

Groton Daily Independent

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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. **(will be livestreamed on GDILIVE.COM)**
Track at Sisseton, 11 a.m.

Friday, April 26

Senior Menu: Taco salad, Mexican rice with beans, breadstick, cherry fluff.
School Breakfast: Bagel bits.
School Lunch: Lasagna, corn, tea buns.

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



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.

Sunday, April 28

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Piano Recital, noon; choir, 6 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's at 9 a.m. and Zion at 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
High School Baseball at Volga. Varsity at 2 p.m., Junior Varsity at 4 p.m.

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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Officials from TikTok vowed yesterday to file a legal challenge against a new law requiring its China-based parent company, ByteDance, to sell the platform or withdraw from the US market within 270 days. President Joe Biden signed the order yesterday as part of a broader \$95B foreign aid package (see previous write-up). The window for sale, which can be extended 90 days, falls on Jan. 19—one day before the current presidential term ends.

The 2024 NFL Draft kicks off tonight (8 pm ET, ABC/ESPN), live from downtown Detroit. Round one will be held tonight, rounds two and three tomorrow, and the final four rounds Saturday. See the full draft order and selections as they're made here.

Surgeons at NYU's Langone Health center have successfully transplanted a gene-edited pig kidney in tandem with a mechanical heart pump implant, doctors revealed yesterday. The first-of-its-kind combination procedure could increase access to life-saving treatment for people with multiple chronic illnesses typically ineligible for human organ donation. Over 100,000 people are currently on the national transplant waiting list.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Heisman Trust returns trophy to 2005 Heisman winner Reggie Bush; Bush forfeited the trophy in 2010 due to Bush receiving improper benefits while playing for Southern Cal.

Tupac Shakur's estate threatens Drake with lawsuit over the use of the late rapper's AI-generated vocals without permission in "Taylor Made" diss track.

Spanish soccer league LaLiga in talks to host league matches in the US beginning with 2025-26 season.

Science & Technology

Brief and reversible suppression of key gene in fruit flies gives rise to cancer tumors; breakthrough challenges longstanding belief cancer can only be initiated by permanent genetic mutations.

Bioluminescent animals evolved as early as 540 million years ago, study suggests; trait emerged at the same time as some animals developed eyes.

NASA confirms it reestablished contact with Voyager 1, months after communications problems arose. The craft launched in 1977 and is now 15 billion miles from Earth.

Business & Markets

Markets close mixed (Dow -0.1%, S&P 500 0.0%, Nasdaq +0.1%) as earnings reports continue to roll in. Shares of Meta drop 16% on weak revenue guidance, despite beating first quarter estimates.

Consulting giant McKinsey reportedly under federal criminal investigation for its role in opioid-related work for pharmaceutical firms. Russia seizes \$440M from JPMorgan Chase, which it says had been frozen following the invasion of Ukraine.

AI coding startup Cognition secures \$175M investment from Founders Fund, brings valuation to \$2B. IBM to acquire cloud infrastructure company HashiCorp for \$6.4B.

Politics & World Affairs

Arizona House passes repeal of near-total abortion ban by 32-28 vote, sending bill to the state Senate; law was first passed in 1864. Supreme Court hears arguments over whether a federal law allowing emergency room doctors to perform abortions in certain cases supersedes state restrictions on the procedure.

Supreme Court to consider today whether former President Donald Trump can claim immunity in election interference case. Former Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, 17 others indicted in Arizona "fake electors" plan. Rep. Donald Payne Jr. (D, NJ-10) dies at age 65 from reported cardiac arrest.

Pro-Palestinian protesters clash with police at the University of Texas and University of Southern California as campus demonstrations spread across the US. House Speaker Mike Johnson (R, LA-4) appears at Columbia University protest, calls on White House to bring in National Guard.

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GROTON HISTORIC JAIL RESTORATION BENEFIT BRUNCH



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

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BALLOT QUESTION SUBMITTED TO SECRETARY OF STATE

(Pierre, S.D.) – Secretary of State Monae L. Johnson’s office received petitions for a ballot question this afternoon. If validated and certified, the ballot question will appear on the general election ballot on November 5, 2024. The deadline to submit ballot question petitions to the Secretary of State is Tuesday, May 7, at 5:00 p.m. central time.

Petitions will be reviewed by the Secretary of State’s office in the order in which they were received. Below is a chart indicating the order of submission:

2024 Ballot Question Petitions Received							
Receipt Order	Sponsor Name(s)	Ballot Measure Type	Title of Measure	Date Received	Time Received	Sponsor's Estimated Petition Sheets	Sponsor's Estimated Signatures
1	Rick Weiland	Initiated Measure	An initiated measure prohibiting taxes on anything sold for human consumption.	04/24/2024	3:37 PM	2,889	25,000
						ESTIMATED TOTAL SUBMITTED	25,000

In order to qualify to be placed on the 2024 general election ballot, an Initiated Measure requires 17,508 valid signatures and a Constitutional Amendment requires 35,017 valid signatures. As outlined in South Dakota Codified Law 2-1-16 and 2-1-17, the Secretary of State’s office will now conduct a random sampling of the petition signatures to determine the validity.

Ballot measures submitted to the Secretary of State’s office previously had a deadline for submission which was one year out from the general election. After a law change in 2023, ballot measure petitions have until the first Tuesday in May to file. Ballot measures will be a top priority for the Secretary of State’s office, along with assisting voters and county auditors with absentee voting and questions for the June 4, 2024, Primary Election.

Individuals who wish to have their name withdrawn from a ballot measure petition must submit written notification to the Secretary of State’s office any time before the petition from which the individual is submitting is filed and certified for placement on the general election ballot.

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April 15-24, 2024

The last few weeks have been very busy here in DC! I was very fortunate to see many South Dakotans from all across the state. We had good discussions on tribal relations, research projects happening in South Dakota, health care, small businesses and more. The Senate also had some pretty big votes this

week on impeachment articles for Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas, the reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and the supplemental aid package that provides funding for Ukraine, Israel and Indo-Pacific. More on those later. Here's my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakotans I met with: Brian Bird, President and CEO of Northwestern Energy; Students from Spearfish High School; Jim Dover, CEO of Avera Health; Members of the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations; Mike Headley, Director of the Sanford Underground Research Facility; Becky Dewitz, CEO of the Great Plains Zoo; Kellie Wasko, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Corrections; Members of the South Dakota Emergency Nurses Association; South Dakota representatives with Growth Energy; Members of the National Community Pharmacists Association; Leaders from the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association; and J. Garret Renville, Chairman of Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate.

Visited with South Dakotans from: Amherst, Baltic, Fort Pierre, Hot Springs, Lead, Mitchell, North Sioux City, Pierre, Sioux Falls, Sisseton and Spearfish.

Other meetings: Lieutenant General Michael Plehn, President of National Defense University; General Thomas Bussiere, Commander of the Air Force Global Strike Command; Lia Merminga, Director of Fermilab; Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba, Canada; Members of the French Parliament; Jerome Powell, Chairman of the Federal Reserve; Students from National Defense University; and Sabri Boukadoum, Algeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs. I also spoke about artificial intelligence at an event hosted by the American Consumer & Investor Institute.

Votes taken: 30 – I usually include the most notable vote in this section, but there were several big votes this past week. Here's a quick recap of those:

As you may recall, a few months ago, the House voted to impeach Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. The articles of impeachment finally came to the Senate last week. As expected, every Senate Democrat voted to dismiss these articles of impeachment before even hearing any evidence. This sets a dangerous precedent for the Senate, as it's the first time the Senate has voted to dismiss articles of impeachment without hearing evidence. I voted in favor of having a trial.

We also voted to reauthorize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, more commonly known as FISA. FISA helps us gather intelligence on foreign intelligence targets operating outside of the United States. I voted to reauthorize FISA for two years.

We voted on H.R.815, otherwise known as the National Security Act. The bill passed 79-18 with strong bipartisan support. It includes \$26.4B for Israel and humanitarian aid, \$60.8B for Ukraine and \$8.13B for the Indo-Pacific theater to deter Chinese aggression. The bill also includes a provision that requires TikTok to divest from their Chinese-owned parent company in nine months or the app will be banned. Finally, this bill includes several sanctions on Iran terrorist activities and Mexican drug cartels trafficking fentanyl.

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The United States Senate reaffirmed our leadership role in the world and sent a powerful message that we are not backing away from our role as a leader of the free world.

Hearings: Five. I attended one hearing in the Select Committee on Intelligence, and one in the Senate Banking Committee. In Banking, I questioned the United States Acting Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Adrienne Todman on burdensome red tape that is getting in the way of Americans being able to afford housing. You can watch a clip of that here.

We had another week full of Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearings:

- In our first hearing from the week, we heard from leadership with the United States Air Force, including Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall on the developments of the B-21 Raider stealth bomber. The first two squadrons of B-21s will be at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota.

- On Wednesday, Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm was in front of Armed Services, where I had the opportunity to ask her about Department of Energy projects happening at the Sanford Underground Research Facility near Lead. You can watch a clip of that here.

- On Thursday, we heard from Christine Wormuth, Secretary of the Army and General Randy George, Chief of Staff of the Army. I questioned them on America's counter drone capability especially as attacks in the Middle East ramp up. You can watch a clip of that here.

Classified briefings: I had one classified briefing with the Armed Services' Subcommittee on Strategic Forces.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Andover, Brookings, Eureka, Hot Springs, Mellette, Pine Ridge, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Sturgis and Vermillion.

Steps taken this past week: 51,405 steps or 25.15 miles.

Carbon Pipelines and Landowner Rights in South Dakota Rep. Will Mortenson (R-Fort Pierre)

About a month ago, the Legislature passed a bill known as the Landowner Bill of Rights. The measure places regulations on proposed carbon pipelines that are being built in eastern South Dakota and requires the carbon pipeline to pay additional money annually to landowners and counties. The Landowner Bill of Rights had strong bipartisan support and was signed into law by Governor Kristi Noem.

A couple weeks ago, a group of political activists announced an effort to repeal the Landowner Bill of Rights. As a prime sponsor of the bill in the House, I admit I am confused about the attempt to repeal it. The primary policy change contained in the measure is an additional surcharge that counties can levy on carbon pipelines, granting millions of extra dollars to landowners and millions of extra dollars to county governments each year from the carbon pipeline company. The measure also clarifies Public Utilities Commission (PUC) siting authority over linear projects like electrical lines, pipelines, and other transmission projects that cross the state. Finally, and importantly, the measure includes several landowner protections, which ensure any easements pertaining to the carbon pipeline are done on terms that are fairer to the farmer or rancher.

The measure does not guarantee the carbon pipelines will be built – that decision will be made by the PUC (just like permitting for all linear projects in South Dakota over the last fifty years). I think it is likely the carbon pipeline will be built whether or not this law is in place and I know for certain that if the carbon pipeline is built, South Dakota will want the Landowner Bill of Rights. We'll want the carbon pipeline to pay millions more dollars to our farmers and to our counties. We'll want the carbon pipeline to pay for damages it causes to fields, drain tile, pastures, and county roads. We'll want the information on what happens if there is a leak. All these measures are contained in the Landowner Bill of Rights.

It is fair to ask - why would anyone want to repeal all these benefits to farmers, ranchers, and the counties? I've spoken to a lot of landowner advocates who have been fighting for landowner rights since the beginning of this carbon pipeline saga. Most acknowledge that the Landowner Bill of Rights is helpful but doesn't address their primary concern: Eminent Domain. The original landowner advocates would like to reform eminent domain, which a process by which easements can be purchased from farmers, whether they want to sell or not.

I am sympathetic to that concern. In 2023, I led on the eminent domain issue, advocating in committee and on the House floor to clarify that carbon pipelines never had eminent domain authority and couldn't use it for this project. That measure was defeated unanimously in the Senate in 2023. A similar measure didn't make it out of a House committee this year. There was not (and is not) consensus for making that change. Instead, we must find other ways to help farmers, ranchers, and counties.

I will return to my earlier statement: I am confused about the attempt to repeal the Landowner Bill of Rights. I can think of no clearer example of the common old phrase: "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face." Repealing the Landowner Bill of Rights would clearly hurt farmers. It would take away substantial compensation and protections. No one can point to a single provision in the measure that harms property rights and there are several obvious property rights added for farmers and ranchers. It would also take revenue away from counties, who desperately need it to fund sheriffs, county roads, and veteran service officers. Repealing this measure hurts the people it claims to be helping. It is misguided politics, pure-and-simple.

I do not know for certain if the carbon pipeline will be built, but if it is, our state, our farmers, and our counties will be much better off with the Landowner Bill of Rights in place. I believe the activists seeking to repeal the measure are actually upset about eminent domain and the federal policies underlying the carbon pipeline, not the Landowner Bill of Rights. Let's not cut off our nose to spite our face. I urge all South Dakotans not to sign petitions to repeal the protections and benefits contained in the Landowner Bill of Rights.

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Letter to the Editor

By Dennis Feickert

In response to South Dakota House of Representatives Majority Leader Will Mortenson's letter to most South Dakota newspapers/media (See page 7 of today's GDI), I would suggest he not discourage South Dakota voters from signing a petition that would repeal SB 201, which he labels as the South Dakota Bill of Rights. It is, in fact, the Summit Carbon Solutions Bill of Rights.

I can believe he is confused by the very concerned citizens who want to repeal SB 201 because it is presented as generating increased tax revenue for counties. Besides stripping counties of local control, accepting this "Bill of Rights" will in fact cost counties in additional funding for EMS, rural fire departments for additional equipment, and with less property tax generated for county government and schools due to a decrease in land values of the hazardous pipe land.

This pipeline is a major boondoggle and will only serve to rip off the taxpayer to line the pockets of a few already rich individuals. It will not guarantee \$7 corn and it will not save the South Dakota corn farmer. I believe it will lead to an even more vertically integrated ethanol industry with the pipeline companies and the ethanol plants snuffing out the small corn producer, leading to even more incorporated farms which will never (and have never) help economic growth.

Obviously Mortenson agrees with South Dakota's severely lacking eminent domain laws because he did not introduce legislation to prevent eminent domain for private gain this year. He says "There is no consensus for making that change." How hard did you try to effect a change? You've got to go after it, Mr. Mortenson!

Mortenson labeled the people wanting to repeal SB 201 "political activists". These people opposing SB 201 are landowners who just want to live on their land, raising their crops, livestock—and families. But since the majority of legislators and the governor did nothing to help protect that way of life from a greedy private company with seemingly unlimited money to throw around, these concerned landowners have had to step up to protect what is theirs. And they've had to do it on their own time and own dime.

As a state representative of the people of South Dakota, Mortenson should not discourage any voter from any petition drive. It is the people of South Dakota's right and privilege to petition any law. Remember South Dakota's state motto? "Under God the people rule."

I would ask the people to please educate themselves and sign the petition to repeal SB 201. Put a stop to this tax rip-off boondoggle and the Summit Carbon Solutions Bill of Rights. Protect your freedom.

Dennis Feickert
Former Brown County Commissioner
Former SD House of Representatives member

High School Baseball

Groton Area Tigers Varsity Lose Lead Early In Defeat To Madison/Chester Varsity 2024

Groton Area Tigers Varsity watched the game slip away early and couldn't recover in a 1-0 loss to Madison/Chester Varsity 2024 on Wednesday. Madison/Chester Varsity 2024 first took the lead in the first inning when Thomas Mechels singled, scoring one run.

The pitching was strong on both sides. Madison/Chester Varsity 2024 pitchers struck out 19, while Groton Area Tigers Varsity sat down four.

JD Prorok earned the win for Madison/Chester Varsity 2024. The starting pitcher surrendered one hit and zero runs over six and one-third innings, striking out 18 and walking one. Dillon Abeln took the loss for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. They went seven innings, allowing one run on seven hits, striking out four and walking none. Ben Brooks earned the save.

Logan Ringgenberg went 1-for-3 at the plate to lead Groton Area Tigers Varsity in hits.

Jordan Pedersen, Mechels, Carsen Schneider, Tregg McGillivray, Brayden Schut, Brooks, and Braxton Bjorklund each collected one hit for Madison/Chester Varsity 2024.

Mechels went 1-for-3 at the plate as the infielder led the team with one run batted in.



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Madison/Chester Varsity 2024 **1 - 0** Groton Area Tigers Varsity

📍 Home 📅 Wednesday April 24, 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
MDSN	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	1
GRTN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2

BATTING

Madison/Chester V	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGillivray (C)	4	0	1	0	0	0
E Barger (CF)	4	0	0	0	0	0
J Pedersen (RF)	3	1	1	0	0	1
B Bjorklund (3B,...)	3	0	1	0	0	0
T Mechels (1B)	3	0	1	1	0	0
B Brooks (SS, P)	3	0	1	0	0	0
C Schneider (LF)	3	0	1	0	0	1
C Hahn (LF)	0	0	0	0	0	0
B Schut	3	0	1	0	0	1
J Olson (2B)	3	0	0	0	0	1
CR: Q Flemming	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	29	1	7	1	0	4

2B: C Schneider, **TB:** B Bjorklund, B Brooks, T McGillivray, C Schneider 2, B Schut, T Mechels, J Pedersen, **SB:** T McGillivray, **LOB:** 7

PITCHING

Madison/Che	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Prorok	6.1	1	0	0	1	18	0
B Brooks	0.2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	7.0	1	0	0	1	19	0

W: J Prorok, **P-S:** B Brooks 7-5, J Prorok 105-69, **WP:** J Prorok, **BF:** B Brooks 2, J Prorok 22

Groton Area Tigers	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Flihs (SS)	3	0	0	0	0	3
C Dunker (LF)	3	0	0	0	0	2
B Althoff (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	3
L Ringgenberg (CF)	3	0	1	0	0	2
G Englund (DH)	3	0	0	0	0	3
C Simon (3B)	2	0	0	0	1	1
N Morris (C)	2	0	0	0	0	2
K Flihs	0	0	0	0	0	0
K Antonsen (2B)	2	0	0	0	0	2
J Erdmann	0	0	0	0	0	0
B Imrie (RF)	2	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	23	0	1	0	1	19

TB: L Ringgenberg, **LOB:** 3

Groton Area	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
D Abeln	7.0	7	1	1	0	4	0
Totals	7.0	7	1	1	0	4	0

L: D Abeln, **P-S:** D Abeln 91-68, **BF:** D Abeln 29



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Feds to require bird flu tests of dairy cattle before transport

South Dakota among states with confirmed infections

BY: JARED STRONG - APRIL 24, 2024 6:50 PM

Starting next week, certain dairy cattle must be tested for avian influenza before they can be transported to a different state, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Wednesday.

The requirement is among several that will expand the testing, reporting and monitoring of the cattle to reduce the spread of bird flu among the animals.

The new rules follow evidence that highly pathogenic avian influenza — which is commonly spread by migrating birds — has transmitted from cow to cow and from cattle to poultry, and that infected cows might not show symptoms of illness, the USDA said. Last week, an analysis of the virus from a Kansas cow showed that it had acquired “an adaptation to mammals.”

On Tuesday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said tests had revealed fragments of the virus in pasteurized milk, but that they don't pose a risk to public health.

“While we are taking this action today, it is important to remember that thus far, we have not found changes to the virus that would make it more transmissible to humans and between people,” the USDA said Wednesday.

It has been a month since the virus was first confirmed to have infected dairy cattle in Texas. The virus has now been detected in 33 dairy herds in eight states, the USDA said. Part of that spread has been attributed to the transportation of infected cows to new herds.

The cows most often recover from infection after a week or so, but their tainted milk cannot be used for commercial human consumption. The virus is often deadly for poultry and can rapidly infect flocks.

The rules set to take effect on Monday require lactating dairy cattle to test negative for influenza A before they are transported across state lines, and that requirement might be expanded to other types of dairy cattle in the future.

Labs must also report their confirmed infections of livestock to the USDA, and certain herd owners must provide details about where their cattle have been transported.

Further information about the new rules is forthcoming, and state agriculture officials declined for now to say what impact they will have on Iowa dairy farmers.

“We are still awaiting specific guidance from USDA regarding this new interstate movement order,” said Don McDowell, a spokesperson for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

John Maxwell, a dairy farmer near Davenport, predicted that the effects for most dairies in Iowa will be inconsequential and that it's best to be cautious and increase testing until more is known about the disease.

“We have to do tests anyway,” he said, in reference to dairy cattle he sells out-of-state. “So it would be one more test and whatever the cost it might be. One more is not the end of the world.”

The USDA has said it will reimburse farmers for testing of sick and asymptomatic cattle.

States with confirmed bird flu infections of dairy cattle include Kansas, Idaho, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota and Texas.

A virus similar to what has infected cows has been found in poultry flocks in Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico and Texas, the USDA said.

Jared Strong is the senior reporter for the Iowa Capital Dispatch. He has written about Iowans and the important issues that affect them for more than 15 years, previously for the Carroll Times Herald and the Des Moines Register.

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His investigative work exposing police misconduct has notched several state and national awards. He is a longtime trustee of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council, which fights for open records and open government. He is a lifelong Iowan and has lived mostly in rural western parts of the state.

Can South Dakota afford to keep Kristi Noem on its payroll?

Governor should audit herself before seeking review of tribal funding

DANA HESS

Whether it's her hairstyle, dental work or feud with the state's tribes, at this point it's impossible to consider Gov. Kristi Noem's actions without looking through the lens of her perpetual tryout to serve as vice president in the next Donald Trump administration.

Her problems with the tribes seem ready-made for the MAGA faithful. It allows her to rail against the federal government's failure to properly fund law enforcement in Indian Country. It also allows her to talk some smack about the Biden administration's policy at the southern border, all the while decrying the prevalence of drugs and crime on the reservations.

Her tough talk, not to mention her insinuation that tribal leaders are profiting from the drug trade, has resulted in her being banned from four of the state's reservations.

One of her favorite talking points lately is calling for an audit of federal funding to tribes. Just as people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones, politicians who call for audits should first make sure that their own books are in order. As it turns out, Noem's tenure in Pierre has been an expensive one for South Dakota taxpayers.

An audit of the Department of Public Safety is probably what it would take to determine the cost of protecting South Dakota's much-traveled governor who is usually accompanied by two Highway Patrol troopers. When legislators tried to get some answers about the cost, Highway Patrol officials were adamant that revealing any figures, even a lump sum, would endanger the governor. It seems that bad guys could somehow use that number to extrapolate the level of protection being afforded the governor whether she was going to Piedmont, Parker or Paris.

That cost remains a mystery while other costs do not.

As Noem's fame grew in right-wing circles, it became apparent that what the Capitol was lacking was a TV studio. In theory that facility is available to any state department that needs to get its message on the airwaves, but the \$130,000 studio sure makes it easier for Noem to be a frequent guest on Fox News.

In one of the ethical low points of her administration, Noem inserted herself into the discussion about whether or not her daughter would be licensed as a real estate appraiser. One of the outcomes there was an age discrimination complaint and a \$200,000 payout.

Terminating a state contract with a transgender advocacy group resulted in an apology from the state and a \$300,000 payment to settle a lawsuit.

So far, the state has spent \$9 million on workforce development commercials starring Noem. State officials have been hard-pressed to quantify the results of the campaign in terms of people actually moving to South Dakota. One reliable fact is that the commercials have kept Noem in the national spotlight throughout this election cycle.

During her reelection campaign, Noem usurped a traditionally Democratic issue and called for cutting the state sales tax on groceries. She seemed to champion the issue in the next legislative session, but while she talked a good game in public, her actions behind the scenes were lacking. Without the backslapping, glad-handing and arm-twisting that goes with trying to pass major legislation, her bill to cut the tax failed. Consequently, the Legislature passed a cut taking the state sales tax from 4.5% to 4.2%, a savings to taxpayers of an estimated \$104 million. Cutting the state sales tax on groceries would have saved an estimated \$120 million for everyone who eats, a \$16 million difference.

Casting herself as a wartime governor, Noem has been eager to characterize the nation's southern border as a war zone and send in the state's National Guard. During the last legislative session, Noem

admitted that while Texas is requesting help from other states, it is not reimbursing the states that send troops. This leaves South Dakota taxpayers on the hook for about \$1 million per deployment.

With the Republican Party's national convention and the selection of a vice presidential candidate set for mid-July, it looked like perhaps there would be an end to Noem's spendthrift ways. However, she has pledged to keep serving as South Dakota's governor, even if she gets the nod from Trump, and will only resign if they win. Of course that's her right, but at this rate there's no telling if the state can afford to keep her on the payroll.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

Searchlight reporter is a finalist for a national award

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - APRIL 24, 2024 2:48 PM

South Dakota Searchlight's Makenzie Huber is a finalist, with Annie Todd, formerly of the Argus Leader, for a Livingston Award from the Wallace House Center for Journalists at the University of Michigan.

Huber and Todd are finalists in the Local Reporting category for their November 2023 collaborative series, *The Lost Children*, examining the causes and solutions for the overrepresentation of Native American children in South Dakota's foster care system.

The center announced 2024 finalists Wednesday in local, national and international reporting. The awards support young journalists and honor the best reporting and storytelling by journalists under the age of 35 across all forms of journalism. The finalists were chosen from more than 400 entries for work released in 2023.

"In a particularly difficult period of journalism downsizing, it's an honor to recognize the ambitious work of young reporters," said Lynette Clemetson, director of the awards and the Wallace House Center for Journalists. "This year's finalists share a commitment to truth, accountability, nuance and empathy at a moment in which these qualities can often feel in short supply."

This year's winners will be announced on June 11 at an in-person awards ceremony hosted by Ken Auletta, media writer for *The New Yorker* and author.

Huber, a lifelong South Dakotan, has worked as a reporter for South Dakota Searchlight since its launch in 2022. South Dakota Searchlight is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network supported by grants and donors.

Supreme Court justices appear split over whether to protect abortion care during emergencies

BY: KELCIE MOSELEY-MORRIS - APRIL 24, 2024 2:42 PM

U.S. Supreme Court justices spent two hours Wednesday debating whether a federal law about emergency treatment encompasses abortion care even in states with strict abortion bans, with no clear indication of how they may ultimately rule.

A decision could come as soon as the end of June to decide whether Idaho's near-total abortion ban means doctors who might need to terminate a pregnancy during a health emergency would be protected from prosecution under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, or EMTALA, a federal law that requires hospitals to treat patients who come to an emergency room regardless of their ability to pay.

If the court decides it does not provide that protection, then hospitals and doctors in Idaho have said they will have to continue transferring patients out of state for that treatment. Since January, when the court decided to take the case and struck down an injunction that provided protection under EMTALA, the number of transfers out of state for pregnancy complications that may require termination has increased from one in 2023 to six over the course of four months.

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The arguments began with aggressive questioning of Idaho Deputy Attorney General Josh Turner by the court's more liberal justices, Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson. Their questions revolved around what EMTALA, which was signed into law in 1986 by President Ronald Reagan, explicitly says about stabilizing treatment and whether abortion procedures fall into that definition when complications occur before a fetus can survive outside of the womb, even with medical intervention.

Turner argued that Idaho's law should supersede federal law in the case of abortion procedures because if a treatment isn't available based on a state law, then it is in conflict with EMTALA and the federal law doesn't apply, even if it goes against commonly accepted medical care standards.

Sotomayor rejected that argument.

"There is no state licensing law that would permit the state to say, 'Don't treat diabetics with insulin. Treat them only with pills,'" Sotomayor said. "Federal law would say you can't do that."

She said federal law requires treatment of a person who is at risk of serious medical complications without that treatment, but Idaho's law does not provide that much leeway.

"Idaho law says the doctor has to determine not that there's really a serious medical condition, but that the person will die. That's a huge difference, counsel," she said.

Idaho's abortion ban went into effect in August 2022, a few months after the U.S. Supreme Court issued its *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ending federal protection for abortion access and allowing states to regulate it instead. Providers who are prosecuted for performing an abortion are subject to two to five years in prison plus the loss of their medical license, and they are also subject to civil enforcement laws by any family members related to the person who had the abortion.

Conservatives ask about conscience objections, expansion of 'emergency' definition

The more conservative justices offered mixed questions to U.S. Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, who argued on behalf of the government. Justice Neil Gorsuch posed questions related to the federal Supremacy Clause about when federal law can override state law in the context of medicine, while Justice Amy Coney Barrett asked about whether conscience exceptions exist for doctors who don't feel comfortable terminating a pregnancy even in emergency situations. Or if a hospital in general did not want to provide the procedure, such as a Catholic hospital, would be exempt under EMTALA for conscience reasons. One of Idaho's largest hospital systems, Saint Alphonsus, is a Catholic hospital.

Prelogar confirmed that yes, individual doctors and entire medical entities qualify for those conscience objections and are therefore not required to perform an abortion under EMTALA. But at a hospital that did not have a blanket objection, they would take individual objections into consideration for appropriate staffing so that there is always someone available to provide that care if necessary.

"If the question is, could you force an individual doctor to step in over a conscience objection, the answer is no, and I want to be really clear about that," Prelogar said.

Justice Sam Alito also asked Prelogar if EMTALA could be understood to apply to other emergency situations such as a mental health emergency, if someone was expressing suicidal thoughts and wanted to end their pregnancy to resolve those thoughts. Idaho's legal representation, conservative religious law firm Alliance Defending Freedom, argued in its brief to the court that a ruling in favor of EMTALA protection would allow such situations to occur. Prelogar said no, the proper treatment would be to administer medications to alleviate the suicidal thoughts.

"There can be grave mental health emergencies, but EMTALA could never require pregnancy termination as the stabilizing care ... because that wouldn't do anything to address the underlying brain chemistry issue that's causing the mental health emergency in the first place," Prelogar said. "If she happens to be pregnant, it would be incredibly unethical to terminate her pregnancy. She might not be in a position to give any informed consent."

The court is expected to rule in the case by the close of its current term, which typically occurs toward the end of June.

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Kelcie Moseley-Morris is an award-winning journalist who has covered many topics across Idaho since 2011. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Idaho and a master's degree in public administration from Boise State University. Moseley-Morris started her journalism career at the Moscow-Pullman Daily News, followed by the Lewiston Tribune and the Idaho Press.

Group says it's filing petition signatures to put grocery tax repeal on ballot

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - APRIL 24, 2024 12:35 PM

South Dakota and Mississippi are the only states that have a full state sales tax rate on groceries, but that could change in November.

Circulators of a petition to repeal the state sales tax on groceries said they planned to turn in enough signatures Wednesday to the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office to place the measure on the Nov. 5 ballot. The office must still verify that enough of the signatures are from registered South Dakota voters.

The ballot initiative would repeal the state sales tax on anything sold for human consumption, except alcoholic beverages and prepared food. It does not prohibit cities from taxing groceries. Currently, the state has a 4.2% sales and use tax, and cities can tack on an additional 2% tax.

The state sales tax rate was 4.5% before state legislators reduced it during the 2023 legislative session. Legislators included a sunset clause to make the tax reduction expire in 2027, in part out of caution in case voters approve the grocery tax repeal. The reduction in the sales tax rate was estimated to cost the state more than \$100 million in annual revenue, and the grocery tax repeal would cost an estimated \$124 million in annual revenue.

Republican Gov. Kristi Noem promised to repeal the state food sales tax during her reelection campaign in 2022 and backed an unsuccessful bill during the 2023 legislative session to eliminate the tax. But Noem pulled her support for the potential ballot question last year. The commissioner of the state Bureau of Finance and Management told South Dakota News Watch that the ballot measure would prevent the state from taxing tobacco and medical marijuana.

Other Republican leaders, such as Senate President Pro Tempore Lee Schoenbeck, have spoken out against the initiative, saying it — along with the 2023 tax cut still in effect — could lead to a budget "train wreck." Most recently, Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken spoke out against the measure during his State of the City address, according to The Dakota Scout.

Polling by South Dakota News Watch and the Chiesman Center for Democracy in 2023 found 60.6% of surveyed registered voters support eliminating the state sales tax on groceries.

TakeItBack, the organization spearheading the ballot initiative campaign, said it collected over 25,000 petition signatures from registered voters. Just over 17,500 are required to put the initiative on the ballot.

Rick Weiland, a Democrat, is co-founder of TakeItBack and also leads Dakotans for Health, which was the organization leading the petition circulation effort alongside a petition to restore abortion rights (the abortion-rights petition has not yet been submitted).

"Removing the state's sales tax on groceries is a crucial step towards addressing food insecurity and promoting economic fairness in our state," Weiland said in a news release.

The South Dakota State Federation of Labor AFL-CIO endorsed the ballot initiative Wednesday. The organization represents 195 unions in the state and 7,000 union members.

"Our low-income working families are struggling, with some spending up to 30% of their household income to feed their families," said B.J. Motley, the organization's president. "This inequality is unacceptable, and we stand ready to partner with TakeItBack to address this pressing issue."

All ballot-question petitions must be filed by May 7. Several other citizen-initiated petitions are circulating, including a measure to switch the state from political-party primary elections to open primaries. The Legislature has already exercised its right to place two measures on the ballot: one would replace references

to male officeholders in the state constitution with neutral language, and the other would ask voters to lift a prohibition against work requirements for Medicaid expansion enrollees.

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

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 co-chair of Life Defense Fund, 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."

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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.

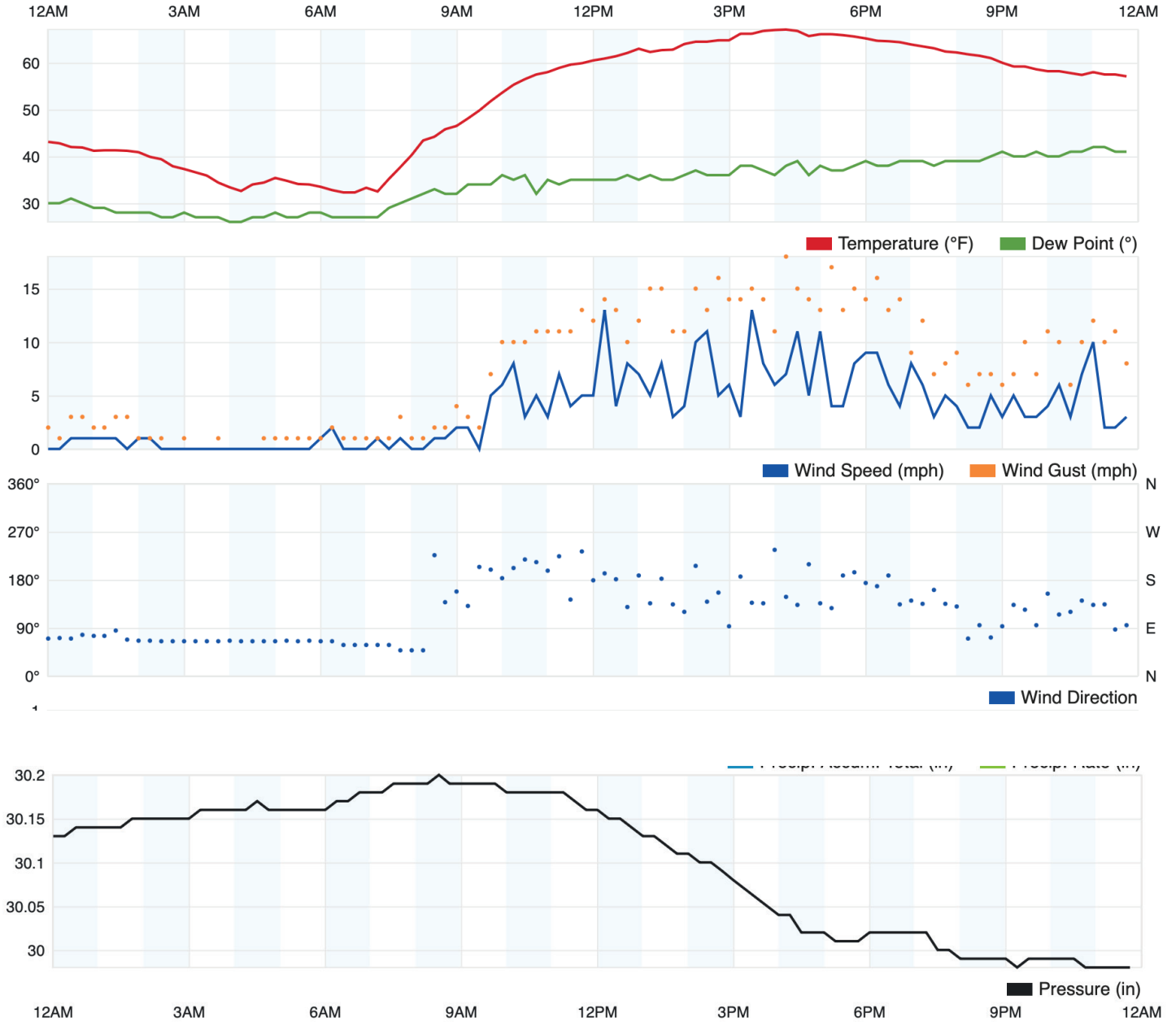
In 2021, 93% of abortions occurred during the first trimester – that is, at or before 13 weeks of gestation, according to the CDC. An additional 6% occurred between 14 and 20 weeks, and about 1% were performed at 21 weeks or more.

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.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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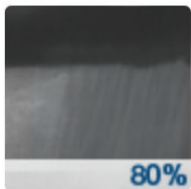
Today



Breezy. Sunny then Slight Chance Showers

High: 72 °F

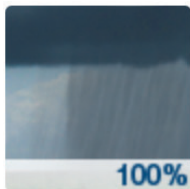
Tonight



Showers and Breezy

Low: 48 °F

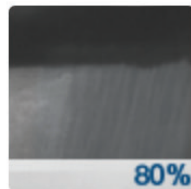
Friday



Showers

High: 57 °F

Friday Night



Showers and Breezy

Low: 45 °F

Saturday



Chance Showers and Breezy

High: 52 °F



Warm & Windy Thursday

April 24, 2024
2:46 PM

Thursday

- Increasing clouds. Highs near 70°. Winds out of the south 20-30 mph with gusts up to 45 mph. A 30% chance of afternoon showers, while dry over west central MN. A few rumbles of thunder.



WINDY



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

On Thursday we will see increasing moisture on gusty winds out of the south 20-30 mph with gusts up to 45 mph. There is a 30% chance of afternoon showers, with dry conditions remaining through the day Thursday over west central MN.

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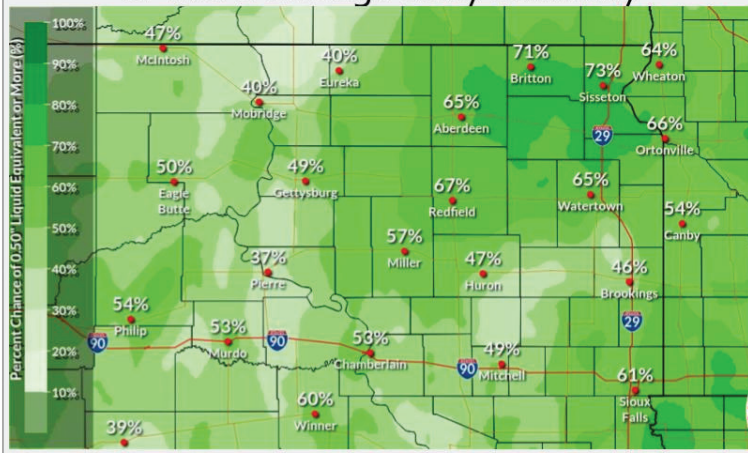
2 Rounds of Rain through the Weekend

Round #1: Thursday afternoon until early Saturday morning.

A few rumbles of thunder. 80-100% chance of rain.



40 to 75% chance of 0.50" of Rain or more through early Saturday



Round #2: Sunday



Colder
Highs in the 40s

A 50-80% chance of rain,
lowest over north central
South Dakota

Get your most up to date forecast
for your specific area at...

[weather.gov/aberdeen](https://www.weather.gov/aberdeen)



There are 2 rounds of rain expected through the weekend. The first round will be Thursday afternoon until early Saturday morning. The chance of rain is 80-100%, with a 40-75% chance of receiving a half an inch or more rain. There will be a few rumbles of thunder. The 2nd round of rain will be on Sunday, with a 50-80% chance of rain, lowest over north central SD.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 67 °F at 4:06 PM

Low Temp: 32 °F at 7:11 AM

Wind: 19 mph at 3:34 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 06 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1962

Record Low: 19 in 2013

Average High: 62

Average Low: 35

Average Precip in April.: 1.45

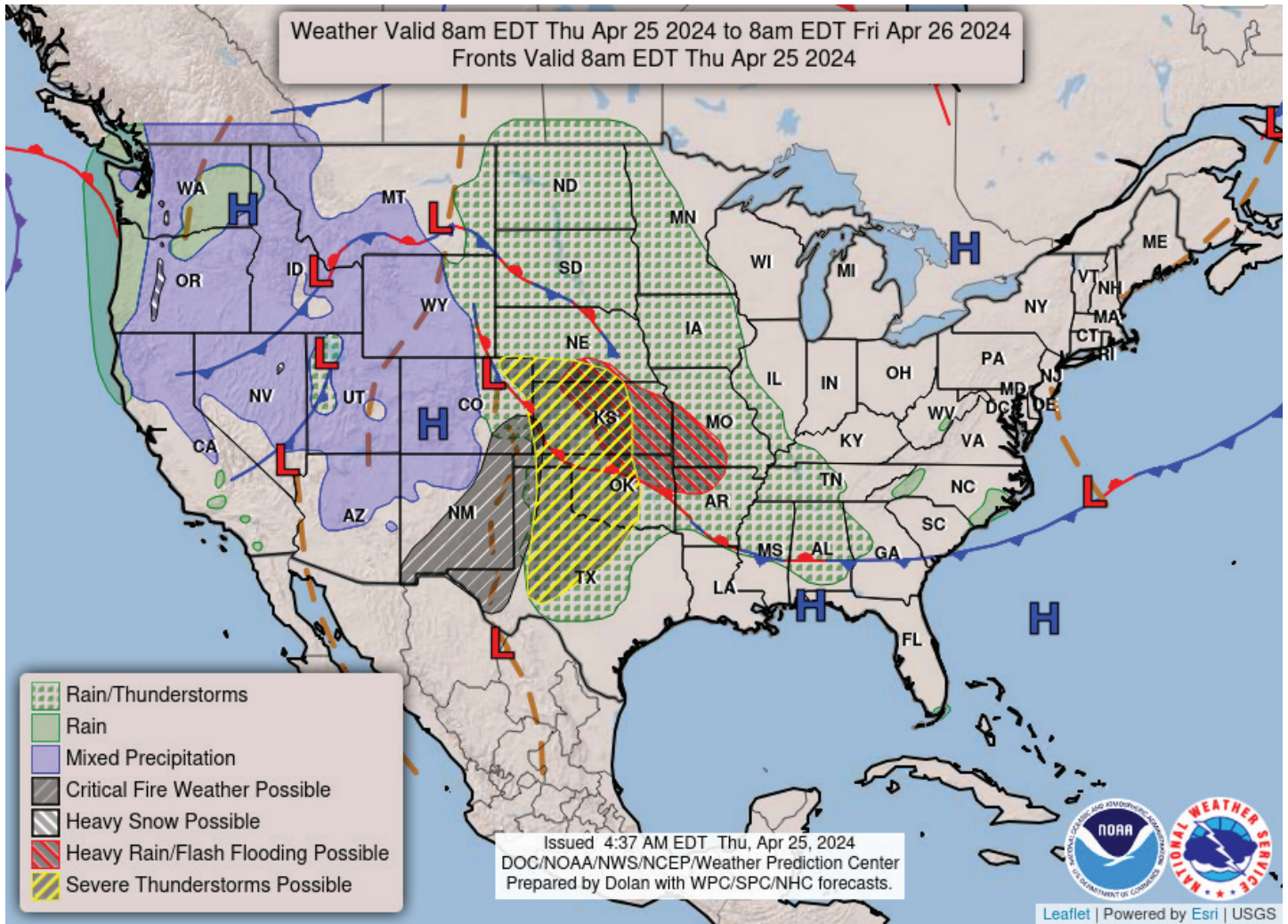
Precip to date in April: 2.34

Average Precip to date: 3.51

Precip Year to Date: 3.29

Sunset Tonight: 8:33:30 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:25:21 am



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Today in Weather History

April 25, 1994: Lightning from a thunderstorm 4 miles W of Aberdeen struck two houses, causing structural damage and starting a fire which caused further damage to one home. The second house suffered damage only to a surge protector.

April 25, 1996: An intense area of low pressure brought high winds of 30 to 50 mph with isolated gusts to 80 mph to central and north central South Dakota from the morning to the evening of the 25th. The dry April soil was picked up by the high winds, lowering visibilities in blowing dust. Some places experienced dust storm conditions with low visibilities and drifting dust. Many roofs lost shingles due to the strong winds. In Eagle Butte, the Vietnam Veterans Center roof was blown off. Other buildings were also damaged across the area, along with some broken windows. Some power poles and lines were downed west of Fort Pierre. Some trees and branches were also downed. Near Isabel, a cattle trailer was tipped over, and two calf shelters were destroyed. Also, a twenty foot Conoco sign was blown down near Isabel along with other signs damaged across the area. The dust storm reminded many of the 1930s. Some wind gusts include 60 mph at Mobridge and Selby, 70 mph at Miller, Pierre, and Murdo, and 80 mph at Isabel and Eagle Butte.

1880: A violent tornado, at times up to 400 yards wide, swept away at least 20 homes in Macon, Mississippi. Pieces of houses were found 15 miles away. 22 people died, and 72 were injured. Loaded freight cars were thrown 100 yards into homes. Clothes were carried for eight miles.

1898 - The temperature at Volcano Springs CA hit 118 degrees to establish a U.S. record for the month of April. (The Weather Channel)

1910: Chicago, Illinois was blanketed with 2.5 inches of snow, and a total of 6.5 inches between the 22nd and the 26th. It was the latest significant snow on record for the city. Atlanta, Georgia also received late-season snowfall when 1.5 inches fell. Their 32 degrees low is the latest freeze on record.

1920 - Atlanta, GA, received 1.5 inches of snow, and experienced their latest freeze of record with a morning low of 32 degrees. The high of just 39 degrees was only their second daily high colder than 40 degrees in April. (The Weather Channel)

1984 - A late season snowstorm struck the Northern Rockies and the Northern Plains. The storm produced some unusually high snowfall totals. The town of Lead, located in the Black Hills of western South Dakota, was buried under 67 inches of snow. Red Lodge, located in the mountains of southern Montana, reported 72 inches of snow. Up to 60 inches blanketed the mountains of northern Wyoming. It was rated the worst late season storm of record for much of the affected area. (25th-28th) (Storm Data) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Low pressure off the coast of North Carolina produced heavy rain flooding creeks in the foothills and the piedmont area, before moving out to sea. The low pressure system also produced wind gusts to 50 mph in Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms racing at 65 mph produced large hail in Alabama and Georgia. Hail damage in Alabama was estimated at fifty million dollars, making it their worst weather disaster since Hurricane Frederick in 1979. Hail three inches in diameter accompanied a tornado near Valdosta GA. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported south of Atlanta GA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a stationary front produced severe weather from North Carolina to Indiana and Ohio, with more than 70 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A strong (F-2) tornado hit Xenia OH injuring 16 persons and causing more than a million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Texas to Nebraska. Thunderstorms spawned fifteen tornadoes, including a powerful (F-4) tornado near Weatherford TX. Between 3 PM and 8 PM, a storm complex tracking northeastward across central Kansas spawned four tornadoes along a 119-mile path from Ness to Smith Center, with the last tornado on the ground for 55 miles. Del Rio TX was raked with hail two inches in diameter, and wind gusts to 112 mph. Brown County and Commanche County in Texas were deluged with up to 18 inches of rain, and flooding caused more than 65 million dollars damage. Two dozen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 87 degrees at Flint MI and 90 degrees at Alpena MI were records for April. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THANK YOU FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL DAY

Just before leaving for school, little Noah was saying his morning prayers. "Heavenly Father, thank You for this beautiful day."

"But," interrupted his mother, "there is going to be a storm with rain, lightning and thunder. That's not a beautiful day."

"I know," was the quick reply. "We just can't judge a day by the weather."

There are some days when the last possible thing we can do is to find something beautiful. We awaken to discover that a loved one is critically ill, we feel overwhelmed by the tough schedule we are facing, the children are out of control and the sink is overflowing because the plumbing is stopped-up. What next? Can anything else go wrong?

Perhaps it is time to listen to the Psalmist: "This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it." Throughout the Psalms we often read about the difficult, demanding and discouraging days they faced. What did they do?

They spoke to God honestly and took their problems to Him and plead for His help. And every time, at the end of the psalm, they were rejoicing!

Prayer: Father, we know that You are bigger than every problem we face and have solutions for each of them. May we see Your beauty in all things. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24



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: 1 Days 17 Hrs 35
Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.24.24

7 12 17 22 52 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 50
Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.24.24

4 40 41 45 46 6

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 5 Mins 52
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.24.24

5 13 26 32 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$70,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 5
Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.24.24

23 25 45 46 62 25

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 34
Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.24.24

2 20 22 26 47 21

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$149,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 34
Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Tennessee lawmakers join movement allowing some teachers to take guns into schools

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Some public school teachers in Tennessee could gain new powers to carry concealed guns into the classroom, a year after a deadly school shooting in the state's capital city stirred impassioned debate about the best ways to curb such violence.

The Republican-led Legislature in Tennessee gave final approval to the legislation Tuesday, just days after Republican governors in Iowa and Nebraska signed laws that also expand the potential for armed personnel in schools.

Tennessee lawmakers followed that up with more gun-rights measures Wednesday, giving final approval to bills letting retired law officers bring guns into schools and prohibiting local extreme-risk-protection ordinances that allow guns to be removed from people judged to pose a threat to themselves or others.

Both bills head next to Republican Gov. Bill Lee, who pushed unsuccessfully last year for a statewide measure that would allow some version of extreme risk protection orders.

The legislative action highlights a national divide on public safety and gun policies, coming as Democratic-led legislatures in Colorado, Maine and Vermont all took steps toward imposing greater firearm restrictions.

Legislatures in about 20 states already have passed measures this year to expand gun rights or restrict access to firearms. Dozens more proposals are pending. The measures continue a trend from last year, when more than half the states enacted firearms legislation, with Democrats generally favoring more limits and Republicans more freedoms for gun owners.

GUNS IN TENNESSEE

A little over a year ago, a shooter opened fire at a private Christian elementary school in Nashville, killing three children and three adults before police killed him.

Tensions ran high as lawmakers debated a response, peaking as the Republican majority expelled two Black Democratic House members last year for their role in a protest supporting gun control. Both lawmakers were subsequently reinstated.

Protests also broke out Tuesday after lawmakers passed the latest school gun legislation.

A previous Tennessee law already allowed some private school teachers and staff to carry guns.

The new measure would expand that to public schools with several conditions. Teachers and staff would first have to obtain a permit to carry a handgun, which requires passing a background check, getting mental health clearance and completing 40 hours of training in basic school policing. They also would need written authorization from the school's principal and local law enforcement. And they wouldn't be able to take guns into school events at stadiums, gymnasiums or auditoriums.

The legislation was one of several pro-gun bills passed this year in Tennessee.

On Monday, Lee signed a bill expanding the private school gun provisions to preschools. On Tuesday, Lee signed legislation requiring schools to provide age-appropriate instruction on firearm safety. And he signed legislation Tuesday prohibiting financial institutions from requiring special tracking codes for retail firearm sales.

GUNS IN SCHOOLS

About half of the U.S. states allow teachers or other school employees with concealed carry permits to bring guns onto school property, according to the Giffords Law Center, a gun control advocacy group.

About a half-dozen states have passed measures this year that could expand the ability of some people to bring guns into schools.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, a Republican, signed legislation last Friday that creates new protections for

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teachers who carry guns in schools. A 2021 state law already allowed schools to authorize individuals to carry firearms, but some districts have been reluctant to embrace that because of concerns about insurance coverage.

The new Iowa law allows teachers and staff who undergo gun safety training to get a professional permit to carry guns in schools. If they do, they would be protected from criminal and civil liability for use of reasonable force. The law comes three months after a 17-year-old student opened fire at a school in Perry, Iowa, killing a school principal and sixth-grade student and wounding several other people.

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen, a Republican, signed legislation last Thursday that would authorize security staff in the state's smallest school districts to carry guns. The law was pared back from an initial proposal that would have applied to all schools.

Republican-led legislatures in Kentucky, South Dakota and Utah also passed measures this year that could expand the ability of some people to bring guns into schools. A bill passed in Wyoming allots \$480,000 to reimburse schools for the cost of training employees to carry guns on school property.

GUN CONTROL MEASURES

Contrary to the Republican-backed measures, lawmakers in various Democratic-led states have been forging ahead this year with measures to impose greater restrictions on guns.

After an Army reservist killed 18 people and wounded 13 others in Lewiston last year, Democratic Maine Gov. Janet Mills called for a variety of new laws aimed at preventing dangerous people from possessing guns.

The Democratic-led Legislature last week approved measures that would impose a 72-hour waiting period for gun purchases and expand background checks on private gun sales. It also passed legislation to ban devices that convert semi-automatic firearms into rapid-firing weapons like machine guns, and enhance an existing law that allows judges to temporarily remove guns from people during a mental health crisis.

The Vermont House on Wednesday approved a bill that cracks down on the possession and transfer of so-called ghost guns, which are hard-to-trace firearms and their components that lack serial numbers and are increasingly being used in crimes. The amended legislation now goes back to the state Senate for consideration.

Supporters say it's critical for Vermont to require background checks and serial numbers on these often privately made firearms to keep guns out of the hands of people prohibited from having them and as the U.S. Supreme Court takes up the legal fight over ghost guns.

Colorado's Democratic-led Legislature is considering numerous gun-control proposals. Among several that recently passed the House, one would require gun dealers to get state permits and another would ask voters to impose a 9% tax on the sale of guns and ammunition.

The Latest | Israeli strikes in Rafah kill at least 5

By The Associated Press undefined

Palestinian hospital officials said Israeli airstrikes on the southern city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip killed at least five people.

Among those killed in the strikes overnight and into Thursday were two children, identified in hospital records as Sham Najjar, 6, and Jamal Nabahan, 8.

More than half of the territory's population of 2.3 million have sought refuge in Rafah, where Israel has conducted near-daily raids as it prepares for an offensive in the city.

In central Gaza, four people were killed in Israeli tank shelling. Family members told The Associated Press they were killed as they tried to move to northern Gaza, where Israel's military is preventing people from returning to their homes.

Meanwhile, a top Hamas political official told The Associated Press the Islamic militant group is willing to agree to a truce of five years or more with Israel and that it would lay down its weapons and convert into a political party if an independent Palestinian state is established along pre-1967 borders.

That appeared to be a significant concession by the militant group, which remains officially committed to

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Israel's destruction, but it's unlikely Israel would consider such a scenario. It has vowed to crush Hamas, and its current leadership is adamantly opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state on lands Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

U.S. President Joe Biden signed into law on Wednesday a \$95 billion war aid measure 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.

The Israel-Hamas war was sparked by the unprecedented Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel in which 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 has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, around two-thirds of them children and women.

Currently:

- Hamas official says group would lay down its weapons if a two-state solution is implemented
- World Central Kitchen workers killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza will be honored at memorial
- Another ex-State Department official alleges Israeli military gets 'special treatment' on abuses
- Biden meets 4-year-old Abigail Edan, an American who was held hostage by Hamas
- A blast near a ship off Yemen marks a new attack by Houthi rebels after a recent lull
- Hamas releases video showing well-known Israeli-American hostage
- Biden signs a \$95 billion war aid measure with assistance for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan
- Police tangle with students in Texas and California as wave of campus protest against Gaza war grows
- Nepal asks visiting Qatari emir to help free Nepali student held hostage by Hamas

Here is the latest:

GAZA HEALTH MINISTRY REPORTS 43 DEAD IN THE LAST DAY

BEIRUT — The Gaza Health Ministry says the bodies of 43 people killed in Israeli strikes have been brought to local hospitals over the past 24 hours. Hospitals also received 64 wounded people.

The ministry's latest report, issued Thursday, brings the overall Palestinian death toll from the Israel-Hamas war to at least 34,305. It says another 77,293 have been wounded.

The Health Ministry doesn't distinguish between fighters and civilians in its tallies, but it has said that women and children make up around two thirds of those killed.

The Israeli military says it has killed some 13,000 militants, without providing evidence. The war began when Hamas attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and dragging some 250 hostages back to Gaza.

ISRAELI STRIKES ON RAFAH KILL AT LEAST 5

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Palestinian hospital officials say Israeli airstrikes on the southern city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip have killed at least five people.

Among those killed in the strikes overnight and into Thursday were two children, identified in hospital records as Sham Najjar, 6, and Jamal Nabahan, 8.

In central Gaza, four people were killed in Israeli tank shelling, and their bodies were brought to a local hospital. Family members told The Associated Press they were killed as they tried to move to northern Gaza, where Israel's military is preventing people from returning to their homes.

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 from fighting elsewhere. 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 United States.

The Israel-Hamas war was ignited by the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, in which some 1,200 people were killed, mostly civilians, and another 250 abducted.

The ongoing war has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its account but has said that around two-thirds of those killed were women and children.

The war has devastated Gaza's two largest cities and left a swath of destruction. Around 80% of the territory's population have fled to other parts of the besieged coastal enclave.

Blinken raises Chinese trade practices in meetings with officials in the financial hub of Shanghai

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

SHANGHAI (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised what the U.S. describes as unfair Chinese trade practices during his first full day of meetings in China on Thursday with local government officials in the financial hub of Shanghai.

Blinken met with the city's top official, Communist Party Secretary Chen Jining, and "raised concerns about (Chinese) trade policies and non-market economic practices," the State Department said in a statement.

It said he stressed that the United States seeks healthy economic competition with China and "a level playing field for U.S. workers and firms operating in China."

"The two sides reaffirmed the importance of ties between the people of the United States and (China), including the expansion of exchanges between students, scholars, and business," it said.

China's multibillion-dollar trade surplus with the U.S. along with accusations of intellectual property theft and other practices seen as discriminating against U.S. businesses in China have long been a source of friction in relations.

China, for its part, has objected strongly to U.S. accusations of human rights abuses and Washington's support for Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing considers its own territory and warns could be annexed by force.

Blinken also spoke with students and business leaders before flying to Beijing for what are expected to be contentious talks with national officials, including Foreign Minister Wang Yi and possibly President Xi Jinping.

Blinken arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday shortly before U.S. President Joe Biden signed a \$95 billion foreign aid package that has several elements likely to anger Beijing, including \$8 billion to counter China's growing aggressiveness toward Taiwan and in the South China Sea. It also seeks to force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform.

China has railed against U.S. assistance to Taiwan and immediately condemned the aid as a dangerous provocation. It also strongly opposes efforts to force TikTok's sale.

Still, the fact that Blinken made the trip — shortly after a conversation between Biden and Xi, a visit to China by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and a call between the U.S. and Chinese defense chiefs — is a sign the two sides are at least willing to discuss their differences.

"I think it's important to underscore the value — in fact, the necessity — of direct engagement, of speaking to each other, laying out our differences, which are real, seeking to work through them," Blinken told Chen.

"We have an obligation for our people, indeed an obligation to the world, to manage the relationship between our two countries responsibly," he said. "That is the obligation we have, and one that we take very seriously."

Chen agreed with that sentiment and said the recent Biden-Xi call had helped the "stable and healthy development of our two countries' relationship."

"Whether we choose cooperation or confrontation affects the well-being of both peoples, both countries, and the future of humanity," he said.

Chen added that he hoped Blinken was able to get a "deep impression and understanding" of Shanghai, a city of skyscrapers, ports and more than 25 million people that is a magnet for commercially ambitious young people from China and abroad.

Most recently, the U.S. has raised concerns that potential overcapacity in Chinese industries — such as electric vehicles, steel and solar panels — might crowd out U.S. and other foreign manufacturers.

Shortly after arriving, Blinken attended a Chinese basketball playoff game between the local Shanghai Sharks and the Zhejiang Golden Bulls, with the home team losing in the last seconds in a 121-120 nailbiter.

With the U.S. presidential race heating up, it's unclear what ramifications a victory for either Biden or former President Donald Trump might have for relations. But Trump could deepen a trade war he started during his first term. His tough rhetoric on China and isolationist approach to foreign policy could ramp up uncertainties.

Colleges nationwide turn to police to quell pro-Palestine protests as commencement ceremonies near

By JIM VERTUNO, ACACIA CORONADO and NICK PERRY Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — With graduations looming, student protesters doubled down early Thursday on their discontent of the Israel-Hamas war on campuses across the country as universities, including ones in California and Texas, have become quick to call in the police to end the demonstrations and make arrests.

While grappling with growing protests from coast to coast, schools have the added pressure of May commencement ceremonies. At Columbia University in New York, students defiantly erected an encampment where many are set to graduate in front of families in just a few weeks.

Columbia continued to negotiate with students after several failed attempts — and over 100 arrests — to clear the encampment, but several universities ousted demonstrators Wednesday, swiftly turning to law enforcement when protests bubbled up on their campuses.

Police peacefully arrested student protesters at the University of Southern California, hours after officers at the University of Texas at Austin aggressively detained dozens in the latest clashes between law enforcement and those protesting the Israel-Hamas war on campuses nationwide.

Tensions were already high at USC after the university canceled a planned commencement speech by the school's valedictorian, who publicly supports Palestine, citing safety concerns. After scuffles with police early Wednesday, a few dozen demonstrators standing in a circle with locked arms were detained one by one without incident later in the evening.

Officers encircled the dwindling group sitting in defiance of an earlier warning to disperse or be arrested. Beyond the police line, hundreds of onlookers watched as helicopters buzzed overhead. The school closed the campus.

Hours earlier in Texas, hundreds of local and state police — including some on horseback and holding batons — bulldozed into protesters, at one point sending some tumbling into the street. Officers pushed their way into the crowd and made 34 arrests at the behest of the university and Texas Gov. Gregg Abbott, according to the state Department of Public Safety.

A photographer covering the demonstration for Fox 7 Austin was in the push-and-pull when an officer yanked him backward to the ground, video shows. The station confirmed that the photographer was arrested. A longtime Texas journalist was knocked down in the mayhem and could be seen bleeding before police helped him to emergency medical staff.

Dane Urquhart, a third-year Texas student, called the police presence and arrests an "overreaction," adding that the protest "would have stayed peaceful" if the officers had not turned out in force.

"Because of all the arrests, I think a lot more (demonstrations) are going to happen," Urquhart said.

Police left after hours of efforts to control the crowd, and about 300 demonstrators moved back in to sit on the grass and chant under the school's iconic clock tower.

In a statement Wednesday night, the university's president, Jay Hartzell, said: "Our rules matter, and they will be enforced. Our University will not be occupied."

North of USC, students at California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, were barricaded inside a building for a third day, and the school shut down campus through the weekend and made classes virtual.

Harvard University in Massachusetts had sought to stay ahead of protests this week by limiting access to Harvard Yard and requiring permission for tents and tables. That didn't stop protesters from setting up a camp with 14 tents Wednesday following a rally against the university's suspension of the Harvard Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee.

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Students protesting the Israel-Hamas war are demanding schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies enabling its monthslong conflict. Some Jewish students say the protests have veered into antisemitism and made them afraid to set foot on campus as graduation nears, partly prompting a heavier hand from universities.

At New York University this week, police said 133 protesters were taken into custody, while over 40 protesters were arrested Monday at an encampment at Yale University.

Columbia University averted another confrontation between students and police earlier Wednesday. University President Minouche Shafik had set on Tuesday a midnight deadline to reach an agreement on clearing an encampment, but the school extended negotiations for another 48 hours.

On a visit to campus Wednesday, U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, called on Shafik to resign "if she cannot bring order to this chaos."

"If this is not contained quickly and if these threats and intimidation are not stopped, there is an appropriate time for the National Guard," he said.

On Wednesday evening, a Columbia spokesperson said rumors that the university had threatened to bring in the National Guard were unfounded. "Our focus is to restore order, and if we can get there through dialogue, we will," said Ben Chang, Columbia's vice president for communications.

Columbia graduate student Omer Lubaton Granot, who put up pictures of Israeli hostages near the encampment, said he wanted to remind people that there were more than 100 hostages still being held by Hamas.

"I see all the people behind me advocating for human rights," he said. "I don't think they have one word to say about the fact that people their age, that were kidnapped from their homes or from a music festival in Israel, are held by a terror organization."

Harvard law student Tala Alfoqaha, who is Palestinian, said she and other protesters want more transparency from the university.

"My hope is that the Harvard administration listens to what its students have been asking for all year, which is divestment, disclosure and dropping any sort of charges against students," she said.

On Wednesday about 60 tents remained at the Columbia encampment, which appeared calm. Security remained tight around campus, with identification required and police setting up metal barricades.

Columbia said it had agreed with protest representatives that only students would remain at the encampment and they would make it welcoming, banning discriminatory or harassing language.

Malaria is still killing people in Kenya, but a vaccine and local drug production may help

By FRED OOKO and DESMOND TIRO Associated Press

MIGORI, Kenya (AP) — As the coffin bearing the body of Rosebella Awuor was lowered into the grave, heart-wrenching sobs from mourners filled the air. Her sister Winnie Akinyi, the guardian to Awuor's orphaned son, fell to the ground, wailing.

It was the latest of five deaths in this family attributed to malaria. The disease is common in Kenya, and it is preventable and curable, but poverty makes it deadly for those who can't afford treatment.

In the family's compound in the western county of Migori, three other graves are visible, that of Awuor's husband and their other two children who died from malaria before the age of 2.

Awuor, 31, fell ill in December and lost her five-month pregnancy before succumbing to malaria. Her 11-year-old son is the family's only survivor.

Malaria is still a significant public health challenge in Kenya, though some progress may be coming. Parts of Kenya participated in an important pilot of the world's first malaria vaccine, with a reported drop in deaths for children under 5. Kenya's health ministry hasn't said when the vaccine will be widely available.

The biggest impact is felt in regions characterized by high temperatures like Kenya's Indian Ocean coast, and places with high rainfall like the western region near Lake Victoria.

Kenya had an estimated 5 million malaria cases and over 12,000 deaths reported in 2022, according to

the World Health Organization.

Most of those affected are children under 5 and pregnant women.

Kenya continues to combat malaria with traditional methods such as distributing bed nets that are treated with insecticides, spraying breeding areas, and promoting prompt diagnosis and treatment, but experts say progress against the disease with those approaches has plateaued.

Public health expert Dr. Willis Akhwale, special adviser for the Kenya End Malaria Council, said the COVID-19 pandemic slowed down distribution of drugs and treatment.

He said innovative treatment methods are needed in the wake of drug resistant cases reported in parts of Africa.

"We need to start looking at investments in new generation medicines. That should then be able to counter any resistance in (the) foreseeable future," he said.

Akhwale said other needs include more funding and logistical support.

"In Kenya the shortfall in terms of the need is almost \$52 million, so we need to close that gap," he said, citing health ministry data. He recommended domestic funding and private sector support amid donor fatigue with crises around the world.

Wilson Otieno has been admitted to a hospital three times for malaria and has received outpatient treatment countless times. It's expensive for the 33-year-old accountant and father in the lakeside city of Kisumu.

Malaria is never "pocket friendly," he said.

Some progress has been made with local manufacturing of crucial medication.

The Kenya-based Universal Corporation Limited last year received the WHO's approval to produce an antimalarial drug known as Spaq, a combination of sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine plus amodiaquine.

The approval was an important step in Africa's capacity to make lifesaving medications, a new focus for governments and public health officials after vulnerabilities were exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Africa relies heavily on drug imports.

"It will really help in lowering the dependency for imports as we saw during the COVID era, where whatever was being imported actually had huge supply disruptions," said Palu Dhanani, the founder and managing director of UCL.

If you don't get the right medicine at the right time, malaria can cause unnecessary deaths, Dhanani said.

Hamas official says group would lay down its weapons if a two-state solution is implemented

By ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — A top Hamas political official told The Associated Press the Islamic militant group is willing to agree to a truce of five years or more with Israel and that it would lay down its weapons and convert into a political party if an independent Palestinian state is established along pre-1967 borders.

The comments by Khalil al-Hayya in an interview Wednesday came amid a stalemate in months of cease-fire talks. The suggestion that Hamas would disarm appeared to be a significant concession by the militant group officially committed to Israel's destruction.

But it's unlikely Israel would consider such a scenario. It has vowed to crush Hamas following the deadly Oct. 7 attacks that triggered the war, and its current leadership is adamantly opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state on lands Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

Al-Hayya, a high-ranking Hamas official who has represented the Palestinian militants in negotiations for a cease-fire and hostage exchange, struck a sometimes defiant and other times conciliatory tone.

Speaking to the AP in Istanbul, Al-Hayya said Hamas wants to join the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by the rival Fatah faction, to form a unified government for Gaza and the West Bank. He said Hamas would accept "a fully sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the return of Palestinian refugees in accordance with the international resolutions," along Israel's pre-1967 borders.

If that happens, he said, the group's military wing would dissolve.

"All the experiences of people who fought against occupiers, when they became independent and ob-

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tained their rights and their state, what have these forces done? They have turned into political parties and their defending fighting forces have turned into the national army," he said.

Over the years, Hamas has sometimes moderated its public position with respect to the possibility of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. But its political program still officially "rejects any alternative to the full liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea" — referring to the area reaching from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, which includes lands that now make up Israel.

Al-Hayya did not say whether his apparent embrace of a two-state solution would amount to an end to the Palestinian conflict with Israel or an interim step toward the group's stated goal of destroying Israel.

There was no immediate reaction from Israel or the Palestinian Authority, the internationally recognized self-ruled government that Hamas drove out when it seized Gaza in 2007, a year after winning Palestinian parliamentary elections. After the Hamas takeover of Gaza, the Palestinian Authority was left with administering semi-autonomous pockets of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The Palestinian Authority hopes to establish an independent state in the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza — areas captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war. While the international community overwhelmingly supports such a two-state solution, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line government rejects it.

The war in Gaza has dragged on for nearly seven months and cease-fire negotiations have stalled. The war began with the deadly Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel in which Hamas-led militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians. Militants dragged some 250 hostages into the enclave. The ensuing Israeli bombardment and ground offensive in Gaza has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, according to local health authorities, and displaced some 80% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million.

Israel is now preparing for an offensive in the southern city of Rafah, where more than 1 million Palestinians have fled to.

Israel says it has dismantled most of the initial two dozen Hamas battalions since the start of the war, but that the four remaining ones are holed up in Rafah. Israel argues that a Rafah offensive is necessary to achieve victory over Hamas.

Al-Hayya said such an offensive would not succeed in destroying Hamas. He said contacts between the political leadership outside and military leadership inside Gaza are "uninterrupted" by the war and "contacts, decisions and directions are made in consultation" between the two groups.

Israeli forces "have not destroyed more than 20% of (Hamas') capabilities, neither human nor in the field," he asserted. "If they can't finish (Hamas) off, what is the solution? The solution is to go to consensus."

In November, a weeklong cease-fire saw the release of more than 100 hostages in exchange for thousands of Palestinian prisoners held in Israel. But talks for a longer-term truce and release of the remaining hostages are now frozen, with each side accusing the other of intransigence. Key interlocutor Qatar has said in recent days that it is undertaking a "reassessment" of its role as mediator.

Most of Hamas' top political officials, previously based in Qatar, have left the Gulf country in the past week and traveled to Turkey, where Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday. Al-Hayya denied a permanent move of the group's main political office is in the works and said Hamas wants to see Qatar continue in its capacity as mediator in the talks.

Israeli and U.S. officials have accused Hamas of not being serious about a deal.

Al-Hayya denied this, saying Hamas has made concessions regarding the number of Palestinian prisoners it wants released in exchange for the remaining Israeli hostages. He said the group does not know exactly how many hostages remain in Gaza and are still alive.

But he said Hamas will not back down from its demands for a permanent cease-fire and full withdrawal of Israeli troops, both of which Israel has balked at. Israel says it will continue military operations until Hamas is definitively defeated and will retain a security presence in Gaza afterwards.

"If we are not assured the war will end, why would I hand over the prisoners?" the Hamas leader said of the remaining hostages.

Al-Hayya also implicitly threatened that Hamas would attack Israeli or other forces who might be stationed around a floating pier the U.S. is scrambling to build along Gaza's coastline to deliver aid by sea.

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"We categorically reject any non-Palestinian presence in Gaza, whether at sea or on land, and we will deal with any military force present in these places, Israeli or otherwise ... as an occupying power," he said.

Al-Hayya said Hamas does not regret the Oct. 7 attacks, despite the destruction it has brought down on Gaza and its people. He denied that Hamas militants had targeted civilians during the attacks — despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary — and said the operation succeeded in its goal of bringing the Palestinian issue back to the world's attention.

And, he said, Israeli attempts to eradicate Hamas would ultimately fail to prevent future Palestinian armed uprisings.

"Let's say that they have destroyed Hamas. Are the Palestinian people gone?" he asked.

Climate change is bringing malaria to new areas. In Africa, it never left

By DAN IKPOYI and FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — When a small number of cases of locally transmitted malaria were found in the United States last year, it was a reminder that climate change is reviving or migrating the threat of some diseases. But across the African continent malaria has never left, killing or sickening millions of people.

Take Funmilayo Kotun, a 66-year-old resident of Makoko, an informal neighborhood in Nigeria's Lagos city. Its ponds of dirty water provide favorable breeding conditions for malaria-spreading mosquitoes. Kotun can't afford insecticide-treated bed nets that cost between \$7 and \$21 each, much less antimalarial medications or treatment.

For World Malaria Day on Thursday, here is what you need to know about the situation in Africa:

MALARIA IS STILL WIDESPREAD

The malaria parasite mostly spreads to people via infected mosquitoes and can cause symptoms including fever, headaches and chills. It mostly affects children under 5 and pregnant women. Vaccine efforts are still in early stages: Cameroon this year became the first country to routinely give children a new malaria vaccine, which is only about 30% effective and doesn't stop transmission. A second vaccine was recently approved.

Cases of resistance to antimalarial drugs and insecticides are increasing, while funding by governments and donors for innovation is slowing.

Living conditions play a role, with crowded neighborhoods, stagnant water, poor sanitation and lack of access to treatment and prevention materials all issues in many areas. And an invasive species of mosquito previously seen mostly in India and the Persian Gulf is a new concern.

A GROWING PROBLEM

Globally, malaria cases are on the rise. Infections increased from 233 million in 2019 to 249 million in 85 countries in 2022. Malaria deaths rose from 576,000 in 2019 to 608,000 in 2022, according to the World Health Organization.

Of the 12 countries that carry about 70% of the global burden of malaria, 11 are in Africa and the other is India. Children under 5 constituted 80% of the 580,000 malaria deaths recorded in Africa in 2022.

COVID-19 HURT PROGRESS

The fight against malaria saw some progress in areas such as rapid diagnostic tests, vaccines and new bed nets meant to counter insecticide resistance, but the COVID-19 pandemic and a shift in focus and funding set back efforts.

A study published in Tropical Medicine and Infectious Disease last year said COVID-19-induced lockdowns led to disruptions at 30% of rural community health service points across Africa. Malaria cases started spiking again, breaking a downward trend between 2000 and 2019.

That downward trend could soon return, according to the WHO.

A WARMING WORLD AND NEW FRONTIERS

Africa is "at the sharp end of climate change," and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events causes havoc in efforts to combat malaria in low- and middle-income regions, Peter Sands, the executive director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, warned in December.

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In 2023, the WHO's World Malaria Report included a chapter on the link between malaria and climate change for the first time, highlighting its significance as a potential risk multiplier. Scientists worry that people living in areas once inhospitable to mosquitoes, including the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro and the mountains of eastern Ethiopia, could be exposed.

In Zimbabwe, which has recorded some of its hottest days in decades, malaria transmission periods have extended in some districts, "and this shift has been attributed to climate change," said Dr. Precious Andifasi, a WHO technical officer for malaria in Zimbabwe.

US coalition warship shoots down missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels over the Gulf of Aden

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A warship — part of a U.S.-led coalition protecting shipping in the Mideast — intercepted an anti-ship ballistic missile fired over the Gulf of Aden on Wednesday, the American military said, marking a new attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels after a recent lull.

The Houthis claimed the assault, which comes after a period of relatively few rebel attacks on shipping in the region over Israel's ongoing war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The explosion happened some 130 kilometers (80 miles) southeast of Djibouti in the Gulf of Aden, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said in a statement.

Early Thursday, the U.S. military's Central Command said a coalition warship shot down the missile likely targeting the MV Yorktown, a U.S.-flagged, owned and operated vessel with 18 U.S. and four Greek crew members.

"There were no injuries or damage reported by U.S., coalition or commercial ships," Central Command said.

Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, a Houthi military spokesman, claimed the attack but insisted without evidence that the missile hit the Yorktown. Saree also claimed the Houthis targeted another ship in the Indian Ocean, without providing proof. The Houthis have made repeated claims that turned out to not be true during their yearslong war in Yemen.

The Houthis have launched more than 50 attacks on shipping, seized one vessel and sank another since November, according to the U.S. Maritime Administration.

Houthi attacks have dropped in recent weeks as the rebels have been targeted by a U.S.-led airstrike campaign in Yemen and shipping through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has declined because of the threat. American officials have speculated that the rebels may be running out of weapons as a result of the U.S.-led campaign against them and firing off drones and missiles steadily in the last months.

The Houthis have said they would continue their attacks until Israel ends its war in Gaza, which has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians there. The war began after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 others hostage.

The ships targeted by the Houthis largely have had little or no direct connection to Israel, the U.S. or other nations involved in the war. The rebels have also fired missiles toward Israel, though they have largely fallen short or been intercepted.

The assaults on shipping have raised the profile of the Houthis, who are members of Islam's minority Shiite Zaydi sect, which ruled Yemen for 1,000 years until 1962. The group seized Sanaa, Yemen's capital, in late 2014. A Saudi-led coalition has been battling the group in a stalemated conflict since 2015.

Columbia's president, no stranger to complex challenges, walks tightrope on student protests

By ANNIE MA AP Education Writer

Columbia University president Minouche Shafik is no stranger to navigating complex international issues, having worked at some of the world's most prominent global financial institutions.

At the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, for example, she tackled both the European

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debt crisis and the Arab Spring.

It remains to be seen, however, if her experience with world conflicts has sufficiently equipped her to navigate the thorny challenges she faces amid ongoing student protests over the Israel-Hamas war.

"The reason you protest is to call attention to an issue," said Ted Mitchell, president of the American Council on Education. "And you do that by challenging the normal order of things. It's not a problem to be solved, but a tension to be managed."

The task before her — to balance the demands of students, faculty and politicians — is also a reflection of just how complex governing universities has become in this day and age, when college footprints have grown ever larger, observers say. And it echoes the experience of a growing number of university leaders who, like Shafik, come from nonacademic backgrounds.

Thus far, it seems no one is happy with Shafik's responses to the protests that began last week at Columbia.

Her decision to ask New York City police to intervene, resulting in the arrests of more than 100 protesters, only served to motivate the demonstrators, who quickly regrouped — and to inspire other students at campuses around the country.

Shafik initially appeared to have weathered the grilling by Republican lawmakers who have expressed growing concern about antisemitism on college campuses. She struck a more conciliatory tone before the House Education and Workforce Committee than the presidents of Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania, who were forced to step down after they were widely criticized for emphasizing free speech protections during their appearances before the same panel.

But Columbia's chapter of the American Association of University Professors responded angrily to her congressional testimony, accusing her of capitulating to demands from lawmakers who they said made "slanderous assaults" on faculty and students. The AAUP submitted a motion of censure against Shafik. While it does not call for her resignation and is largely symbolic, it reflects the intensity of anger on campus toward her actions.

And now lawmakers are piling on again.

Republicans in New York's delegation to the U.S. House on Monday wrote a letter urging Shafik to resign, saying she had failed to provide a safe learning environment in recent days as "anarchy has engulfed the campus." During a visit to Columbia on Wednesday, Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson called for Shafik to resign "if she cannot bring order to this chaos."

In a written statement to Congress preceding her in-person testimony, Shafik described a childhood in Egypt and then in the Southeast as schools were desegregating, saying those experiences gave her the skills necessary "to engage with and learn from people with a wide array of backgrounds and experience overcoming discrimination firsthand."

But that may not be enough; Shafik's position at Columbia also appears to require a fair amount of political finesse.

It's not only that she must try to balance principles of free speech and academic freedom with creating a safe environment on campus. Like other college presidents these days, she also is charged with balancing the pillars of shared governance between the faculty, the board and the administration, said Katherine Cho, assistant professor of higher education at Loyola University Chicago.

"Oftentimes, all three groups have different ideas of what the college is and how well the president is doing their job ... and the president might have a different definition of how they think that they're successful," Cho said.

When she arrived at Columbia last year, Shafik was the first woman to take on the role of president and one of several women newly appointed to take the reins at Ivy League institutions.

Her experience in finance, rather than academia, puts her in line with more and more university leaders who come from nonfaculty backgrounds.

After obtaining her master's degree at the London School of Economics, she went on to earn a doctorate at Oxford University. She rose through the ranks at the World Bank, eventually becoming the bank's

youngest-ever vice president.

Shafik also worked at the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, followed by stints at the International Monetary Fund and the Bank of England, before taking over the leadership of the London School of Economics.

At the time of Shafik's appointment, Columbia Board of Trustees chair Jonathan Lavine described her as a leader who deeply understood "the academy and the world beyond it."

"What set Minouche apart as a candidate," Lavine said in a statement, "is her unshakable confidence in the vital role institutions of higher education can and must play in solving the world's most complex problems."

Shafik also framed her international experience as foundational to her leadership of Columbia in her testimony to lawmakers.

"These experiences have shown me that education is the single most powerful tool to make our communities and our world better," she said in her written statement. "And, amid these challenging times, I believe it is important for the Columbia community to realize the powerful impact of our core educational mission."

World Central Kitchen workers killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza will be honored at memorial

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A memorial at the National Cathedral in Washington on Thursday will honor the seven World Central Kitchen aid workers killed by Israeli airstrikes in Gaza earlier this month.

José Andrés, the celebrity chef and philanthropist behind the Washington-based World Central Kitchen disaster relief group, is expected to speak at the celebration of life service, and famed cellist Yo-Yo Ma will perform, organizers said.

The Biden administration said Thursday that Douglas Emhoff, husband of Vice President Kamala Harris, and U.S. Assistant Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell would be among senior administration figures attending.

The aid workers were killed April 1 when a succession of Israeli armed drones ripped through vehicles in their convoy as they left one of World Central Kitchen's warehouses on a food delivery mission. Those who died were Palestinian Saifeddin Issam Ayad Abutaha; Britons John Chapman, James Kirby and James Henderson; dual U.S.-Canadian citizen Jacob Flickinger; Australian Lalzawmi Frankcom; and Polish citizen Damiam Sobol.

After an unusually swift investigation, Israel said the military officials involved in the strike had violated policy by acting based on a single grainy photo that one officer had contended — incorrectly — showed one of the seven workers was armed. The Israeli military dismissed two officers and reprimanded three others.

The aid workers, whose trip had been coordinated with Israeli officials, are among more than 220 humanitarian workers killed in the six-month-old Israel-Hamas war, according to the United Nations. That includes at least 30 killed in the line of duty.

The international prominence and popularity of Andres and his nonprofit work galvanized widespread outrage over the killings of the World Central Kitchen workers. The slayings intensified demands from the Biden administration and others that Israel's military change how it operates in Gaza to spare aid workers and Palestinian civilians at large, who are facing a humanitarian crisis and desperately need aid from relief organizations as the U.N. warns of looming famine.

World Central Kitchen, along with several other humanitarian aid agencies, suspended work in Gaza after the attack. "We haven't given up," World Central Kitchen spokesperson Linda Roth said last week. "We are in funeral mode right now."

Religious leaders of a range of faiths are set to participate in Thursday's services. Funerals were held earlier in the workers' home countries.

US abortion battle rages on with moves to repeal Arizona ban and a Supreme Court case

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Action in courts and state capitals around the U.S. this week have made it clear again: The overturning of Roe v. Wade and the nationwide right to abortion did not settle the issue.

One iteration of the issue was back before the U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday for the second time in a month.

Meanwhile, Arizona lawmakers took a step toward repealing a near-total ban before enforcement can begin; California's governor pitched providing an outlet to abortion providers and patients from neighboring Arizona if that ban takes effect; and Tennessee moved closer to criminalizing helping a minor go out of state for an abortion without parental consent.

Here's what to know about the latest developments.

ARIZONA LAWMAKERS ADVANCE REPEAL OF ABORTION BAN

Three Republican lawmakers joined Democrats in the Arizona House to advance a bill repealing an abortion ban that was first put on the books in 1864, decades before Arizona became a state.

Democrats, including Gov. Katie Hobbs, had been pushing for a repeal since the Arizona Supreme Court ruling earlier this month that found the ban can be enforced since Roe v. Wade's overturning. Republicans had used procedural moves to block a vote on a repeal, which appears to have enough support to pass the state Senate.

The state's attorney general, also a Democrat, said enforcement won't begin until at least June 8.

There's been pressure on Arizona lawmakers to repeal from the state's governor, President Joe Biden, and the governor of neighboring state California. Gov. Gavin Newsom on Wednesday announced a measure that would allow doctors from Arizona to provide abortions for Arizona patients in California.

Under the proposed California legislation, Arizona providers could work in California without additional licenses though November.

Fourteen other states are already enforcing bans on abortion in all stages of pregnancy. But California has not proposed this kind of help for any of them, possibly because none shares a border with it.

At least one ballot measure on abortion could be before Arizona voters in November in the political battleground state.

ABORTION GOES BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT, AGAIN

The conservative majority of the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturned Roe v. Wade less than two years ago, seemed skeptical about the Biden administration's contention in arguments Wednesday that Idaho should be forced to allow abortion during medical emergencies.

The administration argued that a federal law that requires care hospitals that accept Medicaid provide emergency care even when patients cannot pay means that hospitals must also provide abortions in emergency situations when a patient's health is at serious risk.

Idaho's exceptions are narrower than that, allowing abortion only when the woman's life is at risk.

It was the second time in a month that abortion was before the high court. It's also considering whether to roll back the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approvals for a drug that's often used in combination with a second drug for medication abortions — which are now the most common method of abortion in the U.S.

Rulings on both cases are expected by June.

TENNESSEE POISED TO BAN TAKING MINORS ELSEWHERE FOR ABORTION

With a state Senate vote Wednesday, Tennessee became the second state to give full legislative passage to a measure banning taking a minor out of the state without parental consent to obtain an abortion.

If Gov. Bill Lee, a Republican, signs it into law, it would impact only the part of the journey in Tennessee — not the actual crossing of a state line.

Abortion is banned in all stages of pregnancy in Tennessee and five of the eight states it borders.

Idaho passed a similar law last year, but a court has put enforcement on hold because of a legal chal-

lenge. A Tennessee law would also likely also face court challenges.

California's governor has also fought against this measure and others like it that were proposed in other states, launching an ad campaign against them earlier this year.

MAINE BECOMES LATEST STATE TO PROTECT PROVIDERS

Maine Gov. Janet Mills on Monday signed a bill making her state at least the 14th with a law intended to protect those who provide abortion for out-of-state patients from legal action in those other states.

Maine's law will take effect in the summer.

It's a reminder that abortion policy has flowed in two directions since the end of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022: Most GOP-dominated states have sought to tighten access, while most Democrat-controlled ones have moved to protect or expand it.

Like several of the others, Maine's measure also applies to gender-affirming health care. In addition to imposing abortion bans or restrictions, most Republican-controlled states have also adopted bans on gender-affirming care for transgender minors.

Trump will be in NY for the hush money trial while the Supreme Court hears his immunity case in DC

By JENNIFER PELTZ, MICHAEL R. SISA, COLLEEN LONG and JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press
NEW YORK (AP) — A reluctant Donald Trump will be back in a New York City courtroom Thursday as his hush money trial resumes at the same time that the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments in Washington over whether he should be immune from prosecution for actions he took during his time as president.

Jurors will hear more witness testimony from a veteran tabloid publisher, and Trump faces a looming decision over whether he violated a gag order imposed by the judge. But he had asked to skip out on his criminal trial for the day so he could sit in on the high court's special session, where the justices will weigh whether he can be prosecuted over his efforts to reverse his 2020 election loss to President Joe Biden.

That request was denied by New York state Supreme Court Judge Juan Merchan, who is overseeing the trial on the hush money scheme that was meant to prevent harmful stories about Trump from surfacing in the final days of the 2016 campaign.

"Arguing before the Supreme Court is a big deal, and I can certainly appreciate why your client would want to be there, but a trial in New York Supreme Court ... is also a big deal," Merchan told Trump's lawyer Todd Blanche last week when he nixed the idea.

Though 200 miles apart -- and entirely separate cases -- the proceedings Thursday were jumbled together in one big legal and political puzzle that has implications not just for the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, but for the American presidency writ large.

In both instances, Trump is trying to get himself out of legal jeopardy as he makes another bid for the White House. But the outcome of the Supreme Court case will have lasting implications for future presidents, because the justices will be answering the never-before-asked question of "whether and if so to what extent does a former president enjoy presidential immunity from criminal prosecution for conduct alleged to involve official acts during his tenure in office."

The high court's decision may not impact the New York City case, which hinges mostly on Trump's conduct as a presidential candidate in 2016 — not as a president. He faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in connection with hush money payments meant to stifle embarrassing stories from surfacing. It is the first of four criminal cases against Trump to go before a jury.

The New York trial resumes after a scheduled day off with more testimony from the Manhattan District Attorney's first witness, David Pecker, former publisher of the *National Enquirer* and a longtime friend of Trump's who pledged to be his "eyes and ears" during his 2016 presidential campaign.

In testimony earlier this week, Pecker explained how he and the tabloid parlayed rumor-mongering into splashy stories that smeared 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.

Pecker recounted how he promised then-candidate Trump that he would help suppress harmful stories and even arranged to purchase the silence of a doorman.

"I made the decision to purchase the story because of the potential embarrassment it had to the campaign and to Mr. Trump," Pecker said of the doorman's story that his publication later determined wasn't true.

Judge Merchan may also decide whether or not to hold Trump in contempt and fine him for violating a gag order that barred the GOP leader from making public statements about witnesses, jurors and others connected to the case.

Some of Trump's recent online posts in question included one describing prosecution witnesses Michael Cohen, his former attorney, and Stormy Daniels, the porn actress, as "sleaze bags" and another repeating a false claim that liberal activists had tried to infiltrate the jury.

Merchan criticized Blanche this week for excusing the posts as Trump simply responding to political attacks and commenting on his experience with the criminal justice system.

"When your client is violating the gag order I expect more than one word," Merchan said.

A conviction by the jury in the hush money probe 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. The charge is punishable by up to four years in prison — though it's not clear if the judge would seek to put him behind bars.

The Supreme Court's arguments, meanwhile, are related to charges in federal court in Washington, where Trump has been accused of conspiring to overturn the 2020 election. The case stems from Trump's attempts to have charges against him dismissed. Lower courts have found he cannot claim immunity for actions that, prosecutors say, illegally sought to interfere with the election results.

The high court is moving faster than usual in taking up the case, though not as quickly as special counsel Jack Smith wanted, raising questions about whether there will be time to hold a trial before the November election, if the justices agree with lower courts that Trump can be prosecuted.

Venice launches experiment to charge day-trippers an access fee in bid to combat over-tourism

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Under the gaze of the world's media, the fragile lagoon city of Venice launches a pilot program Thursday to charge day-trippers a 5-euro (around \$5.35) entry fee that authorities hope will discourage visitors from arriving on peak days and make the city more livable for its dwindling residents.

Signs advising arriving visitors of the new requirement for a test phase of 29 days through July have been erected outside the main train station and other points of arrival.

Some 200 stewards have been trained to politely walk anyone unaware of the fee through the process of downloading a QR code. A kiosk has been set up for those not equipped with a smartphone. Once past designated entry ports, officials will carry out random checks for QR codes that show the day-tripper tax has been paid or that the bearer is exempt.

Transgressors face fines 50 euros to 300 euros. The requirement applies only for people arriving between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Outside of those hours, access is free.

"We need to find a new balance between the tourists and residents," said the city's top tourism official, Simone Venturini. "We need to safeguard the spaces of the residents, of course, and we need to discourage the arrival of day-trippers on some particular days."

Venice has long suffered under the pressure of over-tourism, but officials say that pre-pandemic estimates ranging from 25 million to 30 million visitors a year — including day-trippers — are not reliable and that the pilot project also aims to come up with more exact figures to help better manage the phenomenon.

By contrast, registered visitors spending the night last year numbered 4.6 million, according to city figures, down 16% from pre-pandemic highs.

Venturini said the city is strained when the number of day-trippers reaches 30,000 to 40,000. Its narrow alleyways are clogged with people and water taxis packed, making it difficult for residents to go about their business.

Not all residents, however, are persuaded of the efficacy of the new system in dissuading mass tourism, and say more attention needs to be paid to boosting the resident population and services they need.

Venice last year passed a telling milestone when the number of tourist beds exceeded for the first time the number of official residents, which is now below 50,000 in the historic center with its picturesque canals.

"Putting a ticket to enter a city will not decrease not even by one single unit the number of visitors that are coming," said Tommaso Cacciari, an activist who organized a protest Thursday against the measure.

"You pay a ticket to take the metro, to go to a museum, an amusement park; you don't pay a ticket to enter a city. This is the last symbolic step of a project of an idea of this municipal administration to kick residents out of Venice," he said.

Venturini said about 6,000 people had already paid to download the QR code, and officials expect paid day-tripper arrivals Thursday to reach some 10,000.

More than 70,000 others have downloaded a QR code denoting an exemption, including to work in Venice or as a resident of the Veneto region. People staying in hotels in Venice, including in mainland districts like Marghera or Mestre, should also get a QR code attesting to their stay, which includes a hotel tax.

The tourist official says interest in Venice's pilot program has been keen from other places suffering from mass tourism, including other Italian art cities and cities abroad such as Barcelona and Amsterdam.

No one is above the law. Supreme Court will decide if that includes Trump while he was president

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — On the left and right, Supreme Court justices seem to agree on a basic truth about the American system of government: No one is above the law, not even the president.

"The law applies equally to all persons, including a person who happens for a period of time to occupy the Presidency," Justice Samuel Alito wrote in 2020.

Less than a year earlier, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, then a federal trial judge, wrote, "Stated simply, the primary takeaway from the past 250 years of recorded American history is that Presidents are not kings."

But former President Donald Trump and his legal team are putting that foundational belief to the test on Thursday when the high court takes up Trump's bid to avoid prosecution over his efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss to President Joe Biden.

Trump's lawyers argue that former presidents are entitled to absolute immunity for their official acts. Otherwise, they say, politically motivated prosecutions of former occupants of the Oval Office would become routine and presidents couldn't function as the commander-in-chief if they had to worry about criminal charges.

Lower courts so far have rejected those arguments, including a unanimous three-judge panel on an appeals court in Washington, D.C. And even if the high court resoundingly follows suit, the timing of its decision may be as important as the outcome. That's because Trump has been pushing to delay the trial until after the November election, and the later the justices issue their decision, the more likely he is to succeed.

The court typically issues its last opinions by the end of June, which is roughly four months before the election.

The election interference conspiracy case brought by special counsel Jack Smith in Washington is just one of four criminal cases confronting Trump, the first former president to face prosecution. He already is standing trial in New York on charges that he falsified business records to keep damaging information from voters when he directed payments to a former porn star to keep quiet her claims that they had a

sexual encounter.

Smith's team says the men who wrote Constitution never intended for presidents to be above the law and that, in any event, the acts Trump is charged with — including participating in a scheme to enlist fake electors in battleground states won by Biden — aren't in any way part of a president's official duties.

Nearly four years ago, all nine justices rejected Trump's claim of absolute immunity from a district attorney's subpoena for his financial records. That case played out during Trump's presidency and involved a criminal investigation, but no charges.

Justice Clarence Thomas, who would have prevented the enforcement of the subpoena because of Trump's responsibilities as president, still rejected Trump's claim of absolute immunity and pointed to the text of the Constitution and how it was understood by the people who ratified it.

"The text of the Constitution ... does not afford the President absolute immunity," Thomas wrote in 2020.

The lack of apparent support on the court for the sort of blanket immunity Trump seeks has caused commentators to speculate about why the court has taken up the case in the first place.

Phillip Bobbitt, a constitutional scholar at Columbia University's law school, said he worries about the delay, but sees value in a decision that amounts to "a definitive expression by the Supreme Court that we are a government of laws and not of men."

The court also may be more concerned with how its decision could affect future presidencies, Harvard law school professor Jack Goldsmith wrote on the Lawfare blog.

But Kermit Roosevelt, a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania, said the court never should have taken the case because an ideologically diverse panel of the federal appeals court in Washington adequately addressed the issues.

"If it was going to take the case, it should have proceeded faster, because now, it will most likely prevent the trial from being completed before the election. Even Richard Nixon said that the American people deserve to know whether their president is a crook. The Supreme Court seems to disagree," Roosevelt said.

The court has several options for deciding the case. The justices could reject Trump's arguments and unfreeze the case so that U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan can resume trial preparations, which she has indicated may last up to three months.

The court could end Smith's prosecution by declaring for the first time that former presidents may not be prosecuted for official acts they took while in office.

It also might spell out when former presidents are shielded for prosecution and either declare that Trump's alleged conduct easily crossed the line or return the case to Chutkan so that she can decide whether Trump should have to stand trial.

A high-profile murder trial in Kazakhstan boosts awareness of domestic violence

By JOANNA KOZLOWSKA Associated Press

The CCTV footage shown at the domestic abuse trial was disturbing: The defendant is seen dragging his wife by her hair, and then punching and kicking her. Hours after it was recorded, she died of brain trauma.

The trial of businessman Kuandyk Bishimbayev, Kazakhstan's former economy minister, in the death of his wife, Saltanat Nukenova, has touched a nerve in the Central Asian country. Tens of thousands of people have signed petitions calling for harsher penalties for domestic violence.

On April 11, senators approved a bill toughening spousal abuse laws, and President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed it four days later. It's been dubbed "Saltanat's Law" in her honor.

Kazakhs are riveted by Bishimbayev's trial, the first in the country of over 19 million people to be streamed online, and debates about it are dominating social media. Many see it as a moment of truth for Tokayev's promises of reforms and making officials accountable.

The 44-year-old Bishimbayev, once seen as a fresh, Western-educated face of Kazakhstan's government under former leader Nursultan Nazarbayev, was jailed for bribery in 2018 before being pardoned less than two years into his 10-year sentence.

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Nukenova, 31, was found dead in November in a restaurant owned by one of her husband's relatives. Bishimbayev, who was charged with torturing and killing her, for weeks maintained his innocence but admitted Wednesday in court that he had beaten her and "unintentionally" caused her death.

His lawyers initially disputed medical evidence indicating Nukenova died from repeated blows to the head. They also portrayed her as prone to jealousy and violence, although no video from the restaurant's security cameras that was played in court has shown her attacking Bishimbayev.

Aitbek Amangeldy, Nukenova's elder brother and a key prosecution witness, told The Associated Press that he had no doubt his sister's tragic fate has shifted attitudes about domestic violence.

"It changes people's minds when they see directly what it looks like when a person is tortured," Amangeldy said in a video interview, citing the harrowing video played in court.

"Of course, it's difficult for me to be in court, to listen to various things that the defendant's side has been saying," he said. "It's even more painful to know that (their) words are being broadcast across the country. But I understand that these broadcasts are also educational material, including for lawyers and human rights defenders."

Like neighboring Russia, Kazakhstan largely remains a patriarchal society, and progress has been slow on issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and disparities in employment.

According to a 2018 study backed by UN Women, the United Nations' gender equality agency, about 400 women die from domestic violence each year in Kazakhstan, although many abuse cases go unreported.

In 2017, Kazakhstan decriminalized beatings and other acts causing "minor" physical damage, making them punishable only by fines or short jail terms. Russia enacted a similar law that year, outraging women's rights advocates. Kazakhstan's new law reverses this, increasing penalties for assailants and introducing new criminal offenses, including harassment of minors.

Days after Nukenova's death, her relatives launched an online petition urging authorities to pass "Saltanat's Law" to bolster protection for those at risk of domestic violence. It quickly got over 150,000 signatures.

As Bishimbayev's trial began, more than 5,000 Kazakhs wrote senators urging tougher laws on abuse, Kazakh media said.

Still, Amangeldy said the law's final version failed to include all the provisions his family and allies had wanted, noting that "we still have no legal norms around stalking and harassment" of adults.

Viktoriya Kim, a Kazakhstan-based researcher at Human Rights Watch, said the very notion of "domestic violence" is absent from the country's criminal code. Including it, she said, would send "a clearer signal."

But Amangeldy argues that Kazakh society has clearly "passed a point of no return."

"For years, across Kazakhstan and the whole region, the issue (of domestic violence) was shrouded in silence. Raising the issue is already half the solution," he said.

Women's rights advocate Aigerim Kussainkyzy said Bishimbayev's trial has led to "a collective awakening" among politicians and ordinary citizens.

"Some may even label it the trial of the century. ... Male politicians, in particular, have started to consider the implications of domestic violence for their own daughters," said Kussainkyzy, who was among civil society representatives that lawmakers consulted before passing the bill.

The proposals encountered fierce pushback from the Kazakh Union of Parents — an influential association that echoes Russia's opposition to feminist initiatives and LGBTQ+ rights. On the day Tokayev signed the domestic violence law, the organization gave its "Mother of the Year" award to Bishimbayev's mother, Almira Nurlybekova, in recognition of her "courage ... supporting her son through court proceedings and fighting for his rights."

Tokayev has talked repeatedly about strengthening protections for women. In January, he intervened after the Justice Ministry refused to consider the petition by Nukenova's family.

Despite the inclusion of activists in the legislative process, some Kazakh rights defenders argue the law's passage has been accompanied by continuing pressure on those advocates, independent of the government.

Last month, authorities in Almaty — Kazakhstan's largest city and business hub — blocked a rally for International Women's Day to show solidarity with victims of domestic abuse. Feminita, the feminist and LGBTQ+ rights group that tried to organize it, has struggled for years for official registration.

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In December, Kazakhstan put women's rights activist Dina Smailova on its wanted list after authorities launched a criminal fraud investigation that she described as likely retribution for her work.

Smailova, head of the NeMolchi.KZ foundation, which means "Don't Be Silent" and advocates for abuse survivors, told AP that she and her organization were unable to join discussions on the new law.

"I've lost faith in the authorities, because even as they pass a law protecting women and children from violence, they pass harsher laws against independent journalists and bloggers," Smailova said in an interview from Montenegro, where she lives.

She welcomed the bill "as a first step," but said it can only be adequately implemented after tackling "corruption and nepotism" within law enforcement and the courts, citing the fraud case against her.

"Kazakhstan is a country where everyone has a lot of relatives ... and if there's a case concerning a relative of someone in law enforcement, then that person will certainly evade responsibility," she said, adding that education and media campaigns are needed to change attitudes.

Senate Speaker Maulen Ashimbayev said that properly implementing the law will require "a great deal of work," including educational campaigns in schools and the media, as well as vigilance from civil society groups.

HRW's Kim told AP the investigation of Smailova, who has repeatedly criticized officials' failure to protect abused women and children, was marred by "numerous procedural infractions," raising "serious concerns that she is being persecuted."

"I would like to see more willingness from authorities to help and support those who fight for and promote women's rights," the researcher said, noting concerns about Kazakhstan's global reputation played a role in its willingness to act on domestic violence.

"International organizations have called for this particular step for years. That's something the authorities were ready to do to meet rights defenders halfway," she said.

Meanwhile, Bishimbayev's trial continues to spark controversy. Police are investigating telephone threats reported by Judge Ayzhan Kulbayeva after she disallowed forensic evidence from defense lawyers alleging Nukenova's death could have been caused by a preexisting condition.

As closing arguments approach, debate rages in Kazakhstan over its justice system and women's rights, with many believing the trial already has changed the country forever.

TikTok has promised to sue over the potential US ban. What's the legal outlook?

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Legislation forcing TikTok's parent company to sell the video-sharing platform or face a ban in the U.S. received President Joe Biden's official signoff Wednesday. But the newly minted law could be in for an uphill battle in court.

Critics of the sell-or-be-banned ultimatum argue it violates TikTok users' First Amendment rights. The app's China-based owner, ByteDance, has already promised to sue, calling the measure unconstitutional.

But a court challenge's success is not guaranteed. The law's opponents, which include advocacy organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, maintain that the government hasn't come close to justifying banning TikTok, while others say national-security claims could still prevail.

For years, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle 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. The U.S. has yet to provide public evidence to support those claims, but some legal experts note that political pressures have piled up regardless.

If upheld, legal experts also stress that the law could set a precedent carrying wider ramifications for digital media in the U.S.

Here's what you need to know.

IS A TIKTOK BAN UNCONSTITUTIONAL?

That's the central question. TikTok and opponents of the law have argued that a ban would violate First

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Amendment rights of the social media platform's 170 million U.S. users.

Patrick Toomey, deputy director of the ACLU's National Security Project, said a TikTok ban would "stifle free expression and restrict public access" to a platform that has become central source for information sharing.

Among key questions will be whether the legislation interferes with the overall content of speech on TikTok, notes Elettra Bietti, an assistant professor of law and computer science at Northeastern University, because content-based restrictions meet a higher level of scrutiny.

ByteDance had yet to officially file a lawsuit by late Wednesday, but Bietti said she expects the company's challenge to primarily focus on whether a ban infringes on these wider free-speech rights. Additional litigation involving TikTok's "commercial actors," such as businesses and influencers who make their living on the platform, may also arise, she added.

COULD TIKTOK SUCCESSFULLY PREVENT THE BAN IN COURT?

TikTok is expressing confidence about the prospects of its planned challenge.

"Rest assured, we aren't going anywhere," TikTok CEO Shou Chew said in a video response posted to X Wednesday. "The facts and the Constitution are on our side, and we expect to prevail again."

Toomey also said that he is optimistic about the possibility of TikTok being able to block the measure in court, noting that both users and the company "have extremely strong" First Amendment claims.

"Many of the calls to completely ban TikTok in the U.S. are about scoring political points and rooted in anti-China sentiment," Toomey added. "And to date, these steps to ban TikTok had not been remotely supported by concrete public evidence."

Still, the future of any litigation is hard to predict, especially for this kind of case. And from a legal perspective, legal experts say it can be difficult to cite political motivations, even if they're well-documented, as grounds to invalidate a law.

The battle could also string along for some time, with the potential for appeals that could go all the way to the Supreme Court, which would likely uphold the law due to its current composition, said Gus Hurwitz, a senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Carey Law School.

HOW MIGHT THE GOVERNMENT RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGE?

TikTok's legal challenge won't go on without a fight. The government will probably respond with national-security claims, which were already cited prominently as the legislation made its way through Congress.

Toomey maintains that the government hasn't met the high bar required to prove imminent national-security risks, but some other legal experts note that it's still a strong card to play.

"One of the unfortunate and really frustrating things about national-security legislation (is that) it tends to be a trump card," Hurwitz said. "Once national-security issues come up, they're going to carry the day either successfully or not."

Hurwitz added that he thinks there are legitimate national-security arguments that could be brought up here. National security can be argued because it's a federal measure, he added. That sets this scenario apart from previously unsuccessful state-level legislation seeking to ban TikTok, such as in Montana.

But national-security arguments are also vulnerable to questioning as to why TikTok is getting specific scrutiny.

"Personally, I believe that what TikTok does isn't that different from other companies that are U.S.-based," Bietti said, pointing to tech giants ranging from Google to Amazon. "The question is, 'Why ban TikTok and not the activities and the surveillance carried out by other companies in the United States?'"

IF THE LAW IS UPHELD, COULD THERE BE WIDER RAMIFICATIONS?

Still, legal experts note that there could be repercussions beyond TikTok in the future.

The measure was passed as part of a larger \$95 billion package that provides aid to Ukraine and Israel. The package also 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.

That has encountered some pushback, including from the ACLU, which says the language is written too broadly and could sweep in journalists and others who publish personal information.

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"There's real reason to be concerned that the use of this law will not stop with TikTok," Toomey said. "Looking at that point and the bigger picture, banning TikTok or forcing its sale would be a devastating blow to the U.S. government's decades of work promoting an open and secure global internet."

US growth likely slowed last quarter but still pointed to a solid economy

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Coming off a robust end to 2023, the U.S. economy is thought to have extended its surprisingly healthy streak at the start of this year, with consumers still spending freely despite the pressure of high interest rates.

The Commerce Department is expected to report Thursday that the gross domestic product — the economy's total output of goods and services — grew at a slow but still-decent 2.2% annual pace from January through March, according to a survey of forecasters by the data firm FactSet.

Some economists envision a stronger expansion than that. A forecasting model issued by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta points to a first-quarter annual pace of 2.7%, propelled by a 3.3% increase in consumer spending, the principal driver of economic growth.

Either way, the economy's growth is widely expected to have decelerated from the vigorous 3.4% annual pace of October through December. The slowdown reflects, in large part, the much higher borrowing rates for home and auto loans, credit cards and many business loans that have resulted from the 11 interest rate hikes the Federal Reserve imposed in its drive to tame inflation.

Even so, the United States has continued to outpace the rest of the world's advanced economies. The International Monetary Fund has projected that the world's largest economy will grow 2.7% for all of 2024, up from 2.5% last year and more than double the growth the IMF expects this year for Germany, France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and Canada.

Americans, who emerged from the pandemic recession with plenty of money in reserve, have been spending energetically, a significant trend because consumers account for roughly 70% of the nation's GDP. From February to March, retail sales surged 0.7% — almost double what economists had expected.

Businesses have been pouring money into factories, warehouses and other buildings, encouraged by federal incentives to manufacture computer chips and green technology in the United States. On the other hand, their spending on equipment has been weak. And as imports outpace exports, international trade is also thought to have been a drag on the economy's first-quarter growth.

Kristalina Georgieva, the IMF's managing director, cautioned last week that the "flipside" of strong U.S. economic growth was that it was "taking longer than expected" for inflation to reach the Fed's 2% target, although price pressures have sharply slowed from their mid-2022 peak.

Inflation flared up in the spring of 2021 as the economy rebounded with unexpected speed from the COVID-19 recession, causing severe supply shortages. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 made things significantly worse by inflating prices for the energy and grains the world depends on.

The Fed responded by aggressively raising its benchmark rate between March 2022 and July 2023. Despite widespread predictions of a recession, the economy has proved unexpectedly resilient. Economic growth has come in at a 2% annual rate for six straight quarters — seven, if forecasters are correct about the January-March GDP growth.

Hiring so far this year is even stronger than it was in 2023. And unemployment has remained below 4% for 26 straight months, the longest such streak since the 1960s.

"Overall, US economic activity remains resilient, powered by consumers' ongoing ability and willingness to spend," said Gregory Daco, chief economist at the tax and consulting firm EY. "A robust labor market, along with positive real wage growth, continues to provide a solid foundation."

Inflation, the main source of Americans' discontent about the economy, has slowed from 9.1% in June 2022 to 3.5%. But progress has stalled lately. Republican critics of President Joe Biden have sought to pin the blame for high prices on the president and use it as a cudgel to derail his re-election bid. Polls show that despite a healthy job market, a near-record-high stock market and the sharp slowdown in inflation,

many Americans blame Biden for high prices.

Though the Fed's policymakers signaled last month that they expect to cut rates three times this year, they have lately signaled that they're in no hurry to reduce rates in the face of continued inflationary pressure. Now, a majority of Wall Street traders don't expect them to start until the Fed's September meeting, according to the CME FedWatch tool.

Arizona indicts 18 in election interference case, including Giuliani and Meadows

By JACQUES BILLEAUD, JONATHAN J. COOPER and JOSH KELETY Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — An Arizona grand jury has indicted former President Donald Trump 's chief of staff Mark Meadows, lawyer Rudy Giuliani and 16 others for their roles in an attempt to overturn Trump's loss to Joe Biden in the 2020 election.

The indictment released Wednesday names 11 Republicans who submitted a document to Congress falsely declaring that Trump won Arizona in 2020. They include the former state party chair, a 2022 U.S. Senate candidate and two sitting state lawmakers, who are charged with nine counts each of conspiracy, fraud and forgery.

The identities of seven other defendants, including Giuliani and Meadows, were not immediately released because they had not yet been served with the documents. They were readily identifiable based on descriptions of the defendants, however.

Trump himself was not charged but was referred to as an unindicted co-conspirator.

With the indictments, Arizona becomes the fourth state where allies of the former president have been charged with using false or unproven claims about voter fraud related to the election. Heading into a likely November rematch with Biden, Trump continues to spread lies about the last election that are echoed by many of his supporters.

"I will not allow American democracy to be undermined," Democratic state Attorney General Kris Mayes said in a video released by her office. "It's too important."

The indictment alludes to Giuliani as an attorney "who was often identified as the Mayor" and spread false allegations of election fraud. Another defendant is referred to as Trump's "chief of staff in 2020," which describes Meadows.

Descriptions of other unnamed defendants point to Mike Roman, who was Trump's director of Election Day operations; John Eastman, a lawyer who devised a strategy to try to persuade Congress not to certify the election; and Christina Bobb, a lawyer who worked with Giuliani.

A lawyer for Eastman, Charles Burnham, said his client is innocent. Bobb did not respond to a text message seeking comment, nor did a lawyer who is representing Roman in a case in Georgia.

George Terwilliger, a lawyer representing Meadows, said he had not yet seen the indictment but if Meadows is named, "it is a blatantly political and politicized accusation and will be contested and defeated." Giuliani's political adviser, Ted Goodman, decried what he called "the continued weaponization of our justice system."

The 11 people who had been nominated to be Arizona's Republican electors met in Phoenix on Dec. 14, 2020, to sign a certificate saying they were "duly elected and qualified" electors and claiming that Trump carried the state. A one-minute video of the signing ceremony was posted on social media by the Arizona Republican Party at the time. The document was later sent to Congress and the National Archives, where it was ignored.

Biden won Arizona by more than 10,000 votes. Of the eight lawsuits that unsuccessfully challenged Biden's victory in the state, one was filed by the 11 Republicans.

Their lawsuit asked a judge to de-certify the results that gave Biden his victory in Arizona and block the state from sending them to the Electoral College. In dismissing the case, U.S. District Judge Diane Humetewa said the Republicans lacked legal standing, waited too long to bring their case and "failed to provide the court with factual support for their extraordinary claims."

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Days after that lawsuit was dismissed, the 11 participated in the certificate signing.

The Arizona charges come after a string of indictments against fake electors in other states.

In December, a Nevada grand jury indicted six Republicans on felony charges of offering a false instrument for filing and uttering a forged instrument in connection with false election certificates. They have pleaded not guilty.

Michigan's Attorney General in July filed felony charges that included forgery and conspiracy to commit election forgery against 16 Republican fake electors. One had charges dropped after reaching a cooperation deal, and the 15 remaining defendants have pleaded not guilty.

Three fake electors also have been charged in Georgia alongside Trump and others in a sweeping indictment accusing them of participating in a wide-ranging scheme to illegally overturn the results. They have pleaded not guilty.

In Wisconsin, 10 Republicans who posed as electors settled a civil lawsuit, admitting their actions were part of an effort to overturn Biden's victory. There is no known criminal investigation in Wisconsin.

Trump was indicted in August in federal court over efforts to cling to power after his defeat, including the fake electors scheme. The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday will hear arguments on his claim in that case that he can't be prosecuted for acts he committed while serving as president.

In early January, New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez said that state's five Republican electors cannot be prosecuted under the current law. In New Mexico and Pennsylvania, fake electors added a caveat saying the election certificate was submitted in case they were later recognized as duly elected, qualified electors. No charges have been filed in Pennsylvania.

In Arizona, Mayes' predecessor, Republican Mark Brnovich, conducted an investigation of the 2020 election, but the fake elector allegations were not part of that examination, according to Mayes' office.

The so-called fake electors facing charges are Kelli Ward, the state GOP's chair from 2019 until early 2023; state Sen. Jake Hoffman; Tyler Bowyer, an executive of the conservative youth organization Turning Point USA who serves on the Republican National Committee; state Sen. Anthony Kern, who was photographed in restricted areas outside the U.S. Capitol during the Jan. 6 attack and is now a candidate in Arizona's 8th Congressional District; Greg Safsten, a former executive director of the Arizona Republican Party; energy industry executive James Lamon, who lost a 2022 Republican primary for a U.S. Senate seat; Robert Montgomery, chairman of the Cochise County Republican Committee in 2020; Samuel Moorhead, a Republican precinct committee member in Gila County; Nancy Cottle, who in 2020 was the first vice president of the Arizona Federation of Republican Women; Loraine Pellegrino, past president of the Ahwatukee Republican Women; and Michael Ward, an osteopathic physician who is married to Kelli Ward.

In a statement, Hoffman accused Mayes of weaponizing the attorney general's office in bringing the case but didn't directly comment on the indictment's allegations.

"Let me be unequivocal, I am innocent of any crime, I will vigorously defend myself, and I look forward to the day when I am vindicated of this naked political persecution by the judicial process," Hoffman said.

None of the others responded to either phone, email or social media messages from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Dozens arrested on California campus after students in Texas detained as Gaza war protests persist

By JIM VERTUNO, ACACIA CORONADO and NICK PERRY Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Police peacefully arrested student protesters at the University of Southern California on Wednesday, hours after police at a Texas university aggressively detained dozens in the latest clashes between law enforcement and those protesting the Israel-Hamas war on campuses nationwide.

While tensions rose between police and protesters at USC earlier in the day, in the evening a few dozen demonstrators standing in a circle with locked arms were detained one by one without incident.

Police officers encircled the dwindling group, which sat in defiance of an earlier warning to disperse or be arrested. Beyond the police line, hundreds of onlookers watched as helicopters buzzed overhead. The

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school closed the campus.

While universities struggling to defuse unrest have quickly turned to law enforcement, the arrests in California were in sharp contrast to the chaos that ensued just hours earlier at the University of Texas at Austin.

Hundreds of local and state police — including some on horseback and holding batons — pushed into protesters, at one point sending some tumbling into the street. Officers made 34 arrests at the behest of the university and Texas Gov. Gregg Abbott, according to the state Department of Public Safety.

A photographer covering the demonstration for Fox 7 Austin was in the push-and-pull when an officer yanked him backward to the ground, video shows. The station confirmed that the photographer was arrested. A longtime Texas journalist was knocked down in the mayhem and could be seen bleeding before police helped him to emergency medical staff.

Dane Urquhart, a third-year Texas student, called the police presence and arrests an “overreaction,” adding that the protest “would have stayed peaceful” if the officers had not turned out in force.

“Because of all the arrests, I think a lot more (demonstrations) are going to happen,” Urquhart said.

Police left after hours of efforts to control the crowd, and about 300 demonstrators moved back in to sit on the grass and chant under the school’s iconic clock tower.

In a statement Wednesday night, the university’s president, Jay Hartzell, said: “Our rules matter, and they will be enforced. Our University will not be occupied.”

North of USC, students at California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, were barricaded inside a building for a third day, and the school shut down campus through the weekend and made classes virtual.

Harvard University in Massachusetts had sought to stay ahead of protests this week by limiting access to Harvard Yard and requiring permission for tents and tables. That didn’t stop protesters from setting up a camp with 14 tents Wednesday following a rally against the university’s suspension of the Harvard Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee.

Students protesting the Israel-Hamas war are demanding schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies enabling its monthslong conflict. Some Jewish students say the protests have veered into antisemitism and made them afraid to set foot on campus, partly prompting a heavier hand from universities.

At New York University this week, police said 133 protesters were taken into custody, while over 40 protesters were arrested Monday at an encampment at Yale University.

Columbia University averted another confrontation between students and police earlier Wednesday. University President Minouche Shafik had set on Tuesday a midnight deadline to reach an agreement on clearing an encampment, but the school extended negotiations, saying it would continue talks with protesters for another 48 hours.

On a visit to campus Wednesday, U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, called on Shafik to resign “if she cannot bring order to this chaos.”

“If this is not contained quickly and if these threats and intimidation are not stopped, there is an appropriate time for the National Guard,” he said.

On Wednesday evening, a Columbia spokesperson said rumors that the university had threatened to bring in the National Guard were unfounded. “Our focus is to restore order, and if we can get there through dialogue, we will,” said Ben Chang, Columbia’s vice president for communications.

Columbia graduate student Omer Lubaton Granot, who put up pictures of Israeli hostages near the encampment, said he wanted to remind people that there were more than 100 hostages still being held by Hamas.

“I see all the people behind me advocating for human rights,” he said. “I don’t think they have one word to say about the fact that people their age, that were kidnapped from their homes or from a music festival in Israel, are held by a terror organization.”

Harvard law student Tala Alfoqaha, who is Palestinian, said she and other protesters want more transparency from the university.

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"My hope is that the Harvard administration listens to what its students have been asking for all year, which is divestment, disclosure and dropping any sort of charges against students," she said.

Police first tried to clear the encampment at Columbia last week, when they arrested more than 100 protesters. The move backfired, acting as an inspiration for other students across the country to set up similar encampments and motivating protesters at Columbia to regroup.

On Wednesday about 60 tents remained at the Columbia encampment, which appeared calm. Security remained tight around campus, with identification required and police setting up metal barricades.

Columbia said it had agreed with protest representatives that only students would remain at the encampment and they would make it welcoming, banning discriminatory or harassing language.

On the University of Minnesota campus, a few dozen students rallied a day after nine protesters were arrested when police took down an encampment in front of the library. U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar, whose daughter was among the demonstrators arrested at Columbia last week, attended a protest later in the day.

A group of more than 80 professors and assistant professors signed a letter Wednesday calling on the university's president and other administrators to drop any charges and to allow future encampments without what they described as police retaliation.

They wrote that they were "horrified that the administration would permit such a clear violation of our students' rights to freely speak out against genocide and ongoing occupation of Palestine."

A look at the Gaza war protests that have emerged on US college campuses

By The Associated Press undefined

Student protests over the Israel-Hamas war have popped up on an increasing number of college campuses following last week's arrest of more than 100 demonstrators at Columbia University.

Protests Wednesday on the campuses of at least two universities involved clashes with police, while another university shut down its campus for the rest of the week.

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

Protests on many campuses have been orchestrated by coalitions of student groups. The groups largely act independently, though students say they're inspired by peers at other universities.

A look at protests on campuses in recent days:

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Pro-Palestinian student protesters set up a tent encampment at the Ivy League university in New York last week. Police first tried to clear the encampment on Thursday, when they arrested more than 100 protesters. But the move backfired, acting as an inspiration for other students across the country and motivating protesters at Columbia to regroup.

University officials said early Wednesday that they were extending a deadline for protesters to clear out. They said the demonstrators had committed to removing a significant number of tents and agreed that only students would remain at the encampment. They also said they would make the encampment more welcoming by banning any discriminatory language or harassing messages. The encampment on the upper Manhattan campus appeared calm and a little smaller on Wednesday morning.

U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson visited Columbia on Wednesday to meet with Jewish students over concerns about antisemitism on college campuses. Johnson said Israel and Jewish students on campus will not stand alone. Protesters nearby said they couldn't hear him and he responded, "Enjoy your free speech."

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Dozens of police officers and state troopers, including some on horseback and holding batons, forcefully arrested more than two dozen student protesters and a local news photographer at the University of Texas at Austin Wednesday after university officials and the governor called authorities.

Protesters said they had planned a walkout and march to the main campus lawn, where students would occupy the space and host events throughout the afternoon. But the university said in a statement that

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it would "not tolerate disruptions" like those at other campuses.

As of Wednesday night, 34 people had been arrested related to the protest, according to a post on the social platform X by the Texas Department of Public Safety. Agency spokesperson Sheridan Nolen said troopers had responded at the request of university officials and Gov. Greg Abbott.

Abbott said on X that the protesters belong in jail, and that any student who joins what he called hate-filled, antisemitic protests at any public college or university in the state should be expelled.

A photographer covering the demonstration for local Fox affiliate, Fox 7 Austin, was among those arrested after being caught in a push-and-pull between law enforcement and students. The station confirmed the arrest in its online story. Another journalist was knocked down in the mayhem and was seen bleeding before police helped him to emergency medical staff, who bandaged his head.

In a statement, University President Jay Hartzell said that peaceful protests within the university's rules are acceptable but that breaking the rules and disrupting others' ability to learn are not allowed.

"Our rules matter, and they will be enforced," his statement said. "Our University will not be occupied."

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles police began arresting protesters Wednesday evening at the University of Southern California in an effort to clear the center of the university's main campus. The university posted on X that it had closed campus and that police would arrest people who did not leave.

Earlier in the day police removed several tents, then got into a back-and-forth tent tugging match with protesters before falling back. At one point, USC police detained a man and put him in a vehicle. A crowd surrounded the car and chanted "Let him go!" and the officers eventually did so. The man waved at demonstrators to indicate they should return to the park.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Two pro-Palestinian students participating in a protest on campus were arrested Tuesday and charged with criminal trespassing, after "repeated warnings to be quiet," said university spokesperson Ben Johnson.

About 50 protesters had gathered at a campus amphitheater to share stories about their connections to the Palestinian people before marching. While stopping at a building on the university's medical campus, two individuals became "disruptive," Johnson said. Per university policy, the students who were arrested will be referred to the student conduct office.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Trying to stay ahead of protests, Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, locked most gates into its famous Harvard Yard ahead of classes Monday and limited access to those with school identification. The school also posted signs warning against setting up tents or tables on campus without permission. Those efforts didn't stop protesters from setting up a camp with 14 tents Wednesday, which came after a rally against the university's suspension of the Harvard Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee.

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, HUMBOLDT

Students at the university used furniture, tents, chains and zip ties to block entrances to an academic and administrative building on Monday. Protesters chanted, "We are not afraid of you!" before officers in riot gear pushed into them at the building's entrance, video shows. University officials closed the campus through this weekend, saying instruction would continue to be remote. They said in a statement Tuesday that students had occupied a second building and three students had been arrested. On Wednesday officials said some unidentified people who are not students were also inside one of the occupied buildings. Humboldt is located about 300 miles (480 kilometers) north of San Francisco.

EMERSON COLLEGE

About 80 students and other supporters at Emerson College occupied a busy courtyard on the downtown Boston campus Tuesday. College officials on Wednesday warned the students that some of the protesters were in violation of city ordinances, including by blocking a right-of-way and fire hydrants, and violating noise laws. The school said the alley where some protesters have set up tents is owned by the city, and Boston police have warned of imminent law enforcement action. The college said in a statement that campus police were offering escort services for students after officials received credible reports of some protesters engaging in "targeted harassment and intimidation of Jewish supporters of Israel."

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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

At New York University, an encampment set up by students swelled to hundreds of protesters earlier this week. Police on Wednesday said that 133 protesters had been taken into custody. They said all were released with summonses to appear in court on disorderly conduct charges.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

An encampment at the center of the University of Michigan campus in Ann Arbor had grown to about 40 tents on Tuesday. Almost every student there wore a mask, which was handed to them when they entered. Student protesters declined to identify themselves to reporters, saying they feared retribution by the university. One student stood near the encampment passing out small flags of Israel, saying he didn't want Jewish students walking through campus to only see the protesters.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar attended a protest at the University of Minnesota on Tuesday, hours after nine demonstrators were arrested when police took down an encampment in front of the library. Hundreds had rallied to demand their release. Omar's daughter was among the protesters arrested at Columbia last week.

On Wednesday, more than 80 professors and assistant professors signed a letter calling on the University of Minnesota's president to drop any charges, lift any ban on the arrestees' presence on campus and to allow future encampments.

YALE UNIVERSITY

Police arrested 48 protesters, including four who were not students, after they refused to leave an encampment on a plaza at the center of Yale University's campus in New Haven, Connecticut, on Monday.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Protesters at the University of California, Berkeley, had set up about 30 tents as of Tuesday.

Reggie Bush is reinstated as 2005 Heisman Trophy winner, with organizers citing NIL rule changes

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Reggie Bush has his Heisman back.

The Heisman Trust reinstated the former Southern California tailback as the 2005 Heisman Trophy winner on Wednesday, citing fundamental changes in the structure of college athletics during the 14 years since Bush forfeited the trophy and the honor.

Bush gave up his Heisman following an NCAA investigation that found he received what were impermissible benefits during his time with the Trojans. College football players are now allowed to profit from their work in many ways, and the Heisman Trust decided it was time to move past the conflict with one of the most exciting players in the sport's history.

"We are thrilled to welcome Reggie Bush back to the Heisman family in recognition of his collegiate accomplishments," said Michael Comerford, president of The Heisman Trophy Trust. "We considered the enormous changes in college athletics over the last several years in deciding that now is the right time to reinstate the Trophy for Reggie. We are so happy to welcome him back."

The Heisman Trust has returned the trophy to Bush and the replica to USC. Bush also will be invited to all future Heisman Trophy ceremonies.

Bush won the trophy awarded to the top player in college football after amassing 2,218 yards from scrimmage and scoring 18 touchdowns in 2005. His 784 first-place votes were the fifth most in Heisman history, and the trophy was a crowning achievement for Bush after three seasons at USC as one of the most dynamic college football players in decades.

"I am grateful to once again be recognized as the recipient of the Heisman Trophy," Bush said in a statement. "This reinstatement is not only a personal victory, but also a validation of the tireless efforts of my supporters and advocates who have stood by me throughout this arduous journey."

The reinstatement of Bush gives USC a total of eight Heisman winners, most of any school.

USC typically displays its replicas of the Trojans' Heisman Trophies in the lobby of Heritage Hall, its historic

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football headquarters, while the retired uniform numbers of its Heisman winners are displayed on huge banners draping the Peristyle at the Coliseum during USC home games. Bush's No. 5 jersey is expected to be back among the honored numbers this fall.

"What a historic day!" said USC coach Lincoln Riley, who coached Caleb Williams to the school's most recent Heisman in 2022. "Reggie's reintroduction to the Heisman Family is a special moment for every person that has been associated with USC football. We are thrilled that Reggie's athletic accomplishments as one of the greatest to ever play the game can officially be recognized."

The USC football program wrote "back where it belongs" in a social media post.

"This is a momentous day for Reggie Bush and the entire USC community as we celebrate the rightful return of his Heisman Trophy," USC athletic director Jen Cohen said. "Reggie's impact at USC and on college football as a whole is truly unmatched. He has displayed the utmost resiliency and heart throughout this process and is so deserving of every accolade and trophy he's ever received. We are grateful to the Heisman Trophy Trust for making this happen."

Bush had his award vacated in 2010 after USC was hit with massive NCAA sanctions when it was found that Bush and his family received money and gifts from fledgling marketing agents who were hoping to represent him. The sanctions were the final result of a prolonged, antagonistic dispute between the NCAA and USC under former athletic director Mike Garrett.

USC received a two-year postseason ban and lost a whopping 30 scholarships under the sanctions. The NCAA also vacated 14 wins by the Trojans during the heart of Bush's career, including the 55-19 victory over Oklahoma in the Bowl Championship Series title game at the Orange Bowl following the 2004 season.

USC was even required to "disassociate" from Bush for 10 years following the NCAA's decision. The school immediately ended its disassociation when that period ended in June 2020, welcoming Bush back to the school.

The Trust said in its statement that its decision followed a "deliberative process" in which it closely monitored changes in the college athletics landscape. That included the U.S. Supreme Court's 2021 decision that questioned the legality of the NCAA's amateurism model and opened the door to athlete compensation; the ability of players to be paid for their name, image and likeness; and the NCAA's recent proposal to remove the cap on education-related payments.

"Recognizing that the compensation of student athletes is an accepted practice and appears here to stay, these fundamental changes in college athletics led the Trust to decide that now is the right time to return the Trophy to Bush, who unquestionably was the most outstanding college football player of 2005," the Trust said.

Public opinion has long favored the return of Bush's trophy. Johnny Manziel, the 2012 Heisman winner from Texas A&M, said on social media last month that he would not participate in Heisman festivities unless Bush got his trophy back.

Manziel thanked the Trust on Wednesday "for doing what's right and welcoming a storied member of our history back into the fold. There were many voices throughout this process that stood on the table for Reggie simply because of the kind of human being he is. I look forward to being on that stage with you this December (Reggie Bush) you deserve it."

Among others praising the decision were Williams, the 2022 winner and the projected No. 1 pick in Thursday's NFL draft; 2001 winner Eric Crouch of Nebraska; and 2011 winner Robert Griffin III of Baylor.

Bush was the No. 2 overall pick in the 2006 NFL draft by New Orleans, and he played for five teams over 11 seasons. He is now a commentator and studio analyst for Fox Sports.

Last August, Bush filed a defamation lawsuit against the NCAA for issuing a statement to media in 2021 that said Bush had a "pay-for-play" arrangement. That statement was in response to media inquiries about whether Bush would have his statistics from his USC career reinstated when NIL payments became permissible. Bush contended the statement cast him in a false light.

"I want to make it abundantly clear that I have always acted with integrity and in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth by the NCAA," Bush said Wednesday. "The allegations brought against me were unfounded and unsupported by evidence, and I am grateful that the truth is finally prevailing."

Boeing's financial woes continue, while families of crash victims urge US to prosecute the company

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

Boeing said Wednesday that it lost \$355 million on falling revenue in the first quarter, another sign of the crisis gripping the aircraft manufacturer as it faces increasing scrutiny over the safety of its planes and accusations of shoddy work from a growing number of whistleblowers.

CEO David Calhoun said the company is in "a tough moment," and its focus is on fixing its manufacturing issues, not the financial results.

Company executives have been forced to talk more about safety and less about finances since a door plug blew out of a Boeing 737 Max during an Alaska Airlines flight in January, leaving a gaping hole in the plane.

The accident halted progress that Boeing seemed to be making while recovering from two deadly crashes of Max jets in 2018 and 2019. Those crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia, which killed 346 people, are now back in the spotlight, too.

About a dozen relatives of passengers who died in the second crash met with government officials for several hours Wednesday in Washington. They asked the officials to revive a criminal fraud charge against the company by determining that Boeing violated terms of a 2021 settlement, but left disappointed.

Boeing officials made no mention of the meeting, but talked repeatedly while discussing the quarterly earnings of a renewed focus on safety.

"Although we report first-quarter financial results today, our focus remains on the sweeping actions we are taking following the Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 accident," Calhoun told employees in a memo Wednesday.

Calhoun ticked off a series of actions the company is taking and reported "significant progress" in improving manufacturing quality, much of it by slowing down production, which means fewer planes for its airline customers. Calhoun told CNBC that closer inspections were resulting in 80% fewer flaws in the fuselages coming from key supplier Spirit AeroSystems.

"Near term, yes, we are in a tough moment," he wrote to employees. "Lower deliveries can be difficult for our customers and for our financials. But safety and quality must and will come above all else."

Calhoun, who will step down at the end of the year, said again he is fully confident the company will recover.

Calhoun became CEO in early 2020 as Boeing struggled to recover from the Max crashes, which led regulators to ground the planes worldwide for nearly two years. The company thought it had sidestepped any risk of criminal prosecution when the Justice Department agreed not to try the company for fraud if it complied with U.S. anti-fraud laws for three years — a period that ended in January.

Boeing has been reaching confidential settlements with the families of passengers who died, but the relatives of those killed in the Ethiopia crash are continuing to press the Justice Department to prosecute the company in federal district court in Texas, where the settlement was filed. On Wednesday, department officials told relatives that the agency is still considering the matter.

Leaving the meeting, Paul Cassell, a lawyer for the families, called it "all for show." He said the Justice Department appears determined to defend the agreement it brokered in secret with Boeing.

"We simply want that case to move forward and let the jury decide if Boeing is a criminal or not," he said.

It was an emotional meeting, according to Nadia Milleron, whose daughter Samya Stumo died in the 2019 crash.

"People are angry. People are shouting. People are starting to talk over other people," said Milleron, who watched online from her home in Massachusetts while her husband attended in person. Relatives believe the Justice Department is "overlooking a mountain of evidence against Boeing. It's mystifying," she said.

According to Milleron, the head of the fraud section of the Justice Department's criminal division, Glenn Leon, said his agency could extend its review beyond this summer, seek a trial against Boeing on the charge of defrauding regulators who approved the Max, or ask a judge to dismiss the charge. She said Leon made no commitments.

The Justice Department declined to comment.

A federal judge and an appeals court ruled last year that they had no power to overturn the Boeing settlement. Families of the crash victims hoped the government would reconsider prosecuting Boeing after the Jan. 5 door-plug blowout on the Alaska Airlines jetliner as the plane flew above Oregon.

Investigators looking into the Alaska flight say bolts that help keep the door plug in place were missing after repair work at a Boeing factory. The FBI told passengers that they might be crime victims.

Boeing stock has plunged by about one-third since the blowout. The Federal Aviation Administration has stepped up its oversight and given Boeing until late May to produce a plan to fix problems in manufacturing 737 Max jets. Airline customers are unhappy about not getting all the new planes that they had ordered because of delivery disruptions.

The company said it paid \$443 million in compensation to airlines for the grounding of Max 9 jets after the Alaska accident.

Several former and one current manager have reported various problems in manufacturing of Boeing 737 and 787 jetliners. The most recent, a quality engineer, told Congress last week that Boeing is taking manufacturing shortcuts that could eventually cause 787 Dreamliners to break apart. Boeing pushed back aggressively against his claims.

Boeing, however, has a couple things in its favor.

Along with Airbus, Boeing forms one-half of a duopoly that dominates the manufacturing of large passenger planes. Both companies have yearslong backlogs of orders from airlines eager for new, more fuel-efficient planes. And Boeing is a major defense contractor for the Pentagon and governments around the world.

Richard Aboulafia, a longtime industry analyst and consultant at AeroDynamic Advisory, said despite all the setbacks Boeing still has a powerful mix of products in high demand, technology and people.

"Even if they are No. 2 and have major issues, they are still in a very strong market and an industry that has very high barriers to entry," he said.

And despite massive losses — about \$24 billion in the last five years — the company is not at risk of failing, Aboulafia said.

"This isn't General Motors in 2008 or Lockheed in 1971," Aboulafia said, referring to two iconic corporations that needed massive government bailouts or loan guarantees to survive.

All of those factors help explain why 20 analysts in a FactSet survey rate Boeing shares as "Buy" or "Overweight" and only two have "Sell" ratings. (Five have "Hold" ratings.)

Boeing said the first-quarter loss, excluding special items came to \$1.13 per share, which was better than the loss of \$1.63 per share that analysts had forecast, according to a FactSet survey.

Revenue fell 7.5%, to \$16.57 billion.

Moody's downgraded Boeing's unsecured debt one notch to Baa3, the lowest investment-grade rating, citing the weak performance of the commercial-airplanes business.

Boeing Co. shares closed down 3%. They have dropped 34% since the Alaska blowout.

Russia vetoes a UN resolution calling for the prevention of a dangerous nuclear arms race in space

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Russia on Wednesday vetoed a U.N. resolution sponsored by the United States and Japan calling on all nations to prevent a dangerous nuclear arms race in outer space, calling it "a dirty spectacle" that cherry picks weapons of mass destruction from all other weapons that should also be banned.

The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 13 in favor, Russia opposed and China abstaining.

The resolution would have called on all countries not to develop or deploy nuclear arms or other weapons of mass destruction in space, as banned under a 1967 international treaty that included the U.S. and Russia, and to agree to the need to verify compliance.

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U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said after the vote that Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Moscow has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space.

"Today's veto begs the question: Why? Why, if you are following the rules, would you not support a resolution that reaffirms them? What could you possibly be hiding," she asked. "It's baffling. And it's a shame."

Putin was responding to White House confirmation in February that Russia has obtained a "troubling" anti-satellite weapon capability, although such a weapon is not operational yet.

U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Wednesday echoed Thomas-Greenfield, reiterating that "the United States assesses that Russia is developing a new satellite carrying a nuclear device." If Putin has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space, Sullivan said, "Russia would not have vetoed this resolution."

Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia dismissed the resolution as "absolutely absurd and politicized," and said it didn't go far enough in banning all types of weapons in space.

Russia and China proposed an amendment to the U.S.-Japan draft that would call on all countries, especially those with major space capabilities, "to prevent for all time the placement of weapons in outer space, and the threat of use of force in outer spaces."

The vote was 7 countries in favor, 7 against, and one abstention and the amendment was defeated because it failed to get the minimum 9 "yes" votes required for adoption.

The U.S. opposed the amendment, and after the vote Nebenzia addressed the U.S. ambassador saying: "We want a ban on the placement of weapons of any kind in outer space, not just WMDs (weapons of mass destruction). But you don't want that. And let me ask you that very same question. Why?"

He said much of the U.S. and Japan's actions become clear "if we recall that the U.S. and their allies announced some time ago plans to place weapons ... in outer space."

Nebenzia accused the U.S. of blocking a Russian-Chinese proposal since 2008 for a treaty against putting weapons in outer space.

Thomas-Greenfield accused Russia of undermining global treaties to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, irresponsibly invoking "dangerous nuclear rhetoric," walking away from several of its arms control obligations, and refusing to engage "in substantive discussions around arms control or risk reduction."

She called Wednesday's vote "a real missed opportunity to rebuild much-needed trust in existing arms control obligations."

Thomas-Greenfield's announcement of the resolution on March 18 followed White House confirmation in February that Russia has obtained a "troubling" anti-satellite weapon capability, although such a weapon is not operational yet.

Putin declared later that Moscow has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space, claiming that the country has only developed space capabilities similar to those of the U.S.

Thomas-Greenfield said before the vote that the world is just beginning to understand "the catastrophic ramifications of a nuclear explosion in space."

It could destroy "thousands of satellites operated by countries and companies around the world — and wipe out the vital communications, scientific, meteorological, agricultural, commercial, and national security services we all depend on," she said.

The defeated draft resolution said "the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security." It would have urged all countries carrying out activities in exploring and using outer space to comply with international law and the U.N. Charter.

The draft would have affirmed that countries that ratified the 1967 Outer Space Treaty must comply with their obligations not to put in orbit around the Earth "any objects" with weapons of mass destruction, or install them "on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space."

The treaty, ratified by some 114 countries, including the U.S. and Russia, prohibits the deployment of "nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction" in orbit or the stationing of "weapons in outer space in any other manner."

The draft resolution emphasized "the necessity of further measures, including political commitments and legally binding instruments, with appropriate and effective provisions for verification, to prevent an arms

race in outer space in all its aspects.”

It reiterated that the U.N. Conference on Disarmament, based in Geneva, has the primary responsibility to negotiate agreements on preventing an arms race in outer space.

The 65-nation body has achieved few results and has largely devolved into a venue for countries to voice criticism of others’ weapons programs or defend their own. The draft resolution would have urged the conference “to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive program of work.”

At the March council meeting where the U.S.-Japan initiative was launched, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres warned that “geopolitical tensions and mistrust have escalated the risk of nuclear warfare to its highest point in decades.”

He said the movie “Oppenheimer” about Robert Oppenheimer, who directed the U.S. project during World War II that developed the atomic bomb, “brought the harsh reality of nuclear doomsday to vivid life for millions around the world.”

“Humanity cannot survive a sequel to Oppenheimer,” the U.N. chief said.

Chicago’s ‘rat hole’ removed after city determines sidewalk with animal impression was damaged

By RICK CALLAHAN and KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The “rat hole” is gone.

A Chicago sidewalk landmark some residents affectionately called the “rat hole” was removed Wednesday after city officials determined the section bearing the imprint of an animal was damaged and needed to be replaced, officials said.

The imprint has been a quirk of a residential block in Chicago’s North Side neighborhood of Roscoe Village for years, but it found fresh fame in January after a Chicago comedian shared a photo on the social platform X.

The attention, however, quickly grew old for neighbors who complained about visitors at all hours, sometimes leaving coins and other items scattered across the sidewalk. Plus, many in the neighborhood argue that the imprint was actually caused by a squirrel.

Erica Schroeder, a spokesperson for the Chicago Department of Transportation, said the square of sidewalk “containing the famous ‘Chicago rat hole’” is now in temporary storage.

She said that where the slab of sidewalk, which has an impression resembling the outline of a rat — claws, tail and all — will eventually end up is expected to be a “collaborative decision between the city departments and the mayor’s office.”

Schroeder said the rat hole section, as well as other portions of sidewalk along Roscoe Street, were removed by Department of Transportation crews Wednesday morning after the agency inspected them and determined they needed to be replaced because of damage.

Georgina Ulrich, a neighbor, shot video of crews using a concrete saw, a forklift and finally a truck to remove the slab and drive it away.

“All this for a rat imprint,” Ulrich said in one of the clips.

New concrete was poured later Wednesday, Schroeder said.

“The alderman’s office has definitely received complaints from neighbors about people gathering and people placing a bunch of different objects in the public way there,” she told The Associated Press.

Alderman Scott Waguespack’s office had been receiving complaints for several months, both about that portion of sidewalk being uneven and people congregating there to look at and photograph the rat hole, Paul Sajovec, Waguespack’s chief of staff, said Wednesday.

“It was just a combination of the fact that the sidewalk was uneven and also that people would show up at various times of the day and night and make a lot of noise and create other issues and problems,” he said.

In January, someone filled in the rat hole with a material resembling white plaster, although the impres-

sion was quickly dug out by fans, the Chicago Tribune reported at the time.

Chicago resident Winslow Dumaine told the newspaper that people living nearby said the imprint had been there for nearly two decades.

Relatives of those who died waiting for livers at now halted Houston transplant program seek answers

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Several relatives of patients who died while waiting for a new liver said Wednesday they want to know if their loved ones were wrongfully denied a transplant by a Houston doctor accused of manipulating the waitlist to make some patients ineligible to receive a new organ.

Officials at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center have said they are investigating after finding that a doctor had made "inappropriate changes" in the national database for people awaiting liver transplants. Earlier this month, the hospital halted its liver and kidney programs.

Susie Garcia's son, Richard Mostacci, died in February 2023 after being told he was too sick for a transplant. He was 43. "We saw him slipping away, slipping away and there was nothing that we could do, and we trusted, we trusted the doctors," Garcia said at a news conference.

She's among family members of three patients who retained attorneys with a Houston law firm that filed for a temporary restraining order Tuesday to prevent Dr. Steve Bynon from deleting or destroying evidence. Attorney Tommy Hastings said that some interactions with Bynon had caused "concerns about maybe some personal animosities and that maybe he may have taken it out on patients."

"Again, we're very early in this investigation," Hastings said.

Hermann-Memorial's statement didn't name the doctor, but the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, or UTHealth Houston, issued a statement defending Bynon, calling him "an exceptionally talented and caring physician" with survival rates that are "among the best in the nation."

Bynon is an employee of UTHealth Houston who is contracted to Memorial Hermann. He did not respond to an email inquiry Wednesday.

The hospital has said the inappropriate changes were only made to the liver transplant program, but since he shared leadership over both the liver and kidney transplant programs, they inactivated both.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also said it's conducting an investigation, adding it is "working across the department to address this matter."

Neither Hermann Memorial nor UTHealth or HHS had additional comments Wednesday.

Meanwhile, a woman using a different law firm filed a lawsuit last week in Harris County against Memorial Hermann and UTHealth alleging negligence in the death of her husband, John Montgomery, who died in May 2023 at age 66 while on the waitlist for a liver transplant. The lawsuit says that Montgomery was told he wasn't sick enough, and subsequently, that he was too sick before ultimately being taken off the list.

The death rate for people waiting for a liver transplant at Memorial Hermann was higher than expected in recent years, according to publicly available data from the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients, which evaluates U.S. organ transplant programs. The group found that in the two-year period from July 2021 through June 2023, there were 19 deaths on the waitlist, while models would have predicted about 14 deaths.

While the hospital's waitlist mortality rate of 28% was higher than expected "there were many liver programs with more extreme outcomes during the same period," Jon Snyder, the registry's director, said in an email.

He said that the hospital's first-year success rates for the 56 adults who received transplants between July 2020 through December 2022 was 35% better than expected based on national outcomes.

Biden meets 4-year-old Abigail Edan, an American who was held hostage by Hamas

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden met Wednesday with Abigail Edan, the 4-year-old American girl who was held hostage in Gaza for several weeks at the start of the war.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the White House meeting with Abigail and her family was “a reminder of the work still to do” to win the release of dozens of people who were taken captive by Hamas in an Oct. 7 attack on Israel and are still believed to be in captivity in Gaza.

Abigail, who has dual Israeli-U.S. citizenship, was taken hostage after her parents were killed in the attack and was released nearly seven weeks later. She was the first U.S. hostage freed by Hamas as part of a deal with Israel to exchange hostages for Palestinian prisoners early in the war. Abigail turned four during her time in captivity.

“It was also a reminder in getting to see her that there are still Americans and others being held hostage by Hamas,” said Sullivan, who attended Biden’s meeting with the girl and her family. “And we’re working day in, day out to ensure all of them also are able to get safely home to their loved ones. ”

Israel says the militants are still holding around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

Biden spoke to the girl soon after her release in November. Thursday’s meeting was one of mixed emotions for the president.

Sullivan noted that Abigail and her two siblings were “still living with the tragedy and the trauma” of their parents being killed on Oct. 7.

“Abigail, of course, is living with the trauma of being held captive for many weeks,” he added. “But this was a moment of joy as well, because she was able to be returned safely to her family. ”

Biden’s meeting with Abigail came as Hamas on Wednesday released a recorded video of an Israeli American still being held by the group.

The video was the first sign of life of Hersh Goldberg-Polin since Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel. It was not clear when the video was taken.

Goldberg-Polin, 23, was at the Tribe of Nova music festival when Hamas launched its attack from nearby Gaza. In the video, Goldberg-Polin is missing part of his left arm.

Witnesses said he lost it when attackers tossed grenades into a shelter where people had taken refuge. He tied a tourniquet around it before being bundled into the truck.

Sullivan said U.S. law enforcement officials are assessing the video but declined further comment.

Key moments in the Supreme Court’s latest abortion case that could change how women get care

By AMANDA SEITZ, REBECCA BOONE and MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Supreme Court heard its first test on Wednesday of state abortion bans that have been enacted since the court upended the Roe v. Wade constitutional right to abortion. While the current case involves an Idaho abortion ban, the court’s ruling could have implications beyond that state.

Idaho lawmakers have banned abortion except when a mother’s life is at risk. The Biden administration says the state law conflicts with a federal law requiring emergency room doctors to stabilize patients, no matter what, even if that means an abortion.

How the court will rule is uncertain. The justices could make a major ruling — or they could rule narrowly on how Idaho’s state law interacts with the federal law, the the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA).

A look at the key points in Wednesday’s arguments.

POTENTIALLY FAR-REACHING IMPACT

Attorneys for both sides warned that the justices’ ruling could affect women and doctors far beyond Idaho, changing how emergency rooms treat patients in many other states.

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"There are 22 states with abortion laws on the books," said Attorney Joshua N. Turner, who represented Idaho. "This isn't going to end with Idaho. ... This question is going to come up in state after state."

Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, arguing for the Biden administration, cautioned that other states could pass laws limiting how emergency rooms offer other services, which could mean trouble for more patients when they go to a hospital.

"This effectively allows states to take any particular treatment they don't want their hospitals to provide and dump those patients out of state," she warned. "And you can imagine what would happen if every state started to take this approach."

MEDICAL HYPOTHETICALS

Medical "what-ifs" peppered the arguments, sometimes turning personal: What if a woman's water breaks early in her pregnancy, exposing her to serious infection risk at a point when the fetus can't survive outside the womb? What if continuing the pregnancy would subject a pregnant person to organ failure, or cause permanent infertility?

Idaho's Turner told the court that those would be "very case by case" situations – a response that left Justice Amy Coney Barrett "shocked."

Barrett, one of the conservatives who voted to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, pressed Turner on when a prosecutor might bring charges against a doctor for providing an abortion. Experts whom Turner had cited, Barrett said, had told the court that doctors who performed abortions in those cases would be protected.

Turner agreed and said that doctors in Idaho could use their "good faith," medical judgment but Barrett pressed him further.

"What if the prosecutor thought differently?" Barrett asked. "What if the prosecutor thought, well, I don't think any good faith doctor could draw that conclusion."

Justice Sonia Sotomayor, part of the court's liberal minority, asked Turner to consider how the federal law requires hospitals to treat patients for more common medical emergencies, like the diabetes that she has had since childhood.

What if, she said, the state banned treating diabetes with insulin?

"Federal law would say you can't do that," said Sotomayor. "Objective medically accepted standards of care require the treatment of diabetics with insulin. Idaho is saying unless the doctor can say that this person's death is likely, as opposed to serious illness, they can't perform abortion."

ABORTION FOR SUICIDAL PATIENTS?

Conservative Justice Samuel Alito was particularly alarmed by Idaho's argument that emergency rooms could be forced to provide abortions if a pregnant patient in mental distress demanded one. The state has only raised this as a hypothetical, and not provided an actual example of a doctor being in this position.

"Does health mean only physical health or does it also mean mental health?" Alito asked Prelogar, noting that he was trying to get her on the record about it if future incidents arise.

Prelogar said it's not the administration's view that an abortion would be provided as emergency medical care if a woman was suicidal or depressed. She said that the hospital would be required to treat such patients in other ways, dealing with their mental health episode.

"That could never lead to pregnancy termination because that is not the accepted standard of practice to treat any mental health emergency," Prelogar said.

THE LAW'S INTENT

Congress passed its federal law mandating that emergency rooms stabilize or treat patients in 1986, after reports that private hospitals were offloading patients – many of them without health insurance and in bad condition – on public hospitals.

Nearly 40 years later, the attorneys and justices spent some of Wednesday diving into why Congress crafted the law.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh pressed Prelogar on why the law was initially created. Idaho's officials have argued that the law was supposed to ensure patients without health insurance were treated, and should not be used as a way for the federal government to police whether doctors perform abortions in an emergency.

"The text of the statute which says in no uncertain terms, here is the fundamental guarantee: If you have an emergency medical condition and you go to an ER in this country, they have to stabilize you," Prelogar said.

But Turner raised another conundrum for the court about Congress' intent: Why would doctors be required to perform abortions when the text of the law calls on them to treat "unborn children."

"It would be a strange thing for Congress to have regard for the unborn child and yet also be mandating termination of unborn children," he told the court.

AN UNCLEAR RESOLUTION

It's unclear exactly where the Supreme Court will land, but the court had earlier allowed Idaho's abortion ban to be fully enforced while litigation continues.

That means at least five members of the court voted to put on hold a lower court's ruling that the federal law overrides Idaho's abortion ban in medical emergencies. So the Biden administration was facing a tough road in persuading the court to uphold that ruling.

Six conservative justices all have cast votes to limit abortion access, including five who voted less than two years ago to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Justices Neil Gorsuch, Clarence Thomas and Alito seemed most likely to side with Idaho on Wednesday. The liberal justices, Ketanji Brown Jackson, Kagan and Sotomayor were most favorable to the administration.

The outcome likely turns on the votes of the other three members of the court — Chief Justice John Roberts and Barrett and Kavanaugh.

Barrett and Kavanaugh voted to overturn *Roe*.

Hamas releases video showing well-known Israeli-American hostage

By JACK JEFFERY and JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Hamas released a hostage video on Wednesday showing a well-known Israeli-American man who was among scores of people abducted by the militants in the attack that ignited the war in Gaza.

The video was the first sign of life of Hersh Goldberg-Polin since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel, and its release ignited new protests in Jerusalem calling on the government to do more to secure the captives' release.

In the video, Goldberg-Polin accused Israel's government of abandoning the people who are being held hostage by Hamas. He also claimed that some 70 captives have been killed in Israel's bombing campaign. Goldberg-Polin was clearly speaking under duress, and the claim could not be independently verified. It was not clear when the video was made.

Goldberg-Polin, 23, was at the Tribe of Nova music festival when Hamas launched its attack from nearby Gaza. In the video, Goldberg-Polin is missing part of his left arm.

Witnesses said he lost it when attackers tossed grenades into a shelter where people had taken refuge. He had tied a tourniquet around it before being bundled into the truck by Hamas.

Goldberg-Polin is one of the most recognized captives. Posters with his image are pinned up across Israel. His mother, Rachel Goldberg, has met with world leaders and addressed the United Nations.

Though there was no date on the video, Goldberg-Polin appeared to reference the weeklong Jewish holiday of Passover, which began on Monday.

His parents said they were relieved to see him alive but were concerned about his health and well-being, as well as that of the other hostages.

"We are here today with a plea to all of the leaders of the parties who have been negotiating to date," said his father, Jon Polin, naming Egypt, Israel, Qatar, the United States and Hamas.

"Be brave, lean in, seize this moment and get a deal done to reunite all of us with our loved ones and end the suffering in this region," he said.

Hostages' families have accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government of not doing enough to secure the release of their relatives.

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After the Hamas video was made public, hundreds of Israelis gathered outside Netanyahu's official residence in central Jerusalem on Wednesday, calling on the government to strike a deal to bring home hostages. Many held posters of Goldberg-Polin, and some of the protesters set cardboard boxes on fire.

"We are afraid for his life, so we went to protest and call for the government to do whatever is possible to bring him and everybody else back, as soon as possible," said one of the marchers, Nimrod Madrer. "Bring them back home," the crowd chanted.

At the nearby Great Synagogue, a large crowd jeered the country's ultranationalist national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, chanting "shame" as he exited the building following a Passover gathering. One protester banged on Ben-Gvir's car and was pushed away by police as it drove off.

Hamas and other militants abducted around 250 people in the Oct. 7 attack and killed around 1,200, mostly civilians. They are still believed to be holding around 100 hostages and the remains of some 30 others. Most of the rest were freed in November in exchange for the release of 240 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

Khalil al-Hayya, a senior Hamas official, said Goldberg-Polin's family had asked mediators to inquire about his fate for humanitarian reasons.

His family was "searching the world for any sign of him," al-Hayya said in an interview with Hamas-run Al-Aqsa TV broadcast on Wednesday. Hamas' armed wing "sent a strong message by publishing this young man's message directed at Netanyahu," al-Hayya said.

The U.S., Qatar and Egypt have spent months trying to broker another cease-fire and hostage release, but the talks appear to have stalled. Hamas has said it will not release the remaining hostages unless Israel ends the war, which has killed over 34,000 Palestinians, according to local officials.

Netanyahu has rejected those demands, and says Israel remains committed to destroying Hamas and bringing all the hostages home. He has come under mounting criticism in Israel, where some say it will be impossible to do both.

How US changes to 'noncompete' agreements and overtime pay could affect workers

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ and MAE ANDERSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For millions of American workers, the federal government took two actions this week that could bestow potentially far-reaching benefits.

In one move, the Federal Trade Commission voted to ban noncompete agreements, which bar millions of workers from leaving their employers to join a competitor or start a rival business for a specific period of time. The FTC's move, which is already being challenged in court, would mean that such employees could apply for jobs they weren't previously eligible to seek.

In a second move, the Biden administration finalized a rule that will make millions more salaried workers eligible for overtime pay. The rule significantly raises the salary level that workers could earn and still qualify for overtime.

The new rules don't take effect immediately. And they won't benefit everyone. So what exactly would these rules mean for America's workers?

WHAT IS A NONCOMPETE AGREEMENT?

Noncompete agreements, which employers have deployed with greater frequency in recent years, limit an employee's ability to jump ship for a rival company or start a competing business for a stated period of time. The idea is to prevent employees from taking a company's trade secrets, job leads or sales relationships to a direct competitor, who could immediately capitalize on them.

Many industries use noncompete agreements, often among their salespeople, said Paul Lopez, managing partner at Tripp Scott, a Florida law firm that has handled more than 100 cases involving noncompete clauses.

"They're the ones out there generating leads and sales," Lopez said. "The last thing you as a business will want is for that person to go over to your competition and do the same thing."

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WHO IS TYPICALLY SUBJECT TO THESE AGREEMENTS?

People may assume that noncompete agreements apply only to high-level executives in the technology or finance industries. But many lower-level workers are subject to the restrictions as well. The rules vary by state.

In Florida, one medical sales worker was barred by his employer from joining a competitor for 10 years — and once he left his job, was unemployed for more than five years, said Stefanie Camfield, assistant general counsel with Engage PEO, a Florida company that handles human resources for small and medium-sized businesses.

“He was able to find another sales position in a completely different industry,” Camfield said. “But the learning curve was there, so he wasn’t making the same amount of money.”

In another case, a company in the optical industry that had hired a sales associate was informed by his former employer that it intended to enforce a noncompete agreement. So the optical company terminated the employee, Camfield said.

“They thought they had a qualified sales associate hired and ready to get to work, and all of a sudden now they’re back to square one.”

WHY BAN NONCOMPETE AGREEMENTS?

Some view noncompete agreements as harmful and unfair to workers by limiting their mobility. Career opportunities are often more attractive outside an employee’s current workplace. And with restrictions on the type of work they can do for a competitor, it can be hard to shift into a more suitable or lucrative position.

Many hiring managers, after all, most value job candidates who already have a certain level of experience in the same industry.

“A noncompete would unilaterally ban someone from getting exactly the kind of job that it’s reasonable to want,” said Jennifer Tosti-Kharas, a professor of organizational behavior at Babson College in Massachusetts. “To cut people off from that is overly paternalistic. It’s using a really blunt instrument to limit people’s mobility, when in reality there are other legal mechanisms to prevent trade secrets being disclosed.”

HOW DO I KNOW IF I’M SUBJECT TO A NONCOMPETE?

People are sometimes surprised to learn that they’re bound by such an agreement. They might not even find out until after they’ve left for a new job, and their former employer intervenes and causes them to be fired.

“When you join a company, you’re so focused on the opportunity in front of you, you might not be thinking about what’s that next jump,” Tosti-Kharas said.

Experts suggest that employees consult their human resources department about any noncompete agreements that might exist. If a workplace doesn’t have an HR department, an employee should ask a lawyer for the company.

ARE TRADE SECRETS NOW LIKELY TO BE SPILLED?

There are still laws on the books that protect companies’ trade secrets. The FTC decision doesn’t change that.

And the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has already filed a lawsuit against the Federal Trade Commission, calling its decision a dangerous precedent for government micromanagement of business. Lawsuits could delay any implementation of the FTC’s new rule, potentially for years.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEW OVERTIME RULES?

Starting July 1, employers of all sizes will be required pay overtime — time and a half salary after 40 hours a week — to salaried workers who make less than \$43,888 a year in certain executive, administrative and professional roles. That cap will then rise to \$58,656 by the start of 2025. Previously, the cap was \$35,568.

WHO QUALIFIES?

The Labor Department estimates that 4 million salaried workers who weren’t previously eligible will qualify. Some occupations, though, including teachers, doctors and lawyers are not eligible for overtime pay and thus are not affected by the change. And some states, like California and New York, already have salary thresholds that exceed the federal level.

WHAT'S THE REACTION SO FAR?

Predictably, groups that represent companies have lined up against the new rule. Conversely, worker groups are applauding it as a necessary and long-overdue change.

The National Retail Federation argued that the new rules "curtail retailers' ability to offer the most flexible, generous and tailored benefits packages to lower-level exempt employees across the industry."

It also asserted that the new rules don't give employers adequate time to make the changes needed. And it complained that the inclusion of automatic increases "exceeds the Department's legal authority and oversteps longstanding Fair Labor Standards Act and Administrative Procedure Act principles."

On the social media site X, the AFL-CIO labor organization said the rules will "restore and extend overtime protections for hard-working Americans."

WILL THE CHANGES BE CHALLENGED IN COURT?

Almost certainly so. A 2016 effort by the Obama administration was scuttled in court just days before it was set to take effect. Because the new overtime rules won't take effect until July 1, groups have time to study the ruling before mounting a challenge.

"I would expect there will be some legal challenges," said Ted Hollis, a partner at the law firm Quarles & Brady. "When the Obama administration published its proposed rule in 2016, that was almost immediately challenged in court."

HOW SHOULD BUSINESSES PREPARE FOR THIS?

Companies of all sizes will have to reclassify workers who will now qualify for overtime pay — and make sure they track hours and pay them properly.

Another option is to raise employees' salaries so they would remain exempt from overtime. But employers should keep in mind that two more increases are coming under the new timetable.

They'll also have to determine how they will budget for the extra pay for overtime. Small businesses will have the toughest time.

"Some are going to have to cut workers," Hollis said. "Others will have to cut hours from existing workers."

"Some are going to have to raise prices, and some probably won't be able to figure out a way to make it economically work and wind up having to shut down, unfortunately."

Another ex-State Department official alleges Israeli military gets 'special treatment' on abuses

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former senior U.S. official who until recently helped oversee human-rights compliance by foreign militaries receiving American military assistance said Wednesday that he repeatedly observed Israel receiving "special treatment" from U.S. officials when it came to scrutiny of allegations of Israeli military abuses of Palestinian civilians.

The allegation comes as the Biden administration faces intense pressure over its ally's treatment of Palestinian civilians during Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. And matters because of who said it: Charles O. Blaha. Before leaving the post in August, he was a director of a State Department security and human rights office closely involved in helping ensure that foreign militaries receiving American military aid follow U.S. and international humanitarian and human rights laws.

Blaha said his departure from the State Department after decades of service was not related to the U.S.-Israeli security relationship. He is the second senior State official involved in that relationship to assert that when it comes to Israel, the U.S. is reluctant to enforce laws required of foreign militaries receiving American aid.

"In my experience, Israel gets special treatment that no other country gets," Blaha said. "And there is undue deference, in many cases, given" to Israeli officials' side of things when the U.S. asks questions about allegations of Israeli wrongdoing against Palestinians, he added.

He spoke to reporters at an event where he and other members of an unofficial, self-formed panel of former senior U.S. civilian and military officials released a report pointing to civilian deaths in specific air-

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strikes in Gaza. They said there was "compelling and credible" evidence that Israeli forces had acted illegally.

Blaaha's comments echoed those of another State Department official and panel member, Josh Paul. Paul resigned as a director overseeing arms transfers to other countries' militaries in October in protest of the U.S. rushing arms to Israel amid its war in Gaza.

Asked about the allegations from the two, a State Department spokesman, Vedant Patel, said "there is no double standard, and there is no special treatment."

Israeli officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Israel consistently says it follows all laws in its use of U.S. military aid, investigates allegations against its security forces and holds offenders accountable.

Israel historically is the United States' biggest recipient of military aid, and Biden on Wednesday signed legislation for an additional \$26 billion in wartime assistance. But Biden has come under growing pressure over that support as Palestinian deaths mount.

The latest Israel-Hamas war began on Oct. 7, when Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two militant groups backed by Iran, carried out a cross-border attack that killed 1,200 people in Israel. Israel responded with an offensive in Gaza that has caused widespread devastation and killed more than 34,000 people, according to local health officials.

In coming days, the administration says it will announce its official findings from reviews it did into allegations of especially serious human rights abuses by specific Israeli military units. Those units would be barred from receiving U.S. military aid if the U.S. review confirms those allegations.

Separately, the Biden administration also is expected to disclose by May 8 whether it has verified assurances from Israel that the country is not using U.S. military aid in a way that violates international or human rights law. Both Israel's written assurance and the U.S. verification were mandated by a new presidential national security memo that Biden issued in February.

The February agreement was negotiated between the Biden administration and members of his own Democratic Party, who had been pushing for the U.S. to begin conditioning military aid to Israel on improving treatment of Palestinian civilians.

Panel members released their report Wednesday to urge the U.S. to scrutinize specific attacks in Gaza that the former officials argued should lead to a conclusion that Israel was wrong when it confirmed it was complying with the laws. If that determination is made, the U.S. could then suspend military aid.

Wednesday's unofficial report points to 17 specific strikes on apartments, refugee camps, private homes, journalists and aid workers for which the former U.S. officials and independent experts allege there's no evidence of the kind of military target present to justify the high civilian death tolls.

They include an Oct. 31 airstrike on a Gaza apartment building that killed 106 civilians, including 54 children. Israeli officials offered no reason for the strike, and a Human Rights Watch probe found no evidence of a military target there, the officials said. Israel has said in many of the instances that it is investigating.

Supreme Court appears skeptical that state abortion bans conflict with federal health care law

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Conservative Supreme Court justices appeared skeptical Wednesday that state abortion bans enacted after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* violate federal health care law, though some also questioned the effects on emergency care for pregnant patients.

The case marks the first time the Supreme Court has considered the implications of a state ban since overturning the nationwide right to abortion. It comes from Idaho, which is among 14 states that now ban abortion at all stages of pregnancy with very limited exceptions.

The high court has already allowed the state ban to go into effect, even in medical emergencies, and it was unclear whether members of the conservative majority were swayed by the Biden administration's argument that federal law overrides the state in rare emergency cases where a pregnant patient's health is at serious risk.

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The closely watched case tests how open the court is to carving out limited exceptions to state abortion bans. Their ruling, expected by late June, will also affect a similar case in Texas and could have wide implications amid a spike in complaints that pregnant women have been turned away from emergency rooms care since Roe was overturned.

The Biden administration says abortion care must be allowed in those cases under a law that requires hospitals accepting Medicare to provide emergency care regardless of patients' ability to pay.

Justice Samuel Alito, who wrote the decision overturning Roe v. Wade, was doubtful. "How can you impose restrictions on what Idaho can criminalize, simply because hospitals in Idaho have chosen to participate in Medicare?" Alito said.

Idaho contends its ban does have exceptions for life-saving abortions, and the administration wants to wrongly expand the times when it's allowed to turn hospitals into "abortion enclaves."

But liberal justices detailed cases of pregnant women hemorrhaging or having to undergo hysterectomies after abortion care was denied or delayed in states with bans.

"Within these rare cases, there's a significant number where the woman's life is not in peril, but she's going to lose her reproductive organs. She's going to lose the ability to have children in the future unless an abortion takes place," said Justice Elena Kagan.

Conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett, meanwhile, said she was "kind of shocked" that an attorney for Idaho appeared to hedge when asked whether the state would allow abortions in cases like those. Attorney Joshua N. Turner responded that doctors can use their "good faith" medical judgment under Idaho's life-saving exception, but Barrett continued to press: "What if the prosecutor thinks differently?"

Turner acknowledged that a doctor could face a criminal case in that situation. Performing an abortion outside of limited exceptions in Idaho is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison.

Most Republican-controlled states have started enforcing new bans or restrictions since Roe was overturned, and Turner said those laws all have narrower exceptions than the federal law.

"This isn't going to end with Idaho. This question is going to come up in state after state," he said.

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 terminations within the bounds of state law.

Abortion opponents say doctors have mishandled maternal emergency cases, and argue 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 audience was sparse inside the court, with several benches empty or sparingly used. But outside, dueling protesters gathered with signs such as "Abortion saves lives," from one side of the crowd and "Emergency rooms are not abortion clinics" from abortion opponents.

Biden says the US is rushing weaponry to Ukraine as he signs a \$95 billion war aid measure into law

By AAMER MADHANI and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Wednesday that he was immediately rushing badly needed weaponry to Ukraine as he signed into law a \$95 billion war aid measure that also included assistance for Israel, Taiwan and other global hot spots.

The announcement marked an end to the long, painful battle with Republicans in Congress over urgently

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needed assistance for Ukraine, with Biden promising that U.S. weapons shipment would begin making the way into Ukraine "in the next few hours."

"We rose to the moment, we came together, and we got it done," Biden said at a White House event to announce the bill signing. "Now we need to move fast, and we are."

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

Biden immediately approved sending Ukraine \$1 billion in military assistance, the first installment from about \$61 billion allocated for Ukraine. The package includes 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.

Meanwhile, Ukraine for the first time has begun using long-range ballistic missiles provided secretly by the United States, bombing a Russian military airfield in Crimea last week and Russian forces in another occupied area overnight, American officials confirmed Wednesday. The U.S. is providing more of the Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, in the new military package, according to one official who was not authorized to comment and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

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

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan cautioned that even as new U.S. aid flows into Ukraine, it's possible that Russia will continue to make tactical gains in the weeks ahead.

"The fact is that it's going to take some time for us to dig out of the hole that was created by six months of delay," he said.

Tucked into the measure is a provision that gives TikTok's Beijing-based parent company, ByteDance, nine months to sell it or face a nationwide prohibition in the United States. The administration and a bipartisan group of lawmakers have called the social media site a growing national security concern, which ByteDance denies.

The bill includes about \$26 billion in aid for Israel and about \$1 billion in humanitarian relief for Palestinians in Gaza as the Israel-Hamas war continues. Biden said Israel must ensure the humanitarian aid for Palestinians in bill reaches the Hamas-controlled territory "without delay."

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., delayed the 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.

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

Many European leaders have long been nervous that a second Trump term would mean decreased U.S. support for Ukraine and NATO. 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." But in reality, the White House maneuvering to win additional funding for Ukraine started months earlier.

Biden, the day after returning from a trip to Tel Aviv following Hamas militants' Oct. 7 attack on Israel, used a prime-time address to make his pitch for the funding.

At the time, the House was in chaos because the Republican majority had been unable to select a speaker to replace Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., who had been ousted weeks earlier at the urging of restive legislators on the right.

Far-right Republicans have 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.

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 monthslong, 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. On explicit orders from Biden, White House officials also avoided directly attacking Johnson over the stalled aid.

Biden praised Johnson and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., saying in the end they “stepped up and did the right thing.”

“History will remember this moment,” he said.

At frustrating moments during the negotiations, Biden urged his aides to “just keep talking, keep working,” according to a senior administration official, who insisted on 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 would brainstorm possible ways to better make the case about Ukraine’s dire situation in the absence of aid.

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.

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.

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 to Kyiv additional weaponry 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.

“I think Ukrainian success is not guaranteed,” Bowman said, “but Russian success is if we stop supporting Ukraine.”

Biden lamented that the package did not include money to bolster U.S. border security. The White House had proposed including in the package provisions it said would have helped stem the tide of migrants and asylum seekers coming to the U.S. Republicans, however, rejected the proposal at the urging of Trump, who did not want to give Biden the win on an issue that’s been an albatross for the Democratic administration.

Ukraine uses long-range missiles secretly provided by US to hit Russian-held areas, officials say

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ukraine for the first time has begun using long-range ballistic missiles provided secretly by the United States, bombing a Russian military airfield in Crimea last week and Russian forces in another occupied area overnight, American officials said Wednesday.

Long sought by Ukrainian leaders, the new missiles give Ukraine nearly double the striking distance — up to 300 kilometers (190 miles) — that it had with the mid-range version of the weapon that it received from the U.S. last October.

“We’ve already sent some, we will send more now that we have additional authority and money,” White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said. The additional ATACMS were included in a new military aid package signed by President Joe Biden on Wednesday.

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Biden approved delivery of the long-range Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, in February, and then in March the U.S. included a "significant" number of them in a \$300 million aid package announced, officials said.

U.S. officials would not provide the exact number of missiles given last month or in the latest aid package, which totals about \$1 billion.

Ukraine has been forced to ration its weapons and is facing increasing Russian attacks. Ukraine had been begging for the long-range system because the missiles provide a critical ability to strike Russian targets that are farther away, allowing Ukrainian forces to stay safely out of range.

Information about the delivery was kept so quiet that lawmakers and others in recent days have been demanding that the U.S. send the weapons — not knowing they were already in Ukraine.

For months, the U.S. resisted sending Ukraine the long-range missiles out of concern that Kyiv could use them to hit deep into Russian territory, enraging Moscow and escalating the conflict. That was a key reason the administration sent the mid-range version, with a range of about 160 kilometers (roughly 100 miles), in October instead.

Adm. Christopher Grady, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Wednesday that the White House and military planners looked carefully at the risks of providing long-range fires to Ukraine and determined that the time was right to provide them now.

He told The Associated Press in an interview that long-range weapons will help Ukraine take out Russian logistics nodes and troop concentrations that are not on the front lines. Grady declined to identify what specific weapons were being provided but said they will be "very disruptive if used properly, and I'm confident they will be."

Like many of the other sophisticated weapons systems provided to Ukraine, the administration weighed whether their use would risk further escalating the conflict. The administration is continuing to make clear that the weapons cannot be used to hit targets inside Russia. At the State Department, spokesman Vedant Patel said Wednesday that Biden directed his national security team to send the ATACMS specifying that they be used inside Ukrainian sovereign territory.

"I think the time is right, and the boss (Biden) made the decision the time is right to provide these based on where the fight is right now," Grady said Wednesday. "I think it was a very well considered decision, and we really wrung it out — but again, any time you introduce a new system, any change — into a battlefield, you have to think through the escalatory nature of it."

Ukrainian officials haven't publicly acknowledged the receipt or use of long-range ATACMS. But in thanking Congress for passing the new aid bill Tuesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy noted on the social platform X that "Ukraine's long-range capabilities, artillery and air defense are extremely important tools for the quick restoration of a just peace."

One U.S. official said the Biden administration warned Russia last year that if Moscow acquired and used long-range ballistic missiles in Ukraine, Washington would provide the same capability to Kyiv. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to talk about internal discussions.

Russia got some of those weapons from North Korea and has used them on the battlefield in Ukraine, said the official, prompting the Biden administration to greenlight the new long-range missiles.

The U.S. had refused to confirm that the long-range missiles were given to Ukraine until they were actually used on the battlefield and Kyiv leaders approved the public release. One official said the weapons were used early last week to strike the airfield in Dzhankoi, a city in Crimea, a peninsula that Russia seized from Ukraine in 2014. They were used again overnight east of the occupied city of Berdyansk.

Videos on social media last week showed the explosions at the military airfield, but officials at the time would not confirm it was the ATACMS.

"These strikes proved — once again — that Ukraine can notch battlefield victories when given the right tools," said Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee who has long pressed the administration to send the long-range weapons.

Ukraine's first use of the weapon came as political gridlock in Congress had delayed approval of a \$95 billion foreign aid package for months, including funding for Ukraine, Israel and other allies. Facing acute

shortages of artillery and air defense systems, Ukraine has been rationing its munitions as U.S. funding was delayed.

With the war now in its third year, Russia used the delay in U.S. weapons deliveries and its own edge in firepower and personnel to step up attacks across eastern Ukraine. It has increasingly used satellite-guided gliding bombs — dropped from planes from a safe distance — to pummel Ukrainian forces beset by a shortage of troops and ammunition.

The mid-range missiles provided last year, and some of the long-range ones sent more recently, carry cluster munitions that open in the air when fired, releasing hundreds of bomblets rather than a single warhead. Others sent recently have a single warhead.

One critical factor in the February decision to send the weapons was the U.S. Army's ability to begin replacing the older ATACMS. The Army is now buying the Precision Strike Missile, so is more comfortable taking ATACMS off the shelves to provide to Ukraine, the official said.

At the White House, Sullivan said the administration "has worked relentlessly to address those concerns" and stocks are now coming off the production line and the ATACMS can be sent without hurting U.S. military readiness.

About 1 in 4 US adults 50 and older who aren't yet retired expect to never retire, AARP study finds

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — About one-quarter of U.S. adults age 50 and older who are not yet retired say they expect to never retire and 70% are concerned about prices rising faster than their income, an AARP survey finds.

About 1 in 4 have no retirement savings, according to research released Wednesday by the organization that shows how a graying America is worrying more and more about how to make ends meet even as economists and policymakers say the U.S. economy has all but achieved a soft landing after two years of record inflation.

Everyday expenses and housing costs, including rent and mortgage payments, are the biggest reasons why people are unable to save for retirement.

The data will matter this election year as Democratic President Joe Biden and Republican rival Donald Trump are trying to win support from older Americans, who traditionally turn out in high numbers, with their policy proposals.

The AARP's study, based on interviews completed with more than 8,000 people in coordination with the NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, finds that one-third of older adults with credit card debt carry a balance of more than \$10,000 and 12% have a balance of \$20,000 or more. Additionally, 37% are worried about meeting basic living costs such as food and housing.

"Far too many people lack access to retirement savings options and this, coupled with higher prices, is making it increasingly hard for people to choose when to retire," said Indira Venkateswaran, AARP's senior vice president of research. "Everyday expenses continue to be the top barrier to saving more for retirement, and some older Americans say that they never expect to retire."

The share of people 50 and older who say they do not expect to retire has remained steady. It was 23% in January 2022 and 24% that July, according to the study, which is conducted twice a year.

"We are seeing an expansion of older workers staying in the workforce," said David John, senior strategic policy advisor at the AARP Public Policy Institute. He said this is in part because older workers "don't have sufficient retirement savings. It's a problem and its likely to continue as we go forward."

Based on the 2022 congressional elections, census data released Tuesday shows that voters 65 and older made up 30.4% of all voters, while Gen Z and millennials accounted for 11.7%.

Biden has tried to court older voters by regularly promoting a \$35 price cap on insulin for people on Medicare. He trumpets Medicare's powers to negotiate directly with drugmakers on the cost of prescrip-

tion medications.

Trump, in an interview with CNBC in March, indicated he would be open to cuts to Social Security and Medicare. The former president said "there is a lot you can do in terms of entitlements, in terms of cutting."

Karoline Leavitt, press secretary for Trump's campaign, said in a statement to The Associated Press on Tuesday that Trump "will continue to strongly protect Social Security and Medicare in his second term."

In the AARP survey, 33% of respondents 50 and older believe their finances will be better in a year.

A looming issue that will affect Americans' ability to retire is the financial health of Social Security and Medicare.

The latest annual report from the program's trustees says the financial safety nets for millions of older Americans will run short of money to pay full benefits within the next decade.

Medicare, the government-sponsored health insurance that covers 65 million older and disabled people, will be unable to pay full benefits for inpatient hospital visits and nursing home stays by 2031, the report forecast. And just two years later, Social Security will not have enough cash on hand to pay out full benefits to its 66 million retirees.

An AP-NORC poll from March 2023 found that most U.S. adults are opposed to proposals that would cut into Medicare or Social Security benefits, and a majority support raising taxes on the nation's highest earners to keep Medicare running as is.

To pass Ukraine aid, 'Reagan Republican' leaders in Congress navigated a party transformed by Trump

By STEPHEN GROVES and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Mike Johnson, the necessity of providing Ukraine with weapons and other aid as it fends off Russia's invasion is rooted in their earliest and most formative political memories.

McConnell, 82, tells the story of his father's letters from Eastern Europe in 1945, at the end of World War II, when the foot soldier observed that the Russians were "going to be a big problem" before the communist takeover to come. Johnson, 30 years younger, came of age as the Cold War was ending.

As both men pushed their party this week to support a \$95 billion aid package that sends support to Ukraine, as well as Israel, Taiwan and humanitarian missions, they labeled themselves "Reagan Republicans" and described the fight against Russian President Vladimir Putin in terms of U.S. strength and leadership. But the all-out effort to get the legislation through Congress left both of them grappling with an entirely new Republican Party shaped by former President Donald Trump.

While McConnell, R-Ky., and Johnson, R-La., took different approaches to handling Trump, the presumptive White House nominee in 2024, the struggle highlighted the fundamental battle within the GOP: Will conservatives continue their march toward Trump's "America First" doctrine on foreign affairs or will they find the value in standing with America's allies? And is the GOP still the party of Ronald Reagan?

"I think we're having an internal debate about that," McConnell said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I'm a Reagan guy and I think today — at least on this episode — we turned the tables on the isolationists."

Still, he acknowledged, "that doesn't mean they're going to go away forever."

McConnell, in the twilight of his 18-year tenure as Republican leader, lauded a momentary victory Tuesday as a healthy showing of 31 Republicans voted for the foreign aid; that was nine more than had supported it in February. He said that was a trend in the right direction.

McConnell, who has been in the Senate since 1985, said passing the legislation was "one of the most important things I've ever dealt with where I had an impact."

But it wasn't without cost.

He said last month he would step away from his job as leader next year after internal clashes over the money for Ukraine and the direction of the party.

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For Johnson, just six months into his job as speaker, the political crosscurrents are even more difficult. He is clinging to his leadership post as right-wing Republicans threaten to oust him for putting the aid to Ukraine to a vote. While McConnell has embraced American leadership abroad his entire career, Johnson only recently gave complete support to the package.

Johnson has been careful not to portray passage as a triumph when a majority of his own House Republicans opposed the bill. He skipped a celebratory news conference afterward, describing it as "not a perfect piece of legislation" in brief remarks.

But he also borrowed terms popularized by Reagan, saying aggression from Russia, China and Iran "threatens the free world and it demands American leadership."

"If we turn our backs right now, the consequences could be devastating," he said.

Hard-line conservatives, including some who are threatening a snap vote on his leadership, are irate, saying the aid was vastly out of line with what Republican voters want. They condemned both Johnson and McConnell for supporting it.

"House Republican leadership sold out Americans and passed a bill that sends \$95 billion to other countries," said Republican Sen. Tommy Tuberville of Alabama, who opposed the bill. He said the legislation "undermines America's interests abroad and paves our nation's path to bankruptcy."

Johnson has been lauded by much of Washington for doing what he called "the right thing" at a perilous moment for himself and the world.

"He is fundamentally an honorable person," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., who brokered the negotiations and spent hours on the phone and in meetings with Johnson, McConnell and the White House.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said Johnson and McConnell "both showed great resolve and backbone and true leadership at a time it was desperately needed."

When McConnell began negotiations over President Joe Biden's initial aid request last year, he quickly set the terms for a deal. He and Schumer agreed to pair any aid for Ukraine with help for Israel, Schumer said, and McConnell demanded policy changes at the U.S. border with Mexico.

On McConnell's mind, he said, was that Trump was "unenthusiastic" about providing more aid to Kyiv. Yet McConnell, whose office displays a portrait of every Republican president since Reagan with the exception of Trump, had a virtually nonexistent relationship with the man he often refers to not by name, but simply as "the former president."

Still, Trump would prove to hold powerful sway. When a deal on border security neared completion after months of work, Trump eviscerated the proposal as insufficient and a "gift" to Biden's reelection. Conservatives, including Johnson, rejected it out of hand.

With the border deal dead, McConnell pushed ahead with Schumer on the foreign aid, with the border policies stripped out, solidifying their unusual alliance. The Senate leaders met weekly throughout the negotiation.

"We disagreed on a whole lot, but we really stuck together," Schumer said.

"We just persisted. We could not give up on this."

Meanwhile, a small group of GOP senators began working on an idea they thought could give Johnson some political wiggle room. Sens. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Kevin Cramer of North Dakota and Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma took an idea that Trump had raised — structuring the aid to Ukraine as a loan — and tried to make it reality.

Through a series of phone calls with Trump, several House members, as well as the speaker, they worked to structure roughly \$9 billion in economic aid for Ukraine as forgivable loans — just as it was in the final package.

"Our approach this time was to make sure that the politics were set, meaning that President Trump is on board," Mullin said.

The conversations culminated in Johnson making a quick jaunt to Florida, where he stood side by side with Trump at his Florida club just days before moving ahead with the Ukraine legislation in the House.

It was all enough, with Democratic help, to get the bill across the finish line. The legislation, which Biden signed into law on Wednesday, included some revisions from the Senate bill, including the loan structure and a provision to seize frozen Russian central bank assets to rebuild Ukraine. Nine GOP senators who had opposed the first version of the bill swung to "yes" largely because of the changes Johnson had made.

The result was a strong showing for the foreign aid in the Senate, even though the decision could prove costly for Johnson.

What comes next on Ukraine is anyone's guess.

While the \$61 billion for Ukraine in the package is expected to help the country withstand Moscow's offensive this year, more assistance will surely be needed. Republicans, exhausted after a grueling fight, largely shrugged off questions about the future.

"This one wasn't easy," Mullin said.

Rush hour chaos in London as 5 military horses run amok after getting spooked during exercise

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Five military horses spooked by noise from a building site bolted during routine exercises on Wednesday near Buckingham Palace, threw off four riders and caused chaos as they galloped loose through central London streets and collided with vehicles during the busy morning rush hour.

The commotion erupted when the horses from the Household Cavalry, which were conducting an extended exercise for an upcoming military parade, presumably became alarmed by the sound of concrete falling off a moving walkway at a construction site in Belgravia, a swanky neighborhood just to the west of the palace.

Five of the seven horses ran off and four soldiers were thrown off. Three of them were hospitalized with injuries. None of them were deemed to be life-threatening.

The horses — minus their riders — then ran through main roads in central London, hitting vehicles and stunning commuters as they headed to work. The horses were all captured shortly after and are back at the barracks in Hyde Park undergoing medical tests.

Witnesses saw one of the loose animals crashing into a taxi waiting outside the Clermont Hotel nearby, shattering windows. Another of the animals crashed into a tour bus, smashing the windshield.

Pictures and videos shared widely across social media show two of the horses — one white, one black — running at speed down Aldwych, in between London's historic financial center and the busy West End theater district.

The white horse's face and legs were soaked in blood. A British Army spokesperson was not able to confirm what caused the injury.

Megan Morra, who was on her way to work, told the BBC that she saw the striking image of the white horse with a head injury.

"There was a lot of blood," she said. "I was a bit distressed to be honest, looking at the poor horse."

The horses are from the Household Cavalry, the ceremonial guard of the monarch and a feature of state functions in London.

The extent of the injuries the horses suffered were not immediately known.

In a video statement on X, formerly Twitter, Matt Woodward, Commanding Officer of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, said around 150 horses are exercised every morning in parks and on the roads to keep them fit and get them used to the surroundings and the noise so they are less easily panicked during parades.

"This morning, however, a small group of horses were spooked by some construction works on a quiet side road in Belgravia where building materials were dropped from height right next to them," he said.

"Thankfully, considering the frequency of exercise and numbers of horses involved, this type of incident is extremely rare," Woodward added. He thanked the emergency responders and members of the public

for reacting quickly.

"This enabled swift treatment of our soldiers and helped bring our injured horses to safety," he added. The London Ambulance Service said it treated four people across three separate incidents in the space of 10 minutes after the incident erupted around 8:30 a.m.

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 Medicine.

"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."

The summer after Barbenheimer and the strikes, Hollywood charts a new course

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Barbenheimer" is a hard act to follow.

The summer of 2023 brought a new enthusiasm for moviegoing, with the fortuitous counterprogramming of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer," and surprise hits like "Sound of Freedom," helping the season's box office crack \$4 billion for the first time since 2019. But before the industry could take a victory lap, there was another crisis looming with the dual Hollywood strikes, which shuttered most productions for months.

In the fallout, theaters lost big titles like "Mission: Impossible 8" and "Captain America: Brave New World" to 2025. But they gained a gem in Jeff Nichols' "The Bikeriders" (June 21), about a 1960s Midwestern motorcycle club, as studios moved films around on the summer chessboard. "Deadpool & Wolverine," once set to kick off the summer season on May 3 like many Marvel movies before it, is now opening July 26, patiently waiting to dominate the summer charts.

The kickoff weekend instead belongs to an original film about a different kind of superhero: The stunt performer. "The Fall Guy," starring Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt, is an earnest crowd-pleaser that could jumpstart a season that feels like a throwback, with full-throttle spectacle ("Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga," "Twisters"), comedies ("Babes"), IMAX wonder ("The Blue Angels") and even a Kevin Costner Western.

Producer Jerry Bruckheimer has seen the highs and lows of summer movies over the decades. This season, he has three very different offerings on the calendar, two are fourth installments in popular franchises — "Beverly Hills Cop" (July 3, Netflix) and "Bad Boys" (June 7, theaters) — and one was planned for streaming but tested so well that it's getting a theatrical rollout ("Young Woman and the Sea," May 31).

"People just want to be entertained," Bruckheimer said. "It really comes down to us to make the right movies that they want to go see."

"The Bikeriders" could be one of those. It already has stellar reviews from last fall's Telluride Film Festival hailing star turns for Austin Butler and Jodie Comer and was originally planned for December but pushed when it became clear that the strikes weren't going to resolve in time for a press tour.

"It was kind of like walking on frozen glass for three months," Nichols said. "I was touring around doing press and trying to build this energy on my own. Let me tell you, it's not the same as Austin Butler."

Later in June, after a splashy Cannes debut, Kevin Costner will begin rolling out his two-part Western epic "Horizon: An American Saga," set during the Civil War. And as always there are a slew of Sundance breakouts peppered throughout the summer, from "I Saw the TV Glow" and "Didi" to "Thelma" and "Good One."

Family films also go into hyperdrive in the summer, capitalizing on long days out of school. This year has plenty, like "The Garfield Movie" and "Despicable Me 4." But perhaps none has more anticipation behind it than "Inside Out 2" (June 14, theaters), which meets up with Riley as she enters her teenage years as a new group of emotions crash Joy's party, including Anxiety, Envy, Ennui and Embarrassment.

"That age gives us everything we need and love for a Pixar film," director Kelsey Mann said.

John Krasinski is also delving into the inner world of children with his ambitious live-action hybrid "IF" (May 17, theaters) about the imaginary friends that get left behind and two humans (Ryan Reynolds and Cailey Fleming) who can still see them.

Audiences seeking the adrenaline rush of horrors and thrillers have an array of options, including "MaXXXine," the conclusion to Ti West's accidental Mia Goth trilogy ("X" and "Pearl") that debuts around the fourth of July.

Goth's aspiring actress has made her way to Hollywood where a killer is stalking Hollywood starlets

around the time of the home video boom of the 1980s. "We recreated the sleazy side of Hollywood in a hopefully charming way," West said. "It's definitely a pretty wild night at the movies."

On June 26, audiences can also delve into the beginnings of "A Quiet Place" with a prequel set on "Day One" starring Lupita Nyong'o and "Stranger Things" Joseph Quinn. Later, Fede Alvarez brings his horror acumen to "Alien: Romulus" (Aug. 16), set between the first two.

M. Night Shyamalan is back as well with a thriller set at a pop concert ("Trap," Aug. 9) and his daughter, Ishana Night Shyamalan, makes her directorial debut with the spooky, Ireland-set "The Watchers" (June 14) with Dakota Fanning.

"It's very suspenseful and unexpected," Ishana said. "And it's very much built for the experience of being in a theater."

The streamers have movie stars and spectacle, too, with the festival favorite "Hit Man," the Anne Hathaway romance "The Idea of You," Jerry Seinfeld's starry pop-tart movie "Unfrosted" and a Mark Wahlberg/Halle Berry action comedy "The Union."

There are even franchises, like "Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F," in which Eddie Murphy's Axel Foley reunites with his estranged daughter (Taylor Paige). It also sees the return of Judge Reinhold, John Ashton, Paul Reiser and Bronson Pinchot and adds Kevin Bacon and Joseph Gordon-Levitt.

"We raised our hand to make sure we got the franchise right and kept the integrity and fun of the original," Bruckheimer said.

She was too sick for a traditional transplant. So she received a pig kidney and a heart pump

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Doctors have transplanted a pig kidney into a New Jersey woman who was near death, part of a dramatic pair of surgeries that also stabilized her failing heart.

Lisa Pisano's combination of heart and kidney failure left her too sick to qualify for a traditional transplant, and out of options. Then doctors at NYU Langone Health devised a novel one-two punch: Implant a mechanical pump to keep her heart beating and days later transplant a kidney from a genetically modified pig.

Pisano is recovering well, the NYU team announced Wednesday. She's only the second patient ever to receive a pig kidney -- following a landmark transplant last month at Massachusetts General Hospital -- and the latest in a string of attempts to make animal-to-human transplantation a reality.

This week, the 54-year-old grasped a walker and took her first few steps.

"I was at the end of my rope," Pisano told The Associated Press. "I just took a chance. And you know, worst case scenario, if it didn't work for me, it might have worked for someone else and it could have helped the next person."

Dr. Robert Montgomery, director of NYU Langone Transplant Institute, recounted cheers in the operating room as the organ immediately started making urine.

"It's been transformative," Montgomery said of the experiment's early results.

But "we're not off the hook yet," cautioned Dr. Nader Moazami, the NYU cardiac surgeon who implanted the heart pump.

"With this surgery I get to see my wife smile again," Pisano's husband Todd said Wednesday.

Other transplant experts are closely watching how the patient fares.

"I have to congratulate them," said Dr. Tatsuo Kawai of Mass General, who noted that his own pig kidney patient was healthier overall going into his operation than NYU's patient. "When the heart function is bad, it's really difficult to do a kidney transplant."

THE PIG ORGAN QUEST

More than 100,000 people are on the U.S. transplant waiting list, most who need a kidney, and thousands die waiting. In hopes of filling the shortage of donated organs, several biotech companies are genetically modifying pigs so their organs are more humanlike, less likely to be destroyed by people's immune system.

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NYU and other research teams have temporarily transplanted pig kidneys and hearts into brain-dead bodies, with promising results. Then the University of Maryland transplanted pig hearts into two men who were out of other options, and both died within months.

Mass General's pig kidney transplant last month raised new hopes. Kawai said Richard "Rick" Slayman experienced an early rejection scare but bounced back enough to go home earlier this month and still is faring well five weeks post-transplant. A recent biopsy showed no further problems.

A COMPLEX CASE AT NYU

Pisano is the first woman to receive a pig organ — and unlike with prior xenotransplant experiments, both her heart and kidneys had failed. She went into cardiac arrest and had to be resuscitated before the experimental surgeries. She'd gotten too weak to even play with her grandchildren. "I was miserable," the Cookstown, New Jersey, woman said.

A failed heart made her ineligible for a traditional kidney transplant. But while on dialysis, she didn't qualify for a heart pump, called a left ventricular assist device or LVAD, either.

"It's like being in a maze and you can't find a way out," Montgomery explained — until the surgeons decided to pair a heart pump with a pig kidney.

TWO SURGERIES IN EIGHT DAYS

With emergency permission from the Food and Drug Administration, Montgomery chose an organ from a pig genetically engineered by United Therapeutics Corp. so its cells don't produce a particular sugar that's foreign to the human body and triggers immediate organ rejection.

Plus a tweak: The donor pig's thymus gland, which trains the immune system, was attached to the donated kidney in hopes that it would help Pisano's body tolerate the new organ.

Surgeons implanted the LVAD to power Pisano's heart on April 4, and transplanted the pig kidney on April 12. There's no way to predict her long-term outcome but she's shown no sign of organ rejection so far, Montgomery said. And in adjusting the LVAD to work with her new kidney, Moazami said doctors already have learned lessons that could help future care of heart-and-kidney patients.

Special "compassionate use" experiments teach doctors a lot but it will take rigorous studies to prove if xenotransplants really work. What happens with Pisano and Mass General's kidney recipient will undoubtedly influence FDA's decision to allow such trials. United Therapeutics said it hopes to begin one next year.

New Jersey is motivating telecommuters to appeal their New York tax bills. Connecticut may be next

By SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Telecommuting, a pandemic-era novelty that has become a permanent alternative for many people, has some Connecticut and New Jersey employees of New York-based companies questioning why they still have to pay personal income tax to the Empire State.

Their home states are wondering as well.

Fed up with losing out on hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue each year, New Jersey is now offering a state tax credit to residents who work from home and successfully appeal their New York tax assessment. Connecticut is considering a similar measure.

The Garden State's bounty — a rebate worth roughly half a person's refund of income taxes they paid to New York for the 2020-2023 period — has been claimed so far by one winning litigant since the state made the offer in July, according to the state's Division of Taxation. That taxpayer received a \$7,797.02 refund for their efforts. Officials hope that person's windfall will encourage others to follow suit.

Another New Jersey resident who is taking up the state's offer is Open Weaver Banks, a tax attorney who prefers working from home to braving an "awful" commute into the Big Apple. She's also filed one of a growing number of similar challenges.

"The process of doing the refund and the appeal isn't all that intimidating to me," said Banks, a tax partner at Hodgson Russ LLP. "I'm on New Jersey's team here. I would like to see more residents doing this. I think they have a really fair point."

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New York requires out-of-state commuters who work for New York-based companies to pay New York income taxes, even if they've stopped physically going in to the office most days a week, unless they can satisfy very strict requirements for what constitutes a bona fide home office.

A home office near a specialized track to test new cars, for example, might qualify if it couldn't be replicated in New York. But a worker with specialized scientific equipment set up in their home that could be duplicated over the border would still have to pay, according to a memorandum from the New York State Department of Taxation.

When the nature of work was upended in 2020, New York should have "softened" these requirements, Banks said. "And they didn't. They are just standing by and fighting the claims."

Both neighboring states have implemented "retaliatory" tax rules that affect New Yorkers who work remotely for Connecticut or New Jersey-based companies, but these workforces are far smaller and their overall tax payments don't make up the difference.

Out-of-state taxpayers paid New York nearly \$8.8 billion in 2021 in taxes, roughly 15% of the state's total income tax revenues, according to the Citizens Budget Commission in New York. Of that, \$4.3 billion came from New Jersey taxpayers and \$1.5 billion from Connecticut taxpayers.

It's unclear how much of that was earned at home. But out-of-state employees of New York-based companies who work remotely are increasingly appealing their tax bills, Amanda Hiller, the acting commissioner and general counsel for the New York Department of Taxation and Finance, told state legislators recently.

Hiller acknowledged that New York's decades-old policy, known as a "convenience of the employer rule," has created a financial burden for New Jersey and Connecticut, which provide tax credits to their residents for the income taxes they've paid New York so they are not double-taxed.

New Jersey's Division of Taxation said the state's long-term goal is to have New York's rule overturned entirely, something that will likely require a taxpayer's legal challenge to succeed before the U.S. Supreme Court. That could be a tall order: New Hampshire tried to sue Massachusetts for temporarily collecting income tax from roughly 80,000 of its residents who worked from home during the pandemic, and the Supreme Court rejected the complaint without comment.

Officials in New Jersey estimate it could reap as much as \$1.2 billion annually if residents working from home for New York companies are taxed at home. Connecticut could recoup about \$200 million, its officials say.

Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont has proposed an initiative similar to New Jersey's that needs final legislative approval. It's unclear, however, whether it can pass before the session ends May 8.

"We think it's an unconstitutional overreach by the state of New York," Jeffrey Beckham, secretary of Connecticut's state budget office, said recently. "We think our residents should be paying tax to us and they'd be paying at a lower rate."

Indeed, the top marginal state income tax rate, as of Jan. 1, for individuals in New York is 10.90%. Connecticut's top rate is 6.99% and New Jersey's is 10.75%, according to the Tax Foundation.

"An awful lot of people are hurt by these laws," said Edward Zelinsky, a Connecticut resident, tax law expert and professor at Yeshiva University's Cardozo School of Law in New York City. "While New York and other states like to pretend that these are wealthy people, the people who are most hurt by this rule are often people of modest income, middle income, people who can't afford lawyers."

Zelinsky has been trying, so far without success, to challenge New York's tax rule for about 20 years, including a pending case over the income he earned working from home while his school was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

A small number of states, including Arkansas, Delaware, Nebraska and Pennsylvania, have tax rules similar to New York's. New Jersey and Pennsylvania have a reciprocal income tax agreement.

Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff, who is in the unique position of being the former New Jersey state treasurer and a former New York commissioner of taxation and finance, believes eventually the right litigant will "get it before the right court to challenge it."

But former New Jersey state Sen. Steven Oroho, an accountant who commuted for nearly two decades into New York City and who pushed as a legislator to address the inequity, said he's skeptical of New

Jersey's commitment to the effort, which puts the financial onus of a potentially lengthy and expensive legal challenge on the individual taxpayer.

"New York is very, very aggressive and unfortunately, in my view," said Oroho. "New Jersey has been extremely passive."

What a TikTok ban in the US could mean for you

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."

SHOULD I BE WORRIED ABOUT USING TIKTOK?

Lawmakers from both parties — as well as law enforcement and intelligence officials — have long expressed concerns that Chinese authorities could force ByteDance to hand over data on the 170 million Americans who use TikTok. The worry stems from a set of Chinese national security laws that compel organizations to assist with intelligence gathering - which ByteDance would likely be subject to - and other

far-reaching ways the country's authoritarian government exercises control.

Data privacy experts say, though, that the Chinese government could easily get information on Americans in other ways, including through commercial data brokers that sell or rent personal information.

Lawmakers and some administration officials have also expressed concerns that China could - potentially - direct or influence ByteDance to suppress or boost TikTok content that are favorable to its interests. TikTok, for its part, has denied assertions that it could be used as a tool of the Chinese government. The company has also said it has never shared U.S. user data with Chinese authorities and won't do so if it's asked.

The summer after Barbenheimer and the strikes, Hollywood charts a new course

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

"Barbenheimer" is a hard act to follow. But as Hollywood enters another summer movie season, armed with fewer superheroes and a landscape vastly altered by the strikes, it's worth remembering the classic William Goldman quote about what works: "Nobody knows anything."

Four decades later, that still may be true. Yet one thing Hollywood has learned in releasing films through the pandemic and the strikes is how to pivot quickly.

The summer of 2023 brought a new enthusiasm for moviegoing, with the fortuitous counterprogramming of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer," and surprise hits like "Sound of Freedom," helping the season's box office crack \$4 billion for the first time since 2019. But before the industry could take a victory lap, there was another crisis looming with the dual Hollywood strikes, which shuttered most productions for months.

MOVIES FIND A WAY POST-STRIKE

In the fallout, theaters lost big summer titles like "Mission: Impossible 8," "Captain America: Brave New World" and "Thunderbolts" to 2025. But they gained a gem in Jeff Nichols' "The Bikeriders" (June 21), about a 1960s Midwestern motorcycle club, as studios moved films around on the summer chessboard. "Deadpool & Wolverine," once set to kick off the summer moviegoing season on May 3 like many Marvel movies before it, is now sitting happily on July 26, patiently waiting to dominate the summer charts.

"I do love being right there in the belly of summer," said director Shawn Levy. "That's a juicy moment."

The kickoff weekend instead belongs to an original film about a different kind of superhero. "The Fall Guy," starring Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt, is part romantic-comedy, part action-comedy, and all love letter to the stunt performers that make movies spectacular. It's an earnest crowd-pleaser that could jumpstart a season that feels, in some ways, like a throwback, with full-throttle spectacles ("Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga," "Twisters"), comedies ("Babes"), IMAX wonder ("The Blue Angels") and even a Kevin Costner Western.

Producer Jerry Bruckheimer has seen the highs and lows of summer movies over the decades, with blockbusters including "Top Gun: Maverick" and the "Pirates of the Caribbean" movies.

This season, he has three very different offerings on the calendar, two are fourth installments in popular franchises — "Beverly Hills Cop" (July 3, Netflix) and "Bad Boys" (June 7, theaters) — and one was planned for streaming but tested so well that it's getting a theatrical rollout ("Young Woman and the Sea," May 31).

"People just want to be entertained," Bruckheimer said. "It really comes down to us to make the right movies that they want to go see."

THE \$4 BILLION GOAL POST

A Hollywood summer lasts 123 days from the first Friday in May through Labor Day Monday in September. Pre-pandemic, \$4 billion was a normal summer intake and theaters could count on anywhere between 37 and 42 films to open on over 2,000 screens. The outlier was 2017, which had only 35 movies on over 2,000 screens and topped out at \$3.8 billion. It makes last summer's \$4 billion haul with 32 wide releases (45% of the \$9 billion domestic haul) even more impressive.

This summer should have 32 wide releases as well and over 40 movies opening in 500+ theaters. Notably only two of them are Marvel movies ("Deadpool" and Sony's "Kraven the Hunter") and are the only

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superhero movies on the calendar until the "Joker" sequel in the fall.

"People are going to see movies, not box office, and it looks like a really solid summer from a moviegoer's perspective," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore.

REVVING UP FOR ORIGINALS

"The Bikeriders" was one that planned for an awards season rollout, with a turbo boost from stellar reviews out of the Telluride Film Festival hailing star turns for Austin Butler and Jodie Comer. But as they inched closer to its release date it became clear that the strikes were not going to resolve in time for a press tour.

"It was kind of like walking on frozen glass for three months," Nichols said. "I was touring around doing press and trying to build this energy on my own. Let me tell you, it's not the same as Austin Butler."

Later in June, after a splashy Cannes debut, Kevin Costner will begin rolling out his two-part Western epic "Horizon: An American Saga," set during the Civil War. And as always there are a slew of Sundance breakouts peppered throughout the summer, from Jane Schoenbrun's "I Saw the TV Glow" and "Didi" to "Thelma" and "Good One."

FARE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Family films often go into hyperdrive in the summer, capitalizing on long days out of school. This year has plenty, like "The Garfield Movie" and "Despicable Me 4," re-releases of Studio Ghibli classics, and streaming options ("Thelma the Unicorn"). But perhaps none has more anticipation behind it than "Inside Out 2" (June 14, theaters), which meets up with Riley as she enters her teenage years as a new group of emotions crash Joy's party, including Anxiety, Envy, Ennui and Embarrassment.

"That age gives us everything we need and love for a Pixar film," director Kelsey Mann said. "It's full of drama, it has potential for a lot of heart, and I could also make it really funny."

John Krasinski is also delving into the inner world of children with his ambitious live-action hybrid "IF" (May 17, theaters) about the imaginary friends that get left behind and two humans (Ryan Reynolds and Cailey Fleming) who can still see them.

THE ALLURE OF HORROR

Audiences seeking the adrenaline rush of horrors and thrillers have plenty of choices, including "MaXXX-ine," the conclusion to Ti West's accidental Mia Goth trilogy ("X" and "Pearl") that debuts around the fourth of July.

Goth's aspiring actress has made her way to Hollywood where a killer is stalking Hollywood starlets around the time of the home video boom of the 1980s.

"We recreated the sleazy side of Hollywood in a hopefully charming way," West said. "It's definitely a pretty wild night at the movies. A big, rockin', fun movie."

On June 26, audiences can also delve into the beginnings of "A Quiet Place" with a prequel set on "Day One" starring Lupita Nyong'o and "Stranger Things" Joseph Quinn. Director Michael Sarnoski said they wanted to explore the "scope and promise" of a Quiet Place movie in New York. Later, Fede Alvarez brings his horror acumen to "Alien: Romulus" (Aug. 16), set between the first two.

M. Night Shyamalan is back as well with a thriller set at a pop concert ("Trap," Aug. 9) and his daughter, Ishana Night Shyamalan, makes her directorial debut with the spooky, Ireland-set "The Watchers" (June 14) with Dakota Fanning.

"It's very suspenseful and unexpected," Ishana said. "And it's very much built for the experience of being in a theater."

THE STARS ARE STREAMING

Much to the chagrin of theater owners, big summer movies have also existed off the big screen for years now. And the streamers have movie stars and spectacle with the festival favorite "Hit Man," the Anne Hathaway romance "The Idea of You," Jerry Seinfeld's starry pop-tart movie "Unfrosted" and a Mark Wahlberg/Halle Berry action comedy "The Union."

They have franchises too: "Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F" (July 3) was a movie that was in and out of development since the mid-1990s, but got new life when Paramount licensed the rights to Netflix.

"We raised our hand to make sure we got the franchise right and kept the integrity and fun of the origi-

nal," Bruckheimer said.

This installment adds an emotional component in which Eddie Murphy's Axel Foley reunites with his estranged daughter (Tylour Paige). It also sees the return of Judge Reinhold, John Ashton, Paul Reiser and Bronson Pinchot and adds Kevin Bacon and Joseph Gordon-Levitt.

On Aug. 9, Apple TV+ will also have "The Instigators," a new action-comedy starring Matt Damon and Casey Affleck as normal guys attempting a heist. "Midnight Run" was one of their touchstones.

"The script was so funny and I wanted to really embrace that," Doug Liman, who directed, said.

BUT ALSO, NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING

Remember, anything can happen with summer movies.

We can pretend we knew that "Barbie" would be the biggest movie of the year, but would anyone have bet that an R-rated drama about the father of the atomic bomb would have made almost three times as much as Harrison Ford's last ride as Indiana Jones? Or that a \$14 million crowdfunded movie from a new studio about child trafficking with next to zero promotion would earn over \$250 million?

"Nobody knows anything is right," said "The Instigators" producer Kevin Walsh. "The movie business is so unpredictable. You never know what's going to work and what isn't. But you have your taste. And following your taste and your instincts in this business is paramount."

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.

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

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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.

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

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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 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 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.

USDA updates rules for school meals that limit added sugars for the first time

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

The nation's school meals will get a makeover under new nutrition standards that limit added sugars for the first time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Wednesday.

The final rule also trims sodium in kids' meals, although not by the 30% first proposed in 2023. And it continues to allow flavored milks — such as chocolate milk — with less sugar, rather than adopting an option that would have offered only unflavored milk to the youngest kids.

The aim is to improve nutrition and align with U.S. dietary guidelines in the program that provides breakfasts to more than 15 million students and lunches to nearly 30 million students every day at a cost of about \$22.6 billion per year.

"All of this is designed to ensure that students have quality meals and that we meet parents' expectations," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack told reporters.

The limits on added sugars would be required in the 2025-2026 school year, starting with high-sugar foods such as cereal, yogurt and flavored milk. By the fall of 2027, added sugars in school meals would be limited to no more than 10% of the total calories per week for breakfasts and lunches, in addition to limits on sugar in specific products.

Officials had proposed to reduce sodium in school meals by as much as 30% over the next several years. But after receiving mixed public comments and a directive from Congress included in the fiscal year 2024 appropriations bill approved in March, the agency will reduce sodium levels allowed in breakfasts by 10% and in lunches by 15% by the 2027-2028 school year.

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 cease-fire 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 to deliver a commencement address that could draw protests.

FRUSTRATION AT COLUMBIA

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

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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."

HOW MUCH IS BIDEN TO BLAME?

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 of Louisiana 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 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 his 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.

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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."

Today in History: April 25

Athens surrenders to Sparta, Peloponnesian War ends

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, April 25, the 116th day of 2024. There are 250 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

In 404 B.C., the Peloponnesian War ended as Athens surrendered to Sparta.

On this date:

In 1507, a world map produced by German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller contained the first recorded use of the term "America," in honor of Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci (veh-SPOO'-chee).

In 1859, ground was broken for the Suez Canal.

In 1862, during the Civil War, a Union fleet commanded by Flag Officer David G. Farragut captured the city of New Orleans.

In 1898, the United States Congress declared war on Spain; the 10-week conflict resulted in an American victory.

In 1901, New York Gov. Benjamin Barker Odell, Jr. signed an automobile registration bill which imposed a 15 mph speed limit on highways.

In 1915, during World War I, Allied soldiers invaded the Gallipoli (guh-LIH'-puh-lee) Peninsula in an unsuccessful attempt to take the Ottoman Empire out of the war.

In 1945, during World War II, U.S. and Soviet forces linked up on the Elbe (EL'-beh) River, a meeting that dramatized the collapse of Nazi Germany's defenses. Meanwhile, delegates from some 50 countries gathered in San Francisco to organize the United Nations.

In 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope was deployed in orbit from the space shuttle Discovery. (It was later discovered that the telescope's primary mirror was flawed, requiring the installation of corrective components to achieve optimal focus.)

In 1992, Islamic forces in Afghanistan took control of most of the capital of Kabul following the collapse of the Communist government.

In 2002, Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes of the Grammy-winning trio TLC died in an SUV crash in Honduras; she was 30.

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In 2013, President Barack Obama consoled a rural Texas community rocked by a deadly fertilizer plant explosion that killed 15 people, telling mourners during a memorial service at Baylor University they were not alone in their grief.

In 2018, Danish engineer Peter Madsen was convicted of murder for luring a Swedish journalist onto his homemade submarine before torturing and killing her; Madsen was later sentenced to life in prison.

In 2019, former Vice President Joe Biden entered the Democratic presidential race, declaring the fight against Donald Trump to be a "battle for the soul of this nation."

In 2021, "Nomadland," Chloé Zhao's portrait of itinerant lives on open roads across the American West, won Best Picture at the 93rd Academy Awards; Zhao was honored as best director.

In 2022, Elon Musk reached an agreement to buy Twitter for roughly \$44 billion, promising a more lenient touch to policing content on the social media platform where he – then the world's richest person – had made a habit of promoting his interests and attacking his critics to his tens of millions of followers.

In 2023, President Joe Biden formally announced that he would be running for reelection in 2024, asking voters to give him more time to "finish this job" and extend the run of America's oldest president for another four years.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Al Pacino is 84. Rock musician Stu Cook (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 79. Singer Bjorn Ulvaeus (ABBA) is 79. Actor Talia Shire is 79. Actor Jeffrey DeMunn is 77. Rock musician Steve Ferrone (Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers) is 74. Country singer-songwriter Rob Crosby is 70. Actor Hank Azaria is 60. Rock singer Andy Bell (Erasure) is 60. Rock musician Eric Avery (Jane's Addiction) is 59. Country musician Rory Feek (Joey + Rory) is 59. TV personality Jane Clayson is 57. Actor Renee Zellweger is 55. Actor Gina Torres is 55. Actor Jason Lee is 54. Actor Jason Wiles is 54. Actor Emily Bergl is 49. Actor Marguerite Moreau is 47. Actor Melonie Diaz is 40. Actor Sara Paxton is 36. Actor/producer Allisyn Snyder is 28. Actor Jayden Rey is 15.