out the window and concerns will return, he said.

Tesla reported that first-quarter revenue was \$21.3 billion, down 9% from last year as worldwide sales dropped nearly 9% due to increased competition and slowing demand for electric vehicles.

Excluding one-time items such as stock-based compensation, Tesla made 45 cents per share, falling short of analyst estimates of 49 cents, according to FactSet.

The company's gross profit margin, the percentage of revenue it gets to keep after expenses, fell once again to 17.4%. A year ago it was 19.3%, and it peaked at 29.1% in the first quarter of 2022.

Over the weekend, Tesla lopped \$2,000 off the price of the Models Y, S and X in the U.S. and reportedly made cuts in other countries including China as global electric vehicle sales growth slowed. It also slashed the cost of "Full Self Driving" by one third to \$8,000.

Tesla also announced last week that it would cut 10% of its 140,000 employees, and Chief Financial Officer Vaibhav Taneja said Tuesday the cuts will be across the board. Growth companies build up duplication that needs to be pruned like a tree to continue growing, he said.

Musk has been touting the robotaxi as a growth catalyst for Tesla since the hardware for it went on sale late in 2015.

In 2019, Musk promised a fleet of autonomous robotaxis by 2020 that would bring income to Tesla owners and make their car values appreciate. Instead, they've declined with price cuts, as the autonomous robotaxis have been delayed year after year while being tested by owners as the company gathers road data for its computers.

Neither Musk nor other Tesla executives on Tuesday's call would specify when they expect Tesla vehicles to drive themselves as well as humans do. Instead, Musk touted the latest version of Tesla's autonomous driving software — which the company misleadingly brands as "Full Self Driving" despite the fact that it still requires human supervision — and said that "it's only a matter of time before we exceed the reliability of humans, and not much time at that."

It didn't take the Tesla CEO long to begin expounding on the possibility of turning on self-driving capabilities for millions of Tesla vehicles at once, although again without estimating when that might actually occur. He went on to insist that "if somebody doesn't believe that Tesla is going to solve autonomy, I think they should not be an investor in the company."

Early last year the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration made Tesla recall its "Full Self-Driving" system because it can misbehave around intersections and doesn't always follow speed limits. Tesla's less-sophisticated Autopilot system also was recalled to bolster its driver monitoring system.

Some experts don't think any system that relies solely on cameras like Tesla's can ever reach full autonomy.

It began with defiance at Columbia. Now students nationwide are upping their Gaza war protests

By NICK PERRY and KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — What began last week when Columbia University students refused to end their protest against Israel's war with Hamas had turned into a much larger movement by Tuesday as students across the nation set up encampments, occupied buildings and ignored demands to leave.

Protests had been bubbling for months but kicked into a higher gear after more than 100 pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had camped out on Columbia's upper Manhattan campus were arrested Thursday.

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Dozens more protesters have been arrested at other campuses since, and many now face charges of trespassing or disorderly conduct.

With tensions at Columbia continuing to run high and some students afraid to set foot on the campus, officials said the Ivy League school will switch to hybrid learning for the rest of the semester, which will be finished by the end of next week.

At nearby New York University, police said 133 protesters were taken into custody late Monday and all had been released with summonses to appear in court on disorderly conduct charges. New York City Mayor Eric Adams said police officers were hit with bottles and other objects at some of this week's protests.

In Connecticut, police arrested 60 protesters — including 47 students — Monday at Yale University, after they refused to leave an encampment on a plaza at the center of campus.

Yale President Peter Salovey said protesters had declined an offer to end the demonstration and meet with trustees. After several warnings, school officials determined "the situation was no longer safe," so police cleared the encampment and made arrests.

In the Midwest on Tuesday, a demonstration at the center of the University of Michigan campus had grown to nearly 40 tents, and nine anti-war protesters at the University of Minnesota were arrested after police took down an encampment in front of the library. Hundreds rallied to the Minnesota campus in the afternoon to demand their release.

On the West Coast, California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, announced that its campus would be closed through Wednesday after demonstrators occupied a building Monday night. Three protesters were arrested. Classes were to be conducted remotely, the school said on its website.

Since the war in Gaza began, colleges and universities have struggled to balance safety with free speech rights. Many long tolerated protests but are now doling out more heavy-handed discipline.

Harvard University in Massachusetts has tried to stay a step ahead of protests by locking most gates into its famed Harvard Yard and limiting access to those with school identification. The school has also posted signs that warn against setting up tents or tables on campus without permission.

Literature Ph.D. student Christian Deleon said he understood why the Harvard administration may be trying to avoid protests but said there still has to be a place for students to express what they think.

"We should all be able to use these kinds of spaces to protest, to make our voices heard," he said.

Ben Wizner, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union, said college leaders faced extremely tough decisions because they had a responsibility to ensure people could express their views, even when others found them offensive.

"But they also need to protect students from targeted harassment, threats and intimidation," he said. "And sometimes that line can seem like a gray one."

The New York Civil Liberties Union cautioned universities against being too quick to call in law enforcement in a statement Tuesday.

"Officials should not conflate criticism of Israel with antisemitism or use hate incidents as a pretext to silence political views they oppose," said Donna Lieberman, the group's executive director.

Leo Auerbach, a student at the University of Michigan, said the differing stances on the war hadn't led to his feeling unsafe on campus but he has been fearful of the "hateful rhetoric and antisemitic sentiment being echoed."

"If we're trying to create an inclusive community on campus, there needs to be constructive dialogue between groups," Auerbach said. "And right now, there's no dialogue that is occurring."

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, physics senior Hannah Didehbandi said protesters were inspired by those at Columbia.

"Right now there are several professors on campus who are getting direct research funding from Israel's ministry of defense," she said. "We've been calling for MIT to cut those research ties."

Protesters at the University of California, Berkeley, which had an encampment of about 30 tents Tuesday, were also inspired by Columbia's demonstrators, "who we consider to be the heart of the student movement," said law student Malak Afaneh.

Columbia President Minouche Shafik said in a message to the school community Monday that she was “deeply saddened” by what was happening on the campus, where some Jewish students say the criticism of Israel has veered into antisemitism.

U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson planned a trip to visit Jewish students at the university on Wednesday and address antisemitism on college campuses in a press conference.

Columbia has a history of protest, most notably in 1968, when hundreds of students angry about racism and the Vietnam War occupied five campus buildings. After a week, a thousand police officers swept in and cleared them out, making 700 arrests. The Associated Press reported at the time that 100 students and 15 police officers were injured.

Campus protests began after Hamas’ deadly attack on southern Israel, when militants killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took roughly 250 hostages. During the ensuing war, Israel has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, according to the local health ministry, which doesn’t distinguish between combatants and noncombatants but says at least two-thirds of the dead are children and women.

United Methodists open first top-level conference since breakup over LGBTQ inclusion

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

Thousands of United Methodists are gathering in Charlotte, North Carolina, for their big denominational meeting, known as General Conference.

It’s a much-anticipated gathering. Typically it is held every four years, but church leaders delayed the 2020 gathering until now due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, the 11-day gathering runs from April 23 to May 3. Among those assembling are hundreds of voting delegates — the United Methodists from across the globe who were elected to represent their regional church body — though as many as one-quarter of international delegates are not confirmed as able to attend. The delegates, half clergy and half lay Methodists, are the decision makers at General Conference.

WHAT HAPPENS AT GENERAL CONFERENCE?

General Conference — the only entity that can speak for the entire denomination — is a business meeting where delegates set policy, pass budgets and address other church-wide matters. It’s the only body that can amend the United Methodist Book of Discipline, which includes church law. It also includes Social Principles, which are non-binding declarations on social and ethical issues. There’s worship and fellowship, too.

IS THERE SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT THIS YEAR’S MEETING?

Yes. This will be the first General Conference since more than 7,600 mostly conservative congregations left the United Methodist Church between 2019 and 2023 because the denomination essentially stopped enforcing its bans on same-sex marriage and having “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” serving as clergy and bishops.

WILL THE GENERAL CONFERENCE LIFT THOSE LGBTQ-RELATED BANS THIS YEAR?

It’s possible. The delegates in Charlotte are expected to vote on whether to eliminate them. Similar efforts have failed in years past, but with the election of more progressive delegates and the departure of many conservatives, supporters of removing the bans are optimistic.

WHAT OTHER KEY ISSUES ARE UP FOR CONSIDERATION?

— Disaffiliations: The rules that allowed U.S. congregations to leave between 2019 and 2023. It allowed them to leave with their properties, held in trust for the denomination, under friendlier-than-normal legal terms. Some want similar conditions for international churches and for U.S. churches that missed the 2023 deadline.

— Regionalization: A proposal to restructure the denomination into regional conferences around the world, rather than having distinct names for U.S. and other jurisdictions. It would define the role of regions more precisely and put American congregations into their own regional body. Under this proposal, all regions

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would be able to adapt church policies to their local contexts, including those on marriage and ordination. —Budgets: Because of all the disaffiliations, the conference will vote on a much-reduced budget proposal for the coming years.

HOW IS THE CONFERENCE STARTING OFF?

New York Area Bishop Thomas Bickerton, president of the denomination's Council of Bishops, addressed the recent schism head-on in feisty remarks during Tuesday's opening worship, which included music and Communion.

Bickerton spoke of his recent visit to a Texas conference that had lost more than half its congregations and said those remaining were committed to rebuilding the church. He said those at the General Conference should be doing the same – not continuing the controversy.

"Are you committed to the revitalization of the United Methodist Church?" Bickerton said to applause. "Are you here to work for a culture marked by compassion, courage, and companionship? ... If you can't agree to that, what are you doing here anyway? Maybe, just maybe, you're in the wrong place."

He alluded to criticism of the denomination during the disaffiliation debates and said it was holding on to its core beliefs.

"Don't you tell us that we don't believe in Scripture," he said. "Don't you tell us that we don't believe in the doctrine of the church. And Lord have mercy, don't tell us that we don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. ... We have got to rebuild the church and we've got to do it together."

WHERE ARE THE DELEGATES COMING FROM?

Though thousands of Methodists will be attending the conference, there are only 862 official voting delegates, from the following regions of the church:

- 55.9% from the U.S.
- 32% from Africa
- 6% from the Philippines
- 4.6% from Europe
- 1.5% from concordant (affiliated) churches

WILL THEY ALL BE THERE?

No. As of last week, only about three-quarters of international delegates were confirmed as able to attend, the Commission on the General Conference reported Thursday. The other quarter includes 27 delegates unable to get visas or passports, others who couldn't attend for various reasons, and 62 delegates still unconfirmed. African groups have strongly criticized denominational officials, faulting them for delays in providing necessary paperwork and information and raising questions about whether African conferences will accept voting results from the conference.

However, denominational officials defended their work Tuesday, telling the General Conference that visa requirements are stricter than in the past, that some regional conferences hadn't followed correct procedures in sending reserve delegates — and that some would-be delegates received invitations sent by "an unauthorized person or people." Delegates now must wear picture badges amid heightened scrutiny that their credentials are authentic. The conference overwhelmingly approved a resolution "to make every effort to listen to and carefully consider voices from regions that are underrepresented."

HOW ARE CONGREGATIONS PREPARING?

That varies widely, but those long active in the movement to repeal LGBTQ bans are focused strongly on the conference. First United Methodist Church in Pittsburgh, for example, held a commissioning service on April 14 for three members attending the conference in varying capacities. "It will be deeply meaningful for me personally to vote for those changes," said member Tracy Merrick, who will be a delegate.

WHAT ARE UNITED METHODISTS, ANYWAY?

They're part of a larger worldwide family of Methodists and other groups in the tradition of 18th century British Protestant revivalist John Wesley, who emphasized evangelism, holy living and social service. They hold many beliefs in common with other Christians, with some distinct doctrines. United Methodists traditionally ranged from liberal to conservative. They were until recently the third largest and most wide-

spread U.S. denomination. Methodist missionaries planted churches worldwide, which grew dramatically, especially in Africa. Some became independent, but churches on four continents remain part of the United Methodist Church.

HOW MANY UNITED METHODISTS ARE THERE?

5.4 million in the United States as of 2022, but that will decline significantly due to 2023 disaffiliations.

4.6 million in Africa, Asia and Europe. That's lower than earlier estimates but reflects more recent denominational reports.

The Latest | Tent compound rises in southern Gaza as Israel prepares for Rafah offensive

By The Associated Press undefined

Satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press appear to show a new compound of tents being built near Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip as the Israeli military signals that it plans an offensive on the city of Rafah.

Khan Younis has been targeted by repeated Israeli military operations over recent weeks. Israel has said it plans to evacuate civilians from Rafah during an anticipated offensive on the southern city, where hundreds of thousands of people have taken refuge during the war, now in its seventh month.

A Palestinian health official later said the tent camp was being set up to house displaced people who are currently sheltering in a hospital and is not related to any impending military operation. Its presence underscores the struggle to find shelter in Gaza, where some 80% of people have fled their homes. More than half of the territory's population of 2.3 million have sought refuge in Rafah.

On Monday, a failed rocket strike was launched at a base housing U.S.-led coalition forces at Rumalyn, Syria, marking the first time since Feb. 4 that Iranian-backed militias have attacked a U.S. facility in Iraq or Syria, a U.S. defense official said. No personnel were injured in the attack, and no group has claimed responsibility.

The conflict has led to regional unrest, pitting Israel and the U.S. against Iran and allied militant groups across the Middle East. Israel and Iran traded fire directly this month, raising fears of all-out regional war.

The Israel-Hamas war was sparked by the unprecedented Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel in which the militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250 hostages. Israel says the militants are still holding around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

The war in Gaza has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, around two-thirds of them children and women. It has devastated Gaza's two largest cities and left a swath of destruction. Around 80% of the territory's population has fled to other parts of the besieged coastal enclave.

The U.S. Senate could pass a \$26 billion aid package as soon as Tuesday that includes around \$9 billion in humanitarian assistance for Gaza, which experts say is on the brink of famine, as well as billions for Israel. President Joe Biden has promised to sign it immediately.

Currently:

- Satellite photos suggest Iran air defense radar struck during apparent Israeli attack on Isfahan
- Students across the United States are upping their Gaza war protests
- A legal challenge over the UK's role in arms sales to Israel will go ahead
- Google fires more workers who protested its deal with Israel
- Dutch intelligence sees the wars in Gaza and Ukraine as triggers for terrorist threats

Here is the latest:

UNRWA CHIEF SAYS CAMPAIGN AGAINST ITS OPERATIONS IS UNPRECEDENTED

UNITED NATIONS — The head of the U.N. agency helping Palestinian refugees says it has never been under as sustained an attack as it is now in an Israeli campaign to dismantle its activities in Gaza and possibly elsewhere in the Mideast.

In UNRWA's 75-year history, it has experienced "absolutely nothing comparable" to the "ferocity" and scope of the current campaign against its Gaza operations, Philippe Lazzarini told reporters Tuesday.

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It is happening even as many donors have suspended contributions to UNRWA after Israel alleged that 12 employees of the agency participated in the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks in southern Israel, he said. The U.N.'s internal watchdog is investigating those allegations.

ISRAELI STRIKE ON LEBANON HOME KILLS WOMAN AND CHILD

BEIRUT — An Israeli strike on a house in south Lebanon on Tuesday left a woman and a 10-year-old girl dead and six other people, state media and hospital officials said.

It was not clear what the intended target of the strike in the town of Hanin was. Israeli officials did not immediately comment.

Earlier Tuesday, an Israeli strike on a car in the Lebanese town of Adloun killed a Hezbollah official whom the Israeli army described as a "significant" operative in Hezbollah's aerial defense unit.

In response, Hezbollah said it had launched an attack on an Israeli base near the city of Acre, considerably farther south than the areas it usually strikes. The Israeli military said in a statement that it had "successfully intercepted two suspicious aerial targets off the northern coast."

The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and allied groups have been clashing with Israeli forces along the border for more than six months against the backdrop of Israel's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

More than 300 people have been killed by Israeli strikes in Lebanon during that time, including about 50 civilians.

UN OFFICIAL 'HORRIFIED' BY DESTRUCTION OF 2 HOSPITALS

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations' top human rights official says he is "horrified" by the destruction of two major hospitals raided by Israeli troops in Gaza.

Volker Türk also expressed concern about the reported discovery of mass graves in and around the Shifa medical center in Gaza City and Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis.

In a statement issued Tuesday, he called for independent and transparent investigations into the deaths, saying that "given the prevailing climate of impunity, this should include international investigators."

The Israeli military said its forces were searching for the remains of hostages captured by Hamas during its Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war when they exhumed bodies that Palestinians had buried. The military said bodies were examined in a respectful manner and returned to their place.

The Israeli military says it killed or detained hundreds of militants who had taken shelter inside the two hospital complexes, claims that could not be independently verified.

Palestinian health officials say the raids have destroyed Gaza's health sector as it deals with the mounting toll from more than six months of war.

HAMAS' MILITARY WING SAYS TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR A HOSTAGE DEAL

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — The spokesman for Hamas' armed wing says time is running out for reaching a deal to release hostages held by the militant group.

The spokesman, known as Abu Obeida, said in a video statement carried by the Al Jazeera network on Tuesday that "the ball is in the court" of Israel, but that "time grows short and the opportunities are dwindling."

He suggested the hostages could meet the same fate as Ron Arad. The Israeli airman is still missing after being captured by militants in Lebanon in 1986.

Hamas captured around 250 hostages during its wide-ranging assault into Israel on Oct. 7, in which militants also killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians. The attack triggered the war in Gaza, which has killed over 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials.

Hamas and other militants are still believed to be holding around 100 hostages and the remains of around 30 others. Most of the other hostages were freed in November in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners.

The United States, Qatar and Egypt have spent months trying to broker another cease-fire and hostage release. Those talks have stalled, with Hamas demanding an end to the war and Israel vowing to continue its offensive until it destroys the militant group.

Abu Obeida struck a defiant tone in the video statement, saying "the enemy has not achieved anything in the last 200 days except for massacres, destruction and killing."

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IRELAND'S FOREIGN MINISTER CONDEMNS BOMBING OF GAZA

CAIRO — Ireland's top diplomat has condemned Israel's "indiscriminate bombing of Gaza," saying the civilian toll of its war against Hamas is "unacceptable."

Speaking in a joint news conference with his Egyptian counterpart in Cairo on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Micheál Martin said the killing of women and children is "unconscionable."

He mentioned an airstrike over the weekend on Gaza's southern city of Rafah that killed 17 children and two women from the same extended family.

"The women and children that are being killed. It's unconscionable," he said. "It's very difficult for me personally as a human being to comprehend that level of barbarity, there can be no justification for it, in my view."

The minister called for a cease-fire, the release of all hostages captured by Hamas in its Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war, and flooding the strip with humanitarian aid.

It's "unacceptable that hostages are taken in this manner," he said. "And again, we have consistently condemned the taking of hostages."

HEZBOLLAH SAYS IT TARGETED AN ISRAELI BASE IN RESPONSE TO THE KILLING OF ITS OFFICIAL

BEIRUT — The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah said Tuesday afternoon it had launched an attack on an Israeli base near the city of Acre, considerably farther south than the areas it usually targets, in response to an Israeli airstrike that killed one of its officials.

The Israeli military said in a statement earlier Tuesday that it had killed Hussein Ali Azqul in an airstrike in south Lebanon and described him as a "significant" operative in Hezbollah's aerial defense unit. Hezbollah confirmed in a statement that Azqul had been killed.

State media and witnesses said the strike happened in the area of Adloun, between the coastal cities of Sidon and Tyre, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of the border with Israel.

The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and allied groups have been clashing with Israeli forces along the border for more than six months against the backdrop of Israel's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has regularly carried out targeted killings of Hezbollah and Hamas members in Lebanon, sometimes in areas far from the border.

Hezbollah said the strike it launched was "in response to the Israeli aggression on the town of Adloun" and the "assassination" of Azqul. It said the strike targeted a location about 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the border and was the deepest it had launched since the outbreak of the war.

The Israeli military said in a statement that it had "successfully intercepted two suspicious aerial targets off the northern coast."

A PALESTINIAN IS FATALLY SHOT IN THE WEST BANK

JERICHO, West Bank — Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian man early Tuesday in the West Bank city of Jericho, an eyewitness and Palestinian officials said.

The Palestinian Health Ministry identified the man as Shadi Jalaita, 44, and said he suffered a fatal gunshot wound to the chest.

His uncle, Shafiq Jalaita, said the man had been outside of his home watching an Israeli military raid taking place at a neighbor's house in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Suddenly, three gunshots rang out, he said.

"The third bullet hit his chest and came out of his back," Jalaita said.

The Israeli army has not commented on the shooting.

The Health Ministry said a child also was shot in the stomach in Jericho and was in critical condition. No further details were available.

Violence has surged in the West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war broke out on Oct. 7. Since then, at least 487 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the territory, the Ramallah-based Health Ministry said.

QATAR SAYS IT NEEDS TO SEE 'SERIOUSNESS' IN ISRAEL-HAMAS TALKS

DOHA, Qatar — Qatar is in a "reevaluation phase" when it comes to trying to mediate talks between Israel and Hamas over a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip.

"We need to see seriousness from everyone," Majed al-Ansari, a spokesman for Qatar's Foreign Ministry,

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told a news conference Tuesday.

He also said discussions were ongoing about Hamas' ongoing presence in Qatar.

The militant group has had a political office in Doha, Qatar, for years, but the Wall Street Journal has reported in recent days that Hamas could leave the country as the talks remain deadlocked. Hamas has denied that the group was considering leaving Qatar.

— Associated Press writer Lujain Jo contributed to this report.

UN RIGHTS CHIEF RENEWS WARNING AGAINST RAFAH OFFENSIVE

The United Nations' human rights chief is renewing a warning against a large-scale Israeli offensive in the city of Rafah and decrying recent Israeli strikes on the city.

Volker Türk, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, said that a large incursion into Rafah "would risk more deaths, injuries and displacement on a large scale – even further atrocity crimes, for which those responsible would be held accountable," his office said in a statement.

Türk deplored three strikes in Rafah in recent days that reportedly killed mostly women and children. He said that "the world's leaders stand united on the imperative of protecting the civilian population trapped in Rafah."

Israel has carried out near-daily air raids on Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million has sought refuge. It has also vowed to expand its ground offensive against the Hamas militant group to the city on the border with Egypt despite calls for restraint, including from the U.S.

AN ISRAELI STRIKE KILLS A HEZBOLLAH OFFICIAL

BEIRUT — An Israeli airstrike on a car in southern Lebanon on Tuesday killed a Hezbollah official.

The Israeli military said in a statement that it had killed Hussein Ali Azqul in the strike and described him as a "significant" operative in Hezbollah's aerial defense unit. Hezbollah confirmed in a statement that Azqul had been killed.

State media and witnesses said the strike happened in the area of Adloun, between the coastal cities of Sidon and Tyre, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of the border with Israel.

The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and allied groups have been clashing with Israeli forces along the border for more than six months against the backdrop of Israel's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has regularly carried out targeted killings of Hezbollah and Hamas members in Lebanon, sometimes in areas far from the border.

GAZA HEALTH MINISTRY REPORTS 32 DEAD

The Gaza Health Ministry said Tuesday the bodies of 32 people killed by Israeli strikes have been brought to local hospitals over the past 24 hours. Hospitals also received 59 wounded, it said in its daily report.

That brings the overall Palestinian death toll from the Israel-Hamas war to at least 34,183, the ministry said. Another 77,143 have been injured, it said.

The Health Ministry does not distinguish between fighters and civilians in its tallies, but has said that women and children make up around two thirds of those killed.

The Israeli military says it has killed 13,000 militants, without providing evidence to back up the claim.

APPARENT ISRAELI STRIKE HITS CAR IN LEBANON, KILLING AT LEAST 1

BEIRUT — An apparent Israeli airstrike on a car in southern Lebanon killed at least one person Tuesday, officials said.

State media and witnesses said the strike happened in the area of Adloun, between the coastal cities of Sidon and Tyre, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of the border with Israel.

It was not immediately clear who was killed.

The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and allied groups have been clashing with Israeli forces along the border for more than six months against the backdrop of Israel's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on Tuesday's strike. Israel has regularly carried out targeted killings of Hezbollah and Hamas members in Lebanon, sometimes in areas far from the border.

SATELLITE IMAGES SHOW TENT COMPOUND UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN KHAN YOUNIS

JERUSALEM — Satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press appear to show a new compound of

tents being built near Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip as the Israeli military signals that it plans an offensive targeting the city of Rafah.

Images from Planet Labs PBC analyzed by the AP show the tent compound starting to be fully under construction on April 16 just west of Khan Younis. Images taken Sunday show the tent compound has grown.

Dr. Saleh al-Hams, director of the nursery department at the European Hospital in Khan Younis, said the tents were being set up to house displaced people who are currently sheltering in the hospital, where their presence in packed corridors hinders the provision of health care.

He said the tent compound is not related to any potential military operation.

The Israeli military said Tuesday that it was not involved in the tent construction near Khan Younis.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has threatened "additional painful blows" targeting Hamas over the stalling of talks aimed at freeing the remaining hostages held in the Gaza Strip.

That could include the long-threatened attack on Rafah, where half of the Gaza Strip's 2.3 million people have fled. The U.S., Israel's main ally, has repeatedly said any military operation needs to protect civilians.

Netanyahu has said he would order the military to evacuate civilians from Rafah for the offensive, but it is not clear where they could go.

New federal rule would bar 'noncompete' agreements for most employees

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. companies would no longer be able to bar employees from taking jobs with competitors under a rule approved by a federal agency Tuesday, though the rule is sure to be challenged in court.

The Federal Trade Commission voted Tuesday 3-2 to ban measures known as noncompete agreements, which bar workers from jumping to or starting competing companies for a prescribed period of time. According to the FTC, 30 million people — roughly one in five workers — are now subject to such restrictions.

The Biden administration has taken aim at noncompete measures, which are commonly associated with high-level executives at technology and financial companies but in recent years have also ensnared lower-paid workers, such as security guards and sandwich-shop employees. A 2021 study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis found that more than one in 10 workers who earn \$20 or less an hour are covered by noncompete agreements.

When it proposed the ban in January 2023, FTC officials asserted that noncompete agreements harm workers by reducing their ability to switch jobs for higher pay, a step that often provides most workers with their biggest pay increases. By reducing overall churn in the job market, the agency argued, the measures also disadvantage workers who aren't covered by them because fewer jobs become available as fewer people leave their positions. They can also hurt the economy overall by limiting the ability of other businesses to hire needed employees, the FTC said.

The rule, which doesn't apply to workers at non-profits, is to take effect in four months unless it is blocked by legal challenges.

"Noncompete clauses keep wages low, suppress new ideas and rob the American economy of dynamism," FTC Chair Lina Khan said. "We heard from employees who, because of noncompetes, were stuck in abusive workplaces."

Some doctors, she added, have been prevented from practicing medicine after leaving practices.

Business groups have criticized the measure as casting too wide a net by blocking nearly all noncompetes. They argue that highly paid executives are often able to win greater pay in return for accepting a noncompete.

"It'll represent a sea change," said Amanda Sonneborn, a partner at King & Spalding in Chicago who represents employers that use noncompetes. "They don't want somebody to go to a competitor and take their customer list or take their information about their business strategy to that competitor."

But Alexander Hertzell-Fernandez, a professor at Columbia University who is a former Biden administra-

tion Labor Department official, argued that lower-income workers don't have the ability to negotiate over such provisions.

"When they get their job offer," he said, "it's really a take-it-or-leave-it-as-a-whole," he said.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce said Tuesday that it will file a lawsuit to block the rule. It accused the FTC of overstepping its authority.

"Noncompete agreements are either upheld or dismissed under well-established state laws governing their use," said Suzanne Clark, the chamber's CEO. "Yet today, three unelected commissioners have unilaterally decided they have the authority to declare what's a legitimate business decision and what's not by moving to ban noncompete agreements in all sectors of the economy."

Two Republican appointees to the FTC, Melissa Holyoak and Andrew Ferguson, voted against the proposal. They asserted that the agency was exceeding its authority by approving such a sweeping rule.

Noncompete agreements are banned in three states, including California, and some opponents of noncompetes argue that California's ban has been a key contributor to that state's innovative tech economy.

John Lettieri, CEO of the Economic Innovation Group, a tech-backed think tank, argues that the ability of early innovators to leave one company and start a competitor was key to the development of the semiconductor industry.

"The birth of so many important foundational companies could not have happened, at least not in the same way or on the same timeline and definitely not in the same place, had it not been for the ability of entrepreneurs to spin out, start their own companies, or go to a better company," Lettieri said.

The White House has been stepping up its efforts to protect workers as the presidential campaign heats up. On Tuesday, the Labor Department issued a rule that would guarantee overtime pay for more lower-paid workers. The rule would increase the required minimum salary level to exempt an employee from overtime pay, from about \$35,600 currently to nearly \$43,900 effective July 1 and \$58,700 by Jan. 1, 2025.

Companies will be required to pay overtime for workers below those thresholds who work more than 40 hours a week.

"This rule will restore the promise to workers that if you work more than 40 hours in a week, you should be paid more for that time," said Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su.

Get better sleep with these 5 tips from experts

By KENYA HUNTER AP Health Writer

Spending too many nights trying to fall asleep — or worrying there aren't enough ZZZs in your day? You're not alone.

Nearly one-third of American adults say they don't get the recommended seven to nine hours a night. Some of the major causes: Stress, anxiety and a culture that experts say is about productivity, not rest.

"You need to understand what your body needs and try your hardest to prioritize that and not just see sleep as kind of what's left over of the day," said Molly Atwood, an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Don't fall for online fads or unproven methods to fall asleep and stay asleep. Instead, try these simple tricks recommended by sleep experts.

CREATE A BUFFER ZONE

Work-related stress is inevitable, and it can be hard to disconnect. Try creating a "buffer zone" between the end of your work day and your bedtime.

Experts suggest leaving career work and daily responsibilities alone about an hour before bed. Don't check email, pay bills, do chores or scroll endlessly through social media. Instead, create a routine where you relax with a book, indulge in a hobby or spend time with loved ones.

"It goes back to the core value of mindfulness," said Dr. Annise Wilson, an assistant professor of neurology and medicine at Baylor University. "Anything that helps to center you and just helps you focus and release a lot of that tension from the day will then help promote sleep."

WATCH WHAT YOU EAT

Eating a large meal right before bedtime can disrupt your sleep, so try to grub in the early evening hours.

"I would say that eating a large meal is impactful simply because it's like giving your body a really large job to do right before sleep at a time when things are supposed to be shutting down," Atwood said.

But don't go to bed super-hungry, either. Try snacks with protein or healthy fats, like cheese, almonds or peanut butter on whole grain bread.

AVOID CAFFEINE AND ALCOHOL

Having a nightcap or post-dinner espresso might feel relaxing, but it could lead to a long night.

While alcohol can help you fall asleep initially, it can disrupt your sleep cycle, reducing the quality of sleep and increasing the chances you'll wake up more often in the middle of the night.

Caffeine is a stimulant that blocks adenosine, a chemical that contributes to the feeling of sleepiness — and it can take your body up to 10 hours to clear caffeine.

For these reasons, experts suggest finishing up your caffeinated or boozy beverages several hours before bed.

LIMIT TECHNOLOGY

Light from phones and computer screens can disrupt the circadian rhythm — or the internal clock that naturally wakes us up — by suppressing melatonin, which assists with sleep.

But you'll need self-discipline to stop streaming or scrolling, said Dr. Dianne Augelli, an assistant professor of clinical medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College.

"TikTok doesn't want you to stop," Augelli said. "Only you can stop you, so you have to learn to put that stuff away."

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

If nothing's working and you've struggled to get a good night's sleep for more than a month, experts say it's time to go to a doctor. This is especially true if your sleepless nights are interfering with your work performance or your mood.

"It doesn't matter how much relaxation you do. At a certain point, it's not going to be effective if there's a significant amount of stress," Atwood said. "... It might involve some problem-solving to figure that out."

US government agrees to \$138.7M settlement over FBI's botching of Larry Nassar assault allegations

By ED WHITE Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — The U.S. Justice Department announced a \$138.7 million settlement Tuesday with more than 100 people who accused the FBI of grossly mishandling allegations of sexual assault against Larry Nassar in 2015 and 2016, a critical time gap that allowed the sports doctor to continue to prey on victims before his arrest.

When combined with other settlements, \$1 billion now has been set aside by various organizations to compensate hundreds of women who said Nassar assaulted them under the guise of treatment for sports injuries.

Nassar worked at Michigan State University and also served as a team doctor at Indianapolis-based USA Gymnastics. He's now serving decades in prison for assaulting female athletes, including medal-winning Olympic gymnasts.

Acting Associate Attorney General Benjamin Mizer said Nassar betrayed the trust of those in his care for decades, and that the "allegations should have been taken seriously from the outset."

"While these settlements won't undo the harm Nassar inflicted, our hope is that they will help give the victims of his crimes some of the critical support they need to continue healing," Mizer said of the agreement to settle 139 claims.

The Justice Department has acknowledged that it failed to step in. For more than a year, FBI agents in Indianapolis and Los Angeles had knowledge of allegations against him but apparently took no action, an internal investigation found.

FBI Director Christopher Wray was contrite — and very blunt — when he spoke to survivors at a Senate hearing in 2021. The assault survivors include decorated Olympians Simone Biles, Aly Raisman and

McKayla Maroney.

"I'm sorry that so many different people let you down, over and over again," Wray said. "And I'm especially sorry that there were people at the FBI who had their own chance to stop this monster back in 2015 and failed."

After a search, investigators said in 2016 that they had found images of child sex abuse and followed up with federal charges against Nassar. Separately, the Michigan attorney general's office handled the assault charges that ultimately shocked the sports world and led to an extraordinary dayslong sentencing hearing with gripping testimony about his crimes.

"I'm deeply grateful. Accountability with the Justice Department has been a long time in coming," said Rachael Denhollander of Louisville, Kentucky, who is not part of the latest settlement but was the first person to publicly step forward and detail abuse at the hands of Nassar.

"The unfortunate reality is that what we are seeing today is something that most survivors never see," Denhollander told The Associated Press. "Most survivors never see accountability. Most survivors never see justice. Most survivors never get restitution."

Michigan State University, which was also accused of missing chances over many years to stop Nassar, agreed to pay \$500 million to more than 300 women and girls who were assaulted. USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee made a \$380 million settlement.

Mick Grewal, an attorney who represented 44 people in claims against the government, said the \$1 billion in overall settlements speaks to "the travesty that occurred."

A retired federal judge, Gregory Sleet, served as a mediator in the federal claims.

"It took more than six years of tears, pain, and unrelenting effort by Nassar's victims, including many of our nation's most celebrated athletes, to shine the bright light of justice on the horrific misconduct by senior officials in the FBI and demand accountability," said John Manly, one of the lead attorneys.

What's EMTALA, the patient protection law at the center of Supreme Court abortion arguments?

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court will hear arguments Wednesday in a case that could determine whether doctors can provide abortions to pregnant women with medical emergencies in states that enact abortion bans.

The Justice Department has sued Idaho over its abortion law, which allows a woman to get an abortion only when her life — not her health — is at risk. The state law has raised questions about when a doctor is able to provide the stabilizing treatment that federal law requires.

The federal law, called the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act, or EMTALA, requires doctors to stabilize or treat any patient who shows up at an emergency room.

Here's a look at the history of EMTALA, what rights it provides patients and how a Supreme Court ruling might change that.

WHAT PROTECTIONS DOES EMTALA PROVIDE ME AT AN ER?

Simply put, EMTALA requires emergency rooms to offer a medical exam if you turn up at their facility. The law applies to nearly all emergency rooms — any that accept Medicare funding.

Those emergency rooms are required to stabilize patients if they do have a medical emergency before discharging or transferring them. And if the ER doesn't have the resources or staff to properly treat that patient, staff members are required to arrange a medical transfer to another hospital, after they've confirmed the facility can accept the patient.

So, for example, if a pregnant woman shows up at an emergency room concerned that she is in labor but there is no OB/GYN on staff, hospital staff cannot simply direct the woman to go elsewhere.

WHY WAS THIS LAW CREATED?

Look to Chicago in the early 1980s.

Doctors at the city's public hospital were confronting a huge problem: Thousands of patients, many of

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them Black or Latino, were arriving in very bad condition — and they were sent there by private hospitals in the city that refused to treat them. Most of them did not have health insurance.

Chicago wasn't alone. Doctors working in public hospitals around the country reported similar issues. Media reports, including one of a pregnant woman who delivered a stillborn baby after being turned away by two hospitals because she didn't have insurance, intensified public pressure on politicians to act.

Congress drafted legislation with Republican Sen. David Durenberger of Minnesota saying at the time, "Americans, rich or poor, deserve access to quality health care. This question of access should be the government's responsibility at the federal, state, and local levels."

Then-President Ronald Reagan, a Republican, signed the bill into law in 1986.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A HOSPITAL TURNS AWAY A PATIENT?

The hospital is investigated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. If they find the hospital violated a patient's right to care, they can lose their Medicare funding, a vital source of revenue for most hospitals to keep their doors open.

Usually, however, the federal government issues fines when a hospital violates EMTALA. They can add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

WHY IS THE SUPREME COURT LOOKING AT THE LAW?

Since the Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to an abortion, President Joe Biden, a Democrat, has repeatedly reminded hospitals that his administration considers an abortion part of the stabilizing care that EMTALA requires facilities to provide.

The Biden administration argues that Idaho's law prevents ER doctors from offering an abortion if a woman needs one in a medical emergency.

But Idaho's attorney general has pointed out that EMTALA also requires hospitals to consider the health of the "unborn child" in its treatment, too.

WHAT ARE ADVOCATES SAYING?

Anti-abortion advocates argue that state laws banning abortion can coexist with the federal law that requires hospitals to stabilize pregnant patients in an emergency.

The prominent anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America called the lawsuit in Idaho a "PR stunt," in a statement to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

"The EMTALA case is based on the false premise that pregnant women cannot receive emergency care under pro-life laws," said Kelsey Pritchard, the group's state public affairs director. "It is a clear fact that pregnant women can receive miscarriage care, ectopic pregnancy care and treatment in a medical emergency in all 50 states."

But many doctors say it's not as clear cut as anti-abortion advocates claim. Idaho's state law banning abortion, except for the life of the mother, has left some doctors weighing if a patient is close enough to death to treat.

Most other states allow doctors to perform abortions to save the health of a mother. But, if the Supreme Court rules in Idaho's favor, it could invite other states to pass restrictions without that exemption.

In a statement released Monday, Jack Resneck, the former president of the American Medical Association, said Idaho's law forces doctors to withhold proper treatment for patients.

The state's "dangerous standard cannot be applied to the real-life situations faced in emergency departments every day," Resneck said. "There is no bright line when each patient's condition suddenly reaches "life-threatening," and deteriorating patients don't want their physicians delaying care."

Minnesota and other Democratic-led states lead pushback on censorship. They're banning the book ban

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — A movement to ban book bans is gaining steam in Minnesota and several other states, in contrast to the trend playing out in more conservative states where book challenges have soared to their highest levels in decades.

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The move to quash book bans is welcome to people like Shae Ross, a queer and out Minnesota high school senior who has fought on the local level against bans on books dealing with sexuality, gender and race. Ross, 18, said she is encouraged to see her governor and leaders of other states are taking the fight statewide.

"For a lot of teenagers, LGBT teenagers and teenagers who maybe just don't feel like they have a ton of friends, or a ton of popularity in middle or high school ... literature becomes sort of an escape." Ross said. "Especially when I was like sixth, seventh grade, I'd say reading books, especially books with gay characters ... was a way that I could feel seen and represented."

Minnesota is one of several Democratic-leaning states where lawmakers are now pursuing bans on book bans. The Washington and Maryland legislatures have already passed them this year, while Illinois did so last year. It was a major flashpoint of Oregon's short session, where legislation passed the Senate but died without a House vote.

According to the American Library Association, over 4,200 works in school and public libraries were targeted in 2023, a jump from the old record of nearly 2,600 books in 2022. Many challenged books — 47% in 2023 — had LGBTQ+ and racial themes.

Restrictions in some states have increased so much that librarians and administrators fear crippling lawsuits, hefty fines and even imprisonment if they provide books that others regard as inappropriate. Already this year, lawmakers in more than 15 states have introduced bills to impose harsh penalties on libraries or librarians.

Conservative parents and activists argue that the books are too sexually explicit or otherwise controversial, and are inappropriate, especially for younger readers. National groups such as Moms for Liberty say parents are entitled to more control over books available to their children.

But pushback is emerging. According to EveryLibrary, a political action committee for libraries, several states are considering varying degrees of prohibitions on book bans. A sampling includes California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont, though some in conservative states appear unlikely to pass. One has also died in New Mexico this year.

One such bill is awaiting Democratic Gov. Wes Moore's signature in Maryland. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed a bill last month that sets a high bar for removing challenged materials, especially those dealing with race, sexual orientation and gender identity. A version pending in New Jersey would protect librarians from civil or criminal liability.

Some proposals are labeled "Freedom to Read" acts.

"That's what's so critical here. The voluntary nature of reading," said Martha Hickson, a librarian at North Hunterdon High School in New Jersey. "Students can choose to read, not read, or totally ignore everything in this library. No one is asking them to read a damn thing."

Hickson recalled how parents first suggested her book collections contained pedophilia and pornography during a school board meeting in 2021. She watched the livestream in horror as they objected that the novel "Lawn Boy" and illustrated memoir "Gender Queer" were available to students and suggested she could be criminally liable.

"Tears welled up, shaking" Hickson said. "But once my body got done with that, my normal attitude, the fight side kicked in, and I picked up my cellphone while the meeting was still going on and started reaching out."

Book bans have been a sore point for Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a former high school teacher. The Minnesota Senate passed his proposal this month. It would prohibit book bans in public and school libraries based on content or ideological objections and require that the key decisions about what books will or won't be offered be made by library professionals.

The state House is considering an approach with more teeth, including penalties and allowing private citizens to sue to enforce it.

"I'm working with stakeholders, with the Department of Education, librarians, school districts and their

representatives," said Democratic Rep. Cedrick Frazier, of New Hope. "We're working to tighten up the language, to make sure we can come to a consensus, and just kind of make sure that everybody's on the same page."

Ross, a student at Jefferson High School in Bloomington, was alarmed when she heard last year that conservative groups were organizing in her community to ban books based on their content. So she and her friends got organized themselves, and they helped persuade their school board to make it much harder to remove books and other materials from their libraries and classrooms.

Because of her activism, Ross was invited when Walz went to Como Park Senior High School in St. Paul last month to view a display of books banned elsewhere. The governor called book bans "the antithesis of everything we believe" and denounced what he depicted as a growing effort to bully school boards.

At a House hearing last month, speakers said books by LGBTQ+ and authors of color are among those most frequently banned. Karlton Laster, director of policy and organizing for OutFront Minnesota, who identifies as Black and queer, said reading their works helped him "communicate my hard feelings and truths to my family and friends," and helped him come out to his family.

Kendra Redmond, a Bloomington mother with three children in public schools, testified about efforts to push back against a petition drive by conservatives to pull about 28 titles from the city's school libraries.

Pushback from Ross, Redmond and others succeeded. The Bloomington School Board last month made it much harder to seek removals. Parents can still restrict access by their own children to material they deem objectionable.

Many challenges in the district came from the Bloomington Parents Alliance. One of its leaders, Alan Redding, recalled how his son's 9th grade class was discussing a book a few years ago when graphic passages about date rape were read aloud in class. He said his son and other kids were unprepared for something so explicit.

"They were clearly bothered by this and disgusted," Redding said. "My son absolutely shut down for the semester."

Minnesota Republican lawmakers have argued that instead of worrying about book bans, they should be focusing instead on performance in a state where just under half of public school students can read at grade level.

"Every book is banned for a child that doesn't know how to read," said GOP Rep. Patricia Mueller, a teacher from Austin.

A legal challenge over the UK's role in arms sales to Israel will go ahead

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A legal challenge over the British government's role in allowing weapons to be sent to Israel can be heard at the High Court later this year, a judge said Tuesday.

Palestinian human rights organization Al-Haq and the U.K.-based Global Legal Action Network filed the challenge in December, calling for the U.K. to stop granting licenses for arms exports to Israel. They said they acted after Britain's government ignored their written requests to suspend arms sales to Israel following the deadly Oct. 7 Hamas attack that triggered the Israeli-Hamas war.

The case had been dismissed in February, but a High Court judge on Tuesday granted a judicial review hearing for it in October.

Lawyers for the human rights groups argued there was a "clear risk" that the weapons "might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law" in Gaza.

But lawyer James Eadie, representing the U.K. Department for Business and Trade, said the issue is considered "with conspicuous care and thoroughness."

"The secretary of state's position is that those decisions have at all times been lawful and, in particular, rational," he said in a written submission.

Rights groups have long opposed British arms exports to Israel, but such calls have gained ground since an Israeli airstrike killed seven aid workers from the aid charity World Central Kitchen on April 1. Three of the aid workers were British.

Earlier this month more than 600 British lawyers and judges, including three retired judges from the U.K. Supreme Court, joined calls for the government to suspend arms sales to Israel.

They said the U.K. could be complicit in "grave breaches of international law" if it continues to ship weapons, and that it is legally obliged to heed the International Court of Justice's conclusion that there is a "plausible risk of genocide" in Gaza.

The Campaign Against Arms Trade nonprofit group says British industry, namely BAE Systems, provides about 15% of the components in the F-35 stealth combat aircraft used by Israel. The group alleges that the jets were used in recent bombardment of Gaza.

"The U.K. government has stretched legal reasoning to the point of absurdity in order to arm a country that is committing grave violations of international humanitarian law," said Dearbhla Minogue, a senior lawyer at the Global Legal Action Network.

"The government seems to be making this process as painstakingly slow as possible," Minogue added. "Given the urgency of the situation in Gaza, the government should listen to the international legal consensus and halt weapons sales now."

A Russian strike on Kharkiv's TV tower is part of an intimidation campaign, Ukraine's Zelenskyy says

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said a Russian missile strike that smashed a prominent skyline television tower in Kharkiv was part of the Kremlin's effort to intimidate Ukraine's second-largest city, which in recent weeks has come under increasingly frequent attack.

The strike sought to "make the terror visible to the whole city and to try to limit Kharkiv's connection and access to information," Zelenskyy said in a Monday evening address.

The northeastern Kharkiv region straddles the approximately 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line where Ukrainian and Russian forces have been locked in battle for more than two years since Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The front line has changed little during a war of attrition, focused mostly on artillery, drones and trenches.

Since late March, Russia has stepped up the pressure on Kharkiv, apparently aiming to exploit Ukraine's shortage of air defense systems. It has pounded the local power grid and hit apartment blocks.

On Monday, a Russian Kh-59 missile struck Kharkiv's 250-meter (820-foot) -high TV tower, breaking it roughly in half and halting transmissions.

A Washington think tank said Russia may be eyeing a ground assault on Kharkiv.

"The Kremlin is conducting a concerted air and information operation to destroy Kharkiv City, convince Ukrainians to flee, and internally displace millions of Ukrainians ahead of a possible future Russian offensive operation against the city or elsewhere in Ukraine," the Institute for the Study of War said in an assessment.

The expected arrival in Ukraine in coming weeks of new military aid from its Western partners possibly has prompted Russia to escalate its attacks before the help arrives, the ISW said, adding that trying to capture Kharkiv would be "a significant challenge" for the Kremlin's forces.

Instead, the Russian military command "may attempt to destroy Kharkiv City with air, missile, and drone strikes and prompt a large-scale internal displacement of Ukrainian civilians," it said.

The U.S. Senate was returning to Washington on Tuesday to vote on \$61 billion in war aid to Ukraine after months of delays. Zelenskyy said U.S. President Joe Biden assured him the aid would include long-range and artillery capabilities.

"Four priorities are key: defense of the sky, modern artillery, long-range capacity, and to ensure that packages of American aid arrive as soon as possible," Zelenskyy said.

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Also Tuesday, Britain pledged 500 million pounds (\$620 million, 580 million euros) in new military supplies for Ukraine, including 400 vehicles, 60 boats, 1,600 munitions and 4 million rounds of ammunition.

The shipment will also include British Storm Shadow long-range missiles, which have a range of about 150 miles (240 kilometers) and have proven effective at hitting Russian targets, the British government said.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spoke with Zelenskyy on Tuesday morning to confirm the new assistance. He announces the aid during a visit to Warsaw later in the day where he was meeting with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Less cheering news came from the European Union, however. EU countries that have Patriot air defense systems gave no clear sign Monday that they might be willing to send them to Ukraine, which is desperately seeking at least seven of the missile batteries.

Ukraine's army is also heavily outnumbered in the fight, and expanding the country's mobilization has been a delicate issue.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Tuesday signaled that authorities plan to clamp down on young men of conscription age who have moved abroad, with details of the specific measures to be made public soon.

"Staying abroad does not relieve a citizen of his or her duties to the homeland," Kuleba said on the social media platform X.

Meanwhile, Russia launched 16 Shahed drones and two Iskander-M ballistic missiles over Ukraine's southern and central regions, the Ukrainian air force said Tuesday morning. It said all but one of the drones were intercepted.

In Odesa, an overnight attack injured nine people, regional Gov. Oleh Kiper said. Among those injured were two infants and two children aged nine and 12, Kiper said. City mayor Hennadii Trukhanov said 58 apartments in 22 buildings were damaged.

In other developments:

A Russian missile strike near Dnipro, Ukraine's fourth-largest city, injured four people who were admitted to hospital, regional Gov. Serhii Lysak said.

Russian forces dropped a guided aerial bomb in Kostiantynivka, a city in the eastern Donetsk region, injuring five people who were riding in a car, police said. Two of them were in critical conditions.

Google fires more workers who protested its deal with Israel

By KELVIN CHAN and WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writers

Google fired at least 20 more workers in the aftermath of protests over technology the company is supplying the Israeli government amid the Gaza war, bringing the total number of terminated staff to more than 50, a group representing the workers said.

It's the latest sign of internal turmoil at the tech giant centered on "Project Nimbus," a \$1.2 billion contract signed in 2021 for Google and Amazon to provide the Israeli government with cloud computing and artificial intelligence services.

Workers held sit-in protests last week at Google offices in New York and Sunnyvale, California. The company responded by calling the police, who made arrests.

The group organizing the protests, No Tech For Apartheid, said the company fired 30 workers last week — higher than the initial 28 they had announced.

Then, on Tuesday night, Google fired "over 20" more staffers, "including non-participating bystanders during last week's protests," said Jane Chung, a spokeswoman for No Tech For Apartheid, without providing a more specific number.

"Google's aims are clear: the corporation is attempting to quash dissent, silence its workers, and reassert its power over them," Chung said in a press release. "In its attempts to do so, Google has decided to unceremoniously, and without due process, upend the livelihoods of over 50 of its own workers."

Google said it fired the additional workers after its investigation gathered details from coworkers who were "physically disrupted" and it identified employees who used masks and didn't carry their staff badges

to hide their identities. It didn't specify how many were fired.

The company disputed the group's claims, saying that it carefully confirmed that "every single one of those whose employment was terminated was personally and definitively involved in disruptive activity inside our buildings."

The Mountain View, California, company had previously signaled that more people could be fired, with CEO Sundar Pichai indicating in a blog post that employees would be on a short leash as the company intensifies its efforts to improve its AI technology.

5 migrants die while crossing the English Channel hours after the UK approved a deportation bill

PARIS (AP) — Five people, including a child, died while trying to cross the English Channel from France to the U.K., French authorities said Tuesday, just hours after the British government approved a migrant bill to deport some of those who entered the country illegally to Rwanda.

The prefecture responsible for the north of France said in a statement authorities spotted several boats packed with migrants off the coast of Pas-de-Calais, attempting to depart in the early morning.

Several French navy ships, including assistance and rescue tug Abeille Normandie, intervened to rescue "a very overcrowded boat carrying more than one hundred people on board," the statement emailed to The Associated Press said.

"They rescued several people, but unfortunately, five people have died," it said.

The regional prefect Jacques Billant said a woman, three men and a 7-year-old girl died. He said the boat carrying 112 people attempted to sail off the beach in Wimereux.

The Voix du Nord, a regional newspaper, said the bodies were discovered at the beach on Tuesday morning. About 100 migrants were rescued and placed aboard a French navy ship. They will be taken to the port of Boulogne, the paper said.

It came hours after British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's latest effort to send some migrants to Rwanda finally won approval from Parliament. The U.K. government plans to deport some of those who enter the country illegally as a deterrent to migrants who risk their lives in leaky, inflatable boats in hopes that they will be able to claim asylum once they reach Britain.

Human rights groups have described the legislation as inhumane and cruel. Both the United Nations refugee agency and the Council of Europe called on the U.K. Tuesday to rethink its plans for fears they could damage international cooperation on tackling the global migrant crisis.

Migrants trying to cross the busy English Channel face drownings and sinking among other deadly incidents, often aboard crowded boats.

An estimated 30,000 people made the crossing in 2023, according to U.K. government figures.

Trump could avoid trial this year on 2020 election charges. Is the hush money case a worthy proxy?

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Donald Trump faces serious charges in two cases over whether he attempted to subvert the Constitution by overturning the results of a fair election and illegally remain in power.

Yet it's a New York case centered on payments to silence an adult film actor that might provide the only legal reckoning this year on whether the Republican tried to undermine a pillar of American democracy.

Trump is charged in the hush money case with trying to falsify business records, but it was hard to tell that as the trial opened Monday.

Lead prosecutor Matthew Colangelo wasted little time during opening statements tying the case to Trump's campaigning during his first run for the presidency. He said the payments made to Stormy Daniels amounted to "a criminal scheme to corrupt the 2016 presidential election."

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Whether the jury accepts that connection will be pivotal for Trump's fate. The presumptive GOP nominee faces charges related to falsifying business records that would typically be misdemeanors unless the alleged act could be tied to another crime. Prosecutors were able to charge them as felonies because they allege that the false records were part of an effort to cover up state and federal election law violations — though that's still not the type of direct election interference that Trump is charged with elsewhere.

Trump has referred to the New York trial and the three other criminal cases against him as a form of election interference, suggesting without evidence that they're part of a Democratic plan to undermine his campaign to return to the White House.

"I'm here instead of being able to be in Pennsylvania and Georgia and lots of other places campaigning, and it's very unfair," he told reporters before Monday's court session.

While the charges are felonies, the New York case is seen as the least consequential against the former president. In the two election cases, Trump is accused of more direct involvement in trying to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

He faces a four-count federal indictment in Washington in connection with his actions in the run-up to the violent attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters on Jan. 6, 2021. He and others were charged in Georgia with violating the state's anti-racketeering law by scheming to illegally overturn his 2020 loss to Democrat Joe Biden. He has pleaded not guilty to all the charges against him in those cases and a fourth charging him with mishandling classified documents.

All the other cases are tied up in appeals that are expected to delay any trials until after the November election. If that happens, the New York case will stand as the only legal test during the campaign of whether Trump attempted to illegally manipulate an election — and the case isn't even about the election results he tried to overthrow.

On Monday, Trump's attorney quickly moved to undercut the idea that a case in which the charges center on record-keeping could seriously be considered an effort to illegally undermine an election.

"I have a spoiler alert: There's nothing wrong with trying to influence an election. It's called democracy," said his attorney, Todd Blanche. "They put something sinister on this idea, as if it's a crime. You'll learn it's not."

Some legal experts monitoring the cases against Trump said they were skeptical of connecting the payments to a form of "election interference." Doing so also runs the risk of diminishing the gravity of the other charges in the public mind.

Richard Painter, a University of Minnesota Law School professor and former associate White House counsel during the George W. Bush administration, said he believed the facts of the case met the evidence needed to determine whether a felony had been committed that violated campaign law, but added, "The election interference part, I have a little bit of trouble on this."

Richard Hasen, a UCLA law school professor, said the New York case does not compare to the other election-related charges Trump faces.

"We can draw a fairly bright line between attempting to change vote totals to flip a presidential election and failing to disclose embarrassing information on a government form," he wrote in a recent Los Angeles Times column.

In an email, Hasen said New York prosecutors were calling the case election interference "because that boosts what may be the only case heard before the election."

Some said prosecutors' decision to characterize the New York case as election interference seemed to be a strategy designed to raise its visibility.

"When (Manhattan District Attorney) Alvin Bragg calls it an election interference case, that's more of a public relations strategy," said Paul Butler, a professor at Georgetown Law and former federal prosecutor. "I think there was concern that people were looking at the other prosecutions and they weren't discussing the Manhattan case."

Declaring the case a hush money trial made it seem less important than the others and "so they've styled it ... as a case about election interference. But again, what he's charged with is falsifying business records."

Trump has denied having a sexual encounter with Daniels and his lawyers argue that the payments to Cohen were legitimate legal expenses.

The key question in the prosecution's argument is why were the business records falsified, said Chris Edelson, an American University assistant professor of government. Their allegation is that "Trump was preventing voters from making an informed decision in the election."

It's an argument he believes prosecutors can make. "I think that the prosecutors will have to explain this to the jury. I don't think it's impossible to do," he said.

The New York trial revolves around allegations of a \$130,000 payment that Michael Cohen, Trump's former lawyer and personal fixer, made to Daniels to prevent her claims of a sexual encounter with Trump from becoming public in the final days of the 2016 race.

"Candidates want to suppress bad news about them. But there's a difference between trying to limit people knowing about that information and about breaking the law to keep them from finding out," said Andrew Warren, a former state attorney in Florida who was suspended by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis and is running for his old office while his court battle continues.

Warren said he believes the case has always been about more than the payments. If it is accepted as a hush money case, "Trump wins," he said. "If there was intent to deceive the voters, the prosecution wins."

Pro-Palestinian protests sweep US college campuses following mass arrests at Columbia

By NICK PERRY, MICHELLE L. PRICE and DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Columbia canceled in-person classes, dozens of protesters were arrested at New York University and Yale, and the gates to Harvard Yard were closed to the public Monday as some of the most prestigious U.S. universities sought to defuse campus tensions over Israel's war with Hamas.

More than 100 pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had camped out on Columbia's green were arrested last week, and similar encampments have sprouted up at universities around the country as schools struggle with where to draw the line between allowing free expression while maintaining safe and inclusive campuses.

At New York University, an encampment set up by students swelled to hundreds of protesters throughout the day Monday. The school said it warned the crowd to leave, then called in the police after the scene became disorderly and the university said it learned of reports of "intimidating chants and several antisemitic incidents." Shortly after 8:30 p.m., officers began making arrests.

"It's a really outrageous crackdown by the university to allow the police to arrest students on our own campus," said New York University law student Byul Yoon.

"Antisemitism is never OK. That's absolutely not what we stand for and that's why there are so many Jewish comrades that are here with us today," Yoon said.

The protests have pitted students against one another, with pro-Palestinian students demanding that their schools condemn Israel's assault on Gaza and divest from companies that sell weapons to Israel. Some Jewish students, meanwhile, say much of the criticism of Israel has veered into antisemitism and made them feel unsafe, and they point out that Hamas is still holding hostages taken during the group's Oct. 7 invasion.

Tensions remained high Monday at Columbia, where the campus gates were locked to anyone without a school ID and where protests broke out both on campus and outside.

U.S. Rep. Kathy Manning, a Democrat from North Carolina who was visiting Columbia with three other Jewish members of Congress, told reporters after meeting with students from the Jewish Law Students Association that there was "an enormous encampment of people" who had taken up about a third of the green.

"We saw signs indicating that Israel should be destroyed," she said after leaving the Morningside Heights campus. Columbia announced Monday that courses at the Morningside campus will offer virtual options for students when possible, citing safety as their top priority.

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A woman inside the campus gates led about two dozen protesters on the street outside in a chant of, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!" — a charged phrase that can mean vastly different things to different groups. A small group of pro-Israel counter demonstrators protested nearby.

University President Minouche Shafik said in a message to the school community Monday that she was "deeply saddened" by what was happening on campus.

"To deescalate the rancor and give us all a chance to consider next steps, I am announcing that all classes will be held virtually on Monday," Shafik wrote, noting that students who don't live on campus should stay away.

Protests have roiled many college campuses since Hamas' deadly attack on southern Israel, when militants killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took roughly 250 hostages. During the ensuing war, Israel has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, according to the local health ministry, which doesn't distinguish between combatants and non-combatants but says at least two-thirds of the dead are children and women.

On Sunday, Elie Buechler, a rabbi for the Orthodox Union's Jewish Learning Initiative at Columbia, sent a WhatsApp message to nearly 300 Jewish students recommending they go home until it's safer for them on campus.

The latest developments came ahead of the Monday evening start of the Jewish holiday of Passover.

Nicholas Baum, a 19-year-old Jewish freshman who lives in a Jewish theological seminary building two blocks from Columbia's campus, said protesters over the weekend were "calling for Hamas to blow away Tel Aviv and Israel." He said some of the protesters shouting antisemitic slurs were not students.

"Jews are scared at Columbia. It's as simple as that," he said. "There's been so much vilification of Zionism, and it has spilled over into the vilification of Judaism."

The protest encampment sprung up at Columbia on Wednesday, the same day that Shafik faced bruising criticism at a congressional hearing from Republicans who said she hadn't done enough to fight antisemitism. Two other Ivy League presidents resigned months ago following widely criticized testimony they gave to the same committee.

In her statement Monday, Shafik said the Middle East conflict is terrible and that she understands that many are experiencing deep moral distress.

"But we cannot have one group dictate terms and attempt to disrupt important milestones like graduation to advance their point of view," Shafik wrote.

Over the coming days, a working group of deans, school administrators and faculty will try to find a resolution to the university crisis, noted Shafik, who didn't say when in-person classes would resume.

U.S. House Republicans from New York urged Shafik to resign, saying in a letter Monday that she had failed to provide a safe learning environment in recent days as "anarchy has engulfed the campus."

In Massachusetts, a sign said Harvard Yard was closed to the public Monday. It said structures, including tents and tables, were only allowed into the yard with prior permission. "Students violating these policies are subject to disciplinary action," the sign said. Security guards were checking people for school IDs.

The same day, the Harvard Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee said the university's administration suspended their group. In the suspension notice provided by the student organization, the university wrote that the group's April 19 demonstration had violated school policy, and that the organization failed to attend required trainings after they were previously put on probation.

The Palestine Solidarity Committee said in a statement that they were suspended over technicalities and that the university hadn't provided written clarification on the university's policies when asked.

"Harvard has shown us time and again that Palestine remains the exception to free speech," the group wrote in a statement.

Harvard did not respond to an email request for comment.

At Yale, police officers arrested about 45 protesters and charged them with misdemeanor trespassing, said Officer Christian Bruckhart, a New Haven police spokesperson. All were being released on promises to appear in court later, he said.

Protesters set up tents on Beinecke Plaza on Friday and demonstrated over the weekend, calling on Yale

to end any investments in defense companies that do business with Israel.

In a statement to the campus community on Sunday, Yale President Peter Salovey said university officials had spoken to the student protesters multiple times about the school's policies and guidelines, including those regarding speech and allowing access to campus spaces.

School officials said they gave protesters until the end of the weekend to leave Beinecke Plaza. They said they again warned protesters Monday morning and told them that they could face arrest and discipline, including suspension, before police moved in.

A large group of demonstrators regathered after Monday's arrests at Yale and blocked a street near campus, Bruckhart said. There were no reports of any violence or injuries.

Prahlad Iyengar, an MIT graduate student studying electrical engineering, was among about two dozen students who set up a tent encampment on the school's Cambridge, Massachusetts, campus Sunday evening. They are calling for a cease-fire and are protesting what they describe as MIT's "complicity in the ongoing genocide in Gaza," he said.

"MIT has not even called for a cease-fire, and that's a demand we have for sure," Iyengar said. ____

Perry reported from Meredith, New Hampshire, and Collins reported from Hartford, Connecticut. Associated Press writers Steve LeBlanc in Boston and Susan Haigh in Hartford contributed to this report.

Haiti health system nears collapse as medicine dwindles, gangs attack hospitals and ports stay shut

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — On a recent morning at a hospital in the heart of gang territory in Haiti's capital, a woman began convulsing before her body went limp as a doctor and two nurses raced to save her.

They stuck electrodes to her chest and flipped on an oxygen machine while keeping their eyes on a computer screen that reflected a dangerously low oxygen level of 84%.

No one knew what was wrong with her.

Even more worrisome, the Doctors Without Borders hospital in the Cite Soleil slum was running low on key medicine to treat convulsions.

"The medication she really needs, we barely have," said Dr. Rachel Lavigne, a physician with the medical aid group.

It's a familiar scene repeated daily at hospitals and clinics across Port-au-Prince, where life-saving medication and equipment is dwindling or altogether absent as brutal gangs tighten their grip on the capital and beyond. They have blocked roads, forced the closure of the main international airport in early March and paralyzed operations at the country's largest seaport, where containers filled with key supplies remain stuck.

"Everything is crashing," Lavigne said.

Haiti's health system has long been fragile, but it's now nearing total collapse after gangs launched coordinated attacks on Feb. 29, targeting critical infrastructure in the capital and beyond.

The violence has forced several medical institutions and dialysis centers to close, including Haiti's largest public hospital. Located in downtown Port-au-Prince, the Hospital of the State University of Haiti was supposed to reopen on April 1 after closing when the attack began, but gangs have infiltrated it.

One of the few institutions still operating is Peace University Hospital, located south of the shuttered airport. From Feb. 29 to April 15, the hospital treated some 200 patients with gunshot wounds, and its beds remain full.

"We urgently need fuel because we operate using generators. Otherwise we run the risk of closing our doors," hospital director Dr. Paul Junior Fontilus said in a statement.

More than 2,500 people were killed or wounded across Haiti from January to March, a more than 50% increase compared with the same period last year, according to a recent U.N. report.

Even if a hospital is open, sometimes there is little or no medical staff because gang violence erupts daily in Port-au-Prince, forcing doctors and nurses to stay at home or turn around if they encounter blocked roads manned by heavily armed men.

The spiraling chaos has left a growing number of patients with cancer, AIDS and other serious illnesses with little to no recourse, with gangs also looting and setting fire to pharmacies in the capital's downtown area.

Doctors Without Borders itself has run out of many medications used to treat diabetes and high blood pressure, and asthma inhalers that help prevent deadly attacks are nowhere to be found in the capital, Lavigne said.

At the Doctors Without Borders hospital, medical staff recently tried to save a boy with a severe asthma attack by giving him oxygen, she said. That didn't work, and neither did another type of medication. Finally, they ended up injecting him with adrenaline, which is used in emergencies to treat anaphylactic shock.

"We improvise and we do our best for the people here," Lavigne said.

People's health is worsening because the daily medication they need for their chronic conditions is not available, warned Doctors Without Borders project coordinator Jacob Burns.

"It becomes acute and then they run out of options," he said. "For certain people, there are very, very few options right now."

Despite the pressing need for medical care, the Doctors Without Borders hospital in Cite Soleil has been forced to cut the number of outpatients it treats daily from 150 to 50, Burns said, though all emergencies are attended to.

Scores of people line up outside the hospital each day and risk being shot by gang members who control the area as they await medical care.

Everyone is allowed to enter the hospital compound, but medical staff set up a triage to determine which 50 people will be seen. Those with less urgent needs are asked to return another day, Burns said.

On Friday morning, 51-year-old Jean Marc Baptiste shuffled into the emergency room with a bloody bandage on his right hand. He said police in an armored vehicle shot him the previous day as he was collecting wood to sell as kindling in an area controlled by gangs.

Once inside, nurses removed the bandage to reveal a gaping wound in his thumb as he cried out in pain. Lavigne told him he needed a plastic surgeon, which the hospital does not have, and ordered X-rays to ensure there was no fracture.

On average, the Cite Soleil hospital sees three wounded people a day, but sometimes it's up to 14 now, staff said.

Recently, five people wounded by bullets arrived at the hospital after spending all night inside a public bus that couldn't move because of heavy gunfire, Burns said.

"Cite Soleil was long the epicenter of violence," he said. "And now violence is so widespread that it's become a problem for everyone."

Modi is accused of using hate speech for calling Muslims 'infiltrators' at an Indian election rally

By KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's main opposition party accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of using hate speech after he called Muslims "infiltrators" — some of his most incendiary rhetoric about the minority faith, days after the country began its weeklong general election.

The remarks at a campaign rally Sunday drew fierce criticism that Modi was peddling anti-Muslim tropes. The Congress party filed a complaint Monday with the Election Commission of India, alleging he broke rules that bar candidates from engaging in any activity that aggravates religious tensions.

Critics of the prime minister — an avowed Hindu nationalist — say India's tradition of diversity and secularism has come under attack since his Bharatiya Janata Party won power a decade ago. They accuse the party of fostering religious intolerance and sometimes even violence. The party denies the accusation and says its policies benefit all Indians.

At a rally in the state of Rajasthan, Modi said that when the Congress party was in government, "they

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said Muslims have the first right over the country's resources." If it returns to power, the party "will gather all your wealth and distribute it among those who have more children," he said as the crowd applauded.

"They will distribute it among infiltrators," he continued, saying, "Do you think your hard-earned money should be given to infiltrators?"

Mallikarjun Kharge, the Congress party's president, described the prime minister's comments as "hate speech" and party spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi called them "deeply, deeply objectionable."

The party sought action from the election commission, whose code of conduct forbids candidates from appealing "to caste or communal feelings" to secure votes. The first votes were cast Friday in the six-week election, which Modi and his Hindu nationalist BJP are expected to win, according to most surveys. The results come out on June 4.

Asaduddin Owaidi, a Muslim lawmaker and president of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen party, said on Sunday: "Since 2002 till this day, the only Modi guarantee has been to abuse Muslims and get votes."

While there have long been tensions between India's majority Hindu community and Muslims, rights groups say that attacks against minorities have become more brazen under Modi.

Muslims have been lynched by Hindu mobs over allegations of eating beef or smuggling cows, an animal considered holy to Hindus. Muslim businesses have been boycotted, their homes and businesses have been bulldozed and places of worship set on fire. There have been open calls for their genocide.

Modi's remarks referred to a 2006 statement by then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of the Congress party. Singh said that India's lower castes, tribes, women and, "in particular the Muslim minority" deserved to share in the country's development equally.

"They must have the first claim on resources," Singh said. A day later, his office clarified that Singh was referring to all of the disadvantaged groups.

In its petition to the election commission, the Congress party said that Modi and the BJP have repeatedly used religion and religious symbols and sentiments in their election campaign with impunity. "These actions have been further bolstered by the commission's inaction in penalizing the prime minister and the BJP for their blatant violations of electoral laws," it said.

"In the history of India, no prime minister has lowered the dignity of his post as much as Modi has," Kharge, Congress' president, wrote on social media platform X.

The commission can issue warnings and suspend candidates for a certain amount of time over violations of the code of conduct.

"We decline comment," a spokesperson for the commission told the Press Trust of India news agency on Monday.

In his speech, Modi also repeated a Hindu nationalist trope that Muslims were overtaking the Hindu population by having more children. Hindus make up 80% of India's 1.4 billion people, while the country's 200 million Muslims are 14%. Official data shows that fertility rates among Muslims have dropped the fastest among religious groups in recent decades, from 4.4 in 1992-93 to 2.3 between 2019-21, just higher than Hindus at 1.94.

Modi's BJP has previously referred to Muslims as infiltrators and cast them as illegal migrants who crossed into India from Bangladesh and Pakistan. Several states run by the BJP have also made laws that restrict interfaith marriage, citing the unproven conspiracy theory of "love jihad," which claims Muslim men use marriage to convert Hindu women.

Through it all, Modi has largely stayed silent, and critics say that has emboldened some of his most extreme supporters and enabled more hate speech against Muslims.

Today in History: April 24, final Unabomber-linked killing

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, April 24, the 115th day of 2024. There are 251 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

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On April 24, 1995, the final bomb linked to the Unabomber exploded inside the Sacramento, California, offices of a lobbying group for the wood products industry, killing chief lobbyist Gilbert B. Murray. (Theodore Kaczynski was later sentenced to four lifetimes in prison for a series of bombings that killed three people and injured 29 others.)

On this date:

In 1877, federal troops were ordered out of New Orleans, ending the North's post-Civil War rule in the South.

In 1915, in what's considered the start of the Armenian genocide, the Ottoman Empire began rounding up Armenian political and cultural leaders in Constantinople.

In 1960, rioting erupted in Biloxi, Mississippi, after Black protesters staging a "wade-in" at a whites-only beach were attacked by a crowd of hostile white people.

In 1961, in the wake of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, the White House issued a statement saying that President John F. Kennedy "bears sole responsibility for the events of the past few days."

In 1962, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology achieved the first satellite relay of a television signal, between Camp Parks, California, and Westford, Massachusetts.

In 1967, Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov was killed when his Soyuz 1 spacecraft smashed into the Earth after his parachutes failed to deploy properly during re-entry; he was the first human spaceflight fatality.

In 1980, the United States launched an unsuccessful attempt to free the American hostages in Iran, a mission that resulted in the deaths of eight U.S. servicemen.

In 1990, the space shuttle Discovery blasted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, carrying the \$1.5 billion Hubble Space Telescope.

In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI formally began his stewardship of the Roman Catholic Church; the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said in his installation homily that as pontiff he would listen to the will of God in governing the world's 1.1 billion Catholics.

In 2013, in Bangladesh, a shoddily constructed eight-story commercial building housing garment factories collapsed, killing more than 1,100 people.

In 2017, two inmates received lethal injections on the same gurney about three hours apart as Arkansas completed the nation's first double execution since 2000, just days after the state ended a nearly 12-year hiatus on administering capital punishment.

In 2018, former police officer Joseph DeAngelo was arrested at his home near Sacramento, California, after DNA linked him to crimes attributed to the so-called Golden State Killer; authorities believed he committed 13 murders and more than 50 rapes in the 1970s and 1980s. (DeAngelo would plead guilty in 2020 to 13 counts of murder and be sentenced to life in prison without parole.)

In 2019, avowed racist John William King was executed in Texas for the 1998 slaying of James Byrd Jr., who was chained to the back of a truck and dragged along a road outside Jasper, Texas; prosecutors said Byrd was targeted because he was Black.

In 2020, the Food and Drug Administration issued an alert about the dangers of using a malaria drug that President Donald Trump had repeatedly promoted for coronavirus patients. The parent company of Lysol and another disinfectant warned that its products should not be used as an internal treatment for the coronavirus, a day after Trump wondered aloud about that prospect during a White House briefing.

In 2021, the United States formally declared that the systematic killing and deportation of more than a million Armenians by Ottoman Empire forces in the early 20th century was "genocide," a term that the White House had avoided using for decades for fear of alienating ally Turkey.

In 2022, French President Emmanuel Macron comfortably won reelection to a second term. The victory for the 44-year-old centrist spared France and Europe from the seismic upheaval of a shift of power to firebrand populist, far-right challenger Marine Le Pen.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Shirley MacLaine is 90. Actor-singer-director Barbra Streisand is 82. Former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley is 82. Country singer Richard Sterban (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 81. Rock

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musician Doug Clifford (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 79. R&B singer Ann Peebles is 77. Former Irish Taoiseach (TEE'-shuk) Enda Kenny is 73. Actor-playwright Eric Bogosian is 71. Rock singer-musician Jack Blades (Night Ranger) is 70. Actor Michael O'Keefe is 69. Rock musician David J (Bauhaus) is 67. Actor Glenn Morshower is 65. Rock musician Billy Gould is 61. Actor-comedian Cedric the Entertainer is 60. Actor Djimon Hounsou (JEYE'-mihn OHN'-soo) is 60. Rock musician Patty Schemel (Hole) is 57. Actor Stacy Haiduk is 56. Rock musician Aaron Comess (Spin Doctors) is 56. Actor Aidan Gillen is 56. Actor Melinda Clarke is 55. Actor Rory McCann is 55. Latin pop singer Alejandro Fernandez is 53. Country-rock musician Brad Morgan (Drive-By Truckers) is 53. Rock musician Brian Marshall (Creed; Alter Bridge) is 51. Actor Derek Luke is 50. Actor-producer Thad Luckinbill is 49. Actor Eric Balfour is 47. Actor Rebecca Mader is 47. Country singer Rebecca Lynn Howard is 45. Country singer Danny Gokey is 44. Actor Reagan Gomez is 44. Actor Austin Nichols is 44. Actor Sasha Barrese is 43. Contemporary Christian musician Jasen Rauch (Red) is 43. Singer Kelly Clarkson is 42. Rock singer-musician Tyson Ritter (The All-American Rejects) is 40. Country singer Carly Pearce is 34. Actor Joe Keery is 32. Actor Jack Quaid is 32. Actor Doc Shaw is 32. Actor Jordan Fisher is 30. Golfer Lydia Ko is 27.