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Tuesday, July 16:

- Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, corn, apple crisp, breadstick.
- T-Ball B/G Scrimmage, 6 p.m.
- United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
- Common Centers Community Thrift Store open, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Pantry Open, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center
- City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Legion at Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
- St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 12:30 p.m.
- Jr. Teener Tournament in Groton

Groton Daily Independent
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1440

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Trump Taps Vance

Former President Donald Trump selected Sen. JD Vance (R-OH) as his running mate for the 2024 election yesterday. The announcement came during the first day of the Republican National Convention (see photos) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, just before Trump officially became the party's presidential nominee. Trump is expected to accept the nomination Thursday.

The 39-year-old Vance (see overview) is a first-time senator and former venture capitalist who gained recognition after publishing his 2016 bestselling memoir "Hillbilly Elegy," covering his family's struggles in greater Appalachia and Rust Belt America. Vance was considered a vocal critic of Trump before becoming one of his allies in Congress, including on issues like foreign policy, trade, and immigration. Vance bested Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Gov. Doug Burgum (R-ND) from Trump's shortlist.

Separately, a federal judge dismissed Trump's criminal indictment over his handling of classified documents. The judge ruled Special Counsel Jack Smith's appointment as prosecutor violated the US Constitution, which requires such appointments to be made by the president and confirmed by the Senate or by an act of legislation. Smith intends to appeal.

Moon Cave Discovery

An international team of scientists has confirmed for the first time the existence of a lava tube in the lunar subsurface, marking a potential location for future lunar bases. Led by the University of Trento in Italy, researchers reanalyzed data from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter using special techniques to detect radar reflections that point to a massive tunnel on the moon.

The underground cavern, located in the Mare Tranquillitatis pit near where Apollo 11 landed, is approximately 500 feet below the surface and measures about 150 feet wide and 260 feet long (lava tubes on Earth typically have a diameter of about 33 to 98 feet). This structure could provide natural protection against the harsh lunar environment, including extreme temperatures, cosmic rays, solar radiation, and micrometeorites.

Lava tubes form when molten lava flows beneath a hardened surface layer, creating a tunnel as the lava drains, leaving an empty underground cavern. At least 200 pits, at least 16 of which are thought to have lava tubes, have been identified on the moon.

Malaria Vaccine Rollout

West Africa's Ivory Coast became the first nation in the region to begin administering the world's latest malaria vaccine to children. The World Health Organization-approved vaccine is part of a program that initially seeks to cover roughly 250,000 children under 2 years old. The introduction of the new three-dose shot comes six months after the world's first malaria vaccine—a four-dose shot—was rolled out in Cameroon.

Malaria is an illness caused by the microscopic Plasmodium parasite, which infects and destroys red blood cells. Over 200 million people are diagnosed annually. Roughly 600,000 people die as a result of the illness—nearly 80% of whom are children. Approximately 95% of malaria cases arise in sub-Saharan Africa.

The latest vaccine, R21/Matrix-M, has shown a 77% efficacy in reducing symptoms and preventing death in the first year. At least 15 other African countries plan to administer one of the two existing malaria vaccines this year.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Argentina edges Colombia 1-0 in extra time to win a record 16th Copa América championship.

Twenty-seven arrested amid security breach at main entry gate, which caused a delayed start to the Copa América.

Disney investigating hacking after a trove of internal communications data was leaked by a hacktivist artists' rights group.

The American League takes on the National League in tonight's (8 pm ET, Fox) 94th MLB All-Star game . MLB Draft continues today.

Science & Technology

AT&T reportedly pays \$300K ransom to hacker group to delete stolen data following the company's second major breach in three months.

Researchers pinpoint gene capable of slowing the aggressive spread of pancreatic cancer; gene produces the molecule HNF4A, and gets "switched off" in early stages of the disease.

Gulf War Illness explained in new study; mysterious illness, affecting up to one-third of veterans from the 1990-91 Gulf War, likely caused by intestinal exposure to biological and chemical agents.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.3%, Dow +0.5%, Nasdaq +0.4%), with Dow closing at a record high; Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell signals the Fed won't wait until annual inflation hits 2% before cutting interest rates.

Amazon kicks off Prime Day 48-hour sale today; this year's Prime Day expected to set record in US online spending, with an estimated \$14B in total sales.

Macy's ends buyout talks to go private for \$6.9B with activist investors Arkhouse Management and Brigade Capital Management; Macy's shares close down 12%.

Politics & World Affairs

Gambian lawmakers uphold ban on female genital mutilation, reversing course months after an initial vote; despite the ban, the practice remains widespread in Gambia, with more than 70% of girls and women undergoing the procedure.

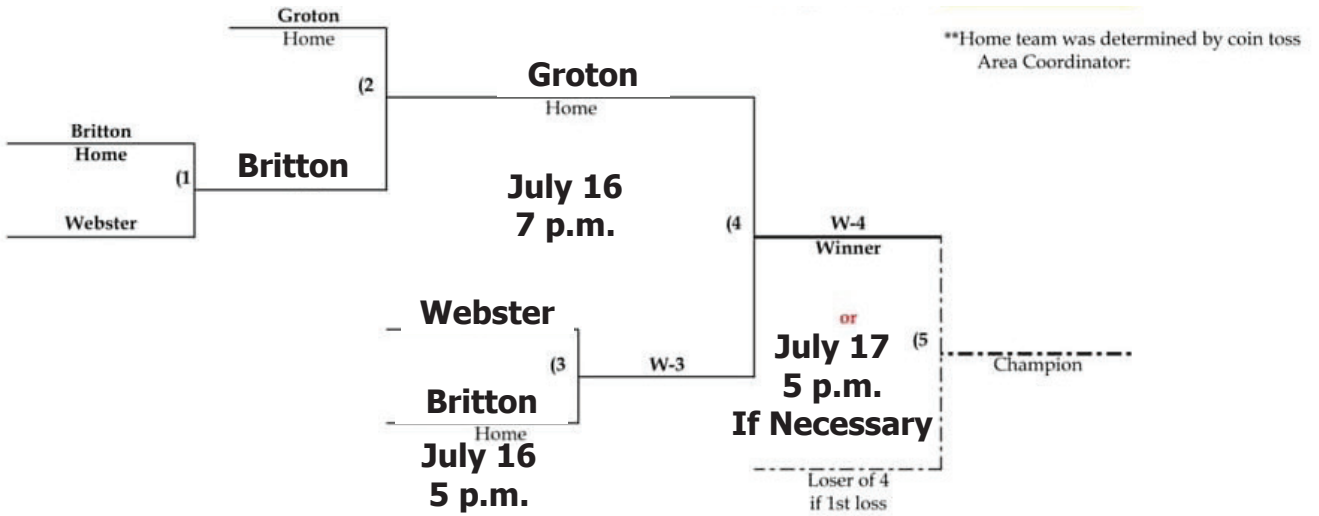
Moscow court convicts US journalist Masha Gessen in absentia for violating Russia's law criminalizing criticism of Russian war in Ukraine.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame expected to extend his 30-year rule after defeating two candidates permitted to run against him in yesterday's election.

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Department of SD VFW Baseball 14U Class B Region 1 Bracket All games to be played at Locke-Karst Field in Groton



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Region Jr. Teener Tournament in Groton



Alex Abeln was the Groton starting pitcher at the Groton Region VFW tournament last night. (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Groton infielders take a knee while they listen attentively to Groton head coach Spencer Locke. (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Groton fielders L-R Ryder Schelle, Jordan Schwann, and TC Schuster. (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Ryder Schelle awaiting at 3rd base while Kason Oswald covers 2nd. (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)

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TC Schuster relief pitching in top of the 5th.

(Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Groton American Legion Post provided the color guard for the Summer Fest opening ceremony. L-R Bruce Babcock and Dave McGannon. (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)

SDVFW 14B R1

Groton Defeats Britton On Multiple Hit Performance By Bisbee By GameChanger Media

John Bisbee collected four hits in four at bats, as Groton defeated Britton 10-1 on Monday. Bisbee singled in the third inning, singled in the sixth inning, singled in the second inning, and singled in the fifth inning. A walk by Braeden Flihs put Groton on the board in the bottom of the first.

Groton added one run in the second. Kason Oswald doubled after a 6-pitch at-bat, making the score 2-0.

Groton added to their early lead in the bottom of the third inning after Bisbee singled, Groton scored on a passed ball, and Groton scored on a passed ball, each scoring one run.

Groton scored five runs on four hits in the bottom of the sixth inning. An error scored one run, Sam Crank singled, scoring one run, Bisbee singled, scoring one run, Oswald drew a walk, scoring one run, and an error scored one run.

Alex Abeln started the game for Groton. They surrendered one hit and one run over five and one-third innings, striking out six and walking two. Chaz Veitor led things off on the hill for Britton. The starting pitcher gave up three hits and two runs (one earned) over one and one-third innings, striking out one and walking three. T.C. Schuster threw one and two-thirds innings of zero-run ball for Groton in relief. They gave up zero hits, striking out one and walking none.

Groton accumulated 14 hits in the game. Ryder Schelle, Jordan Schwan, and Crank each collected multiple hits for Groton. Flihs paced Groton with two walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, piling up six walks for the game.

Lincoln Kilker led Britton with one run batted in. Drew Heitmann led Britton with one hit in three at bats.

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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

July 16, 2024 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

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

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Airport Services Agreement- IMEG Corp.
4. Wastewater Update – IMEG Corp.
5. Soccer Shed Discussion
6. 1st Annual Celebration in the Park Discussion
7. Garden Club – Removal of Bushes at City Park
8. Appoint Newspaper and Banks
9. June Finance Report
10. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 777 – Supplemental Appropriations
11. Authorization to Temporarily Pause Ordinance 6-2-2 to Allow the Public to Possess and Consume Alcoholic Beverages for Summer Sip & Shop on July 25, 2024, from 5:00pm to 8:00pm on Main Street
12. Minutes
13. Bills
14. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
15. Adjournment

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**50th Wedding Celebration
Honoring Neal & Wynella Abeln
Saturday, July 20, 2024
Food & Visiting 6 pm – 8 pm
Barn Dance 8 pm – 11 pm
AT: Tim & Lacey Grabow's
15689 456th Ave
South Shore, SD 57263
FUN FOR ALL
No gifts please**

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GFP Commission Holds July Meeting

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Park (GFP) Commission held their monthly meeting on July 11-12 at Good Earth State Park.

Wildlife Proposals

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Seasons

The Commission proposed the 2024-25 and 2025-26 Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Seasons with the following dates:

2025

Residents: December 26, 2024 – February 15, 2025

Nonresidents: January 11 – February 15, 2025

2026

Residents: December 26, 2025 – February 15, 2026

Nonresidents: January 10 – February 15, 2026

The proposal also included a change restricting Black Hills bobcat hunters or trappers to be limited to one bobcat per hunter or trapper.

Bait

The Commission proposed a change to update scientific names for certain species of crayfish to reflect updates in taxonomic classification.

Fish Limits

The Commission proposed to modify the existing harvest regulation on Belle Fourche Reservoir. Currently, four walleye may be taken daily, but only those less than 15 inches in length or 18 inches or greater in length, and of the walleye taken daily, no more than one may be 18 inches or greater in length. The Commission proposal would allow a two fish daily limit with a 15-inch minimum on Belle Fourche Reservoir.

Private Fish Hatcheries

The Commission proposed to modify annual reporting requirements for private hatcheries by requiring an annual summary to be submitted rather than individual records.

Salmon Snagging

The Commission proposed to allow snagging of all salmon species during the months of October and November on Lake Oahe.

Spring Turkey

The Commission continued discussions on the 2025 and 2026 Spring Turkey Hunting Seasons with the following dates:

2025

April 12 – May 31, 2025 Single-season prairie units

April 26 – May 31, 2025 Black Hills and Black Hills archery

April 12 – 30, 2025 Split-season early prairie units (08A and 44A) and Unit 58B

May 1 – 31, 2025 Split-season late prairie units (08B and 44B)

April 12 –30, 2025 Access Permit Areas

2026

April 11 – May 31, 2026 Single-season prairie units

April 25 – May 31, 2026 Black Hills and Black Hills archery

April 11 – 30, 2026 Split-season early prairie units (08A and 44A) and Unit 58B

May 1 – 31, 2026 Split-season late prairie units (08B and 44B)

April 11 –30, 2026 Access Permit Areas

* Depending on the geographic area being hunted, the mentored and archery spring seasons align with the prairie and Black Hills seasons, respectively.

The Commission proposal will expand the archery statewide turkey hunting unit to include the portion of Lake County south of State Highway 34.

The Commission proposed to change the name of the unit including Aurora and Douglas counties to

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PST-10A from PST-18A.

The Commission proposed to limit the number of nonresident licenses to 2,225 one-tag male turkey licenses in the Black Hills hunting unit.

Proposed license numbers for the 2025 and 2026 spring firearms turkey hunting season prairie units would be 7,605 resident and 318 nonresident licenses; with the Black Hills season having unlimited resident single "male turkey" licenses and a limited number of nonresident single "male turkey" licenses, and Custer State Park having 100 resident only "male turkey" licenses.

Good Earth State Park would have 5 archery "male turkey" access permits and Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve would have 30 archery and 20 mentored youth "male turkey" access permits under this proposal.

Parks Finalizations License Entrance Fees

Senate Bill 55 was introduced by the Department during the 2024 Legislative Session and was passed and signed by the Governor. The new law amended SDCL 41-17-13 to eliminate the option to purchase a discounted second annual park entrance license through the stub/coupon method and eliminated the ability to buy multiple discounted annuals through common vehicle registration.

The Commission eliminated the stub/coupon method of discounted park entrance licenses and multiple discounted annual process using vehicle registrations.

This will now provide the availability of a double license option (one full price license and one-half price license when purchased together). There are no limits on how many double licenses may be purchased.

Wildlife Finalizations Air Rifle

The Commission finalized the proposal to reduce the air gun muzzle velocity minimum from 1,000 feet per second to 600 feet per second to hunt cottontail rabbit, red squirrel, fox squirrel, grey squirrel, and any species defined as a predator/varmint. Varmints include coyote, gray fox, red fox, skunk, gopher, ground squirrel, chipmunk, jackrabbit, marmot, opossum, porcupine, crow, and prairie dog.

Firearms Antelope Hunting Seasons

The Commission finalized the 2024 and 2025 Firearms Antelope Hunting Seasons for the following dates:
Sept 28-Oct. 13, 2024

Oct 4 – Oct 19, 2025

Applicants for a special antelope license will now be able to apply for an antelope license in the second lottery drawing instead of the third drawing as previously allowed.

The Commission made a minor unit boundary adjustment for Butte County and specified in rule the Stanley and Jones County prairie units do not include the Ft. Pierre National Grasslands.

Landowner own land licenses will now be a one buck antelope license. Previously, landowner own land licenses had allowed one any antelope license or one two-tag any antelope and any doe-fawn antelope license.

Additionally, the Commission removed the option for a mentored child to obtain a doe/kid antelope license to increase antelope population growth across the state, thus eliminating all doe harvest with the exception of 100 special antelope "any antelope" licenses.

License numbers for the 2024 and 2025 seasons will be 2,020 resident and 99 nonresident firearms licenses.

Archery Antelope Hunting Seasons

The Commission also finalized the 2024 and 2025 Archery Antelope Hunting season for the following dates:
2024

1st interval: August 17 – September 27

2nd interval: October 14 – 31

2025

1st interval: August 16 – October 3

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2nd interval: October 20 – 31

There will no longer be five archery antelope access permits for Custer and Pennington Counties within the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

The Commission did create ten resident archery antelope access permits for the Fort Pierre National Grasslands.

Fall Turkey

The Commission finalized the 2024-25 and 2025-26 Fall Turkey Hunting Seasons with the following dates of Nov. 1 – Jan 31.

The Commission finalization removed Douglas County from Unit PFT-17A (Charles Mix County) and changed the name of the unit including Aurora and Douglas counties to PFT-10A from PFT-18A.

The Commission also included Unit PFT-58A (Stanley County) as an open unit and modified the PFT-06A (Brookings County) fall turkey hunting unit to include the portion of Brookings County west of Interstate 29.

License numbers for the 2024 and 2025 seasons will be 1,720 resident and 72 nonresident.

Public Comment Opportunity and Upcoming Meeting

To hear the discussion on any of the topics on the agenda, audio from the meeting is available through South Dakota Public Broadcasting and will soon be available on the GFP website as part of the meeting archive.

To see these documents in their entirety, visit gfp.sd.gov/commission/information.

To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, public comments must include a full name and city of residence and be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CT, September 1.

The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on September 5-6 in Rapid City.

South Dakota Ends Fiscal Year with \$80 Million Surplus

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Kristi Noem announced that South Dakota closed the 2024 budget year with a surplus of \$80.7 million. As she did last year, Governor Noem announced her intention to set aside the surplus to offset the cost of prison construction.

“South Dakota makes common sense decisions based on small government, low taxes, and spending within our means. We don’t just talk about fiscal responsibility – we follow through!” said Governor Noem. “We will continue to budget responsibly for the people, and we will avoid unnecessary debt by using this surplus for prison construction costs. This will help South Dakotans keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets.”

State government spent \$56.4 million less than appropriated in fiscal year 2024, with the total revenue finishing above the legislative adopted forecast by \$24.3 million.

South Dakota maintains a AAA credit rating and is one of the only states with a fully-funded pension. South Dakota also has the lowest unemployment rate in America.

By law, the fiscal year 2024 surplus was transferred to the state’s budget reserves. The state’s reserves now total \$322.8 million or 13.3% of the fiscal year 2025 general fund budget.

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That's Life by Tony Bender: We Mark Time

Writer's note: A memory from 2017.

We mark time in very personal way in a small town.

In a bigger city, there are so many anonymous moving parts, it's not possible to have the same kind of connections. Here, we mark time in eras, by the inevitable changing of the guard. So, when Dorene Rueb went to sleep last Monday and didn't wake up again, it was a touchstone moment in Ashley, N.D.

Fifty years. That's how long Dorene was an institution at Ashley Super Valu. Although she was in retirement, sometimes I'd still see her helping out in the bakery, and things just always seemed a little more right in the world.

She was short and round, like all the best German women are, with a cherubic face that exuded kindness. Her husband, Adolf, was a classmate of my father's. They're both gone now.

Dylan and I talked about Adolf yesterday. "I don't think he ever knew my name," he laughed, "He just called me 'Little Tony.'"

Dylan worked there for a while, like a good many students have over the years. The students fill out a core roster that has been surprisingly consistent. There have been losses, sure, but familiar faces are the norm.

Among the regulars are Wally Heupel and DeuWayne Arnold. Some months ago, I was in the dairy section watching as DeuWayne arranged paper products above the coolers, storage always at a premium in the store. Wally was on the other side, watching with some disgust as, in the process, DeuWayne pushed an inch too much and sent a row of bathroom tissue tumbling down at Wally's feet.

My first instinct was to instigate a brawl.

"Hey, Wally, did you see what DeuWayne did?"

"Yeah, I saw," Wally grumbled as he gazed at the carnage.

"Hey, what's the big idea, DeuWayne," I said, "throwing bathroom tissue at Wally?"

No answer. He just pushed his glasses back onto his nose and squinted up at the stack. I walked away with one parting comment. "Violence is never the answer, DeuWayne."

I crack myself up. Blessed are the peacemakers.

My office has been across the street since 1998, so the store has been my pantry for a very long time.

Sometimes, I pick up a bag of pastries for the office. They always ask how many are in the white bag. You're on the honor system.

Honor is overrated. I'll throw four in there and when they ask, I always say, "one." I'm trying to live a life of crime, but they never let me get away with it.

When I came to visit my grandfather before I moved back, he would always pull a ring of that famous sausage in the red casing out of his refrigerator and unwrap the white paper. He'd cut up pieces for us that were way too small in my opinion.

"Where did you get this sausage?" I remembered asking him once. "Rueb!" was the answer.

The baloney recipe remains, but the construction of the fry sausage has gotten more adventuresome, with the introduction of things like sauerkraut, which makes perfect sense. And jalapenos, which do not, in the sense of ethnic cross-pollination. But it sure is good. I used some in my Thanksgiving dressing. It was a big hit.

I love coming in on Tuesday mornings when baloney is steaming on the meat counter. Is there a better breakfast? I don't think so. My family members often put in an order when we are about to gather for some event. "Hey, Sausage Boy..." the email begins.

Adolf and Dorene's son, Kirk, is keeping the tradition alive as one of the sausage-makers. Kirk and Byron were adopted. I sometimes think about what it must have been like for them to contemplate their good fortune. To emerge from uncertainty, into a world filled with so much love and joy.

A friend of mine once said that, after he lost his mother—his father had passed first—"I felt like an orphan." The natural order of things leaves us all orphans, doesn't it?

I saw Dorene just a few days before she slipped away. We exchanged pleasantries in the first aisle of the store. I'm sure I was smiling, because I always did when I saw her. She was that kind of person.

I'll hold that last image of Dorene in my mind. I miss her already.

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Downtown Groton

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DakotaDome receives upgrade with new turf

VERMILLION, S.D. — The Coyote football team will take the field to start the 2024 on a brand new turf field inside the DakotaDome. AstroTurf will provide the synthetic turf installation, that began last week inside the Dome.

“We are incredibly excited to work with AstroTurf on this project to provide the premium competition and practice surface our football student-athletes deserve,” said Corey Jenkins, Deputy Athletic Director. “The new field also presented the opportunity to re-design the playing surface to a more modern look while featuring the state outline to show our pride in being the flagship university for the state of South Dakota.”

The new turf will feature the USD paw logo at midfield, outlined by the State of South Dakota to emphasize the USD athletic mantra: We Are South Dakota.

The end zones will feature the wordmark Coyotes in white on both ends, set on the Coyote red background. Each side of the field from the 20-yard line towards the goal line will feature H. Lauren Lewis Field name.

The new turf will replace the old turf that was installed inside the Dome back in 2012, also installed by AstroTurf.

The 2024 season kicks off against Northern State on August 29.



Judge dismisses lawsuit seeking to keep South Dakota abortion measure from ballot

By STU WHITNEY

South Dakota News Watch

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – The campaign to put abortion rights before South Dakota voters on the November 2024 ballot claimed a major victory in state court Monday.

Circuit Court Judge John Pekas ruled in favor of Dakotans for Health, the grassroots organization behind Amendment G, by granting a motion to dismiss a lawsuit filed by anti-abortion group Life Defense Fund that sought to keep the measure from the ballot.

Rather than itemizing allegations of improper petition circulation raised in the complaint, Pekas noted the importance of following election law and questioned why the South Dakota Secretary of State's office wasn't named as a party in the lawsuit.

"I don't know how the Dakotans for Health can control the Secretary of State," Pekas said during the hearing at the Minnehaha County Courthouse. "They submitted the (petition) information to the state of South Dakota and it has been accepted. The challenge I believe is now out of the hands of Dakotans for Health. In this particular instance, this is a collateral attack."

In a press release, Life Defense Fund co-chair Leslee Unruh criticized the judge's ruling and said that her organization plans to appeal.

"The case was brought because we have a mountain of evidence and hours of video footage showing that (Dakotans for Health) deceived and tricked South Dakotans into signing their petition," Unruh said in the release. "This unexpected dismissal further plays into their motive to delay our case and refuse to answer our documented allegations. We will follow the judge's invitation to appeal this case."

Sara Frankenstein, the lawyer representing Life Defense Fund, and Jon Hansen, the group's co-founder, did not respond to emailed questions from News Watch.

Jim Leach, who represented Dakotans for Health, called the decision a victory for the ballot initiative process in South Dakota.

"Any appeal decision is up to Life Defense Fund, but I hope they're not going to pursue this cause any further," Leach said outside the courtroom. "People want to vote. People signed petitions to vote. They're saying that people shouldn't be able to vote. Well, this is America. People should be able to vote."

Amendment set for Nov. 5 ballot

South Dakota is currently under a 2005 state trigger law activated in June 2022 when the Supreme Court left it up to states to determine reproductive rights with its ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

The law makes it a Class 6 felony for anyone "who administers to any pregnant female or prescribes or procures for any pregnant female" a means for an abortion, except to save the life of the mother.

If passed, Amendment G would prevent the state from regulating abortions during the first trimester. During the second trimester, the state could regulate the abortion decision, but any regulation must be reasonably related to the physical health of the mother. During the third trimester, abortion could be prohibited except if it is necessary to preserve the life or health of the pregnant woman, according to her physician.

On May 16, South Dakota Secretary of State Monae Johnson's office certified the measure for the Nov. 5 ballot, saying that a random sample showed 46,098 signatures were deemed valid, well over the threshold of 35,017.

Nearly a month later, the Life Defense Fund and Frankenstein filed a complaint in state circuit court

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asking that the amendment be disqualified. It also asked the court to prohibit "Dakotans for Health and those who worked with or for it" from being involved in petition or ballot measure campaigns for a period of four years.

"If they had a complaint, they should have sued the Secretary of State," said Leach. "She's the one who counted all the signatures and then ruled. There were more than enough signatures to put this on the ballot so the people could vote. If they've got a problem with it, they need to talk to her."

Federal judge declined to intervene

Life Defense Fund, led by Republican state legislator Hansen and longtime anti-abortion advocate Leslee Unruh, alleged in their lawsuit that petition circulators violated a residency affidavit requirement introduced into state law in 2018, among other charges.

That law was later superseded by Senate Bill 180, which was halted in federal court in January 2023 as part of a permanent injunction signed by U.S. District Judge Lawrence Piersol, an action upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Dakotans for Health filed a motion in federal court to enforce the permanent injunction, but U.S. District Judge Karen Schreier on July 5 ruled that state court proceedings should be allowed to continue before determining if federal intervention was warranted.

After Monday's dismissal in state court, legal options for Life Defense Fund include appealing to the South Dakota Supreme Court or re-filing the lawsuit with the Secretary of State as defendant.

Time is a factor, considering that Aug. 13 is the deadline under state law for the Secretary of State to certify copies of all ballot questions to the county auditors.

"I've thought all along that this was a bridge too far for them to think they could dismiss 55,000 South Dakotans based on some petitioner residency requirement that's not on the books," Weiland said. "Every time they've tried to disrupt this and make it about something other than letting the people vote, they've been unsuccessful."

Actions of petitioners questioned

Of the five counts detailed in the complaint as alleged violations, several were recast from clashes between Life Defense Fund and Dakotans for Health during the petition campaign and legislative session.

Among those accusations are that circulators left petitions unattended, failed to provide a circulator handout as required by law, and purposely confused the public with a "bait and switch" involving the grocery tax and abortion measures.

Attorney General Marty Jackley sent a letter to Dakotans for Health on Oct. 31, 2023, that mentioned "video and photographic evidence" of such encounters and warned of potentially illegal actions taken by petition circulators. No charges were filed.

Leach called the allegations "deceptive and overblown" in a February interview with News Watch. On Monday, he stressed that it was important to let the people have their say at the ballot box as part of South Dakota's longstanding initiative process.

A statewide poll co-sponsored by News Watch and the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota conducted in May showed that 53% of respondents support Constitutional Amendment G, compared to 35% opposed and 11% undecided.

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization. Read more in-depth stories at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email every few days to get stories as soon as they're published. Contact Stu Whitney at stu.whitney@sdnewswatch.org.

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**SOUTH DAKOTA
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

Embattled CEO of major SD social services agency steps down

By Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

The CEO of one of the state's largest nonprofit social services agencies, who was the subject of a federal sexual harassment and toxic workplace settlement in 2022, has quit his position.

The July 1 resignation of Peter Smith from the top leadership post at the Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) in Wagner, South Dakota, was immediate. It came roughly 18 months after the agency paid a \$320,000 settlement to several former female employees whose claims of workplace sexual harassment and retaliation by Smith were substantiated by a federal investigation.

ROCS, with an annual budget of roughly \$15 million, is mainly funded through federal and state dollars. The agency provides housing, food and transportation assistance to low-income residents in a 22-county area of southeastern South Dakota roughly from Yankton to Mitchell to Chamberlain.

Smith's sudden departure came amid ongoing turnover at the agency and closely followed the resignation of another top ROCS employee, former human resources official Michelle Figland. Figland would not comment to News Watch, and there's no indication at this point that the two departures are related.

The attorney for ROCS, Richard J. Rylance of MorganTheeler in Mitchell, declined to answer several questions posed in an email from News Watch. But Rylance did confirm that Smith resigned on July 1, adding that ROCS transportation director Andrea Irwin has been appointed interim CEO as the search for a new agency director moves forward.

In a phone interview with News Watch, Smith said he resigned in part because, "after the EEOC thing and everything that happened, I figured it's time to move on."

"My reputation has been soiled like nobody's business, and so I would rather just go forward," he said.

Rylance said Smith's departure is not expected to disrupt ROCS programming in any way.

"At this time, ROCS has the staff, training, and experience to continue delivering services to its clients throughout South Dakota," he wrote.

EEOC: Harassment, bullying, retaliation by Smith

A two-year investigation by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission resulted in a December 2022 settlement in which ROCS paid the \$320,000 rather than contest the findings that Smith sexually harassed female employees at the agency and retaliated against certain employees who complained by terminating them.

News Watch and the True Dakotan newspaper in Wessington Springs first reported on the EEOC settlement and the harassment of female employees at ROCS in January 2023. One former employee said Smith often directed sexual innuendos toward female employees, hugged or touched them in uncomfortable ways, and created an atmosphere of bullying and retaliation against anyone who complained.

The EEOC settlement announcement in 2022 said, "The EEOC found that the female employees were harassed by executive director. Despite complaints to management and the board of directors, the EEOC found the harassment continued over several years."

ROCS board members contacted by News Watch referred all questions to Rylance. According to the ROCS website, the board includes: chairman Jim Kasten, vice chairman Fred Kill and members James Deines, Georgia Chicoine, Dallas Laffey, Wendy Figland, Rachel Fischer, Brenda Jatton and Julie Dennis.

In the initial News Watch report, EEOC Minneapolis office director Cherie Doak said the agency has no authority to recommend or enforce employment decisions at entities it investigates. However, Doak at the time said that "had (Smith) been an employee of mine, he would not still be in his position, let me just say that."

Victor Chen, communications director for the federal EEOC office, said he could not comment on whether any new complaints had been filed against ROCS or Smith, or if any new investigations were underway.

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"Under federal law, possible charges (complaints) made to the EEOC are confidential, and we are prohibited from releasing any information, or confirming or denying their existence," Chen wrote to News Watch in an email.

Rylance said ROCS continues to abide by requirements of the EEOC settlement that included additional staff training, updating of internal systems of handling discrimination complaints and providing the EEOC with regular updates.

"In addition to the policies and procedures which were put into place, ROCS staff and administration have continued to attend regular trainings aimed at maintaining a safe, respectful working environment for ROCS staff and clients," Rylance wrote to News Watch in an email.

Annual audits of the agency and federal 990 nonprofit tax filings reviewed by News Watch do not indicate any obvious financial improprieties or procedural problems.

Smith has separate nonprofit business at home

In a review of state records, News Watch found that since April 2019, Smith has operated a separate business from his home in Mission Hill, South Dakota, that retains an active 2024 designation from the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office.

According to state documents, Beyond Expectations is a nonprofit corporation designed to "provide human and social services" to clients, though records in the Urban Institute nonprofit database indicate the business operates as a temporary homeless shelter.

The documents also show that Smith's wife, Karen Smith, his son, Malachi Smith, and a current employee of ROCS, director of strategic planning and marketing Linsy Tice Duba, are directors of Beyond Expectations. Peter Smith told News Watch that Duba is his step-daughter.

Duba told News Watch in an email that Smith registered the business for another family member and that it has been "collecting dust" since its launch. Duba said she was listed as a director of the business because she intended to do marketing and web design.

Rylance did not respond to questions related to Beyond Expectations, and there is nothing to indicate Smith's side business was related in any way to his resignation.

In a phone interview, Peter Smith told News Watch that the home business retains legal status with the state but is not active.

"No, I wanted to at one time, and it's still registered like that, but I haven't really done anything with it," he said. "Back in the past, I would help people and stuff like that."

Smith: No harassment, no retaliation

Peter Smith told News Watch he was prevented by the ROCS board from responding to the EEOC findings when the 2022 settlement was made public. But he denied harassing any women and said anyone who left the agency did so of their own volition.

He said some employees resigned because Smith required them to perform well at their jobs and follow federal guidelines in their work.

"You're not supposed to sit around doing your own private business when you're on federal funding," he said. "If they're calling me some horrible person, then why are they telling people I'm the best boss they ever had, that I'm patient and kind of decent?"

Smith, 60, addressed rumors of his past criminal history by noting that he has two prior DUI convictions and "that I have in Pennsylvania, in 1997 or 1999, an indecent assault that wasn't true."

"Stupid me did not practice boundaries," he said.

Smith said he left ROCS because he felt that, "if I cause as much harm to people just in the way that I manage, I chose to resign."

Smith said he does not plan to work in the social services field anymore.

"I'm moving on and just trying to go forward and to make sure my name is not in the public eye again or anything negative anyway," he said. "I'm totally walking away from the agency, not just the agency, but I'm not going to try this industry anymore (because) I realize it just doesn't work for me."

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization. Read more in-depth stories at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email every few days to get stories as soon as they're published. Contact Bart Pfankuch at bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org.

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Northern State University Gypsy Day Parade Registration Now Open

ABERDEEN, S.D. – Registration is now open for the 108th annual Northern State University Gypsy Day Parade, scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024. Interested participants can register at northern.edu/gypsy-days.

This year, organizers have introduced new options for parade float registrations, including premium and mid-level placements. Register before Aug. 31 to take advantage of the most affordable rates. Prices will increase after this date, with the final deadline to register being Sept. 15.

Pricing Options:

Premium Placement: \$100 (First 20 parade spots, following grand entry)

Mid-Level Placement: \$50 (Next 20 parade spots)

Standard Placement: \$25 (Remaining spots)

Horses/Livestock Entries: \$50

Price Increase After Aug. 31:

Premium Placement: \$150

Mid-Level Placement: \$100

Standard Placement: \$75

Horses/Livestock Entries: \$100

Final Registration Deadline: Sept. 15

"With this new option, businesses and organizations can choose to be placed closer to the grand entry by registering for premium or mid-level placement," said Gypsy Days Committee Co-Chair and Northern State University's Director of Communications and Marketing Chad Hatzenbuehler. "This will streamline the placement process, and the additional funds will help ensure the parade's financial sustainability. Not many people know, but the parade is self-funded by registration fees. Each year, we aim to grow the parade and add more incentives for participants and the community."

The parade will begin at 9 a.m. in downtown Aberdeen. Entrants will decorate their floats based on this year's theme, "Wolves in Candy Land." A panel of judges comprised of Northern and community leaders will present awards in various categories.

Judges will vote on several awards, including the Best Float competition. The top three floats will win cash prizes and tickets to the President's Suite for a football game. Additionally, a new category for NSU Student Clubs offers a \$300 prize.

Best Float Awards:

1st Place: \$1,000 and six tickets to the President's Suite

2nd Place: \$500 and four tickets to the President's Suite

3rd Place: \$250 and two tickets to the President's Suite

Northern's homecoming week takes place Monday, Sept. 30 – Sunday, Oct. 6, culminating with the parade and football game. Festivities will also include Wolves athletic events, the NSU Hall of Fame and Distinguished Alumni Banquet, and the coronation of a king and queen.

2024 Homecoming King Candidates:

Simon Bickford (Newman Center)

Jacob Ebeling (SAAC)

Braden Freeman (Honors Program)

Michael Grebner (Residence Hall Association)

Colton Wicks (TRIO Scholar Association)

2024 Homecoming Queen Candidates:

Ashlyn Haselhorst (Lumin Ministry)

Nevaeh Meyer (School of Education Clubs)

Madison Park (Campus Activities Board)

Ava Pickard (Music Department)

Randi Schuster (Honors Program)

The Life of Adrian Paulson

Funeral services for Adrian Paulson, 87, of Andover, SD will be 10:30 a.m., Monday, July 22nd at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton, SD. Pastor Adam Franken will officiate. Burial with military honors will follow in Skudesnes Lutheran Cemetery rural Pierpont, SD.

Adrian passed away July 1, 2024 at Avera St. Luke's Hospital, Aberdeen, SD.

Visitation will be one hour prior to services.

Casket bearers will be Steven Paulson, Henry Paulson, Bill LaMee, Craig Kroll, Suton Paulson, Paul Carlson and Torre Raap.



Adrian Henry Paulson was born on March 3, 1937 in Webster, SD to Henry and Helen (Peterson) Paulson. He grew up on the family farm near Roslyn, SD and attended country school. He later graduated from Roslyn High School and continued his education at Northern State Teacher's College. Adrian taught at a rural country school south of Webster until his enlistment in the US Army. He was honorably discharged as an E-4 in June of 1962. He joked that he had it easy because he could type, so he became a clerk instead of an auto mechanic. After his discharge, he returned to teaching in Watertown, SD as a sixth grade teacher. In 1973 Adrian left teaching and moved to Andover where he farmed.

Adrian had a gift to be able to fix or construct anything from wiring, plumbing, concrete work, and more. He was also known as a "Betty Crocker" to some for the cookies, bars, and cakes that would go along to fairs and shows.

Adrian was involved in many organizations on local, state, and national levels. They included Groton School Board, Andover Township Board, Day County DHIA, South Dakota DHIA, South Dakota Dairy Farmer Foundation, South Dakota Jersey Breeders, Minnesota Valley Breeder Association, 21st Century Genetics, and Land O' Lakes.

Grateful for having shared his life are his children Andy (Kara) Paulson of Andover and Allyn Paulson (Tammy Voegeli) of Rockford, IL, his grandchildren Steven Paulson, Henry Paulson, Cort Paulson, Tyler Grams, Suton Paulson, and Dakota Paulson; his brothers Bryon (Madonna) Paulson of Springfield, MO and Lew (Carol) Paulson of Hosmer; and several nieces and nephews.

Preceding Adrian in death were his parents, his wife Arlene in 2021, his brother Boyd, and a sister, Madeline.

www.paetznick-garness.com



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Trump 'honored the Constitution,' Noem says in convention speech

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR AND SETH TUPPER - JULY 15, 2024 9:35 PM

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem used her Monday evening speech at the Republican National Convention to praise former President Donald Trump's devotion to the Constitution, without mentioning that he's criminally accused of subverting it.

"I've been governor under both President Trump and Joe Biden, and people ask me all the time, 'What's the biggest difference?'" Noem said from the stage in Milwaukee. "And I tell them that President Trump honored the Constitution."

A pending federal indictment against Trump filed in August 2023 alleges he knowingly spread falsehoods to his supporters, unsuccessfully plotted with co-conspirators to overturn his loss in the 2020 election, and worked his supporters into a frenzy that culminated in a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, the day Congress was to certify electoral votes.

The indictment alleges Trump interfered with American citizens who were engaging "in the free exercise and enjoyment of a right and privilege secured to them by the Constitution and laws of the United States — that is, the right to vote, and to have one's vote counted."

Noem said Trump has been "unjustly prosecuted" but did not say which case she was referencing.

In May, Trump was convicted of 34 felonies in New York state court for falsifying business records related to a hush money payment ahead of the 2016 presidential election. Trump's sentencing has been delayed until September while the court reviews a U.S. Supreme Court immunity decision.

Trump has also been indicted in Georgia on racketeering charges — though the case is bogged down in personnel matters — and has been ordered to pay hundreds of millions in penalties following multiple civil suits.

On Monday, a federal classified documents case against Trump was dismissed by a Florida judge on the grounds that the Department of Justice unlawfully appointed special counsel Jack Smith.

Noem spent much of the rest of her speech touting South Dakota's economy, including its comparative lack of economic restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We also have the highest birth rate in the nation," Noem said. "People are having babies because they're happy. And in South Dakota, we love babies."

Noem pointed to South Dakota's economic growth and low unemployment as evidence of the success of her administration's policies.

"South Dakota's strong economy has been a beacon of freedom for America," she said.

One of her policies is a workforce recruitment advertising campaign starring herself, which she described as the most successful such campaign in the history of South Dakota.

Shortly after the speech, South Dakota Democratic Party Executive Director Dan Ahlers said many of those economic achievements are owed to the Biden administration.

"She talked about building roads and all these things, but that's funding from Biden and Congress," he said.

Noem was considered a potential running mate for Trump until late April, when she released her book, "No Going Back." She was widely criticized for a story she related in the book about fatally shooting a dog and a goat, and for including a claim that she later retracted about meeting North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un.

Trump was formally nominated for president Monday at the convention, and announced that his running mate will be U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance, R-Ohio. Trump appeared at the convention but did not speak Monday,

just two days after he was injured during a failed assassination attempt against him at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania.

— *States Newsroom's D.C. Bureau contributed to this report.*

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.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Judge dismisses lawsuit against abortion-rights ballot measure

Losing side vows to appeal to the state Supreme Court

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JULY 15, 2024 1:51 PM

SIOUX FALLS — A judge on Monday dismissed the lawsuit challenging South Dakota's abortion-rights ballot measure, saying the litigation should have targeted the Secretary of State's Office rather than only the group that petitioned the measure onto the ballot.

The losing party vowed to appeal the decision to the state Supreme Court, leaving South Dakota voters in limbo for now over whether they'll vote Nov. 5 on restoring abortion rights.

After hearing the plaintiff's oral arguments during a motions hearing in the Minnehaha County Courthouse, Judge John Pekas ruled that since the Secretary of State's Office has already certified the measure, the arguments should have been directed against that office.

"They are the ones that should be hearing this," Pekas said.

An anti-abortion group, the Life Defense Fund, filed the lawsuit last month in state court against Dakotans for Health, the organization that gathered the petition signatures. The Life Defense Fund alleged that Dakotans for Health failed to comply with state laws regarding petition circulation.

Life Defense Fund attorney Sara Frankenstein contended that the petition process did not adhere to a 2018 law that requires sworn statements proving petition circulators' South Dakota residency. Those and other problems with the petitions and the circulation process rendered the petition invalid, she argued.

Pekas ruled that since Dakotans for Health is no longer in control of the ballot measure after the Secretary of State's Office validated it, the relief that the Life Defense Fund sought — removing the measure from the November ballot — should have been sought from the Secretary of State's Office, not solely from Dakotans for Health.

Life Defense Fund contends it followed the proper legal steps in challenging the petition signatures, saying Pekas' decision "blindsided both parties." The group said it sought additional relief, like barring Dakotans from Health from participating in petition circulation for four years.

The Secretary of State's Office validated the petition in May, after using a sample to estimate that 46,098 of the signatures were from registered South Dakota voters, surpassing the required 35,017.

Abortions are currently banned in South Dakota, except to "preserve the life of the pregnant female." The ballot measure would legalize abortions in the first trimester of pregnancy but allow the state to impose limited regulations in the second trimester and a ban in the third trimester, with exceptions for the life and health of the mother.

Representatives from the Life Defense Fund expressed disappointment as they left the courtroom and later issued a news release vowing to appeal, while advocates for the ballot measure welcomed the ruling.

"Let the people vote, let the people decide," Dakotans for Health attorney Jim Leach told reporters after the hearing.

Dakotans for Health had previously asked a federal judge to intervene and stop the state case from moving forward. The judge in the federal case had declined to intervene, saying she would wait for key issues to be settled in the state lawsuit. The dismissal of the state case likely renders further action in

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federal court moot, said Rick Weiland, chairman of Dakotans for Health.

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.

Federal judge dismisses Trump classified documents criminal case

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - JULY 15, 2024 10:41 AM

MILWAUKEE — The federal classified documents case against former President Donald Trump was dismissed Monday by a Florida judge on the grounds that the Department of Justice unlawfully appointed special counsel Jack Smith.

The order, while likely to be appealed, makes the possibility even more remote that Trump will be tried before the election on any of the federal charges pending against him. The order came on the first day of the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, during which Trump will be officially nominated as the 2024 GOP presidential candidate.

Trump, who on Saturday was injured at a Pennsylvania rally in what is being investigated as an attempted assassination, has also been federally charged in Washington, D.C., for his alleged attempts to subvert the 2020 presidential election results. The case is pending as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court's presidential immunity decision.

In May, Trump was convicted of 34 felonies in New York state court for falsifying business records related to a hush money payment ahead of the 2016 presidential election. Trump's sentencing has been delayed until September while the court reviews the federal immunity decision.

Trump has also been indicted in Georgia on racketeering charges — though the case is bogged down in personnel matters — and has been ordered to pay hundreds of millions in penalties following multiple civil suits.

Trump reaction: Dismiss all 'witch hunts'

Trump, who arrived in Milwaukee Sunday, wrote on his social media platform Monday that all cases against him should be dropped following the attempt on his life by the 20-year-old gunman identified by law enforcement as the shooter. The gunman was killed at the scene.

"As we move forward in Uniting our Nation after the horrific events on Saturday, this dismissal of the Lawless Indictment in Florida should be just the first step, followed quickly by the dismissal of ALL the Witch Hunts — The January 6th Hoax in Washington, D.C., the Manhattan D.A.'s Zombie Case, the New York A.G. Scam, Fake Claims about a woman I never met (a decades old photo in a line with her then husband does not count), and the Georgia 'Perfect' Phone Call charges," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

House Speaker Mike Johnson declared the ruling "good news for America and for the rule of law" and a "critically important step" in unifying the country after Saturday's shooting in Western Pennsylvania.

In a statement issued from Milwaukee, the Louisiana Republican said, "House Republicans repeatedly argued that Special Counsel Jack Smith abused his office's authority in pursuit of President Trump, and now a federal judge has ruled Smith never possessed the authority in the first place."

"As we work to unify this country following the failed assassination attempt of President Trump, we must also work to end the lawfare and political witch hunts that have unfairly targeted President Trump and destroyed the American people's faith in our system of justice," Johnson continued.

Republican lawmakers largely echoed Johnson.

House Republican Conference Chair Elise Stefanik of New York said in a statement that she applauds Cannon's "courage and wisdom" to dismiss the case brought by the "corrupt" special counsel.

"Case Dismissed! Big win for the rule of law," South Carolina Congressman Ralph Norman wrote on X.

The GOP's Rep. Clay Higgins of Louisiana also posted on the platform: "Winning. More to come. MAGA."

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The dismissal order

In Monday's 93-page order, federal District Judge Aileen Cannon wrote Smith's appointment violates two clauses of the U.S. Constitution that govern how presidential administrations and Congress appoint and approve "Officers of the United States" and how taxpayer money can be used to pay their salaries and other expenses.

"Upon careful study of the foundational challenges raised in the Motion, the Court is convinced that Special Counsel's Smith's prosecution of this action breaches two structural cornerstones of our constitutional scheme—the role of Congress in the appointment of constitutional officers, and the role of Congress in authorizing expenditures by law," wrote Cannon, who sits on the bench in the Southern District of Florida.

She was nominated by Trump in 2020 and confirmed by the U.S. Senate later that year.

In February, Trump's team filed the motion to dismiss the case, accusing Smith of being unlawfully appointed and paid.

The classified documents case against Trump presented a historic first for the United States — a former sitting president had never been charged with federal crimes.

A federal grand jury handed up a 37-count indictment in June 2023 charging the former president and his aide Walt Nauta with felonies related to mishandling classified documents after his term in office, including storing them at his Florida Mar-a-Lago estate.

A little over a month later a new indictment was handed up, adding new charges against the former president and also adding Trump's Mar-a-Lago property manager Carlos De Oliveira as a co-defendant.

Cannon's order dismisses the July 2023 superseding indictment.

The court will now close the case and cancel any scheduled hearings. Any pending motions are considered moot, according to Cannon's order.

The Department of Justice did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Democrats slam 'misguided ruling'

Cannon's dismissal of the case was met with shock from Democrats, who view Trump's alleged mishandling of classified documents as a serious, prosecutable offense.

The indictment against Trump detailed how U.S. government documents marked "secret" and "confidential" were stored at Mar-a-Lago, an active social club in Palm Beach, in a ballroom, bathroom and shower, bedroom, office space and storage area.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement Monday that the "breathtakingly misguided ruling flies in the face of long-accepted practice and repetitive judicial precedence."

"It is wrong on the law and must be appealed immediately. This is further evidence that Judge Cannon cannot handle this case impartially and must be reassigned," the New York Democrat said.

Conor Lamb, a former congressman from Pennsylvania, wrote on X that Saturday's failed assassination on Trump does not exonerate him from taking and keeping classified records as he left the Oval Office.

"In the same way that the Secret Service's failure to protect Trump was unacceptable, it was unacceptable for Trump to fail to protect our country's secrets. Trump is a victim of the 1st but that doesn't change that he is the perpetrator of the 2nd. Accountability for both," Lamb wrote.

Not Above the Law, a coalition of 150 organizations, issued a statement calling the ruling "flatly wrong."

"The special counsel statute is clear. Its constitutionality has been upheld by multiple courts in the past, and Judge Cannon has no grounds to reject such a well-settled principle," read the statement signed by the organization's four co-chairs.

"Accountability, protecting the rule of law, and justice cannot be further delayed. We expect Judge Cannon's ruling not only to be swiftly appealed, but also promptly reversed," continued the statement from Lisa Gilbert, co-president of Public Citizen; Praveen Fernandes, vice president of the Constitutional Accountability Center; David Sievers, interim organizing director at MoveOn; and Brett Edkins, managing director for policy and political affairs at Stand Up America.

Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

Trump picks Ohio U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance as his running mate

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND ARIANA FIGUEROA - JULY 15, 2024 2:29 PM

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — Donald Trump announced Ohio U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance as his running mate Monday during the first day of the Republican National Convention, capping off months of speculation about who would get the nod as his vice presidential pick.

Vance has not been a member of Congress long, having less than two years experience as a senator and having voted against major bipartisan bills throughout his tenure in the upper chamber.

Before becoming a U.S. lawmaker, Vance served in the Marine Corps during the Iraq war, worked as a venture capitalist and wrote a book about growing up in Appalachia. He holds a law degree from Yale.

"After lengthy deliberation and thought, and considering the tremendous talents of many others, I have decided that the person best suited to assume the position of Vice President of the United States is Senator J.D. Vance of the Great State of Ohio," Trump, who will be nominated as the 2024 Republican presidential candidate on Thursday night, posted on social media.

"J.D. has had a very successful business career in Technology and Finance, and now, during the Campaign, will be strongly focused on the people he fought so brilliantly for, the American Workers and Farmers in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Minnesota, and far beyond....," Trump added.

Trump's former Vice President Mike Pence has distanced himself from Trump since the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol building — requiring Trump to find a different person to join him on the ticket this year.

Pence was in the Capitol that day, when a pro-Trump mob attacked police officers, broke into building and disrupted Congress' certification of the electoral college votes for President Joe Biden.

Pence has been critical of how the Republican Party has changed under Trump's leadership, including rejecting how the platform evolved on abortion this year.

The Biden-Harris campaign immediately slammed the selection of Vance.

"Donald Trump picked J.D. Vance as his running mate because Vance will do what Mike Pence wouldn't on January 6: bend over backwards to enable Trump and his extreme MAGA agenda, even if it means breaking the law and no matter the harm to the American people," said Biden-Harris 2024 Chair Jen O'Malley Dillon.

"Over the next three and a half months, we will spend every single day making the case between the two starkly contrasting visions Americans will choose between at the ballot box this November: the Biden-Harris ticket who's focused on uniting the country, creating opportunity for everyone, and lowering costs; or Trump-Vance — whose harmful agenda will take away Americans' rights, hurt the middle class, and make life more expensive — all while benefiting the ultra-rich and greedy corporations."

Vance background

Vance was born in Middletown, Ohio in August 1984. After graduating from high school in 2003 he enlisted in the Marine Corps, later deploying to the Iraq War.

He attended Ohio State University, where he received a bachelor's degree in political science and philosophy in 2009. Vance went on to attend Yale Law School, graduating in 2013 before working for the law firm Sidley Austin LLP.

Vance gained national attention with his 2016 memoir, "Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis," which tells the story of him growing up in poverty in the Rust Belt. However, the book faced backlash from many historians and journalists over his depictions of Appalachia and the people who live there.

The 39-year-old worked in San Francisco in the tech industry as a venture capitalist. He served as a principal at one of the firms of Peter Thiel, the co-founder of PayPal.

Vance later moved back to Ohio and raised more than \$90 million to co-found a venture capital firm in Cincinnati, Narya Capital, which received financial backing from Thiel.

Vance ran his first campaign for U.S. Senate in 2022, defeating Democratic candidate and former U.S. House Rep. Tim Ryan with 53% of the vote.

Since being sworn into office in January 2023, Vance has voted against several big-ticket legislative items,

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including the law that raised the debt limit, the national defense policy bill and two must-pass government funding packages.

Aid to Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan

Vance also voted against legislation that held \$95 billion in military and humanitarian assistance for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan as well as a ban on TikTok within the United States unless the social media app's Chinese parent company sold it.

Vance was among the 18 senators who voted against that emergency spending bill heading to President Joe Biden's desk. Another 79 senators voted to approve the legislation.

During floor debate on the supplemental spending package, Vance spoke out against sending more aid and arms to Ukraine, arguing that there were parallels between its fight to eject Russia from its borders and the U.S. war in Iraq.

"And the same exact arguments are being applied today, that you are a fan of Vladimir Putin if you don't like our Ukraine policy, or you are a fan of some terrible tyrannical idea because you think maybe America should be more focused on the border of its own country than on someone else's," Vance said.

"This war fever, this inability for us to actually process what is going on in our world to make rational decisions is the scariest part of this entire debate," he added.

Bipartisan efforts

Vance has also worked across the aisle on bipartisan legislation during his somewhat brief tenure in the U.S. Senate.

He sponsored a bill alongside Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, Pennsylvania Sens. Bob Casey and John Fetterman, all three of whom are Democrats, to address rail safety in the aftermath of the Norfolk Southern train derailment in East Palestine.

Vance wrote in a statement released when the bill was unveiled in March 2023 that with the legislation "Congress has a real opportunity to ensure that what happened in East Palestine will never happen again."

"We owe every American the peace of mind that their community is protected from a catastrophe of this kind," Vance wrote. "Action to prevent future disasters is critical, but we must never lose sight of the needs of the Ohioans living in East Palestine and surrounding communities."

The bipartisan legislation has yet to advance in the Senate to either a committee markup or a floor vote.

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States pledged hundreds of troops and spent millions to help Texas at the border so far this year

The federal government has deployed National Guard members to the border for years. States dig into their own budgets to send even more personnel.

BY: STATES NEWSROOM - JULY 15, 2024 9:11 AM

More than a dozen Republican governors gathered in Eagle Pass in February, heeding a call from Texas Gov. Greg Abbott to confront what he labeled "President Joe Biden's border crisis." The governors, along with other GOP state leaders, vowed to send another round of National Guard troops from their states to the Texas-Mexico border.

With shifts in pandemic-era federal border policies, there'd been a sharp increase in migrant encounters in the latter half of 2023. But then January saw a steep 50% drop.

Still, the governors told their constituents that they needed to send more people to assist Texas in fend-

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ing off an “invasion,” as both Abbott and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis have called it, or fight drug smuggling. But the deployments have been widely criticized as political grandstanding — opportunities to take photos near personnel in uniform on the border while feeding nationalism and fear during an election year.

States Newsroom outlets across the country have tracked state deployments and expenses so far this year as part of a collaboration with Texas Tribune and Stateline to get a sense of what becomes of these promises, and what those deployments look and feel like at the border.

States generally chip in anywhere from five to 200 troops for deployments that can last anywhere from a couple of weeks to months. Typically, the funding comes from state budgets and state emergency funds.

The federal government also deploys thousands of National Guard members to the border year-round.

Gen. Daniel Hokanson, the chief of the U.S. National Guard Bureau who will retire Sept. 1, told the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense in mid-June that nearly 2,500 troops were serving at the southwest border under federal command. Sen. Jon Tester, a Democrat from Montana, asked the general about the impact of this deployment on the guard’s other duties.

“There is no military training value for what we do [on the border],” Hokanson said. “For our guardsmen there, they might as well be deployed to Kuwait or somewhere overseas, because they’re away from their families. They’re there doing mission sets that are not directly applicable to their military skill set. That time, I think, would be better utilized building readiness to deter our adversaries.” — Marisa Demarco

STATE DEPLOYMENTS

Texas

Gov. Greg Abbott launched Operation Lone Star in March 2021, soon after Biden took office. Since then, the state has deployed thousands of people from the Texas Department of Public Safety and Texas National Guard along the roughly 1,250-mile border it shares with Mexico.

It was an unprecedented activation of soldiers for a state operation. Usually the federal government, not a state, deploys troops for long-term assignments and gives them much more notice. Soon after the operation began, guard members began to complain about being paid late or not at all, living in cramped mobile homes and feeling underutilized.

Today, 97% of troops currently on the mission volunteered to be deployed, according to guard leadership. The state also just finished building the first phase of a new base in Eagle Pass to house National Guard members. The base is designed to house up to 2,300 people.

Texas has spent more than \$11 billion on Operation Lone Star to date, but it’s not clear how much of the money has been spent on the National Guard deployment, and the state hasn’t divulged exactly how many people have been sent to the border. — Alejandro Serrano / The Texas Tribune

South Dakota

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem’s deployment of 60 National Guard troops in the spring is the state’s fifth deployment to the U.S.-Mexico border since 2021.

Noem initiated three of the deployments in response to calls for help from Texas, and the other two were federal.

One of the deployments Noem initiated was mostly funded by a \$1 million donation from Tennessee billionaire Willis Johnson. That donation and Noem’s use of it sparked criticism from Democrats, who said it gave the appearance that the South Dakota National Guard is available to do the political bidding of wealthy donors.

Noem funded the remaining costs and the two other deployments she initiated with money from the state’s Emergency and Disaster Fund, despite a state law that defines emergencies and disasters as events “in any part of the state.” She declined to deploy guard troops to flood-ravaged areas in South Dakota in late June. Her use of the fund has drawn bipartisan criticism from some legislators, but a majority endorsed the practice during the last legislative session.

Previous deployments have cost the Emergency and Disaster Fund at least \$1.3 million, and \$1.5 mil-

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lion is budgeted from the fund for this year's. No further deployments are planned yet. — Seth Tupper / South Dakota Searchlight

Montana

After Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte made a trip to the border earlier in the year, he declared that he would send members of the Montana National Guard to Texas at the request of the Texas governor, a fellow Republican.

Ten troops were called to active duty for vehicle repair and maintenance.

They returned home in mid-May after a monthlong deployment, where Gianforte met with them for breakfast, and he declared May "Military Appreciation Month" in Montana.

Despite public document requests being filed in April, no information has yet been released on the expense. — Darrell Ehrlick / Daily Montanan

Indiana

Indiana's National Guard has estimated the cost of a 10-month, 50-member deployment at \$7 million. The troops were called up under state active duty, meaning Indiana pays their salaries. That budget also covers transportation, supplies and maintenance.

Guard officials have said they will use existing appropriations in their budget for the costs.

Gov. Eric Holcomb made the move this year — his last in office. He didn't need legislative action. There has been little debate on the matter. Republican lawmakers issued supportive statements, and Democrats have been opposed.

Troops deployed in early April. That month, an Indiana guard member assigned to Operation Lone Star shot a migrant who was attacking another migrant, according to a U.S. Border Patrol bulletin.

"I am beyond thankful to this individual who potentially saved two lives by defending them and themselves. I'm reassured that the training that they got before they deployed and assumed this active duty on the southern border was beneficial," Holcomb told reporters on a Zoom. — Niki Kelly / Indiana Capital Chronicle

New Hampshire

New Hampshire National Guard troops have been deployed to the southern border twice since 2020, each time for about a year and by the federal government. From April through early June, 15 soldiers from New Hampshire were stationed at a Texas National Guard base camp in Del Rio, about an hour from Eagle Pass.

Two months earlier, during an hourlong discussion with Gov. Chris Sununu, the Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee's Democrats in February asked the governor how much of an impact 15 National Guard members could have at a border crossing seeing thousands of migrants a day.

Sen. Lou D'Allesandro, a Manchester Democrat, said a better response could come from Republicans in Congress who blocked a border deal that cleared the U.S. Senate. "Although it's a wonderful thought in terms of support, it seems to be that the real issue is that Congress isn't funding what they should be funding to protect the southern border," D'Allesandro told Sununu.

The committee's Republicans praised Sununu's plan to send troops to the border. Senate President Jeb Bradley noted the governor had requested the funding for the 2024 deployment under the civil emergency law to address the state's drug overdose deaths, which have topped 400 yearly since 2015.

The three-month deployment cost the state \$850,000, which covered salary and benefits. New Hampshire paid the Texas National Guard \$200 a day per soldier for room and board, as well as other expenses at its base in Del Rio. — Annmarie Timmins / New Hampshire Bulletin

Idaho

In Idaho Gov. Brad Little's State of the State Address in January, he announced he would send two teams of five state police troopers to the border to "learn the best tactics to respond to those who smuggle and

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abuse vulnerable people.”

The 10 officers were sent to the border in April for three weeks and partnered with the Texas Department of Public Safety for the mission.

“We are determined to utilize this training to enhance our efforts in Idaho and to combat human trafficking with utmost efficiency,” Idaho State Police Col. Kedrick Wills said. “It’s vital for our troopers to face repeated real-world scenarios to sharpen their skills.”

The governor this year recommended \$200,000 to the Idaho state police budget to send troopers to the Texas-Mexico border for training. The total cost of the trip was \$205,655.

One state police officer said the majority of the time was spent along the border wall assisting the Texas Department of Public Safety and the National Guard with traffic stops and arrests, then turning people over to the Border Patrol. — Mia Maldonado / Idaho Capital Sun

Nebraska

Republican Gov. Jim Pillen has continued a push by his predecessor, former Gov. Pete Ricketts, to send state-paid law enforcement and National Guard members to the Texas border with Mexico.

In 2023, Pillen sent 61 National Guard members and 10 state troopers to the border, and Ricketts sent 32 state troopers to the Del Rio area in 2021.

This year, Nebraska sent 24 National Guard members for roughly three months from April 1 through June 27. Ten state patrol troopers deployed for two weeks from April 14-28. No additional deployments have been announced.

This year’s two border deployments ordered by Pillen cost a combined \$1.27 million. The state says it paid \$1.2 million of that total using interest accrued from the second wave of \$48 million in federal pandemic relief funds that Congress set aside for rental assistance.

State taxpayers covered the remaining \$71,675 from the state’s general fund, the Nebraska state patrol confirmed.

Pillen has argued that public safety and national security dictate the need for every state to send help, speaking often about the importance of doing what it takes to stem the flow of migrants at the southern border. He has dismissed questions about the cost-effectiveness of state efforts.

Pillen, like Ricketts, has faced criticism of his efforts from some Democrats and from groups that advocate for immigrant rights and those representing Latino voices in Nebraska. They argue that his push is political and his rhetoric about crime and drugs at the border contributes to the animosity and fear local Latinos face. — Aaron Sanderford / Nebraska Examiner

Iowa

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds has deployed National Guard troops and state law enforcement officers to the border multiple times in recent years. There are currently five Iowa National Guard troops in Texas who arrived April 1 and will be there through Sept. 30, providing public affairs assistance and vehicle maintenance for Operation Lone Star. Earlier this year, 110 troops were deployed to the Texas border from April 1 through May 3, assisting the Texas Military Department. Eight Iowa Department of Public Safety troopers and two sergeants went to work with Texas DPS from March 31 through April 27.

The cost of the 2024 border deployment has not yet been released, according to Iowa National Guard officials.

Previous deployments saw 109 National Guard members and 31 Iowa DPS personnel assisting at the border in 2023, and 28 Iowa State Patrol troopers in 2021. While the deployments over the past two years have been financed using federal American Rescue Plan funding, with the 2023 mission costing \$1.93 million, according to the governor, the 2021 deployment was paid for with \$300,000 in other state funds

Reynolds has also spoken in favor of the 2023 Texas law — currently under injunction — allowing state law enforcement to arrest migrants suspected of illegally entering the country. She signed into law a similar measure this year that was set to take effect July 1 but is under a preliminary injunction following

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challenges from the U.S. Department of Justice and civil rights organizations.

The blocked Iowa statute would have also allowed state law enforcement to arrest and charge immigrants if they have been previously deported, removed or denied admission from the U.S., or if they have an order to leave the country. Judges would have been allowed to order people charged with "illegal reentry" crimes to leave the country or face prison time, with state agencies and law enforcement authorized to transport them to U.S. ports of entry to ensure they leave the country.

State Attorney General Brenna Bird appealed the injunction ruling on Iowa's law in June, seeking to begin enforcement. — Robin Opsahl / Iowa Capital Dispatch

Missouri

When Gov. Mike Parson announced a deployment of 200 National Guard troops and 22 state highway patrol officers in February, he cited a visit to the region that he said showed it was a "crisis." There has been some debate over the deployment, which was funded in part by a special appropriation bill.

During a February budget hearing, lawmakers focused on short-staffing at the state patrol, noting that the officers were being sent despite being 132 short of full strength.

"Does that not put Missouri at risk when we're sending even more troopers away when we already have a deficit of 132?" asked state Rep. Deb Lavender, a Democrat from Manchester.

Col. Eric Olson, superintendent of the patrol, said only volunteers were going, and they had been selected from eight of the patrol's nine regions.

"Geographically, we spread that out," Olson said, "and we feel like we will be able to manage this event as well as take care of our duties here at home."

There was very little opposition to the actual spending once troopers were deployed in March. National Guard members were sent on rotations of 50 over three months at a cost of \$2 million, while patrol officers were split into two teams and sent to Texas for 32 days at a cost of \$206,000. The deployments were set to end on June 13. The money came from the state's general fund.

The Missouri budget for the fiscal year that began July 1 included \$8.8 million to continue deployments for a full year, but Parson has said he will not extend the deployment and vetoed \$6 million of that appropriation.

"We don't need that money," he said. "I think that was more of a political statement people were trying to make."

In his letter to lawmakers explaining the veto, Parson wrote the National Guard's deployment to the southern border has already concluded. If there is a need to deploy again, Parson wrote, there is enough money already in the budget to "support another short-term mission." — Rudi Keller / Missouri Independent

Tennessee

Gov. Bill Lee has continued to deploy Tennessee National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border since 2021, when he first sent 300 troops on a yearlong mission.

In March, Lee affirmed he would send two waves of 50 active-duty soldiers as part of Operation Lone Star, in addition to the 123 deployed in October 2023.

State funding for these deployments have ramped up through the years. In fiscal year 2022, Tennessee spent \$500,000. In 2024, it jumped to \$1.4 million. The state government's fiscal year 2025 started July 1, and \$5 million in nonrecurring funds was budgeted. — Holly McCall / Tennessee Lookout

Utah

After Utah Gov. Spencer Cox's February visit to Texas' southern border, he deployed a small number of troops. The Republican governor announced he would send five people from the Utah National Guard engineer battalion to maintain military equipment, plus one sergeant and four officers from the Utah Highway Patrol's Criminal Interdiction Team, which specializes in drug investigations.

The deployment for both groups was scheduled on Feb. 26. The highway patrol team went for 30 days

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at a cost of \$100,000, while the Utah National Guard battalion was sent for 14 days costing \$50,000. Funding came from the Governor's Office's emergency fund.

Legislative leaders at the helm of the Republican-supermajority Utah Legislature applauded the deployment when it was announced earlier this year, while Democratic leaders pushed back, arguing it shouldn't be Utah's role. Senate Minority Leader Luz Escamilla, D-Salt Lake City, and Senate President Stuart Adams, R-Layton, agreed, however, that Congress and the White House should seek solutions to the nation's broken immigration system.

The Utah Democratic Party criticized Cox for playing a part in "the MAGA Republican party's ongoing political grandstanding in immigration."

Asked whether the governor has sent or will send any additional resources, a spokesperson said, to her knowledge, no additional deployments are promised or planned. A spokesperson for the Utah National Guard echoed that. — Katie McKellar / Utah News Dispatch

Arkansas

Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders has spent more than \$2 million in state funding to send 120 Arkansas National Guard members to the southwest border twice since taking office in January 2023.

Eighty guard members were deployed for a mission that lasted from June 24 to Aug. 5, 2023, and cost \$1.3 million. This year, another 40 were activated for a \$1 million mission from April 1 to May 30.

Both active-duty missions ordered by the governor were paid for with state funds, said Maj. Cibeles Ramirez-Rodriguez, Arkansas National Guard spokesperson.

Additionally, 50 guard members were deployed to the southwest border from October 2022 to October 2023 for a Title 10 federal mission in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Ramirez-Rodriguez said. The state guard also sent 40 members to the southern border in 2021 for 90 days. That mission was primarily to recover and repair vehicles belonging to a Texas task force.

Troops from the Arkansas Guard were deployed between 2006 and 2008 in support of the federal Operation Jump Start under former President George W. Bush, with the state providing more than 750 soldiers and airmen in support of Border Patrol. — Antoinette Grajeda / Arkansas Advocate

Louisiana

Gov. Jeff Landry announced July 1 that engineers with the Louisiana National Guard would deploy in Texas to assist with border security through mid-November. Their assignment extends Louisiana's commitment of 150 personnel from its state militia spread across three 30-day rotations.

Landry said the additional time guard members will spend in Texas will not create an additional cost to taxpayers. State lawmakers approved \$3 million for Operation Lone Star earlier this year, and there is \$800,000 remaining from that allocation, according to the governor's office.

Landry is one of many Republican governors who have sent National Guard troops to Texas in support of Abbott's border policies. In addition to busing migrants to Democratic-led cities, the Texas governor placed razor wire along the banks of the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass to hinder unauthorized border crossings.

In a letter to legislative leaders, Landry said Abbott and the Texas National Guard leadership requested additional engineering support from Louisiana. The governor said he has worked with Brig. Gen. Thomas Friloux of the Louisiana National Guard and Jacques Thibodeaux of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness "to ensure that this will not impair our ability to mobilize troops here at home if necessary."

Louisiana National Guard members are among the first emergency response personnel put to work ahead of a pending disaster and during the recovery stages. The Atlantic hurricane season started June 1 and lasts until the end of November. — Greg LaRose / Louisiana Illuminator

Georgia

The Georgia Army National Guard has fewer than 20 troops supporting Texas' border operations, accord-

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ing to spokesman Maj. William Carraway.

Carraway said the deployments are paid for through Texas' Emergency Management Assistance Compact and directed questions about funding to the Texas National Guard and Texas governor's office. He declined to give a specific timeline but said the troops likely arrived in early May and that they wouldn't be there long.

"It's a short-term thing," he said. "They're just going over there, and they're coming back. So they're not going to be over there for years or anything like that."

Gov. Brian Kemp announced the deployment in a Feb. 13 press conference in the Georgia Capitol, where he blamed Biden for what he termed a crisis on the southern border. Kemp said the troops will be responsible for assisting with the construction of a forward command post on the border.

Kemp has made multiple visits to the U.S.-Mexico border since he was first elected in 2019 and made immigration a major issue in both of his successful campaigns, suggesting in a 2018 commercial that he may need to round up "criminal illegals" in his big truck. — Ross Williams / Georgia Recorder

Florida

Gov. Ron DeSantis announced on Feb. 1 that Florida would deploy up to 1,000 members of the Florida National Guard and Florida State Guard to assist Texas with Operation Lone Star. That was in addition to the more than 90 officers from the Florida highway patrol, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Florida Department of Law Enforcement that were already on the border.

A couple of weeks later on Feb. 23, DeSantis announced he would send more troops to Texas for border security — 50 National Guard members and another 76 Florida highway patrol officers.

How many troops were sent or what it cost the state remains unknown. Gov. Ron DeSantis' press office did not respond to requests for comment.

The state budget this year provides nearly \$20 million to "restore and build upon" the Florida State Guard, one of the state agencies that has been sent to deter migrants in Texas and South Florida.

Gov. DeSantis signed measures in 2022 and 2023 that included an additional \$12 million to continue to relocate immigrants to "sanctuary jurisdictions." This year, there is no funding specifically allocated for those relocations.

A spokesperson for the Florida National Guard said troops have also deployed as part of the federal mission in 2021 and 2023, with the next company set to depart in October and return a year later. — Mitch Perry / Florida Phoenix

FEDERAL DEPLOYMENTS

North Dakota

About 100 members of the National Guard deployed to the southern border in August 2023 under state orders from Gov. Doug Burgum. Members of the 188th Engineer Company, they were integrated into the Texas Department of Public Safety and Military Department for one month as part of Operation Lone Star. The North Dakota Emergency Commission authorized up to \$2.2 million for the deployment through a loan with the Bank of North Dakota. About \$1.7 million was spent.

Since 2021, members of the North Dakota National Guard have supported U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents every October under federal orders through the Department of Defense. North Dakota National Guard members will complete their third yearlong deployment to the southern border in the fall.

The deployed units, consisting of between 100 to 125 soldiers, are tasked with assisting with surveillance efforts, maintenance and other needs, according to the National Guard.

The 142nd Engineer Battalion will head to the southern border in the fall on federal orders under the direction of U.S. Northern Command and Joint Task Force North, according to a guard spokesperson. The unit will consist of about 50 service members. — Michael Achterling / North Dakota Monitor

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After a request from Texas' governor, in June 2023, Republican Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine authorized 14 Ohio state highway patrol officers and supervisors to go to Texas to help with border surveillance for two weeks. They were not tasked with making arrests. A spokesperson for DeWine said in May that he did not believe Ohio highway patrol troopers had been down to the border at all in 2024.

Ohio National Guard spokesperson Heidi Griesmer said Ohio troops have had a continuous presence at the border since October 2020.

"Over the past four years, Ohio has deployed approximately 375 Ohio National Guard members to support the Southwest Border operations at the request of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Northern Command, including Ohio National Guard members who deployed in October 2023 and remain there today," she said.

For operational security reasons, she said, they would not reveal the number of guard members currently at the border. Nor could she confirm whether there would be future deployments. When asked for the costs, she said they don't have a figure for expenditures.

"Ohio National Guard members' deployments have been paid for by the U.S. Department of Defense," Griesmer said. — David DeWitt and Marty Schladen / Ohio Capital Journal

Alaska

Alaska plans to send 20 National Guard members and two helicopters to the border as part of the federal Department of Defense's ongoing border mission, according to a spokesperson for Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy, a Republican. They are scheduled to support the federal Border Patrol for an estimated nine months, starting in early October. While there are no official orders yet, the state continues to move forward with planning.

This mission is entirely federally funded and not related to Texas's Operation Lone Star, according to Dunleavy's office. The state does not have plans to send the Alaska National Guard to support Operation Lone Star, the governor's spokesperson said.

Dunleavy said in February that he was interested in supporting Texas's operations, but cited the cost as a potential concern. The estimated cost was \$1 million per month to support 100 guard members, and the Legislature did not include funding for this in the annual budget it passed in May, which Dunleavy signed into law in June for the budget year starting in July. — Andrew Kitchenman / Alaska Beacon

Kansas

The Kansas Legislature allocated \$15.7 million to send Kansas National Guard troops to Texas to assist with the U.S.-Mexico border.

Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly vetoed the funding, but she was overridden by GOP supermajorities in both the House and Senate. That means the funding remains in place through fiscal year 2025 but is unlikely to be spent.

"As the Kansas National Guard's commander-in-chief, it is my constitutional authority to direct the National Guard while on state duty," Kelly said when she vetoed the funding. "It is not the Legislature's role to direct the operations or call out the National Guard."

The governor also said "lawmakers in Washington must act to solve this issue."

Still, there are Kansas National Guard troops at the U.S. border as part of federal security efforts, whose deployments are federally funded by the Department of Defense. — Sherman Smith / Kansas Reflector

Michigan

Dave Kennedy, a spokesperson for the Michigan National Guard, said there are no troops deployed to the U.S. southern border, nor any scheduled for fiscal year 2024, which ends Sept. 30. While negotiations are ongoing for the FY 2025 budget, there has been no discussion of additional funding for deployments to that region.

However, that hasn't stopped the Michigan Freedom Caucus, a small group of far-right lawmakers in

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the Michigan House, from demanding Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer send guard troops to Texas or Arizona.

The legislators banded together during the current session after Republicans moved into the minority in Lansing for the first time since 2010. The caucus says the military personnel are needed to help stop what they referred to as "sabotage" of the nation's borders. Several members also visited the border in February.

Whitmer's office has noted that the Michigan National Guard has made several deployments to assist at the southern border in the past few years as part of federal operations, during both the Trump and Biden administrations, including 175 members of the 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment, who were sent to locations in Fort Bliss, Laredo and El Paso, Texas, from March 2020 to March 2021. — Jon King / Michigan Advance

Pennsylvania

In March, the GOP-controlled Pennsylvania Senate voted along party lines 27-22 to pass a resolution urging Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro to send Pennsylvania National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border. Introduced by Republican state Sen. Doug Mastriano, the resolution came the same day as a U.S. Supreme Court preliminary ruling that allowed state authorities in Texas to deport people who crossed the border into the U.S.

Mastriano, who ran for Pennsylvania governor in 2022 and lost, argued that immigration was as big a concern for Pennsylvania as it is for border states, noting that in 2006, then-Gov. Ed Rendell, a Democrat, authorized 500 Pennsylvania National Guard soldiers and airmen to deploy to the Texas border on a volunteer basis for "Operation Jump Start" during the George W. Bush administration.

Shapiro ultimately did not send troops. "This issue requires leaders in both parties to step up and deliver real, comprehensive solutions – not more the failed talking points and political grandstanding that have brought us decades without immigration reform," Shapiro spokesperson Manuel Bonder said. — Peter Hall/ Pennsylvania Capital-Star

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Eagle Pass residents have mixed feelings about sharing their city with the National Guard

Texas has sent thousands of soldiers to the border as part of Gov. Greg Abbott's multibillion-dollar initiative Operation Lone Star. No border town has felt their presence more than Eagle Pass.

BY: ALEJANDRO SERRANO - JULY 15, 2024 9:10 AM

EAGLE PASS — From a shaded bench off Main Street, next to the city park the state of Texas seized in January for its border operations, Jessie Fuentes sometimes likes to count the number of humvees, Department of Public Safety SUVs and unmarked trucks driven by uniformed soldiers that pass him.

Often, Fuentes said, he loses count.

"You just never wanna see your community change into a militarized zone," said Fuentes, a retired school teacher who now runs a business giving kayak and canoe tours and lessons on the Rio Grande. "It makes you feel hopeless."

Since Gov. Greg Abbott launched Operation Lone Star in March 2021, Texas has deployed thousands of National Guard troops — along with DPS troopers — to the border. The soldiers have patrolled the riverbank with drones and guns, installed countless coils of razor wire along its banks and at least once spied on migrants using WhatsApp. More recently, they have turned to crowd control, trying to contain groups of migrants that have pushed through state barriers and shooting pepper balls to discourage crossings.

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To support the operation, 18 other states have deployed roughly 2,400 troops to the Texas-Mexico border in the last two years, Major General Thomas M. Suelzer, leader of the Texas National Guard, testified during a recent state legislative committee hearing.

"In this crisis, every state is now a border state," Suelzer said.

Texas' unprecedented push to secure the border has defied laws and court rulings that say immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility.

In many ways, Eagle Pass has become the focal point of the state's efforts to bolster the border. Texas is building an 80-acre military base with a capacity to house more than 2,000 National Guard troops. The state also took over Shelby Park, where Main Street begins, against the city's wishes and put up a wall of shipping containers strung with razor wire along the river.

People in the city of about 30,000 have mixed feelings about being surrounded by troops. Some agree with the state's Republican leaders that the armed forces — mostly standing at the edge of the river staring at Mexico — are needed to keep migrants from entering the country. Others see it as an unwanted invasion of their tight-knit community by the state.

Either way, they don't have a say about what the state does in Eagle Pass, where Fuentes traces his family's history back 240 years.

He used to launch tours from the public boat ramp in Shelby Park, but that's been reduced to rare trips because the state has limited access to the park, he said. Where he once highlighted the beauty he grew up around, he now shows mostly out-of-town visitors the state's installations — a floating barrier in the river aimed at preventing migrants from crossing, rows of gleaming concertina wire — and talks about how it's affecting the river.

"To me, it's just upsetting that they're messing everything up," he said. "This is our ecosystem. This is what brings us life."

At the Eagle Grocery near Shelby Park, 80-year-old Benny Rodriguez, who runs the store with his wife, said he supports the National Guard.

"They mean well, they want to do a good job and we wish them the best of luck," he said. "All we want is for Eagle Pass to continue striving, providing jobs and for everybody to make a good living."

Maverick County Sheriff Tom Schmerber said neither he or his 34 deputies interact much with National Guard troops. Their presence in the community benefits the town when soldiers are off duty and spend money at restaurants and stores, he said.

Still, he'd like the state to leave Shelby Park. The city can no longer host celebrations there, people can no longer relax on the riverbank and kids can no longer play soccer, he said.

"It should be given back to the city," Schmerber said.

In and around the 47-acre park, National Guard troops stand guard at an entrance gate and walk along the riverbank where families used to fish and unwind in the open area near the water. Now the quiet along the river is sometimes broken by the roar of airboats and the occasional chopping of a helicopter's blades as soldiers patrol by water and air.

Eagle Pass was a hot spot for migrant crossings as recently as December, when thousands of migrants entered the country through the city during record migration across the southern border. However, fewer migrants have tried entering the country through Eagle Pass since then. Border Patrol agents in the Del Rio sector, which includes Eagle Pass, recorded the biggest decrease in migrant encounters at the beginning of this year compared to their counterparts throughout the rest of the southwest border.

While encounters in the Del Rio sector have dropped 66% from May 2023 to May 2024, the El Paso sector, which includes New Mexico, has seen a smaller 10% drop over the same period.

Earlier this year, large groups of migrants regularly gathered on the Mexican bank of the dry riverbed in El Paso, waiting for an opportunity to cut through the concertina wire and push through so they could surrender and request asylum. Following two mass rushes at one border gate this spring, state troopers arrested hundreds of migrants and charged them with misdemeanor rioting — an unusual move that is now being reviewed by local courts.

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National Guard soldiers also began firing pepperballs near migrants, trying to break up groups and deter them from approaching border barriers, according to Guard leadership. Soldiers are trained not to shoot migrants with the projectiles, which contain a chemical that causes irritation to the eyes, nose and throat, but migrants in Ciudad Juárez say they have been hit by the munitions, which left welts and bruises.

In the hours between dusk and dawn on a recent Monday, troops flew a drone overhead looking for migrants hiding in the brush. Others patrolled on foot, looking across the river, where empty gallons of water, shoes and bras left by migrants on their way north littered the dry riverbed.

A few migrants crawled into the U.S after several men cut a hole in concertina wire with a bolt cutter. A moment later, a truck with a wailing siren appeared.

"Get back inside! Hurry up," a National Guard soldier yelled at several dozen migrants who approached the wire.

"Go back to Venezuela," another one yelled.

A majority of the group quickly retreated.

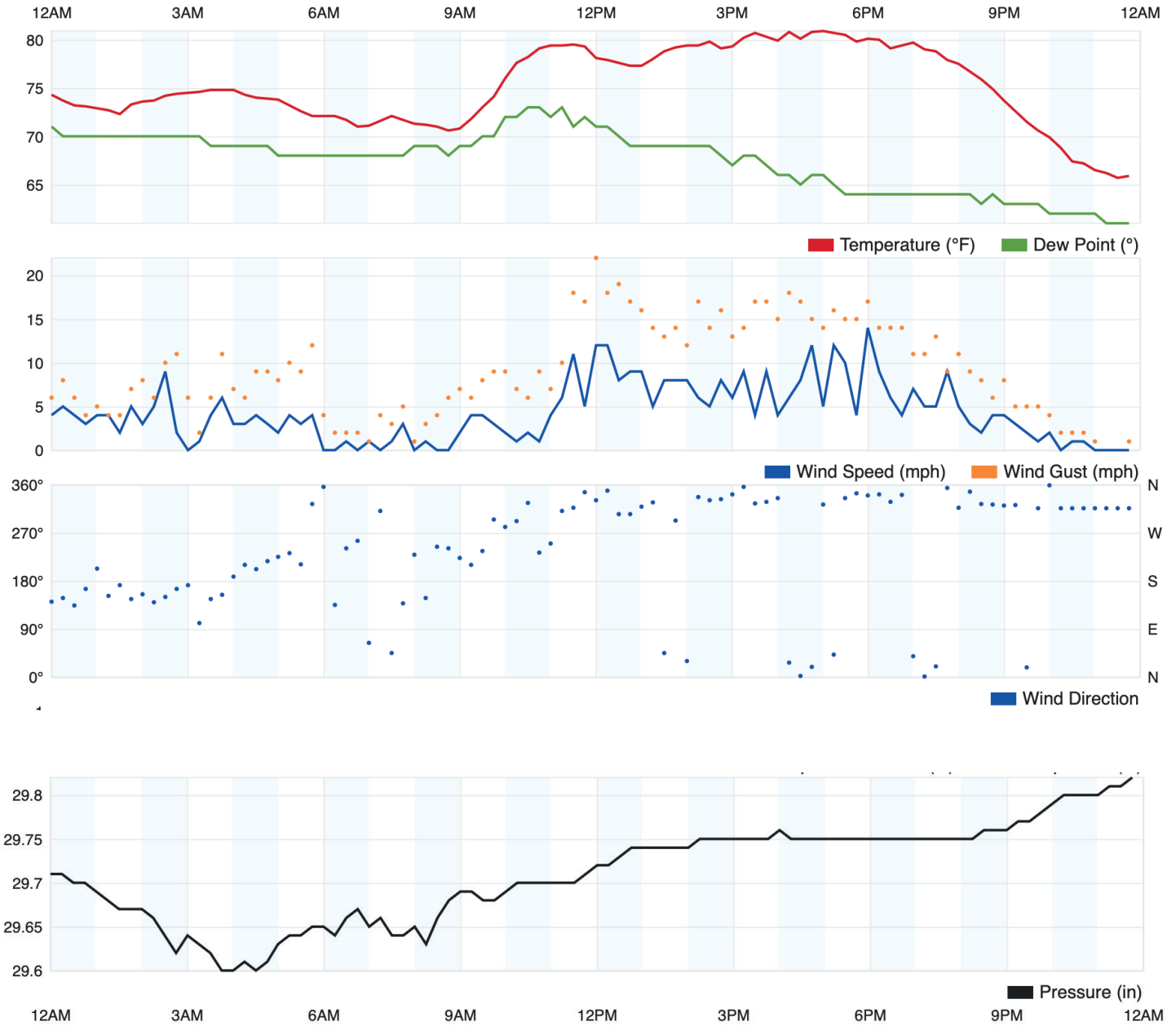
Uriel J. García contributed to this story.

Alejandro Serrano is a general assignment reporter for The Texas Tribune. Before joining the Tribune in the fall of 2022, he reported on a variety of topics for the Houston Chronicle, including education and the Houston Independent School District. The Long Island, New York native received his bachelor's degree in journalism from Northeastern University. He is based in Houston and speaks fluent Spanish.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Wednesday

Wednesday
Night

Thursday



70 % → 20 %

High: 79 °F

Showers
Likely then
Slight Chance
Showers



Low: 53 °F

Mostly Clear



High: 77 °F

Sunny



Low: 53 °F

Mostly Clear



High: 83 °F

Sunny

Today

Highs: 74-81°F

Wednesday

Highs: 71-84°F

www.weather.gov/abr

Probability of Precipitation Forecast (%)

	7/16 Tue													
	6am	7am	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm
Aberdeen	15	40	70	60	60	45	20	10	10	10	5	10	5	0
Britton	15	20	35	30	25	10	5	5	5	10	5	5	10	5
Brookings	5	10	10	10	20	35	35	40	30	25	25	20	15	10
Chamberlain	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	10	10	10	5	5	5
Clark	5	10	15	35	55	65	50	30	15	15	10	15	10	0
Eagle Butte	30	35	35	25	15	10	5	5	5	10	15	10	10	5
Ellendale	30	50	40	25	25	10	0	5	5	10	15	0	0	10
Eureka	40	65	75	45	45	30	5	5	5	10	20	5	0	0
Gettysburg	25	40	50	35	45	30	10	10	5	5	15	10	5	5
Huron	15	20	25	30	40	50	40	30	20	10	10	10	10	5
Kennebec	10	10	15	15	10	15	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	5
McIntosh	60	60	60	25	25	10	0	5	5	10	15	5	0	0
Milbank	5	5	15	30	50	45	30	20	25	20	15	10	15	5
Miller	20	20	25	40	40	45	35	15	15	10	5	5	5	5
Mobridge	35	50	50	30	25	10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
Murdo	5	5	10	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	15	15	15	5
Pierre	15	15	15	15	15	15	10	10	5	5	10	5	5	5
Redfield	10	20	25	45	60	55	50	25	20	15	10	15	5	5
Sisseton	10	15	25	25	25	10	10	15	10	5	5	10	5	5
Watertown	5	5	15	35	50	55	45	30	20	20	20	15	10	5
Webster	5	10	35	60	60	45	30	15	15	10	10	20	5	5
Wheaton	5	10	15	15	10	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	20	10

Increasing clouds today with a 30 to 75% chance of showers and a few thunderstorms. Precipitation should move out of the forecast area by this evening. There is a Marginal Risk (1/5) for isolated strong to severe storms over south central SD this afternoon. Main threats are up to quarter sized hail and 60 mph wind gusts.

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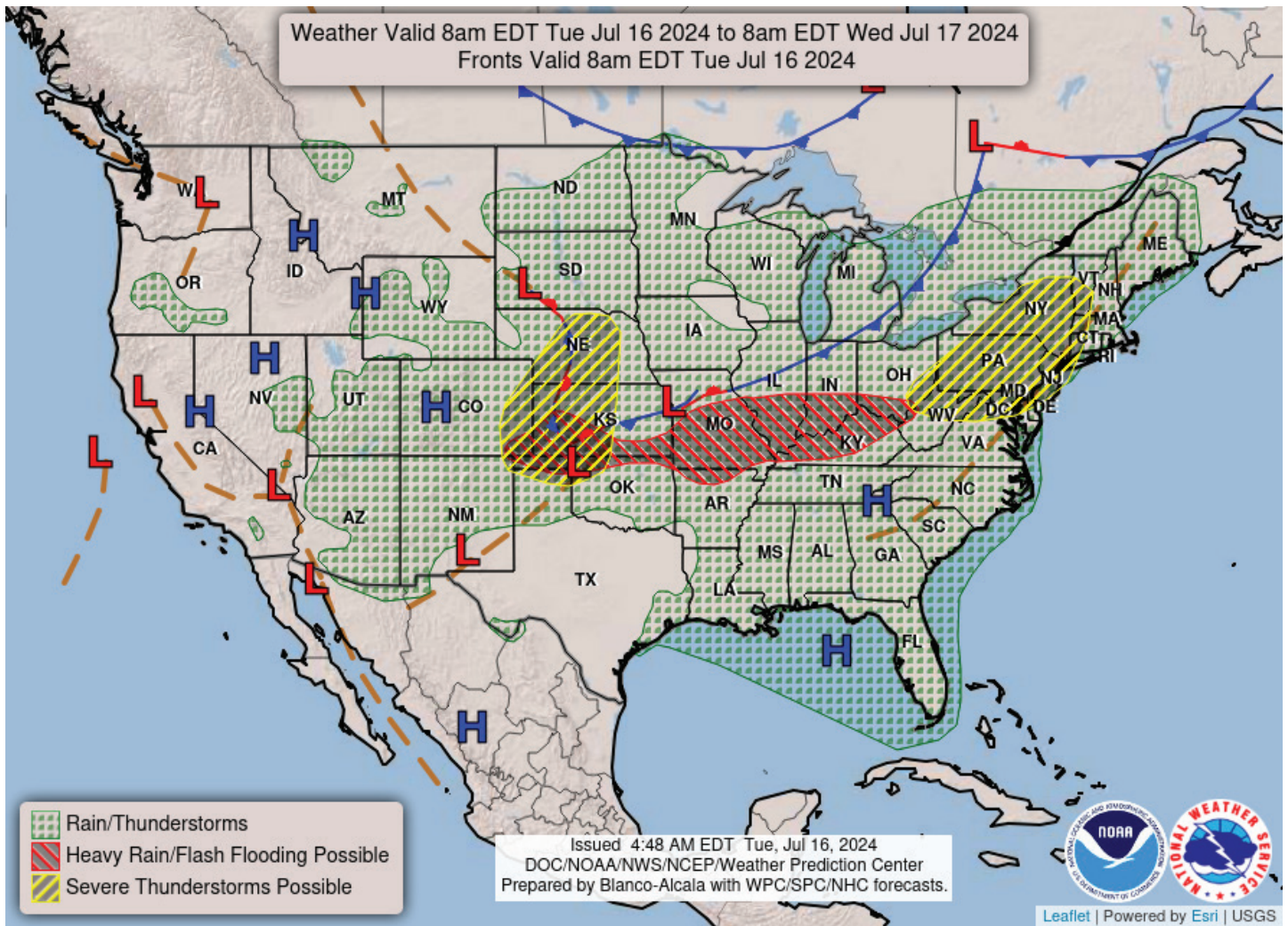
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 81 °F at 3:33 PM
Low Temp: 66 °F at 11:28 PM
Wind: 22 mph at 11:58 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 20 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 112 in 1936
Record Low: 42 in 1976
Average High: 85
Average Low: 60
Average Precip in July.: 1.80
Precip to date in July: 3.56
Average Precip to date: 12.81
Precip Year to Date: 14.51
Sunset Tonight: 9:18:37 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:59:30 am



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Today in Weather History

July 16, 1993: Thunderstorms, dumping two to seven inches of rain caused flooding problems in north-eastern South Dakota. Several dams and many roads were washed out. Most of the damage was in Marshall County. Six families were evacuated about six miles southeast of Britton as two private earthen dams broke. Winds, as high as 70 mph were also reported in a couple of locations in Marshall County. The torrential rains resulted in flooded farmland, roads, and basements in northeast South Dakota through July 21st. In Groton and Claremont at least 90 percent of the homes had water in the basements. Some storm total rainfall amounts include 3.20 inches in Leola; 3.14 in Ipswich; 3.13 in Britton; and 2.77 in Eureka.

July 16, 2001: Very heavy rains of 3 to 7 inches fell across north central Corson County causing flash flooding. Oak Creek along with several other streams washed out several roads and damaged some fences from Watauga to McIntosh to McLaughlin and north. Travel stopped for a while on the Highway north of McLaughlin.

1920 - A severe hailstorm over parts of Antelope and Boone counties in Nebraska stripped trees of bark and foliage, ruined roofs, and broke nearly every window facing north. (The Weather Channel)

1946 - The temperature at Medford, OR, soared to an all-time high of 115 degrees to begin a two week heat wave. During that Oregon heat wave the mercury hit 100 degrees at Sexton Summit for the only time in forty years of records. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1975 - An early afternoon thunderstorm raked the east side of Tucson, AZ, with gale force winds, heavy rain, and numerous lightning strikes. A thirteen year old boy was swept through a forty foot long culvert by raging waters before being rescued. (The Weather Channel)

1979: The most damaging tornado in Wyoming history touched down 3 miles west-northwest of the Cheyenne airport. This strong tornado moved east or east-southeast across the northern part of Cheyenne, causing \$22 million in damage and one fatality. 140 houses and 17 trailers were destroyed. 325 other homes were damaged. Four C-130 aircraft and National Guard equipment sustained \$12 million damage. Municipal hangars and buildings suffered \$10 million in losses.

1987 - Showers and thundestorms in the southwestern U.S. ended a record string of thirty-nine consecutive days of 100 degree heat at Tucson, AZ. A thunderstorm at Bullhead City, AZ, produced wind gusts to 70 mph reducing the visibility to near zero in blowing dust. Southerly winds gusting to 40 mph pushed temperature readings above 100 degrees in the Northern Plains. Rapid City, SD, reported a record high of 106 degrees, following a record low of 39 degrees just three days earlier. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty-seven cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 96 degrees at Bluefield, WV, and 104 degrees at Charleston WV were all-time records, and afternoon highs of 98 degrees at Binghamton, NY, 99 degrees at Elkins, WV, and 103 degrees at Pittsburgh PA, tied all-time records. Highs of 104 degrees at Baltimore, MD, and 105 degrees at Parkersburg WV were records for July, and Beckley, WV, equalled their record for July with a high of 94 degrees. Martinsburg, WV, was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 107 degrees. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms raked the northeastern U.S. with large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms developing along a stationary front drenched the Middle Atlantic Coast States with heavy rain, causing flooding in some areas. More than five inches of rain was reported near Madison and Ferncliff, VA. Hot weather prevailed in Texas. San Angelo reported a record high of 106 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2009: A hailstone, 3.3 inches in diameter, 6.8 inches circumference, and weighing 2.1 ounces fell in Westford, Vermont. This hailstone is the largest ever found in Vermont.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE PROMISE OF PATIENCE

When I was a child, I was fascinated by my father's garden. Each spring we would plant little seeds that would grow into large plants that produced all types of vegetables. One day I decided to plant my own garden.

Carefully I "turned" the soil and placed the same seeds that my father planted in straight rows separated with room enough for them to grow. Then I went into our house and watched my garden through the window of my bedroom. Every morning and evening I would visit the garden to look for some sign that would assure me that my garden was growing.

Finally, in desperation for some sign that my garden was "working" just like my dad's, I dug up the seeds to see what was going on. To my surprise I discovered that they were still seeds. I had faith and hope, but no patience.

Sometimes during the difficult periods of life, we sow seeds in the garden of prayer and water them with times of meditation, faith and hope. But we lose patience with God and do not give Him enough time to do His work. His Word reminds us, "When the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow."

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to wait on You for lessons in patience that we all need to learn. Only then will we be strong enough to face the challenges of life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete. 1 John 1:3-5



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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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.12.24

15 35 48 53 68 8

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$226,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 48 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.15.24

1 7 10 40 41 9

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$5,190,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 3 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.15.24

1 2 3 20 24 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 18 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.13.24

1 8 10 25 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$35,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 18 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.15.24

3 13 41 55 61 6

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 47 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.15.24

9 31 39 40 45 23

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$75,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 47 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

- 07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
- 07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
- 07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
- 07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- 07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
- 07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
- 08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
- 08/02/2024 Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
- 08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
- 08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
- 09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party & Tour of Homes with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

News from the Associated Press

Ruling keeps abortion question on ballot in South Dakota

A state court judge's ruling Monday keeps an abortion-rights question on the November ballot in South Dakota.

Judge John Pekas dismissed a lawsuit filed by an anti-abortion group, Life Defense Fund, that sought to have the question removed even though supporters turned in more than enough valid signatures to put it on the ballot.

"They have thrown everything they could dream up to stop the people of South Dakota from voting on this matter," Adam Weiland, co-founder of Dakotans for Health, said in a statement after the ruling. "This is another failed effort by a small group opposed to giving women the option to terminate pregnancies caused by rape and incest or to address dangerous pregnancies affecting the life and health of women."

Republican Rep. Jon Hansen, who is a co-chair of the Life Defense Fund, and a lawyer for the group did not immediately return messages from The Associated Press on Monday.

South Dakota is one of 14 states now enforcing a ban on abortion at every stage of pregnancy, a possibility the U.S. Supreme Court opened the door to in 2022, when it overturned *Roe v. Wade* and ended the nationwide right to abortion.

The amendment supported by Dakotans for Health would bar the state from regulating "a pregnant woman's abortion decision and its effectuation" in the first trimester, but it would allow second-trimester regulations "only in ways that are reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman."

Since *Roe* was overturned, all seven statewide abortion-related ballot measures have gone the way abortion-rights groups wanted them to.

This year, similar questions are on the ballots in five states, plus a New York equal rights question that would ban discrimination based on "pregnancy outcomes," among other factors.

Advocates are waiting for signatures to be verified to get questions on the ballot this year in four more states, including Nebraska, where there could be competing questions on abortion rights before voters.

Violent clashes over government jobs quota system leave scores injured in Bangladesh

By JULHAS ALAM Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — Police fired tear gas and charged with batons during violent clashes between a pro-government student body and student protesters overnight, leaving dozens injured at a public university outside Bangladesh's capital, authorities and students said Tuesday.

The violence spread early Tuesday at Jahangir Nagar University in Savar, outside Dhaka, where protesters demanded an end to a quota reserved for family members of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971, allowing them to take up 30% of governmental jobs. While job opportunities have expanded in Bangladesh's private sector, many find government jobs stable and lucrative. Each year, some 3,000 such jobs open up to nearly 400,000 graduates.

Protesters argue such quota appointments are discriminatory and should be merit-based. Some even said the current system benefits groups supporting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Some Cabinet ministers criticized the protesters, saying they played on students' emotions.

Hasina said Tuesday war veterans — commonly known as "freedom fighters" — should receive the highest respect for their sacrifice in 1971 regardless of their current political ideologies.

"Abandoning the dream of their own life, leaving behind their families, parents and everything, they joined the war with whatever they had..." she said during an event at her office in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, Protesters gathered in front of the university's official residence of the vice-chancellor early Tuesday when violence broke out. Demonstrators accused the Bangladesh Chhatra League, a student wing

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of Hasina's ruling Awami League party, of attacking their "peaceful protests." According to local media reports, police and the ruling party-backed student wing attacked the protesters.

But Abdullahil Kafi, a senior police official, told the country's leading English-language newspaper Daily Star that they fired tear gas and "blank rounds" as protesters attacked the police. He said up to 15 police officers were injured.

More than 50 people were treated at Enam Medical College Hospital near Jahangir Nagar University as the violence continued for hours, said Ali Bin Solaiman, a medical officer of the hospital. He said at least 30 of them suffered pellet wounds.

On Monday, violence also spread at Dhaka University, the country's leading public university, as clashes gripped the campus in the capital. More than 100 students were injured in the clashes, police said.

On Tuesday, protesters blocked railways and some highways across the country, and in Dhaka, they halted traffic in many areas as they vowed to continue demonstrating until the demands were met.

Local media said police forces were spread across the capital to safeguard the peace.

Swapon, a protester and student of Dhaka University who only gave his first name, said they only want the "rational reformation of the quota system." He said after studying for six years, if he can't find a job, "it will cause me and my family to suffer."

Protesters say they are apolitical, but leaders of the ruling parties accused the opposition of using the demonstrations for political gains.

A ruling party-backed student activist, who refused to give his name, told The Associated Press the protesters with the help of "goons" of the opposition's Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Jamaat-e-Islami party vandalized their rooms at the student dormitories near the Curzon Hall of the Dhaka University.

The family of the veterans' quota system was halted following a court order after mass student protests in 2018. But last month, Bangladesh's High Court nulled the decision to reinstall the system once more, angering scores of students and triggering protests.

Last week, the Supreme Court halted the High Court's order for four weeks and the chief justice asked protesting students to return to their classes, saying the court would issue a decision in four weeks.

However, the protests have continued daily, halting traffic in Dhaka.

The quota system also reserves government jobs for women, disabled people and ethnic minority groups, but students have only protested against jobs reserved for veterans' families.

Prime Minister Hasina maintained power in an election in January that was again boycotted by the country's main opposition party and its allies due to Hasina's refusal to step down and hand over power to a caretaker government to oversee the election.

Her party favors keeping the quota for the families of the 1971 war heroes after her Awami League party, under the leadership of her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led the independence war with the help of India. Rahman was assassinated along with most of his family members in a military coup in 1975.

In 1971, the Jamaat-e-Islami party, which shared power with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Hasina's archrival, former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in 2001-2006, openly opposed the independence war and formed groups that helped the Pakistani military fight pro-independence forces. All the major political parties in Bangladesh have active student wings across the South Asian nation.

Israeli strikes across Gaza kill more than 30 as the sides weigh the latest cease-fire proposal

By WAFSA SHURFA Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes in the central Gaza Strip overnight into Tuesday killed 24 people, including women and children, according to hospital records, in deadly violence that continues to rage as Israel and Hamas weigh the latest cease-fire proposal.

The deaths in Nuseirat and Zawaida, which included 10 women and four children, came days after Hamas said cease-fire talks meant to wind down the nine-month-long war would continue even after Israel targeted the militant group's top military commander, Mohammed Deif, whose fate remained unclear. Israel

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says another senior Hamas militant was killed in that strike which, according to local officials, killed 90 Palestinians, including children.

International mediators are working to push Israel and Hamas toward agreeing to a deal that would bring a halt to the devastating fighting and set free roughly 120 hostages held by the militant group in Gaza.

The strikes late Monday and early Tuesday hit four residential homes, according to emergency workers. An Associated Press journalist saw the bodies of the dead, some wrapped in blue blankets and a floral sheet, as they were ferried to Al Aqsa hospital in Deir al-Balah. Clouds of smoke from Israeli strikes could be seen rising above the city.

The military said it "conducted targeted raids on terror targets" in central Gaza, without elaborating. It did not immediately provide additional details on the targets.

In southern Gaza, nine people were killed in two separate strikes overnight Monday, according to medical officials and Associated Press journalists.

Four people were killed in a blast that struck a house in eastern Khan Younis while five other people were killed in a strike on a street in southernmost Rafah according to ambulance workers who transported the bodies to Nasser Hospital.

An AP journalist counted the bodies at the hospital before a funeral was held at its gates.

The military said that air force planes struck some 40 targets in Gaza over the past day, among them observation posts, Hamas military structures and explosives-rigged buildings.

The war in Gaza, which was sparked by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, has killed more than 38,600 people, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. The war has sparked a humanitarian catastrophe in the coastal Palestinian territory, displaced most of its 2.3 million population and triggered widespread hunger.

Hamas' surprise attack killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and militants took roughly 250 people hostage. About 120 remain in captivity, with about a third of them believed to be dead, according to Israeli authorities.

Violence has also surged in the West Bank during the war and on Tuesday a Palestinian stabbed an Israeli policeman, wounding him lightly, before another officer opened fire, killing the assailant, who was identified as a 19-year-old from Gaza.

The Democratic National Committee says it's investing \$15 million in 7 swing state parties

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats are trying to offer political counterprogramming to the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, announcing \$15 million to fund campaign operations in seven key swing states — even as some in the party have urged President Joe Biden to bow out of November's election.

The Democratic National Committee announced Tuesday that it is investing \$15 million in state parties, meant to help them open more field offices and bolster staffing. The funding will let them add to the 217 existing coordinated campaign offices working jointly for Biden's reelection bid and state parties that already employ 1,100-plus staffers in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, the DNC said.

The investments will pump nearly \$3 million into Wisconsin; nearly \$2 million each into Pennsylvania, Michigan and Nevada; almost \$1.5 million in Arizona; more than \$1.2 million in North Carolina; and more than \$1 million in Georgia.

The outlay was planned prior to former President Donald Trump being injured in an attempted assassination during his rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday, which prompted Biden and his campaign to temporarily shift its reelection strategy. Trump nonetheless is attending his party's convention and will accept his party's nomination on Thursday.

Trump's campaign has spent recent weeks opening field offices, including those targeting key constituencies, in conjunction with the Republican National Committee.

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"We have paid staffers and volunteer-powered field programs in every battleground state, and they are expanding daily," Trump campaign spokesman Karoline Leavitt said. "Our aggressive and experienced operation is focused on turning out votes and highlighting the contrast" between Trump and Biden.

The DNC for months has argued that its and the Biden campaign's growing on-the-ground operation could help swing an election expected to be close. Still, top Democrats are trying to move past questions from within their own party that have persisted about whether Biden is up to continuing to seek reelection in the weeks since his debate debacle and despite the race's shifting dynamics after Trump was injured last weekend.

Biden and his team have furiously attempted to reassure jittery lawmakers and donors, as well as skeptical voters, that, at age 81, the Democratic president can still win in November and handle a second four-year term. Nearly 20 Democratic lawmakers have nonetheless publicly called on Biden to step aside.

The DNC said the investments will fund new field offices and help state parties get more accurate data and better coordinate party efforts for down-ballot races.

"Democrats are leaving nothing to chance and investing heavily on the ground to ensure Joe Biden and Kamala Harris win this election," Democratic National Committee Chair Jaime Harrison said in a statement. "This election was always going to be close, and regardless of beltway media narratives, the entire election is going to come down to operation and turnout in the battleground states."

Arizona Democratic Party chair Yolanda Bejarano said state officials and the Biden campaign opened a 15th coordinated campaign office in Arizona over the weekend, adding that, "This election is going to be won at the doors, talking to people about the issues that they care about."

"This is perfect timing from my vantage point," Bejarano said of the DNC investment. "We need the resources to do the work, to hire organizers, to have town halls across the state, to get the message out through media buys."

Amazon Prime Day deals are almost here. Should you take advantage of them?

BY HALELUYA HADERO AND CORA LEWIS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It's summertime, and the bargains seem easy at a time when many consumer prices are high.

July sales events have become a seasonal revenue driver for the retail industry since Amazon launched its first Prime Day back in 2015. While consumers may be enticed by the advertised can't-miss savings on some products, personal finance experts say shoppers should be careful not to fall for potentially misleading marketing or give in to impulse buys.

Amazon has drummed up expectations in recent weeks for its 10th Prime Day event, which will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday and is open only to customers who pay \$14.99 per month, or \$139 per year, to receive free shipping and other perks as Prime members.

Rival retailers tried in the past to capture some of the Prime Day excitement by offering their own discounts during the two-day event. This year, Walmart, Target, Kohl's, and newcomers TikTok Shop and Temu launched summer promotions ahead of Amazon, hoping to siphon off some of the e-commerce giant's savings-hungry shoppers. Meanwhile, Macy's will be rolling out what it calls its "best summer deals" during an eight-day discount event that begins on Tuesday.

Why are retailers offering so many summer discounts?

July sales help retailers attract customers who are looking to get a head start on back-to-school shopping, which is the industry's second-most important shopping season behind the winter holiday period. The markdowns also pull in some discretionary spending from shoppers who've had their eyes on gadgets, household products and seasonal items, such as a bikini or a new summer dress.

Discounts can help retailers combat "a summer lull in retail spending" as consumers shift their spending to summer vacations and services, like going out to eat at restaurants, according to John Mercer, the head of global research at Coresight Research.

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"It drives a bit of excitement in that mid-year period," when retailers may otherwise struggle to generate more revenue, Mercer said. Companies also have relied on discounts to drive consumer spending during the recent period of inflation and high interest rates, he said.

Amazon doesn't disclose how much revenue it pulls in from Prime Day, but it has given some indications of its success. The company said last year's event resulted in the "single largest sales day" in the company's history, with customers purchasing more than 375 million items.

An estimate from market research firm Emarketer indicated Amazon's global sales on Prime Day went up to \$12.5 billion in 2023. The firm forecasts sales to jump roughly 7% this year.

Are the prices on offer really deals or something else?

It depends on who you ask.

Retailers hype up their promotions to pull people in. But the New York Times-owned product review website Wirecutter published an article this month saying most of Amazon's early deals this year so far "stink."

Santa Clara University business professor Kirthi Kalyanam, who is writing a book about Amazon, said Prime Day offers have been good, historically. That's because the company was able to source discounts from well-known brands such as Apple and to incentivize third-party sellers to lower their prices by promising to feature them prominently on the Amazon website, according to Kalyanam.

But Prime Day discounts may matter less these days because customers are getting accustomed to the ultra-cheap products sold by Amazon competitors Shein and Temu, which were both founded in China.

"Many of (the) deals may not be as competitive compared to Temu and Shein," Kalyanam said.

At the same time, he noted rival retailers will most likely be looking at Amazon's prices and trying to match them overnight. Last week, he said he saw Best Buy discount two products after Amazon revealed some of its early deals.

Consumer data company Numerator reported that a majority of the roughly 5,000 Prime Day shoppers it surveyed after last year's event saw product discounts of up to 40%. Survey respondents said they saw a quarter of items selling at a discount of 60% or more.

Some shopping experts have said that some past Prime discounts were not as big as they appeared.

What are some bargain-hunting and budgeting tips?

If you're watching your budget, personal finance experts say you should exercise caution before you buy.

"Avoid the false sense of urgency of manufactured holidays," advises Mark Elliot, chief customer officer at financial services company LendingClub. "The idea that 'The more you spend, the more you save' — that's just definitionally not true."

Dan Egan, a vice president at financial advising and investment company Betterment, says shoppers should make a list of what they need before the sales begin to be intentional about purchases. He also encourages consumers to avoid shopping late at night or out of boredom.

"Once you have a list, it's less likely you'll get distracted by things you don't need," Egan said. "If that list contains almost nothing, I would say to delete the (retailers') apps off your phone for the next week or two. Or you're going to get lots of notifications."

Any shopper already carrying a credit card balance should keep in mind that the interest paid on that balance could end up cancelling out any perceived savings from a summer sale purchase, he added.

"A deal is not a deal if you have to pay interest on it," Egan said.

While it may make sense for shoppers to try out free or temporary memberships to qualify for the best deals during the summer sales, those programs typically charge a fee to the customer's credit card on file after a short period of time, noted Erin Witte, the Consumer Federation of America's director of consumer protection.

"Set a calendar reminder to cancel if you don't want to go through with that subscription," Witte said. "Think about it right at the beginning. And remember that these companies design this product to make it easy to sign up, but more difficult to cancel."

Consumer Reports also offers a few tips: Download Amazon's app, sign-up for invite-only deals available for a select group of shoppers, and join the waitlist on limited-time offers that are already sold out.

Don't forget to shop around

Filling up an online Amazon cart is tempting for Prime members since they are paying for access to Prime Day deals. But it's always a smart idea to compare prices across multiple websites before completing a purchase.

Unlike Prime Day offers, Walmart's discount event this month was open to everyone. However, the company sweetened the deal for its Walmart+ members by offering them early access.

Target only offered discounts to shoppers enrolled in its Target Circle loyalty program and used the weeklong event to promote a new membership program that aims to rejuvenate sales and traffic.

TikTok Shop, the e-commerce arm of the popular video-sharing app, opened its summer sales event to everyone. The event started on July 9 and runs until Wednesday.

Biden is trying to sharpen the choice voters face in November as Republicans meet in Milwaukee

By AAMER MADHANI and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — President Joe Biden returns to the campaign trail Tuesday for the first time since the attempted assassination of his Republican rival, former President Donald Trump, aiming to sharpen the choice voters will face this November in the wake of the attack.

Biden will speak at the NAACP convention in Las Vegas, aiming to showcase his administration's support for Black voters who are a tentpole of the Democratic coalition and of his personal political support. He'll also participate in an interview with BET. And a day later he'll address UnidosUS, looking to bolster his appeal to Latino voters, another crucial Democratic-leaning bloc.

Biden's remarks to both groups come as Democrats have been engaged in a weeks-long crisis of confidence over Biden's candidacy after his devastating debate with Trump last month. The president's shaky performance inflamed voter concerns about his age, fitness for office and capacity to defeat Trump once again.

Republicans, for their part, are demonstrating that they are more coalesced than ever around Trump as they go through with their national convention in Milwaukee.

Biden has rejected a flurry of calls from within his party to step aside, restating his belief that he is the best-positioned Democrat to beat Trump. He has relied heavily on his support among Black and Latino elected officials, and was set to appear with many of them in Nevada.

Trump has tried to appeal to both Black and Latino voters, hoping to capitalize on Biden's sagging favorability. While it's not clear that the loss of enthusiasm for Biden has helped Trump's approval with those groups, any marginal loss of support for Biden could prove pivotal in a close race.

"While Trump and MAGA Republicans showcase their Project 2025 agenda at the Republican National Convention, the president will be rallying the backbone of the Biden-Harris coalition," Biden spokesman Kevin Munoz said.

The president and his campaign hit pause on their criticisms of Trump in the immediate aftermath of the shooting Saturday at Trump's rally in Pennsylvania, where the Republican candidate was injured in the ear, a rallygoer was killed and two others seriously injured.

In an Oval Office address on Sunday night, Biden called on Americans to reject political violence and for political leaders to "cool it down." But he indicated in a Monday interview with NBC News that he was still committed to calling Trump a threat to American democracy.

Biden did allow that he made a "mistake" when he told campaign donors that he wanted to put a "bull's-eye" on Trump, but he argued that the rhetoric from his opponent was more incendiary.

"Look, how do you talk about the threat to democracy, which is real, when a president says things like he says?" Biden said. "Do you just not say anything because it may incite somebody?"

NAACP President Derrick Johnson, in an interview with the AP, sidestepped questions about whether Biden should step aside as the Democratic nominee and whether the president, who often credits his place in the Oval Office to Black voters, could still inspire people to turn out for his candidacy.

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Johnson instead focused on the need for Black voters to hear “solutions” on issues like inflation, education and attacks on civil rights, which are among the top concerns for Black communities in this election.

“I expect him to share what his policy priorities will be if he is reelected. We want to focus on the policy goals of whoever occupies the White House in the next term,” Johnson said. He added that Black voters would dismiss candidates “concerned with personality and sound bites.”

At an economic summit hosted by Congressional Black Caucus Chair Rep. Steven Horsford, Biden was also set to unveil policy actions to tame rising housing costs, a critical issue in the battleground state.

Biden is to announce a proposal to cap rent increases at 5% for tenants whose landlords own over 50 units. If landlords hiked rents by more than that, they would lose access to tax write-offs tied to the depreciation of their buildings. The Bureau of Land Management is also opening up public comments to sell 20 acres of public land in Clark County, Nevada, for home construction.

But Biden’s proposal would require congressional approval that he’s unlikely to receive with a House Republican majority — a sign that his proposal is more about political messaging at a critical juncture.

Trump has also used Nevada to float new economic policies. He said he would end taxes on the tips received by workers in the service-industry focused state, a concept that has since been endorsed by Nevada’s Democratic senators, Jacky Rosen and Catherine Cortez Masto.

JD Vance is a relative political unknown. He’s been asked to help Donald Trump avenge his loss

By STEVE PEOPLES, THOMAS BEAUMONT and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — JD Vance is supposed to help Donald Trump win the Midwest this fall.

But almost immediately after the Ohio senator was announced as Trump’s vice presidential pick on Monday, one thing became clear: Vance, a 39-year-old Republican with less than two years in Congress, is not well-known among many in his party, even in the swing states Trump hopes he’ll deliver.

Michigan Republican Party Chairman Pete Hoekstra offered a blunt response when asked about Trump’s pick minutes after it was announced: “We don’t know him.”

“If he’s from Ohio, he understands our state and the other northern battlegrounds,” Hoekstra said, standing on the floor of the Republican National Convention. “But we haven’t had a chance to take his measure yet.”

Trump’s team now has less than four months to strengthen Vance’s profile in the states that matter most this fall in his 2020 rematch against Democratic President Joe Biden. Already, a collection of political foes — Democrats and Republicans — is working to fill the void by seizing on Vance’s inexperience in government, his nationalist views and his critical comments about Trump himself.

“I’m not sure he helps him in the campaign,” said veteran Republican pollster Neil Newhouse, suggesting Vance may be better positioned to help Trump enact his agenda on Capitol Hill if given the chance. “He’s not that well-known even in Ohio. ... This isn’t a campaign pick. It’s a policy pick, a governing pick.”

Republican strategist Kellyanne Conway, who served as Trump’s chief counselor while in the White House, had encouraged Trump to pick a different running mate in the weeks leading up to his announcement. Privately, she believed that Florida Sen. Marco Rubio or Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin would do more to help Trump win.

Vance, who quickly developed a reputation as a MAGA firebrand in his short time on Capitol Hill, earned modest applause when he entered the packed convention hall for the first time Monday as Trump’s running mate. The Republican senator posed for selfies, shook hands and signed posters. Later in the night, the crowd was more excited as he greeted Trump — who entered the room with a bandage covering his right ear, injured in Saturday’s assassination attempt — for the ticket’s first public appearance.

Recent polling confirms the notion that most voters don’t know Vance.

Just 13% of registered voters said they had a favorable opinion of Vance with 20% an unfavorable one, according to a CNN poll conducted in late June. The majority said they had never heard of him or had no opinion.

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Trump's vice-presidential pick is arguably the most important decision of his 2024 campaign. Vance, who is literally half the 78-year-old Trump's age, and has the least political experience on a short list that included Rubio and North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum.

Sensing an opportunity, Trump's critics in both parties quickly went after him.

"Almost any other choice might have expanded the map for them, but Trump needed a candidate who looked like him, talked like him, and thought like him. He needed a candidate who would grovel," former New Hampshire Republican Party chair Jennifer Horn wrote on X. "JD Vance was the least experienced, least qualified, most obsequious, psychopathic, servile candidate on the list."

But Trump made up his own mind based on a different set of criteria.

Trump especially liked Vance's performance on television, where he has become a fixture on conservative media. The former president also likes Vance's looks, saying he reminded him of "a young Abraham Lincoln."

Trump is also hopeful Vance can draw from his life story growing up in Appalachia to help appeal to Midwestern voters. Vance has experienced poverty and addiction up close in a way that is uncommon among leading Republican officials.

Vance also had another advantage: his chemistry with Trump. The first-term senator has developed a strong rapport with Trump, his son Donald Trump Jr. and leading MAGA figures during his recent rise in Republican politics.

Vance is an Ivy League-educated author, former Marine and businessman. He is known for his aggressive questioning of Biden administration officials.

Biden's campaign hosted a conference call Monday denouncing the pick, focusing especially on his limited record on abortion and the economy and his support for Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

Vance previously said he would support a national abortion ban at 15 weeks of pregnancy. He also said he would not have voted to certify the 2020 election results, as former Vice President Mike Pence did over Trump's objections.

"I will certainly take that matchup any day of the week and twice on Sunday," said Jen O'Malley Dillon, the Biden campaign chairwoman. "Because while Trump and Vance have an agenda focused on themselves and their wealthy donor friends, President Biden and Vice President Harris are fighting for the American people."

One of Biden's greatest assets in his campaign against Vance might be what Vance previously said about Trump.

During the early stages of Trump's political career, Vance cast Trump as "a total fraud," "a moral disaster" and "America's Hitler."

"If you go back and listen to the things that JD Vance said about Trump ... he said some things about me, but see what he said about Trump," Biden told NBC's Lester Holt in an interview Monday.

Vivek Ramaswamy, once considered a potential Trump running mate as well, described Vance as "a major asset" on the ticket whose evolution on Trump would ultimately help him connect with swing voters.

"He's also somebody who can say, 'You know what, in 2016, I may not have voted for Donald Trump either, but here's why I am with him to the fullest today,'" Ramaswamy said.

But for now, Vance joins the Trump presidential ticket as a mystery to many voters and elected officials alike.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp said Vance was one of the few vice-presidential prospects that he "really haven't crossed paths with."

"I don't know that much about him," Kemp said.

Forty dead in heavy rains in eastern Afghanistan; 17 killed in bus accident

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Heavy rains in eastern Afghanistan have killed at least 40 people and injured nearly 350 others, Taliban officials said Tuesday. Separately, at least 17 died when a bus overturned on a main highway, official media said.

Sharafat Zaman Amar, a spokesperson for the Public Health Ministry, confirmed that 40 people had died in Monday's storm and that 347 injured people had been brought for treatment to the regional hospital in Nangarhar from Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, and nearby districts.

Among the dead were five members of the same family who were killed when the roof of their house collapsed in Surkh Rod district, according to provincial spokesperson Sediqullah Quraishi. Four other family members were injured.

About 400 houses and 60 electricity poles were destroyed across Nangarhar province, Quraishi said. Power was cut in many areas and there were limited communications in Jalalabad city, he said. The damage was still being assessed, Quraishi said.

Abdul Wali, 43, said much of the damage occurred within an hour. "The winds were so strong that they blew everything into the air. That was followed by heavy rain," he said. His 4-year-old daughter received minor injuries, he said.

In May, exceptionally heavy rains killed more than 300 people and destroyed thousands of houses, mostly in the northern province of Baghlan, according to the World Food Program.

Separately, the official Taliban news agency Bakhtar reported that at least 17 people were killed and 34 others injured when a bus overturned Tuesday morning on the main highway linking Kabul and Balkh in northern Baghlan province.

The cause of the accident wasn't immediately clear, but poor road conditions and careless driving are often blamed for such incidents in the country.

Federal jury returns for third day of deliberations at bribery trial of Sen. Bob Menendez

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A jury in New York City is expected to resume deliberations Tuesday in the bribery trial of Sen. Bob Menendez, the New Jersey Democrat accused of accepting gold and cash to use his political clout to help three businessmen and the Egyptian government.

Menendez, 70, insists he is innocent. He faces 16 counts in a criminal indictment that accuses him of multiple corrupt acts, including meddling in criminal investigations to protect his associates and helping one deal with U.S. agriculture regulators. He is also accused of serving as a foreign agent for Egypt.

The senator is on trial with two New Jersey businessmen. All three defendants have pleaded not guilty. A third pleaded guilty before trial and testified against Menendez and the other businessmen.

Menendez's wife, Nadine, also is charged in the case, although her trial has been postponed while she recovers from breast cancer surgery.

In a 2022 raid on the Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, home where Menendez lived with his wife, FBI agents confiscated gold bars worth nearly \$150,000 and over \$480,000 in cash, some of it stuffed into boots and jackets emblazoned with the senator's name.

Menendez expressed some hope as he left the courthouse on Monday that the jury was carefully reviewing the evidence in its deliberations. In two separate notes, the jury had posed questions about the charges, including asking in one instance if unanimity was required to acquit "on a single count."

"It's obvious that the government's case is not as simple as they made it to be," Menendez said before repeating himself. "It's not as simple as they made it to be. The jury's finding that out."

During closing arguments last week, lawyers spent over 15 hours urging jurors to carefully study the

evidence.

Prosecutors cited numerous instances when they said Menendez helped the businessmen. And they argued that his efforts to speed \$99 million in helicopter ammunition to Egypt, along with cozy communications with top Egyptian officials, showed he was serving Egypt's interests as an agent.

Lawyers for Menendez insisted the senator never accepted bribes and that actions he took to benefit the businessmen were the kinds of tasks expected of a public official. His lawyers added he was simply carrying out foreign responsibilities expected in his role as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which he was forced to relinquish after charges were brought.

Menendez announced several weeks ago that he plans to run for reelection this year as an independent.

Severe storms with tornadoes whip through Midwest, cutting power to 460K

CHICAGO (AP) — Storms spawning multiple tornadoes blew through Iowa, Illinois — including Chicago — and Indiana, Monday downing trees and power poles and cutting power to more than 460,000 customers and businesses.

The National Weather Service confirmed that a tornado hit Des Moines, Iowa, as storms rolled through Monday afternoon and into the night. Des Moines police were responding to calls about utility poles that had apparently snapped in two.

The storms then moved east into northern Illinois, including the Chicago area, which saw multiple tornado warnings, wind and drenching rain. Multiple tornadoes were reported along the line of storms that moved through the city, according to the National Weather Service.

Nearly 390,000 customers were left without power in northern Illinois alone, according to poweroutage.us.

The National Weather Service in Chicago had to take cover for a time and later reported extensive damage in the city.

A flash flood warning also was issued in the Chicago area into early Tuesday. Flooding was expected in creeks, streams, drainage ditches, streets and underpasses as rain continued Monday night.

Storms moved into Indiana and Michigan later Monday night, prompting additional alerts including multiple tornado warnings in Indiana.

Far-right groups that block aid to Gaza receive tax-deductible donations from US and Israel

By URI BLAU and MILAN CZERNY OF SHOMRIM and JOSEF FEDERMAN OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
undefined

JERUSALEM (AP) — Under American pressure, Israel has pledged to deliver large quantities of humanitarian aid into the war-ravaged Gaza Strip. But at the same time, the U.S. and Israel have allowed tax-deductible donations to far-right groups that have blocked that aid from being delivered.

Three groups that have prevented humanitarian aid from reaching Gaza — including one accused of looting or destroying supplies — have raised more than \$200,000 from donors in the U.S. and Israel, The Associated Press and the Israeli investigative site Shomrim have found in an examination of crowdfunding websites and other public records.

Incentivizing these donations by making them tax-deductible runs counter to America's and Israel's stated commitments to allow unlimited food, water and medicine into Gaza, say groups working to get more aid into the territory. Donations have continued even after the U.S. imposed sanctions against one of these groups.

By not cracking down on these groups, Israel is showing a "lack of coherence" in its Gaza aid policy, said Tania Hary, executive director of Gisha, an Israeli nonprofit that has long called on Israel to improve conditions in the territory.

"If you're on the one hand saying you're allowing aid in but then also facilitating the actions of groups

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that are blocking it, can you really say you're facilitating aid?" she said.

Israeli officials did not respond to requests for comment. The U.S. State Department said it is committed to ensuring the delivery of aid, but had no comment on the fundraising efforts by the far-right groups.

Israel has said repeatedly it does not restrict humanitarian aid and that the United Nations has failed to distribute thousands of truckloads of goods that have reached the territory. The U.N. and aid groups say deliveries have repeatedly been hampered by military operations, lawlessness inside Gaza and delays in Israeli inspections.

The three groups examined by AP and Shomrim have slowed the delivery of aid by blocking trucks on their way to Gaza, either by snarling traffic or simply standing in front of the main Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza.

While these organizations are not the primary impediment to aid shipments, they have received tacit support from some Israeli leaders. Israel's ultranationalist minister for national security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, has said aid shipments to Gaza should be blocked and he supported the right of opponents to demonstrate, though he said it should not be done violently.

One of the groups, Mother's March, has raised the equivalent of over \$125,000 via Givechack, an Israeli crowdfunding site, the AP and Shomrim found. The group also raised some \$13,000 via JGive, a U.S. and Israeli crowdfunding site. Donations to charitable organizations are tax-deductible in Israel and the U.S.

Mother's March does not raise the money directly. Instead, it works with an allied group called Torat Lechima that raises funds on its behalf.

Torat Lechima, whose name translates loosely as "combat doctrine," is active in Israeli nationalist circles and works to "strengthen the Jewish identity and fighting spirit" among Israeli soldiers, according to its website. Torat Lechima continues to solicit funds for Mother's March on the JGive site in the U.S.

Until it was sanctioned last month, a third group, Tzav 9, raised over \$85,000 from close to 1,500 donors in the U.S. and Israel via JGive. JGive said that donations made to Tzav 9 were frozen even before the sanctions were imposed and not delivered to the group.

All three groups, which have ties with Israel's ultranationalist far right, say Israel should not be aiding the Palestinians as long as Hamas is holding dozens of people hostage. They also claim that Hamas is stealing much of the aid, though aid groups have disputed that.

"No to 'humanitarian' aid that grants fuel to the enemy who kills us! No to the hundreds of trucks that pass every day through Kerem Shalom – and drag out the war!" Mother's March said in a recent crowdfunding campaign. It said the funds were needed for demonstrations, shuttles, printing materials and publicity campaigns.

Hundreds of activists set up tents at Kerem Shalom for several nights in early February to stop the delivery of aid. The head of Mother's March, Sima Hasson, was briefly detained by Israeli police in January after temporarily blocking trucks.

Israeli news reports have shown large convoys of cars blocking aid trucks from traveling on Israeli highways, as well as activists looting trucks and destroying supplies.

In its sanctions order, the White House accused Tzav 9 of violently blocking roads, damaging aid trucks and dumping supplies on the road. It said in May that Tzav 9 members looted and set fire to two trucks in the West Bank carrying aid destined for Gaza. Last week, the White House imposed sanctions on the group's co-founders.

Israeli police, who fall under the authority of Ben-Gvir, have made few arrests, though the group appears to have stopped its activities in recent weeks.

Tzav 9 defended its actions as "within the framework of the law, in a democratic protest." It called the sanctions from the U.S. "anti-democratic intervention."

Neither Mother's March nor Torat Lechima responded to requests for comment.

Israel launched its offensive in Gaza in response to the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, which killed roughly 1,200 people and took 250 others hostage.

The offensive has killed over 38,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities, and unleashed

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a humanitarian crisis in the densely populated territory. Over 80% of the population is displaced, and international officials say hundreds of thousands of people are on the brink of famine.

Two international courts have accused Israel of war crimes and genocide – charges Israel denies as it pledges to keep the aid flowing into Gaza.

Those who violate the sanctions against Tsav 9 could have their assets frozen or face travel and visa bans.

It's unclear how effective these sanctions will be. Extremist Israeli settlers in the West Bank say similar U.S. sanctions imposed on them have had little effect, in part because Israeli leaders helped circumvent them.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office declined comment. The Justice Ministry, which regulates nonprofits, said it would investigate but had no further comment.

JGive said it complies with Israeli laws. In addition to freezing Tzav 9's donations, it noted that the Mother's March campaign ended over four months ago.

The U.S. State Department said it has urged Israel to ensure aid safely reaches Gaza and to punish those who try to block it.

"The targeting of aid trucks by violent extremist settlers is unacceptable, and we've made that clear to the government of Israel," it said. It declined comment on the groups' fundraising efforts.

Hary, of the Israeli activist group Gisha, noted that the efforts of Mother's March and Tzav 9 appear to have quieted down in recent weeks. But as they continue to seek donors, she said they could resume activities at any moment.

"They're getting signals from various places in the government that Gaza should be completely cut off," she said.

Trump's escape from disaster by mere inches reveals a tiny margin with seismic impact

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Jarring, chaotic and sudden, the bullet whizzed toward the stage where former President Donald Trump stood behind a podium speaking. In its wake: the potential for a horrifying and tragic chapter in American history.

But the Republican presidential candidate had a narrow escape — mere inches, possibly less — in Saturday's assassination attempt. The projectile from the shooter on a nearby rooftop left Trump with just a bloodied right ear, initially shaken but otherwise unharmed as he dropped down and Secret Service swarmed, his campaign continuing as the Republican National Convention got underway.

A tiny margin for survival, with a potentially seismic impact. And an unforgettable example of something many were talking about Monday — a hard truth about the events that shape us, our daily lives, and our society:

Sometimes, it's all about chance, about circumstances falling in one direction and not another, about interventions in the nick of time or missteps that allow for disruption.

Sometimes history can come down to inches.

Near misses and the hinge of history

It's a truth that often gets obscured as we look over dates, places, people and events with the perspective of hindsight and blanket media coverage. The past gets covered with a patina of inevitability — as if it could have only occurred the way it did.

But "what just happened to us is a kind of humbling lesson about how contingent all of this is," says Susan Schulten, a history professor at the University of Denver. "And nothing's foreordained."

No matter what, of course, there will be fallout and an impact from the attempted assassination of Trump on Saturday at a Pennsylvania rally, where an attendee was killed and two others wounded, and law enforcement killed the shooter. But what it will be, in this election year and in the years to come, will unfold differently than it would have in an America where events had gone differently.

History is filled with examples of chance, randomness or luck playing a part in how things turn out, says

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Mark Rank, a professor of social welfare at Washington University in St. Louis and author of "The Random Factor: How Chance and Luck Profoundly Shape Our Lives and the World around Us."

In his book, he recounts an incident during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, when a submarine from what was then the Soviet Union came close to firing a nuclear-tipped torpedo at U.S. forces out of a belief it was being attacked. But a circumstantial delay in getting the order carried out allowed enough time for another officer to recognize that wasn't the case.

There are plenty of other moments where there can be endless "what-if" discussions, from assassinations of figures like Abraham Lincoln and John and Robert Kennedy to other attempted killings such as the attack on President Ronald Reagan in 1981, two months after he assumed the presidency.

It's also events like the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001, Rank points out, when there were ordinary people who "missed their subway connection or were late or were early and just missed being killed in that disaster, whereas other folks were not as lucky."

Trying to find meaning

Often, people respond to events like these by trying to make sense of them through a belief in coherence — to summon some kind of universal meaning, or divine plan.

That's because people want a sense of control, says Daryl Van Tongeren, a professor of psychology at Hope College in Michigan. It's too unnerving, he says, to admit that life is random and chance-filled. "It's safer for us to think that we can just control everything that happens."

And in the United States of America, where part of the national mythology is the idea that we are masters of our own destinies — that we can pull ourselves up by our own efforts — the idea of randomness can land as particularly unnerving, Rank says.

"In the United States, we're really steeped in the idea of rugged individualism and self-reliance and meritocracy and you do it on your own, and you're in control, and you have agency," he says. "And to some extent, we are in control. We do make decisions. But another aspect of life is that ... there are things that happen to you that you have no control over.

"That's kind of unsettling," he says. "But that's the way life plays out. That's the world."

Amazon Prime Day is a big event for scammers, experts warn

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and HALELUYA HADERO AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Amazon Prime Day is here, and experts are reminding consumers to be wary of scams.

Deceptions such as phony emails from people impersonating online retailers like Amazon are nothing new. But phishing attempts increase amid the heavy spending seen during significant sales events, whether it's Black Friday or Prime Day, according to the Better Business Bureau.

"This is a huge moment on the retail calendar," Josh Planos, vice president of communications and public relations at the Better Business Bureau, previously told The Associated Press. "And because of that, it represents an enormous opportunity for a scammer, con artist or even just an unethical business or organization to capitalize on the moment and separate folks from their hard-earned money."

Prime Day, a two-day discount event for Amazon Prime members, kicks off on Tuesday and runs through Wednesday. In updated guidance published last week, the Better Business Bureau reminded consumers to watch out for lookalike websites, too-good-to-be-true social media ads, and unsolicited emails or calls during sales events this month.

Consumers might need to be more vigilant this year than ever before. In June, the Better Business Bureau published a report that said it received a record number of phishing reports in 2023. Reports are also trending up so far this year, the organization said.

Meanwhile, in a report released this month, the Israel-founded cybersecurity company Check Point Software Technologies said more than 1,230 new websites that associated themselves with Amazon popped up in June. The vast majority of them were malicious or appeared suspicious, according to Check Point.

Scott Knapp, director of worldwide buyer risk prevention at Amazon, identifies two areas that the company has seen hoaxes around come Prime Day in recent years: Prime membership and order confirmations.

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Last year, for example, more than two-third of scams reported by Amazon customers claimed to be related to order or account issues, Knapp wrote in an emailed statement. People reported getting unsolicited calls or emails saying there was something wrong with their Prime membership and seeking bank account or other payment information to reinstate the accounts, Knapp explained.

Urging consumers to confirm an order they didn't place is also a common tactic at this time of year, he added. Scammers might pick something expensive, like a smartphone, to get attention — and again ask for payment information or send a malicious link. They might also try to lure in consumers with promises of a giveaway, or by using language that creates a false sense of urgency.

Amazon is attempting "to ensure scammers are not using our brand to take advantage of people who trust us," Knapp wrote, adding that customers can confirm their purchases and verify messages from the company on its app or website.

Additional scams are probably out there, but it's hard to know what form they might take before this year's Prime Day begins. Still, experts note that the same shopping scams tend to resurface year after year.

"Typically, the bones remain the same," Planos said, pointing to fake delivery scams, email phishing and other repeated methods. "It's always a ploy to separate consumers from (their) personal and payment information."

But online hoaxes are also constantly evolving to become more sophisticated, Planos and others warn. That means images might look more legitimate, text messages may sound more convincing and fake websites that look very similar to real shopping destinations.

Amazon's Knapp has said that with artificial intelligence "starting to leak in," the scams targeting e-commerce shoppers follow the same approach but with a machine populating an email or text instead of a person.

According to data from the Federal Trade Commission, consumers reported losing about \$10 billion to fraud in 2023, a 14% jump from 2022. Online shopping scams were the second most-reported form of fraud, following impostor scams, the FTC said.

Both the FTC and Better Business Bureau provide consumers with tips to avoid scams year-round. Guidance includes blocking unwanted messages, not giving financial information to unsolicited callers and checking links before clicking — secure websites, for example, will have "HTTPS" in the URL, Planos notes, never "HTTP."

Scammers will often pressure you to act immediately, experts say. It's important to pause and trust your gut. Experts also urge consumers to report scams to regulators.

Beyond scams that impersonate companies or retailers, it's also important to be cautious of counterfeit products and fake reviews on the sites of trusted retailers. Just because you're shopping on Amazon, for example, doesn't mean you're buying from Amazon. The online shopping giant, like eBay, Walmart and others, has vast third-party marketplaces.

The quality and look of counterfeit products has significantly increased over recent years, Planos notes, making the activity difficult to police. A good rule of thumb is looking at the price tag — if the product is being sold for less than 75% of its year-round market rate, "that's a pretty big red flag," he says.

Sketchy sellers can show up on different platforms, including sites like Amazon, "all the time" Planos said, urging consumers to check out companies on the Better Business Bureau's website. Like other scams, counterfeit products may increase around high spending periods.

Amid increasing pressure to tackle counterfeit products, Amazon has reported getting rid of millions of phony products in recent years. The company said it also blocked billions of bad listings from making it on to its site. In 2023, Amazon the company said more than 7 million counterfeit items were "identified, seized and appropriately disposed of." The online retailer has also filed multiple lawsuits against fake review brokers.

Amazon notes customers can also report fake reviews and other scams on its website. If a shopper purchases a counterfeit item detected by the company, Amazon has said it will "proactively contact" the customer and provide a refund.

What to watch as the Republican National Convention enters its second day in Milwaukee

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The Republican National Convention heads into its second day Tuesday in Milwaukee — now with Donald Trump officially as its presidential nominee.

Trump energized the crowd Monday night by entering the arena with a bandage on his right ear after being injured during an assassination attempt Saturday. Expect more speakers Tuesday to mention what they described as the former president's strength and resilience after the shooting at his rally in Pennsylvania.

That will likely include Nikki Haley, a onetime primary rival who was a last-minute addition to the schedule. Here's what to watch for on the second day of the RNC:

Nikki Haley will speak on Tuesday

The former United Nations ambassador and South Carolina governor was the last major rival against Trump in this year's primary contest. She waited two months after dropping out in March to say she would vote for him. Then last week, she announced she would instruct her convention delegates to vote for Trump but wasn't planning to attend the convention.

It wasn't until Sunday — hours after the shooting — that her office reversed itself and said she would speak.

It's likely that she will call on her party to show cohesion in the face of this fall's general election battle against President Joe Biden.

Immigration will be in the spotlight

Many of the speeches Monday focused on economic policies and claims that Biden had mishandled the economy.

On Tuesday, the overview shifts to immigration and crime, according to Trump's campaign and the Republican National Committee, with the theme of "Make America Safe Once Again."

Be on the lookout for speakers to argue that they have been damaged by Biden-era immigration policies. Trump and Republicans believe the border debate is among their strongest issues.

As part of a broader attempt to blame crime on border policies, expect speeches from family members of slain people in cases where immigrants in the U.S. illegally face criminal charges. Trump has repeatedly brought up the issue at rallies this year.

Last week, the Trump campaign and the RNC announced that the brother of Rachel Morin — a Maryland woman whom prosecutors say was killed and raped by a fugitive from El Salvador — would be one of the speakers at the convention. Officials say the suspect, Victor Antonio Martinez Hernandez, entered the U.S. illegally after allegedly killing a woman in his home country.

He was arrested last month in Oklahoma and charged with first-degree murder and rape in Morin's death.

The RNC hasn't released the day's full schedule

Convention organizers are not expected to announce who will speak on the event's second day until later Tuesday morning.

Biden goes back on the trail

The Democratic president gets back on the campaign trail Tuesday with events in Nevada, as he continues to try to reassure members of his party about his candidacy after his disastrous debate last month. He had canceled a planned Monday trip to Texas and his reelection campaign temporarily suspended its television ads after Saturday's shooting.

He will address the NAACP convention in Las Vegas on Tuesday, conduct an interview with the BET network and participate in an economic summit with Rep. Steven Horsford, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

As the RNC got underway, Biden had his own slice of the prime-time spotlight Monday. In an interview with Lester Holt on NBC, Biden called it a "mistake" to say he wanted to put a "bull's-eye" on Trump, but argued that the rhetoric from his opponent was more incendiary, while warning that Trump remained a

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threat to democratic institutions.

Those remarks from Biden came during a private call with donors last week as the Democrat had been scrambling to shore up his imperiled candidacy with key party constituencies. During that conversation, Biden declared that he was "done" talking about his poor debate performance and that it was "time to put Trump in the bull's-eye," saying Trump has gotten far too little scrutiny on his stances, rhetoric and lack of campaigning.

Republican convention to focus on immigration a day after a bandaged Trump makes triumphant entrance

By BILL BARROW, STEVE PEOPLES and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Two days after surviving an attempted assassination, former President Donald Trump appeared triumphantly at the Republican National Convention's opening night with a bandage over his right ear, the latest compelling scene in a presidential campaign already defined by dramatic turns.

GOP delegates cheered wildly when Trump appeared onscreen backstage and then emerged in the arena, visibly emotional, as musician Lee Greenwood sang "God Bless the USA." That was hours after the convention had formally nominated the former president to head the Republican ticket in November against President Joe Biden.

The convention resumes Tuesday, when the focus shifts to immigration, an issue central to Trump's political brand that helped endear him to the GOP base when he began his first campaign in 2015.

Trump, accompanied by a wall of Secret Service agents Monday, did not address the hall — with his acceptance speech scheduled for Thursday — but smiled silently and occasionally waved as Greenwood sang. He eventually joined his newly announced running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, to listen to the night's remaining speeches, often with a subdued expression and muted reactions uncharacteristic for the unabashed showman.

The raucous welcome underscored the depth of the crowd's affection for the man who won the 2016 nomination as an outsider, at odds with the party establishment, but has vanquished all Republican rivals, silenced most conservative critics and now commands loyalty up and down the party ranks.

"We must unite as a party, and we must unite as a nation," said Republican Party Chairman Michael Whatley, Trump's handpicked party leader, as he opened Monday's prime-time national convention session. "We must show the same strength and resilience as President Trump and lead this nation to a greater future."

But Whatley and other Republican leaders made clear that their calls for harmony did not extend to Biden and Democrats, who find themselves still riven by worries that the 81-year-old question is not up to the job of defeating Trump.

"Their policies are a clear and present danger to America, to our institutions, our values and our people," said Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson, welcoming the party to his battleground state, which Trump won in 2016 but lost to Biden four years ago.

Trump's campaign chiefs designed the convention to feature a softer and more optimistic message, focusing on themes that would help a divisive leader expand his appeal among moderate voters and people of color.

On Monday, a night devoted to the economy, delegates and a national TV audience heard from speakers the Trump campaign pitched as "everyday Americans" — a single mother talking about inflation, a union member who identified himself as a lifelong Democrat now backing Trump, a small business owner, among others.

Featured speakers also included Black Republicans who have been at the forefront of the Trump campaign's effort to win more votes from a core Democratic constituency.

U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt of Texas said rising grocery and energy prices were hurting Americans' wallets.

"We can fix this disaster," Hunt said, by electing Trump and sending "him right back to where he belongs, the White House."

A Baltimore man died after being sedated and restrained by medics. His mom wants answers

By LEA SKENE Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — When Trea Ellinger left a Baltimore drug rehab facility last summer, he assured his anxious mother that everything was fine. He had his medications and was planning to meet up with his girlfriend.

By the following afternoon, he was dead — not from the violence his mom feared he might face, but because he didn't survive an encounter with first responders in downtown Baltimore.

Ellinger, 29, died after being sedated and restrained. Despite repeated comments from police and medics at the scene acknowledging the dangers of lying face down in the prone position, responders failed to act urgently when the handcuffed Ellinger turned onto his stomach and remained that way for several minutes, according to investigators and experts.

His death adds to a list of similar cases. A recent investigation led by The Associated Press found that the practice of giving sedatives to people detained by police has spread quietly across the nation over the last 15 years. The strategy, which was intended to reduce violence and save lives, has resulted in some avoidable deaths.

In Ellinger's case, the autopsy determined that he died from overdosing on an antidepressant and methadone, which is commonly prescribed to curb opioid cravings. The findings didn't say if other factors might have contributed to his death.

His mother, Lori Ellinger, questions the autopsy's findings and wants to know why paramedics decided to use an injectable sedative.

"I do believe they killed my son with that shot," she said. "He shouldn't be dead at 29 years old."

Independent experts say Trea Ellinger could have died from the combined effects of being sedated and lying prone, which can obstruct a person's airways.

The Baltimore City Fire Department, which employs the city's medics, provided copies of its policies regarding the use of sedatives, physical restraints and other related topics. But the agency declined to comment on the circumstances surrounding Ellinger's death, citing the potential for future litigation.

None of the first responders involved have been charged, and Ellinger's family hasn't sued.

According to an investigative report released in May by the Maryland attorney general's office, a 911 caller reported that a man was lying in the middle of a downtown Baltimore street, speaking incomprehensibly, and acting combative and distressed.

Police body camera footage of the encounter shows officers handcuffing Ellinger at the request of medics. Officers laid him on his side until he was injected with midazolam and then lifted him onto a stretcher.

"As long as he's not lying face down, that would be great," one of the medics says.

Ellinger was initially positioned on his side again, but his continued flailing shifted him onto his stomach while first responders affixed the stretcher straps, according to the report. Inside the ambulance, one medic started checking his vital signs while another sat by his head. He remained face down, sometimes struggling against the stretcher's straps, the report says.

Four minutes later, the medics discussed getting Ellinger repositioned, but they didn't act immediately. After another minute passed, Ellinger was "moving only slightly," the report says. Finally, a medic released the straps and helped roll Ellinger onto his side, noting that his lips were blue. The same medic told his colleague he could administer Narcan, an opioid overdose reversal medication.

Ellinger was unhandcuffed and placed on his back as medics began performing chest compressions, according to the report. He regained a pulse and was transported to the hospital, where he later died.

The report was produced under a relatively new state law that requires the Maryland attorney general's office to investigate all in-custody deaths. In this case, investigators specifically noted that they were only tasked with investigating the actions of the police officers, not those of the medics or other first responders.

Eric Jaeger, an emergency medical services educator in New Hampshire who has no connection to the case, said the most obvious problem was that the medics left Ellinger prone for several minutes, potentially

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hindering his ability to breathe. He said he shows the bodycam footage to his students as an example of what can go wrong when a patient's airways aren't prioritized during sedation.

"I think Trea Ellinger would be alive today if he had been placed on the stretcher face up," Jaeger told the AP.

He also questioned the initial decision to sedate Ellinger, saying medics should be particularly discerning about when to administer such drugs because of the risks they pose.

When dealing with an agitated patient, fire department policy directs medics to "place the patient in supine position (face up) as soon as practical." A different policy says a restrained patient should be placed "face up or on their side, if at all possible."

Fire officials declined to answer questions about the case, including whether the agency is conducting an internal review. The union representing firefighters and paramedics also declined to comment, and the mayor's office didn't respond to recent inquiries about the case.

It appears the decision to sedate Ellinger using midazolam was in accordance with department policy.

Gail Van Norman, professor emeritus of anesthesiology at the University of Washington, said the sedative could have depressed his respiration and relaxed the muscles of his upper airway, making him more vulnerable to cardiac arrest.

"The medics made a few medical mistakes," she said. "But this was a rapidly evolving situation where the unexpected happened. I don't envy them the decisions they had to make."

Ellinger died last July. In April, Baltimore prosecutors announced their decision not to bring charges. The investigative report was released the following month.

Meanwhile, Lori Ellinger is still trying to process the untimely death of her only child. She wears a necklace shaped like a guitar that symbolizes Trea's passion for music. She scrolls through old photos on her phone and reminisces about his childhood.

Trea Ellinger grew up in rural northeastern Maryland and worked for a concrete company after finishing high school. Despite his struggles with substance abuse, he spent much of his 20s crisscrossing the country with a traveling carnival, a job he loved. In the months before his death, he was trying to stay on track and taking methadone to curb his opioid cravings.

His mom said he had been previously diagnosed with mental health issues, including bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

Lori Ellinger visited her son at his rehab facility and brought him some groceries the day before his death. She said he seemed in good spirits. But a couple hours later, he called and said another resident had stabbed him in the shoulder during an argument. His injuries weren't severe, but the facility asked him to leave, she said.

She believes he ended up sleeping on the streets that night. The following afternoon, he was seen stumbling around downtown Baltimore, falling repeatedly and acting disoriented, according to the investigative report.

Watching the videos and reading the report, Lori Ellinger's heart breaks for her son. Clearly he was experiencing some sort of crisis, but she didn't get a call until hours later, when a nurse told her he had already died.

"I love and miss him," she said. "We had a lot of good years — but not enough."

Trump's economic plans include proposed tariffs, tax cuts and no taxes on tips. Details are scarce

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The first night of the Republican National Convention kept its official focus on the economy Monday even after Saturday's shooting at a rally in Pennsylvania in which former President Donald Trump was injured.

Speakers argued that Trump would fix inflation and bring back prosperity simply by returning to the White House as president. Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin lamented, "Tonight, America, the land of opportunity,

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just doesn't feel like that anymore."

But Trump has released few hard numbers and no real policy language or legislative blueprints, and most of the speakers Monday didn't get into details either. Instead, his campaign is betting that voters care more about attitude than policy specifics.

Trump says he wants tariffs on trade partners and no taxes on tips. He would like to knock the corporate tax rate down a tick. The Republican platform also promises to "defeat" inflation and "quickly bring down all prices," in addition to pumping out more oil, natural gas and coal.

The platform would address illegal immigration in part with the "largest deportation program in American history." And Trump would also scrap President Joe Biden's policies to develop the market for electric vehicles and renewable energy.

Democrats and several leading economists say the math shows that Trump's ideas would cause an explosive bout of inflation, wallop the middle class and — by his extending his soon-to-expire tax cuts — heap another \$5 trillion-plus onto the national debt.

The Associated Press sent the Trump campaign 20 basic questions in June to clarify his economic views and the campaign declined to answer any of them. Spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt insisted that Trump best speaks for himself and directed the AP to video clips of him.

By contrast, Biden has an exhaustive 188-page budget proposal that lays out his economic vision, even as his campaign had increasingly devolved before Saturday's rally shooting into questions about his age and whether he should remain the nominee after a self-defeating June 27 debate.

A recent analysis by the Peterson Institute of International Economics showed that deporting 1.3 million workers would cause the size of the U.S. economy to shrink by 2.1%, essentially creating a recession.

Stephen Moore, an informal Trump adviser and economist at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, said Trump is unique in that he's already been president and voters can judge him off his record in office.

"You want to know what he's going to do in his second term, look at what he did in his first term," Moore said.

Democrats have argued that Trump would be more extreme in his second term, using his own remarks to say he would put independent federal agencies under his direct control and use the federal government to settle scores with his perceived enemies. The Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 blueprint is a template for what a second term would look like, they argue, a claim that Trump has disputed.

But Moore said he believes that Trump would be pragmatic in office and focus on the needs of business to drive economic growth.

"There is an idea that it's going to be like slash and burn — I don't think it's going to be a radical agenda," Moore said.

Some of Trump's plans have gotten bipartisan backing. Both of Nevada's senators, Jacky Rosen and Catherine Cortez Masto, are Democrats who would like to ban taxes on tips paid to workers, even as the Biden White House favors a higher minimum wage for tipped workers.

Companies do like Trump's ideas to cut regulations and further lower the corporate tax rate from 21% to 20%. The tax rate had been 35% when he became president in 2017. Democrats, by comparison, want a 28% corporate tax rate in order to fund programs for the middle class and deficit reduction.

But Trump has also floated huge tariffs that he says would protect U.S. manufacturing jobs. Biden preserved the tariffs on China that Trump introduced and went a step further by banning exports of advanced computer chips to China.

Companies generally dislike tariffs — which are taxes on imports — because they can raise costs, which are then likely borne by consumers. An analysis by the economists Kimberly Clausing and Mary Lovely found that Trump's tariffs would cost a typical U.S. household \$1,700 a year in what would effectively be a tax hike.

Trump's tariff plans could worsen inflation as a result, even though the Republican says in videos that he would reduce inflation. It's unclear how Trump would lower inflation, which peaked in 2022 at 9.1% and has since eased to 3% annually.

"The tariff issue is extremely important — and people are not paying enough attention to the magnitude of the Trump tariff policy, what the consequences would be," said Clausing, a former Biden Treasury Department official and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

But tariffs might be more of a political winner than an economic strategy, according to a research paper earlier this year by the economists David Autor, Anne Beck, David Dorn and Gordon Hanson. The research found that the tariffs during Trump's first term did not increase employment, but the tariffs did help Trump politically in the 2020 election in the industrial areas that lost jobs to China and other countries.

Clausing noted that Trump is proposing tariffs on more than \$3 trillion of imports, a 10-fold increase over what he did in his first term. She noted that the tariffs could make it more expensive to bring in the raw materials that U.S. factories need while also raising prices for consumers already struggling with high inflation. She said she wants people to understand the risks Trump's economic policies could pose before it's too late.

"I think people will notice when everything gets wildly expensive," she said. "This is going to be a huge disaster."

Donald Trump enters Republican convention hall with a bandaged ear and gets a hero's welcome

By BILL BARROW, STEVE PEOPLES and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Two days after surviving an attempted assassination, former President Donald Trump appeared triumphantly at the Republican National Convention's opening night with a bandage over his right ear, the latest compelling scene in a presidential campaign already defined by dramatic turns.

GOP delegates cheered wildly when Trump appeared onscreen backstage and then emerged in the arena, visibly emotional, as musician Lee Greenwood sang "God Bless the USA." That was hours after the convention had formally nominated the former president to head the Republican ticket in November against President Joe Biden.

Trump, accompanied by a wall of Secret Service agents, did not address the hall — with his acceptance speech scheduled for Thursday — but smiled silently and occasionally waved as Greenwood sang. He eventually joined his newly announced running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, to listen to the night's remaining speeches, often with a subdued expression and muted reactions uncharacteristic for the unabashed showman.

The raucous welcome underscored the depth of the crowd's affection for the man who won the 2016 nomination as an outsider, at odds with the party establishment, but has vanquished all Republican rivals, silenced most conservative critics and now commands loyalty up and down the party ranks.

"We must unite as a party, and we must unite as a nation," said Republican Party Chairman Michael Whatley, Trump's handpicked party leader, as he opened Monday's prime-time national convention session. "We must show the same strength and resilience as President Trump and lead this nation to a greater future."

But Whatley and other Republican leaders made clear that their calls for harmony did not extend to Biden and Democrats, who find themselves still riven by worries that the 81-year-old question is not up to the job of defeating Trump.

"Their policies are a clear and present danger to America, to our institutions, our values and our people," said Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson, welcoming the party to his battleground state, which Trump won in 2016 but lost to Biden four years ago.

Saturday's shooting at a Pennsylvania rally, where Trump was injured and one man died, were clearly in mind, but the proceedings were celebratory — a stark contrast to the anger and anxiety that had marked the previous few days. Some delegates chanted "fight, fight, fight" — the same words that Trump was seen shouting to the crowd Saturday as the Secret Service ushered him off the stage, his fist raised and face bloodied.

"We should all be thankful right now that we are able to cast our votes for President Donald J. Trump

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after what took place on Saturday," said New Jersey state Sen. Michael Testa as he announced all of his state's 12 delegates for Trump.

When Trump cleared the necessary number of delegates, video screens in the arena read "OVER THE TOP" while the song "Celebration" played and delegates danced and waved Trump signs. Throughout the voting, delegates flanked by "Make America Great Again" signs applauded as state after state voted their support for a second Trump term.

Multiple speakers invoked religious imagery to discuss Trump and the assassination attempt.

"The devil came to Pennsylvania holding a rifle," said Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina. "But an American lion got back up on his feet!"

Wyoming delegate Sheryl Foland was among those who adopted the "fight" chant after seeing Trump survive Saturday in what she called "monumental photos and video."

"We knew then we were going to adopt that as our chant," added Foland, a child trauma mental health counselor. "Not just because we wanted him to fight, and that God was fighting for him. We thought, isn't it our job to accept that challenge and fight for our country?"

"It's bigger than Trump," Foland said. "It's a mantra for our country."

Another well-timed development boosted the mood on the convention floor Monday: The federal judge presiding over Trump's classified documents case dismissed the prosecution because of concerns over the appointment of the prosecutor who brought the case, handing the former president a major court victory.

The convention is designed to reach people outside the GOP base

Trump's campaign chiefs designed the convention to feature a softer and more optimistic message, focusing on themes that would help a divisive leader expand his appeal among moderate voters and people of color.

On a night devoted to the economy, delegates and a national TV audience heard from speakers the Trump campaign pitched as "everyday Americans" — a single mother talking about inflation, a union member who identified himself as a lifelong Democrat now backing Trump, a small business owner, among others.

Featured speakers also included Black Republicans who have been at the forefront of the Trump campaign's effort to win more votes from a core Democratic constituency.

U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt of Texas said rising grocery and energy prices were hurting Americans' wallets and quoted Ronald Reagan in calling inflation "the cruelest tax on the poor." Hunt argued Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris didn't seem to understand the problem.

"We can fix this disaster," Hunt said, by electing Trump and sending "him right back to where he belongs, the White House."

Scott, perhaps the party's most well-known Black lawmaker, declared, "America is not a racist country."

Republicans hailed Vance's selection as a key step toward a winning coalition in November.

Trump announced his choice of his running mate as delegates were voting on the former president's nomination Monday. The young Ohio senator first rose to national attention with his bestselling memoir, "Hillbilly Elegy," which told of his Appalachian upbringing and was hailed as a window into the parts of working-class America that helped propel Trump.

North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, who had been considered a potential vice presidential pick, said in a post on X that Vance's "small town roots and service to country make him a powerful voice for the America First Agenda."

Yet despite calls for harmony, two of the opening speakers at Monday's evening session — Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and North Carolina gubernatorial nominee Mark Robinson — are known as some of the party's most incendiary figures.

Robinson, speaking recently during a church service in North Carolina, discussed "evil" people who he said threatened American Christianity. "Some folks need killing," he said then, though he steered clear of such rhetoric on the convention stage.

Opening night also did not pass without references to the 2020 election and Trump's repeated lies that it was stolen from him.

The campaign continues

Trump's nomination came on the same day that Biden sat for another national TV interview as the president sought to demonstrate his capacity to serve another four years despite continued worries within his own party.

Biden told ABC News that he made a mistake recently when he told Democratic donors the party must stop questioning his fitness for office and instead put Trump in a "bull's-eye." Republicans have circulated the comment aggressively since Saturday's assassination attempt, with some openly blaming Biden for inciting the attack on Trump's life.

The president's admission was in line with his call Sunday from the Oval Office for all Americans to ratchet down political rhetoric. But Biden maintained Monday that drawing contrasts with Trump, who employs harsh and accusatory language, is a legitimate part of a presidential contest.

Inside the arena in Milwaukee, Republicans did not dial back their attacks on Biden, at one point playing a video that mocked the president's physical stamina and mental acuity.

They alluded often to the "Biden-Harris administration" and took regular digs at Vice President Kamala Harris — a not-so-subtle allusion to the notion that Biden could step aside in favor of his second-in-command.

Paul Skenes in spotlight, starting All-Star Game after just 11 major league games

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Paul Skenes looked like a summer intern reporting for duty in a light gray suit, white shirt and cream-colored tie, teenage acne on his face and wonder in his voice.

In a ballpark filled with six dozen All-Stars, the 22-year-old Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher with 11 major league appearances was the center of attention.

"Pretty dang cool," he said.

Skenes is hot, like the 102-degree temperature outside air-conditioned Globe Life Field, and will start Tuesday's All-Star Game for the National League. He will have the fewest big league games of any player in the showcase's 91-year history, a new flavor baseball likes to savor. His splinker, a hybrid that sinks like a splitter with the velocity of a sinker, has batters muttering.

"He's very intriguing to me, and I'm honored to sit next to him," NL manager Torey Lovullo of Arizona gushed.

If not quite flustered by the flattery, Skenes wasn't ripe for the hype.

"It's an honor, but I'm 11 starts in," he said. "Hopefully, there's a lot more time that I can play this game."

At this time last year, he was the top pick in the amateur draft, weeks after celebrating an NCAA title with LSU. Now he's 6-0 with a 1.90 ERA, striking out 89 and walking 13 in 66 1/3 innings.

Cleveland's Steven Kwan will get first look at him Tuesday. He found out in a group text from his parents that he was the leadoff hitter for the American League, which will start Baltimore's Corbin Burnes.

"Sometimes they'll just post stuff that isn't even correct," Kwan said. "I did kind of a double take, and be like: Is this really true?"

Kwan leads the major league with a .352 average and was excited to face Skenes' arsenal of fastballs, splitters, sliders, curves and changeups. Skenes' 99.1 mph average velocity on his four-seam fastball leads the major leagues among those with at least 1,000 pitches.

"It's generational talent," Kwan said. "The guy has all of the pressure on him and people probably naturally want to see him fail because of that, but he continues to excel, he continues to succeed. He says the right things. It seems like his teammates really like him."

An imposing 6-foot-6, Skenes already produced a pair of hitless outings of six innings or more, prevented from trying for a no-hitter by the pitch limits of the analytics age. He arrived in the major leagues with a celebrity girlfriend, the gymnast/influencer Livvy Dunne.

A mustache on Skenes' boyish face gives him an old-time baseball look, like in a daguerreotype of some 19th-century founder. Yet he is a creature of 21st-century pitching practices that include warmups with

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footballs, PlyoCare weighted balls and water bags.

Skenes grew up in Orange County and went to El Toro High School, also known for Nolan Arenado, Matt Chapman and Austin Romine. He enrolled at the Air Force Academy and was a catcher and a pitcher. LSU coach Jay Johnson persuaded him to transfer after the 2022 season and he became a fulltime pitcher last year.

"They stopped putting me in BP groups," Skenes said. "I wanted to keep hitting as long as I could, but the upside on the mound, I think, was a lot better than the upside hitting, so kind of gave it up."

His splinker, listed by Statcast as a splitter, averages 94.1 mph — 1.1 mph faster than anyone else with 1,000 pitches and well above the MLB average of 86.5 mph. Before Skenes, the pitch was known mostly for its use by Minnesota's Jhoan Duran.

"I had a sinker grip I was throwing last year at LSU and kind of started fooling around with it between when the college season wrapped up and when I was going to report to the complex after the draft," Skenes said. "Just figured out a different cue for it, started throwing it and got command over it and the last part of that is just throwing it to hitters and seeing how they react to it."

He didn't change his grip, only the release while playing catch.

"I just kind of discovered it on one random throw," he said.

Skenes has struck a note for the next generation of pitchers since he warmed up to Charles Wesley Godwin's rendition of "Cue Country Roads" for his May 11 debut at Pittsburgh's PNC Park.

Skenes has thrown 75 pitches of 100 mph; the Los Angeles Angels' José Soriano is second among starters with 36.

After Kwan, Skenes will face Baltimore's Gunnar Henderson and the New York Yankees' Juan Soto, then possibly AL home run leader Aaron Judge.

"He's got a 100 mile-an-hour four-seam and I see it as a 95, 96 mile-an-hour two-seam fastball," said the Mets' Pete Alonso, who singled and doubled off splinkers on July 5 before taking a 99.4 fastball for strike three. "So for me it's just getting being ready to hit 100 and then everything else seems semi-hittable if it's over the plate."

After working his way from rookie ball to Double-A last summer and starting this year at Triple-A Rochester, Skenes' goal for 2024 was to reach the major leagues. He's already sparked the attention of the sport's elite.

"I didn't necessarily think I would be here," he said.

Home Run Derby

Teoscar Hernández of the Los Angeles Dodgers won the Home Run Derby, beating Kansas City's Bobby Witt Jr. in the final round.

At the Trump rally, it was evening sun, songs and blue sky. Then came bullets, screams and blood

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

On a sweltering weekend evening, beneath a clear blue sky, Donald Trump supporters in red "Make America Great Again" hats packed the fairgrounds in Butler, Pennsylvania.

It was a friendly and festive venue for the once and maybe future president's final rally before the Republican National Convention the following week. He won Butler County, just north of Pittsburgh in the crucial swing state, by roughly 2 to 1 in both 2016 and 2020.

"God Bless the U.S.A." boomed over a speaker — "I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free" — as Trump arrived wearing his own red MAGA hat. He stood before a row of gold-trimmed American flags. He waved, clapped and pointed to his fans, their cell phones held aloft to record him. The peaks of white tents rose near the red, white and blue-striped grandstands. A green farm combine sat to one side of the rally.

To retired emergency room doctor James Sweetland, it felt like "an old-time rock concert." As they awaited Trump's appearance, Sweetland helped a fellow attendee who was suffering in the day's heat,

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advising her to lie down and giving her water until emergency crews arrived. At the time, he said, it felt like the worst that could happen.

Joleen Monteleone, 57, of Butler, was in the bleachers behind Trump, wearing a "Trump 2024" denim vest that her husband made. Kristen Petrarca, 60, was there, too. "I'd never been to a rally," she said, "and I really wanted to just experience it."

The former president climbed three steps to the stage, basking in applause and chants of "USA!" before delivering a familiar litany of grievances against the news media, President Joe Biden and immigrants living in the country illegally. He reiterated his false claims that the 2020 election was rigged against him.

He pointed to a large video screen depicting statistics on border crossings. Sweetland was sitting near the foot of the screen and felt like Trump was looking right at him.

In the seconds that followed came chaos.

Confusion, then panic

Less than 200 yards (meters) away, unknown to Sweetland or Trump, another scene was playing out.

Some rally-goers had noticed a man climbing to the roof of a nearby building. A local police officer was hoisted up by a fellow officer so he could grab the edge of the roof, local officials said. The officer dropped back down to safety when the gunman turned and pointed his rifle at him, according to Butler County Sheriff Michael Slupe.

Then: shots. Confusion. Disorder.

Trump grabbed his right ear. He ducked. A cluster of Secret Service agents in dark suits piled atop him, ready to take a bullet. More shots.

"Get down!" some rally-goers shouted as others ducked. Still others tried to keep their cell phone cameras pointed at the chaos onstage.

"Everybody was just like screaming and trying to hide in between the bleachers," Petrarca recalled. "And I'm literally being pushed down, in between the bleachers, where your feet would be."

Trump's microphone picked up the urgent chatter of the Secret Service agents.

"I got you, sir! I got you!"

"Shooter's down."

"We're clear, we're clear."

"Let's move!"

The agents helped lift him to his feet, his hat knocked off and his hair mussed. They continued surrounding him. As they began to usher him off the stage, Trump paused. He wanted to get his shoes. Then he paused again.

"Wait!" he shouted. "Wait, wait, wait."

With blood covering his ear and streaking across his face in two rivulets that converged on his tightly pressed lips, he looked out past the agents to the stunned but adoring crowd — and pumped his fist. Even in the middle of the shocking attempt on his life, the former reality TV star's instincts for showmanship and symbolism did not fail him.

"Fight!" he mouthed. "Fight! Fight!"

The agents moved him into a black SUV. All around him, his supporters erupted in chants.

"USA! USA!"

A jumbled aftermath

The Secret Service said its snipers had killed the gunman after the assassination attempt. But even now, two days later, the attacker's motives and actions in the hours before the shooting are unclear.

His name was Thomas Matthew Crooks, 20, a nursing home employee from the suburbs south of Pittsburgh. He'd been armed with an AR-15 that his dad bought.

Crooks did not kill Donald Trump. But in those moments, another life was lost.

Corey Comperatore, a 50-year-old former fire chief who had served for decades with the Buffalo Township volunteer fire company, was in a section of bleachers just to Trump's right. At the pops of gunshots, he dove to cover his wife and daughter. A bullet struck his head.

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When Sweetland, the retired ER doctor, heard calls for help nearby, his muscle memory kicked in. He rushed to the grievously wounded Comperatore and performed CPR as blood seeped from a hole above the man's right ear. Two minutes into his efforts, state troopers tapped him on the shoulder, took over, and then picked Comperatore up "like a rag doll" and carried him off on a stretcher.

"I looked up and I saw what I assumed would be his wife and a daughter that were there, and the look on their face was something I'll never forget," said Sweetland, who is from a town called DuBois about 90 minutes away. "The look on their faces, they were appalled, they were sad. And the look on everybody's face in this situation is, 'Is he gonna be alright?'"

"And all I could blurt out was, 'They're taking him to where he can get help.'"

Rico Elmore, vice chairman of the Republican Party in neighboring Beaver County, also heard the cries for help. He removed his tie and rushed over a barricade toward the wounded man. He held the man's head with a towel.

Later, in an interview with The Associated Press, Elmore pulled a red T-shirt over his white shirt, which was stained with the victim's blood. "It was a horror," Elmore said. "I pray to the family that had to deal with this that is going through this now. Because it is hard. It is so hard."

At least two other people were wounded: David Dutch, 57, of New Kensington, Pennsylvania, and James Copenhaver, 74, of Moon Township, Pennsylvania, both towns outside Pittsburgh. Each man was listed in stable condition Sunday.

Monteleone, who wore the "Trump 2024" denim vest that her husband made, said the ordeal and Trump's fist pumps only made her "more MAGA, more pro-America than ever."

"We were not scared. We were angry," Monteleone said. "And we will not surrender. We will vote for him. We will support him. He is a strong leader, and that's what America needs."

As Trump was spirited away, many rally-goers directed that anger toward the journalists documenting the rally, shouting obscenities and extending their middle fingers. "Are you happy?" some yelled.

And Sweetland? A day after the shooting, his shock had turned to anger.

"I just hope and pray everybody takes a step back, a deep breath, lowers their temperature and stops all this vitriolic comments that are being made," he said. "This is not the United States I know and love, and I love this country dearly."

Trump picks Sen. JD Vance of Ohio, a once-fierce critic turned loyal ally, as his GOP running mate

By JILL COLVIN, JULIE CARR SMYTH, STEVE PEOPLES and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press MILWAUKEE (AP) — Former President Donald Trump chose Sen. JD Vance of Ohio as his running mate on Monday, picking a onetime critic who became a loyal ally and is now the first millennial to join a major-party ticket at a time of deep concern about the advanced age of America's political leaders.

"After lengthy deliberation and thought, and considering the tremendous talents of many others, I have decided that the person best suited to assume the position of Vice President of the United States is Senator J.D. Vance of the Great State of Ohio," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network as the Republican National Convention got underway in Milwaukee.

Hours later, Vance formally received his party's formal nomination after walking onto the floor of the convention to Merle Haggard's "American First." He and Trump — who had a large bandage on his right ear after Saturday's shooting — sat next to each other in Trump's box during the convention's opening night program.

The 39-year-old Vance rose to national fame with the 2016 publication of his memoir, "Hillbilly Elegy." He was elected to the Senate in 2022 and has become one of the staunchest champions of the former president's "Make America Great Again" agenda, particularly on trade, foreign policy and immigration.

But he is largely untested in national politics and is joining the Trump ticket at an extraordinary moment in American history. An attempted assassination of Trump at a rally Saturday has shaken the campaign, bringing new attention to the nation's coarse political rhetoric and reinforcing the importance of those

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who are one heartbeat away from the presidency.

Vance himself faced criticism in the wake of the shooting for a post on X that suggested President Joe Biden was to blame for the violence.

"The central premise of the Biden campaign is that President Donald Trump is an authoritarian fascist who must be stopped at all costs," Vance wrote. "That rhetoric led directly to President Trump's attempted assassination."

Law enforcement has not yet specified a motivation for the shooting.

Why Vance was chosen over the other finalists

The pick is sure to energize Trump's loyal base. Vance has become a fixture on the conservative media circuit and frequently spars with reporters on Capitol Hill, helping establish him as the kind of leader who could carry Trump's mantle into the future, beginning with the next presidential election in 2028.

But the pick also means that two white men will now lead the Republican ticket at a time when Trump has sought to make inroads with Black and Latino voters.

In his post announcing his pick, Trump said Vance "will be strongly focused on the people he fought so brilliantly for, the American Workers and Farmers in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Minnesota, and far beyond." Several of those Midwestern states are expected to play a critical role in November's election.

But Vance also had another advantage: his chemistry with Trump. Personal relationships are extremely important to the former president and he and Vance have developed a strong rapport, speaking on the phone regularly.

Trump has also complimented Vance's looks, saying he reminded him of "a young Abraham Lincoln."

Trump formally offered Vance the job in a phone call that came about 20 minutes before his Truth Social post, according to a person familiar with the call who requested anonymity to share details of the private conversation.

Vance told Fox News host Sean Hannity in his first interview since his selection that he knew Trump was calling with big news, but didn't know if it was good or bad. He said the former president told him he could help win Midwestern swing states such as Michigan, and thought he would do well in the vice presidential debate.

Trump had long said he wanted to dramatically reveal his pick onstage at the convention, which he said would make it more "interesting" and "exciting." The timing is later than in recent cycles, but hardly unprecedented. In 1980, Ronald Reagan made his decision less than 24 hours before he formally accepted the GOP nomination, and George H.W. Bush waited until his convention in 1988.

Biden's reelection campaign issued a statement calling out Vance for saying, had he been vice president, he would have allowed "multiple slates of electors" to challenge Biden's victory over Trump four years ago. Trump repeatedly promoted falsehoods about election fraud before and after Jan. 6, 2021, when rioters loyal to the former president stormed the Capitol to try to stop the certification of his loss.

"Donald Trump picked J.D. Vance as his running mate because Vance will do what Mike Pence wouldn't on January 6: bend over backwards to enable Trump and his extreme MAGA agenda, even if it means breaking the law and no matter the harm to the American people," Biden campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon said in the statement.

Trump had spent months testing the field, assessing how his contenders performed on television, at fundraisers and on rally stages. Several joined him at his criminal hush money trial in New York. Others were there at the debate last month, where Biden's disastrous performance upended his campaign, leading to widespread calls for him to step aside in favor of a younger candidate.

Vance once was a harsh Trump critic

The relationship between Vance and Trump has been symbiotic.

Vance's fame grew in tandem with Trump's unlikely rise from a reality television star to Republican presidential nominee and eventually president. During the early stages of Trump's political career, Vance cast him as "a total fraud," "a moral disaster" and "America's Hitler."

But like many Republicans who sought relevance in the Trump era, Vance eventually shifted his tone. He said he was proved wrong by Trump's performance in office and evolved into one of his most steadfast

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defenders.

"I was certainly skeptical of Donald Trump in 2016, but President Trump was a great president and he changed my mind," Vance said in his interview with Hannity. "I think he changed the minds of a lot of Americans, because again he delivered that peace and prosperity."

Vance was rewarded for his turnaround during his bid for an open Senate seat in 2022, during which he landed Trump's coveted endorsement and rode it to victory in a crowded Republican primary and a general election hard fought by Democrats. He is close to Trump's son Donald Jr.

"Listen, I've seen him on TV," Donald Trump Jr. said of Vance, speaking to CNN from the convention floor. "I've seen him prosecute the case against the Democrats. No one's more articulate than that. And I think his story, his background, really helps us in a lot of the places that you're going to need from the Electoral College standpoint."

Vance is now a Trump loyalist who has challenged the legitimacy of criminal prosecutions and civil verdicts against him and questions the results of the 2020 election.

He told ABC News in February that, if he had been vice president on Jan. 6, 2021, he would have told states where Trump disputed Biden wins "that we needed to have multiple slates of electors, and I think the U.S. Congress should have fought over it from there."

"That is the legitimate way to deal with an election that a lot of folks, including me, think had a lot of problems in 2020," he said.

Many states adopted emergency measures four years ago to allow people to vote safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. But judges, election officials in both parties and Trump's own attorney general have concluded there was no evidence of widespread voter fraud in the 2020 election.

Vance's book vaulted him to national prominence

Vance's book — subtitled "A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis" — detailed life in Appalachian communities that drifted from a Democratic Party many residents found disconnected from their daily travails. It was embraced for its insights into Trump's appeal in middle America, where manufacturing job losses and the opioid crisis had driven many families like his into poverty, abuse and addiction, but it was also criticized for sometimes oversimplifying rural life and ignoring the role of racism in modern politics.

The tale of Vance's hardscrabble childhood in Middletown, Ohio, where he was born, and his familial eastern Kentucky hills region also captivated Hollywood. Ron Howard made it into a 2020 movie starring Amy Adams as Vance's mother and Glenn Close as his beloved "Mamaw."

Because of that difficult upbringing, "I actually understand a little bit what people are going through," Vance said on Fox. "Yeah, it was tough when I was dealing with it, but now I really do think it's a blessing that's given me a perspective a lot of politicians don't have."

With his grandmother's encouragement, Vance went on to serve in the Marine Corps, including in Iraq, and to graduate from Ohio State University and Yale Law School. From there, he joined a Silicon Valley investment firm before returning to Ohio to launch a nonprofit that he said would aim to develop opioid addiction treatments that might be "scaled nationally."

Ultimately, Our Ohio Renewal failed at that mission and was shuttered. During the 2022 campaign, then-U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, his Democratic rival, charged that the charity was little more than a front for Vance's political ambitions. Ryan pointed to reports that the organization made payments to a Vance political adviser and conducted public opinion polling, even as its actual efforts to address addiction largely floundered. Vance denied the characterization.

As a senator, Vance has shown some willingness to work across the aisle. He and Ohio's senior senator, Democrat Sherrod Brown, have teamed up on a number of issues important to the state, including fighting for funding for a \$20 billion chip facility Intel is building in central Ohio and introducing rail safety legislation in response to the fiery derailment in East Palestine, Ohio.

Will the Seine be clean enough by the Olympics? Not even the experts know yet

By TOM NOUVIAN and SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — With the Paris Olympics less than two weeks away, a question hangs over the Games: Will the Seine River be clean enough for athletes to swim in?

Triathlon and marathon swimming are scheduled to take place in the Seine, where it has been illegal to swim for more than a century. Despite the city's efforts to clean up the long-polluted river, the water has tested unsafe for humans in recent weeks, and cleaner on other days. The Games run from July 26-Aug. 11.

To clean up the river, Paris invested 1.4 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) in building infrastructure to catch more stormwater when it rains — the same water that contains bacteria-laden wastewater that enters the river during periods of heavy rain and makes it unsafe to swim in.

In May, Paris officials inaugurated a giant underground water storage basin next to the Austerlitz train station aimed at collecting excess rainwater and stopping wastewater from entering the Seine. The basin can hold the equivalent of 20 Olympic swimming pools of dirty water that will now be treated and is the centerpiece of major infrastructure improvements that the city has rushed to finish in time for the Games, but to also ensure that Parisians have a cleaner Seine in years to come.

But a few spells of heavy rain could push E. coli levels beyond the limit of 900 colony-forming units per 100 milliliters that the World Triathlon Federation has determined as safe for competitions.

"The Seine is not a special case," said Metin Duran, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at Villanova University who has researched stormwater management. "It really is a complicated and very costly problem."

Paris, like many old cities around the world, has a combined sewer system, which means that the city's wastewater and stormwater flow through the same pipes. With heavy or prolonged periods of rain, the pipes' capacity is reached, which means raw wastewater flows into the river instead of a treatment plant.

On a daily basis, the monitoring group Eau de Paris has tested the river water, yielding results that showed unsafe E. coli levels in recent weeks followed by results in early July that showed improvement.

Paris Olympic organizers have said that if heavy rain affects the Seine's flow during the Games, the triathlon would no longer feature the swimming portion — and the marathon swimming competition would be relocated to the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium in the greater Paris region.

"It's not very common, but it has happened a few times," said Ollala Cernuda, head of communications at World Triathlon, an international body for the sport, about the possibility of the swim portion being cancelled.

"And it's always linked with water quality issues," Cernuda said.

But organizers remain optimistic that drier, sunnier weather than what the French capital experienced in June will allow the events to go as planned — buffeted by the infrastructure upgrades. The sun's ultraviolet rays kill bacteria like E. coli in water.

An AP analysis of weather data showed that in 2024, Paris has seen the second-most days with rain than any year since 1950, surpassed only by 2016.

Importantly for the Seine's water quality, there have also been few stretches of days without rain.

Paris only experienced one weeklong dry spell this year — in early June, whereas between 1950 and 2020, it was typical for the city to have at least three such periods by the end of June, according to the analysis.

"Predictions of rainfall have become much more accurate up to a week in advance," said Jennifer Francis, a scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Center in Massachusetts. "But the seasonal patterns of past decades no longer provide reliable guidance in our warmer world."

With the Games approaching, the feverish debate over the cleanliness of the Seine River has become a source of frustration for some athletes like Léonie Périault, a French triathlete who won a bronze medal in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

"Every time I meet someone, they worry that I'm going to swim in the Seine," Périault said. "But I've

been swimming in this river for several years now. In youth competitions, we swam regularly in the Seine and never had problems.”

Last year, Périault took part in a test event in the Seine.

“The setting was incredible with the Eiffel Tower as a backdrop and the water conditions were not worse than anywhere else in the world,” she said.

On Saturday, the French Sports Minister Amélie Oudéa-Castéra took a plunge to demonstrate that the famed river is clean enough. Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo has also said she would swim in the Seine this week.

Dan Angelescu, the founder and CEO of Fluidion, a Paris and Los Angeles-based water-monitoring tech company, said there have been improvements observed in the river since the city’s new infrastructure came online, but that the Seine’s water quality remained fragile. His company has measured the Seine’s contamination levels for several years.

Angelescu said it’s hard to predict, using previous years’ data, what might happen later this month — since the water storage basin and other infrastructure were not operational until a few months ago.

“It’s difficult to tell,” Angelescu said, speaking in early July after the Seine’s water had tested cleaner than in several weeks prior.

“To see such a drastic improvement and so rapidly could be a sign that something is working,” he said.

Who is JD Vance? Things to know about Donald Trump’s pick for vice president

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Former President Donald Trump on Monday chose U.S. Sen. JD Vance of Ohio to be his running mate as he looks to return to the White House.

Here are some things to know about Vance, a 39-year-old Republican now in his first term in the Senate: Vance rose to prominence with the memoir ‘Hillbilly Elegy’

Vance was born and raised in Middletown, Ohio. He joined the Marines and served in Iraq, and later earned degrees from Ohio State University and Yale Law School. He also worked as a venture capitalist in Silicon Valley.

Vance made a name for himself with his memoir, the 2016 bestseller “Hillbilly Elegy,” which was published as Trump was first running for president. The book earned Vance a reputation as someone who could help explain the maverick New York businessman’s appeal in middle America, especially among the working class, rural white voters who helped Trump win the presidency.

“Hillbilly Elegy” also introduced Vance to the Trump family. Donald Trump Jr. loved the book and knew of Vance when he went to launch his political career. The two hit it off and have remained friends.

He was first elected to public office in 2022

After Donald Trump won the 2016 election, Vance returned to his native Ohio and set up an anti-opioid charity. He also took to the lecture circuit and was a favored guest at Republican Lincoln Day dinners where his personal story — including the hardship Vance endured because of his mother’s drug addiction — resonated.

Vance’s appearances were opportunities to sell his ideas for fixing the country and helped lay the groundwork for entering politics in 2021, when he sought the Senate seat vacated by Republican Rob Portman, who retired.

Trump endorsed Vance. Vance went on to win a crowded Republican primary and the general election. He and Trump have personal chemistry

Personal relationships are extremely important to the former president and he and Vance have developed a strong rapport over years, speaking on the phone regularly.

Trump has also complimented Vance’s beard, saying he “looks like a young Abraham Lincoln.”

Vance went from never-Trumper to fierce ally

Vance was a “never Trump” Republican in 2016. He called Trump “dangerous” and “unfit” for office. Vance, whose wife, lawyer Usha Chilukuri Vance, is Indian American and the mother of their three children,

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also criticized Trump's racist rhetoric, saying he could be "America's Hitler."

But by the time Vance met Trump in 2021, he had reversed his opinion, citing Trump's accomplishments as president. Both men downplayed Vance's past scathing criticism.

Once elected, Vance became a fierce Trump ally on Capitol Hill, unceasingly defending Trump's policies and behavior.

He is a leading conservative voice

Kevin Roberts, president of the conservative Heritage Foundation, called Vance a leading voice for the conservative movement, on key issues including a shift away from interventionist foreign policy, free market economics and "American culture writ large."

Democrats call him an extremist, citing provocative positions Vance has taken but sometimes later amended. Vance signaled support for a national 15-week abortion ban during his Senate run, for instance, then softened that stance once Ohio voters overwhelmingly backed a 2023 abortion rights amendment.

He is married to a lawyer who was a Supreme Court clerk

Vance met his wife, Usha Chilukuri Vance, at Yale, where she received both her undergraduate and law degrees. She spent a year clerking for future Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh when he served as an appeals court judge in Washington, followed by a year as a law clerk to Chief Justice John Roberts.

She had been a trial lawyer for the Munger, Tolles and Olson law firm. Her law firm announced Monday that she had left the firm.

"Usha has been an excellent lawyer and colleague, and we thank her for her years of work and wish her the best in her future career," Munger, Tolles & Olson said in a statement.

Vance has adopted Trump's rhetoric about Jan. 6

On the 2020 election, he said he wouldn't have certified the results immediately if he had been vice president and said Trump had "a very legitimate grievance." He has put conditions on honoring the results of the 2024 election that echo Trump's. A litany of government and outside investigations have not found any election fraud that could have swung the outcome of Trump's 2020 loss to Democratic President Joe Biden.

In the Senate, Vance sometimes embraces bipartisanship. He and Democratic Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown co-sponsored a railway safety bill following a fiery train derailment in the Ohio village of East Palestine. He's sponsored legislation extending and increasing funding for Great Lakes restoration, and supported bipartisan legislation boosting workers and families.

Vance can articulate Trump's vision

People familiar with the vice presidential vetting process said Vance would bring to the GOP ticket debating skills and the ability to articulate Trump's vision.

Charlie Kirk, founder of the conservative activist group Turning Point USA, said Vance compellingly articulates the America First world view and could help Trump in states he closely lost in 2020, such as Michigan and Wisconsin, that share Ohio's values, demographics and economy.

Federal judge dismisses Trump classified documents case over concerns with prosecutor's appointment

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge in Florida dismissed the classified documents case against former President Donald Trump on Monday, siding with defense lawyers who said the special counsel who filed the charges was illegally appointed by the Justice Department.

Hours later, special counsel Jack Smith's office said it would appeal the order, which could result in it eventually being overturned by a higher court. But for now at least, the dismissal by U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon brings a stunning and abrupt halt to a criminal case that at the time it was filed was widely regarded as the most perilous of all the legal threats the Republican former president confronted.

Though the case had long been stalled, and the prospect of a trial before the November election already nonexistent, the judge's order is a significant legal and political victory for Trump as he recovers from a

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weekend assassination attempt and prepares to accept the Republican nomination in Milwaukee this week.

It's the latest stroke of good fortune in the four criminal cases Trump has faced. He was convicted in May in his New York hush money trial, but the sentencing has been postponed after a Supreme Court opinion that conferred broad immunity on former presidents. That opinion will cause major delays in a separate case charging Trump with plotting to overturn his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden. Another election subversion case filed in Atlanta has been delayed by revelations of a romantic relationship between the district attorney and a special prosecutor she hired for the case.

In a statement on his social media platform, Trump said the dismissal "should be just the first step" and the three other cases, which he called "Witch Hunts," should also be thrown out.

The classified documents case had been seen as the most legally clear-cut of the four given the breadth of evidence that prosecutors say they had accumulated, including the testimony of close aides and former lawyers, and because the conduct at issue occurred after Trump left the White House in 2021 and lost the powers of the presidency.

The indictment included dozens of felony counts accusing him of illegally hoarding classified records from his presidency at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, and obstructing FBI efforts to get them back. He had pleaded not guilty and denied wrongdoing.

Defense lawyers filed multiple challenges to the case, including legally technical ones that asserted that special counsel Jack Smith's appointment by Attorney General Merrick Garland violated the Constitution's Appointments Clause because it did not go through Congress and that Smith's office was improperly funded by the Justice Department.

Cannon agreed, writing Monday that Garland had exceeded his bounds by appointing a prosecutor without Senate approval and confirmation and had undermined the authority of Congress.

"The Special Counsel's position effectively usurps that important legislative authority, transferring it to a Head of Department, and in the process threatening the structural liberty inherent in the separation of powers," Cannon wrote in a 93-page order that granted the defense team's request to dismiss the case but did not dissect the substance of the allegations against Trump.

"If the political branches wish to grant the Attorney General power to appoint Special Counsel Smith to investigate and prosecute this action with the full powers of a United States Attorney, there is a valid means by which to do so," she added.

That mechanism is through congressional approval, she said.

A spokesman for Smith, Peter Carr, said the Justice Department had authorized an appeal.

"The dismissal of the case deviates from the uniform conclusion of all previous courts to have considered the issue that the Attorney General is statutorily authorized to appoint a special counsel," Carr said in a statement.

President Joe Biden said Monday in an interview with NBC News that he wasn't surprised by the decision to dismiss the case, but "the basis upon which the case was thrown out I find specious."

The order is the latest example of the Trump-appointed judge handling the case in ways that have benefited the ex-president.

She generated intense scrutiny during the FBI's investigation when she appointed an independent arbiter to inspect the classified documents recovered during the August 2022 search of Mar-a-Lago, a decision that was overturned months later by a unanimous federal appeals panel.

Since the charges were filed, she has been slow to issue rulings — favoring Trump's strategy of securing delays in all his criminal cases — and has entertained defense motions and arguments that experts said other judges would have dispensed with without hearings. In May, she indefinitely canceled the trial date amid a series of unresolved legal issues.

Smith's team had vigorously contested the Appointments Clause argument during hearings before Cannon last month, saying Justice Department leadership has full authority to name and fund a special counsel. Attorneys general appointed by both Democratic and Republican presidents have named special counsels without the permission of Congress, going back years.

Prosecutors had also noted that Trump's position had been rejected in other courts involving other

prosecutions brought by other Justice Department special counsels.

For instance, Trump-appointed judges in the federal tax and firearms cases against Biden's son, Hunter, dismissed similar arguments several months ago. The younger Biden was convicted of three felonies in the gun case in June and is scheduled for trial in September in the tax case.

The appointment of another special counsel Robert Mueller, selected by Trump's Justice Department to investigate potential ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign, was also upheld as lawful by a District of Columbia judge.

But Cannon remained unpersuaded, and she called the prosecution's claims "strained." The Trump team's position got a boost this month in a Supreme Court ruling that said former presidents enjoy expansive immunity from prosecution, with Justice Clarence Thomas writing a separate concurrence questioning whether Smith had been legally appointed.

No other justice signed on to the concurrence, which Thomas said he wrote to "highlight another way in which this prosecution may violate our constitutional structure." Thomas wrote that lower courts should weigh whether the office had been "established by law," and Cannon cited that concurrence several times in her order.

"Both the Appointments and Appropriations challenges as framed in the Motion raise the following threshold question: is there a statute in the United States Code that authorizes the appointment of Special Counsel Smith to conduct this prosecution?" she said. "After careful study of this seminal issue, the answer is no."

Trump lawyer Chris Kise praised Cannon for what he said was a "courageous and correct decision."

"Judge Cannon today restored the rule of law and made the right call for America. Jack Smith is not above the law and must be held accountable under the Constitution," Kise said.

Signs of trouble at Trump rally were evident in minutes before gunman opened fire

By MARK SCOLFORO, ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

BUTLER, Pa. (AP) — Signs of trouble were evident in the minutes before shots rang out at Donald Trump's rally in Pennsylvania: Police had a report of a suspicious man pacing near the magnetometers and were apparently exchanging photos of the suspect. Witnesses pointed and shouted at an armed man on a nearby roof.

When a police officer climbed up to the roof to investigate, the gunman turned and pointed his rifle at him. But the officer did not — or could not — fire a single shot.

A sniper cut down 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks within seconds of him firing an AR-style rifle toward the former president, but it was too late. Now investigators are trying to painstakingly piece together how an armed man with no military background managed to reach high ground and get the jump on teams of Secret Service agents.

Stan Kephart, a former police chief who worked event security for two former presidents, said the shooting followed an "an absolute and abysmal failure" on the part of the Secret Service to protect Trump. The agency is ultimately responsible for the candidate's safety, he added.

"You don't get to blame other people. They are under your control," said Kephart, now a consulting expert on law enforcement event security.

President Joe Biden has ordered an independent investigation of the attempted assassination. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said he has "full confidence" in the Secret Service's leadership, but he conceded that the gunman never should have reached that deadly position.

"We are speaking of a failure," Mayorkas told CNN. "We are going to analyze through an independent review how that occurred, why it occurred, and make recommendations and findings to make sure it doesn't happen again."

At least a dozen police officers and sheriff's deputies were assisting the Secret Service and Pennsylvania State Police with rally security.

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Several rallygoers reported to local officers that Crooks was acting suspiciously and pacing near the magnetometers, according to a law enforcement official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to discuss the investigation.

It was a Butler Township police officer who encountered the gunman on the roof before the shooting. The officer was looking for the suspicious person when another officer hoisted him up so he could grab the edge of the roof, local officials said.

The officer dropped back down to safety when the gunman turned and pointed his rifle at him, according to Butler County Sheriff Michael Slupe.

Slupe, who was inside the rally venue when the shooting erupted and did not witness the encounter, said the officer could not have wielded his own gun under the circumstances.

"I think all law enforcement on site did everything that they could, especially the local law enforcement," Slupe told The Associated Press on Monday. "I hope they're not made a scapegoat, because they did their job to the best of their abilities."

Butler Township Manager Tom Knights said the officer lost his grip and was not retreating when he fell 8 feet (2.4 meters) to the ground.

"He was literally dangling from the edge of a building and took the defensive position he needed to at that time. He couldn't hold himself up," Knights said.

The officer, who has 10 years of experience in law enforcement, severely injured an ankle in the fall and was in a walking boot, Knights said.

Two spectators were critically wounded in the shooting. A former fire chief, 50-year-old Corey Comperatore, was killed.

The FBI said it was investigating the attack as a potential act of domestic terrorism, but the agency had not identified a clear ideological motive. The FBI believes Crooks, who had bomb-making materials in the car he drove to the rally, acted alone.

The FBI said Monday that analysts were able to gain access to the shooter's phone, though a law enforcement official who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity said the device has not revealed meaningful information about any potential motive.

The official also said that investigators believe Crooks purchased 50 rounds of ammunition on the day of the attack.

The FBI has conducted nearly 100 interviews of law enforcement officials, attendees at the rally and other witnesses, and it has received hundreds of digital media tips.

Authorities said they believe the gunman's AR-style rifle was purchased by his father. Kevin Rojek, FBI special agent in charge in Pittsburgh, said investigators do not yet know if Crooks took the gun without his father's permission.

The roof where Crooks lay was an estimated 147 yards (135 meters) from where Trump was speaking, a distance from which a decent marksman could reasonably hit a human-sized target. That is a distance at which U.S. Army recruits must hit a scaled human-sized silhouette to qualify with the M-16 rifle.

Patrick Brosnan, a former New York Police Department detective who runs a national private intelligence and security firm that has protected heads of state, suggested a building that close to the stage should have been secured and under surveillance from the start. An AR-15-type weapon has an effective range of about 400 to 500 yards (366 to 457 meters). The gunman was under 150 yards (137 meters) from Trump.

"It would just seem to me to be elemental and rudimentary as it relates to providing a steel band or circular band of protection for the former president, who is fully exposed," said Brosnan, who has trained with the Secret Service and spoken in the past to Trump and his family about security issues.

'Hillbilly Elegy': JD Vance's rise to vice presidential candidate began with a bestselling memoir

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — At the heart of JD Vance's swift journey from venture capitalist to vice presidential candidate is a memoir he first thought of in law school, "Hillbilly Elegy."

Vance's bestseller about his roots in rural Kentucky and blue-collar Ohio made him a national celebrity soon after its publication in the summer of 2016, and became a cultural talking point after Donald Trump's stunning victory that November. The Ohio Republican has since been elected to the U.S. Senate and, as of Monday, chosen as Trump's running mate in the former president's quest for a return to the White House. He is 39, and would be the youngest vice president since Richard Nixon, who served two terms under Dwight Eisenhower, starting in 1953.

In "Hillbilly Elegy," Vance reflects on the transformation of Appalachia from reliably Democratic to reliably Republican, sharing stories about his chaotic family life and about communities that had declined and seemed to lose hope. Vance first thought of the book while studying at Yale Law School, and completed it in his early 30s, when it was eventually published by HarperCollins.

"I was very bugged by this question of why there weren't more kids like me at places like Yale ... why isn't there more upward mobility in the United States?" Vance told The Associated Press in 2016.

Sales for "Hillbilly Elegy" now total at least 1.6 million copies, according to Circana, which tracks around 85% of hardcover and paperback sales. Ron Howard adapted the book into a 2020 movie of the same name, earning Glenn Close an Oscar nomination for best supporting actress. Within hours of Trump's announcement Monday, it was No. 1 on Amazon.com, surging from No. 220 earlier in the day.

"I felt that if I wrote a very forthright, and sometimes painful, book, that it would open people's eyes to the very real matrix of these problem," Vance told the AP in 2016. "If I wrote a more abstract or esoteric essay ... then not as many people would pay attention to it because they would assume I was just another academic spouting off, and not someone who's looked at these problems in a very personal way."

Vance's book, subtitled "A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis," was initially praised by conservatives for its criticisms of welfare and what Vance saw as "too many young men immune to hard work." Reviewing "Hillbilly Elegy" in The American Conservative, Rod Dreher praised Vance's contention that public policy does little to "affect the cultural habits that keep people poor."

After Trump's election, Vance's book became an unofficial guide for liberals baffled both by Trump's rise and by the bonds shared between some of the country's poorest residents and the wealthy New York real estate man turned TV star.

The Washington Post dubbed Vance, initially a fervent critic of Trump, "The Voice of the Rust Belt."

At the same time, "Hillbilly Elegy" was heavily criticized, including by some from the Appalachian communities Vance was portraying. Common critiques were that it flattened rural life and sidestepped the role of racism in politics.

Sarah Jones, writing in The New Republic that she grew up in poverty on the border of southwestern Virginia and eastern Tennessee, called the book a list of "myths about welfare queens repackaged as a primer on the white working class."

In The Guardian, Sarah Smarsh wrote that Vance offered a narrow perspective on American poverty.

"Most downtrodden whites are not conservative male Protestants from Appalachia," Smarsh wrote. "That sometimes seems the only concept of them that the American consciousness can contain: tucked away in a remote mountain shanty like a coal-dust-covered ghost, as though white poverty isn't always right in front of us, swiping our credit cards at a Target in Denver or asking for cash on a Los Angeles sidewalk."

Israeli drone strike along Lebanon-Syria border kills Syrian businessman close to the government

By BASSEM MROUE and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — An Israeli drone strike on a car Monday near the Lebanon-Syria border killed a prominent Syrian businessman who was sanctioned by the United States and had close ties to the government of Syrian President Bashar Assad, according to pro-government media and an official from an Iran-backed group.

Mohammed Baraa Katerji was killed when a drone strike hit his car near the area of Saboura, a few kilometers or miles inside Syria after apparently crossing from Lebanon. Israel's air force has carried out hundreds of airstrikes in recent years, mainly targeting members of Iran-backed groups and Syria's military. But it has been rare to hit personalities from within the government.

The strike also came as Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah group have been exchanging fire on an almost daily basis since early October, after the start of the Israel-Hamas war.

An official from an Iran-backed group said that Katerji was killed instantly while in his SUV on the highway linking Lebanon with Syria. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to the media.

The pro-government Al-Watan daily quoted unnamed "sources" as saying that Katerji, 48, was killed in a "Zionist drone strike on his car." It gave no further details.

Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the Britain-based opposition war monitor Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said that Katerji was killed while in a car with Lebanese licence plates, adding that he was apparently targeted because he used to fund the "Syrian resistance" against Israel in the Golan Heights, as well as his links to Iran-backed groups in Syria.

Israel, which has vowed to stop Iranian entrenchment in its northern neighbor, has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets in government-controlled parts of Syria in recent years, but it rarely acknowledges them.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, or OFAC, sanctioned Katerji in 2018 as Assad's middleman to trade oil with the Islamic State group and for facilitating weapons shipments from Iraq to Syria.

The U.S. Treasury declined Associated Press requests for comment. The sanctions imposed on Katerji were authorized under an Obama-era executive order issued in 2011 that prohibits certain transactions with Syria. A search of the OFAC database indicates that the sanctions were still in effect against Katerji and his firm at the time of his death.

OFAC said in 2018 that Katerji was responsible for import and export activities in Syria and assisted with transporting weapons and ammunition under the pretext of importing and exporting food items. These shipments were overseen by the U.S. designated Syrian General Intelligence Directorate, according to OFAC.

It added that the Syria-based Katerji Company is a trucking company that has also shipped weapons from Iraq to Syria. Additionally, in a 2016 trade deal between the government of Syria and IS, the Katerji Company was identified as the exclusive agent for providing supplies to IS-controlled areas, including oil and other commodities.

Katerji and his brother, Hussam — widely referred to in Syria as the "Katerji brothers" — got involved in oil business a few years after the country's conflict began in March 2011. Hussam Katerji is a former member of Syria's parliament.

California is 1st state to ban school rules requiring parents get notified of child's pronoun change

By SOPHIE AUSTIN Associated Press/Report for America

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California became the first U.S. state to bar school districts from requiring staff to notify parents of their child's gender identification change under a law signed Monday by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

The law bans school rules requiring teachers and other staff to disclose a student's gender identity or

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sexual orientation to any other person without the child's permission. Proponents of the legislation say it will help protect LGBTQ+ students who live in unwelcoming households. But opponents say it will hinder schools' ability to be more transparent with parents.

The legislation comes amid a nationwide debate over local school districts and the rights of parents and LGBTQ+ students.

"This law helps keep children safe while protecting the critical role of parents," Brandon Richards, a spokesperson for Newsom, said in a statement. "It protects the child-parent relationship by preventing politicians and school staff from inappropriately intervening in family matters and attempting to control if, when, and how families have deeply personal conversations."

The new law comes after several school districts in California passed policies requiring that parents be notified if a child requests to change their gender identification. That led to pushback by Democratic state officials, who say students have a right to privacy.

But Jonathan Zachreson, an advocate in California who supports the so-called parental notification policies, opposes the law and said telling parents about a student's request to change their gender identification is "critical to the well-being of children and for maintaining that trust between schools and parents."

States across the country have sought to impose bans on gender-affirming care, bar transgender athletes from girls' and women's sports, and require schools to out trans and nonbinary students to their parents. Some lawmakers in other states have introduced bills with broad language requiring that parents are told of any changes to their child's emotional health or well-being.

The California law led to heated debate in the state Legislature. LGBTQ+ lawmakers have shared stories about how it was difficult for them to decide when to come out to their families, arguing that transgender students should be able to share that part of their identity on their own terms. State Assemblymember Bill Essayli, a Republican representing part of Riverside County, is an outspoken opponent of the law. He has criticized Democratic leaders for preventing a bill he introduced last year — that would have required parents to be told of their child's gender identification change — from receiving a hearing.

In Northern California, the Anderson Union High School District board approved a parental notification policy last year. But the teachers union recommended that teachers not enforce the rule while the union is involved in a labor dispute with the district over the policy, said Shaye Stephens, an English teacher and president of the teachers association at the district.

The notification policies put teachers in an unfair position, Stephens said.

"It's kind of a lose-lose situation for teachers and administrators or anybody that's being asked to do this. I don't think it's safe for students," she said. "I do not think that we are the right people to be having those conversations with a parent or a guardian."

Texas governor criticizes Houston energy as utility says power will be mostly restored by Wednesday

By JIM VERTUNO and NADIA LATHAN Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The majority of Houston outages that followed Hurricane Beryl should be fixed within the next two days, the city's main utility company said Monday as Texas Gov. Greg Abbott threatened to punish CenterPoint Energy even after the lights come back.

The Texas Public Utility Commission, the state's regulatory agency, announced Monday it had launched an investigation Abbott demanded into CenterPoint's storm preparation and response as hundreds of thousands of residents sweltered without power for more than a week after the storm. The governor has given the utility until the end of July to submit plans to protect the power supply through the rest of what could be an active hurricane season, as well as trim trees and vegetation that threaten power lines.

But some energy experts question whether Abbott and the Texas regulators, whose leaders are appointed by the governor, have done enough before now to get tough on utilities or make transmission lines more resilient in the nation's biggest energy producing state.

"What CenterPoint is showing us by its repeated failure to provide power, is they seem to be just inca-

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pable of doing their job," Abbott said Monday in Houston.

Spokespeople for CenterPoint, which has defended its response and pace of restoring outages, did not immediately return an email seeking comment Monday.

A week after Beryl made landfall as a Category 1 hurricane — toppling power lines, uprooting trees and causing branches to crash into power lines — the damage from the storm and the prolonged outages has again put the resiliency of Texas' power grid under scrutiny.

In 2021, a winter storm plunged the state into a deep freeze, knocking out power to millions of residents and pushing Texas' grid to the brink of total collapse. Following the deadly blackout, Abbott and state lawmakers vowed changes that would better ensure that Texans would not be left in the dark in dangerous cold and heat.

Unlike that crisis — which was caused by failing power generation — Beryl created high winds that brought down power lines and knocked out power to about 2.7 million homes and businesses. Most were concentrated in the Houston area, where CenterPoint reported Monday that it had restored power to more than 2 million customers. Still, more than 200,000 remained without power.

Houston-area residents have sweltered in heat and humidity, stood in long lines for gas, food and water, and trekked to community centers to find air conditioning. Hospitals have seen a spike in patients with heat-related illnesses and carbon monoxide poisoning caused by improper use of home generators.

"This isn't a failure of the entire system," Abbott said. "This is an indictment of one company that's failed to do its job."

In special meeting of the Houston City Council on Monday, resident Alin Boswell said he was on day eight without power and had not seen anyone from CenterPoint in his neighborhood until that morning. He said the city and the company should have known the potential for damage after storms in May knocked out power to more than 1 million.

"You all and CenterPoint had a preview of this debacle in May," Boswell told council members.

Ed Hirs, an energy fellow at the University of Houston, said the failures extend beyond CenterPoint. He said regulators have been reluctant to ensure that transmission lines are more resilient and trees are sufficiently trimmed.

Hirs said Abbott and other leaders who are solely zeroing in on the utility after Beryl are looking for a scapegoat.

"Of course, not one of them have a mirror around," he said. "It's not CenterPoint exclusively. The regulatory compact has totally broken down."

CenterPoint has at least 10 years of vegetation management reports on file with Texas regulators. In April, the company filed a 900-page report on long-term plans and expenses that would be needed to make its power system more resilient, from tree trimming to withstanding storms and flooding to cybersecurity attacks.

In a report filed May 1, CenterPoint said it had spent nearly \$35 million on tree removal and trimming in 2023. It said it would target efforts this year across more than 3,500 miles (5,630 kilometers) of its estimated 29,000 miles (46,670 kilometers) of overhead power lines in 2024.

Vegetation management remains a key issue for avoiding another power outage when the next storm hits, said Michael Webber, a University of Texas mechanical engineering professor with a focus on clean energy technology. But it's just one ongoing problem for power providers.

Policy makers must rebuild Texas' energy grid to adapt to its changing climate, Webber said.

"We've designed our system for weather of the past," he said.

The utility has defended its preparation for the storm and said that it has brought in about 12,000 additional workers from outside Houston. It has said it would have been unsafe to preposition those workers inside the predicted storm impact area before Beryl made landfall.

In a message to CenterPoint customers Sunday night, CEO Jason Wells wrote that the company had made "remarkable" progress.

"The strong pace of the restoration is a testament to our preparation (and) investments we have made in the system," Wells wrote.

Border arrests plunge 29% in June to the lowest of Biden's presidency as asylum halt takes hold

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Arrests for illegally crossing the border from Mexico plunged 29% in June, the lowest month of Joe Biden's presidency, according to figures released Monday that provide another window on the impact of a new rule to temporarily suspend asylum.

Arrests totaled 83,536 in June, down from 117,901 in May to mark the lowest tally since January 2021, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said.

A seven-day average of daily arrests fell more than half by the end of June from Biden's announcement on June 4 that asylum processing would be halted when daily arrests reach 2,500, which they did immediately, said Troy Miller, acting Customs and Border Protection commissioner.

"Recent border security measures have made a meaningful impact on our ability to impose consequences for those crossing unlawfully," Miller said.

Arrests had already fallen by more than half from a record high of 250,000 in December, largely a result of increased enforcement by Mexican authorities, according to U.S. officials.

Sharp declines registered across nationalities, including Mexicans, who have been most affected by the suspension of asylum, and Chinese people, who generally fly to Ecuador and travel to the U.S. border over land.

San Diego was the busiest of the Border Patrol's nine sectors bordering Mexico by number of arrests, followed by Tucson, Arizona.

More than 41,000 people entered legally through an online appointment app called CBP One in June. The agency said 680,500 people have successfully scheduled appointments since the app was introduced in January 2023.

Nearly 500,000 people from four countries entered on a policy to allow two-year stays on condition they have financial sponsors and arrive at an airport. They include 104,130 Cubans, 194,027 Haitians, 86,101 Nicaraguans and 110,541 Venezuelans, according to CBP.

FACT FOCUS: A look at false claims around the assassination attempt on former President Trump

By MELISSA GOLDIN and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

The assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump, who is running for reelection, is fueling a range of false claims and conspiracy theories as authorities seek information about the 20-year-old shooter's background and motive, how he obtained the AR-style rifle he fired at Trump and security at the venue that failed to stop the shooting.

Here's a look at the facts.

Online posts falsely claim sharpshooter was told not to fire on suspect in Trump shooting

CLAIM: A law enforcement sniper assigned to Trump's rally Saturday in Butler, Pennsylvania, says the head of the Secret Service ordered him not to shoot the suspect accused of attempting to assassinate Trump.

THE FACTS: No such order was made. Snipers killed the suspected shooter moments after he opened fire on the former president, bloodying Trump's ear, killing one rally attendee and injuring two. The Secret Service and the Butler Police Department say they have no agents, officers or employees with the name of the person claiming to be the sharpshooter.

Following Saturday's attempt on Trump's life, a poster on the online message board 4chan wrote that they were a sniper assigned to the rally, and that they can be seen in a photo of two law enforcement officers on the roof at the rally.

"My name is Jonathan Willis," the poster wrote. "I came here to inform the public that I had the assassin in my sights for at least 3 minutes, but the head of the secret service refused to give the order to

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take out the perp. 100% the top brass prevented me from killing the assassin before he took the shots at president Trump," the post claimed.

But there is no agent or officer by the name of Jonathan Willis working for the Secret Service or the Butler police, and no internet records of such an officer could be located.

A spokesman for the Secret Service said snipers are trained and instructed to act whenever they see a threat, and do not await instructions before taking a shot to neutralize a suspect. He said he couldn't discuss the specifics of agency communication or the details of the ongoing investigation, but said the post was false.

Witnesses at the rally alerted law enforcement to the suspect, identified as Thomas Matthew Crooks, after they saw him perched atop a nearby roof. A local law enforcement officer climbed to the roof and found Crooks, who pointed the rifle at the officer. The officer retreated down the ladder, and the gunman quickly fired toward Trump, the officials said. That's when U.S. Secret Service gunmen shot him, officials have said.

Crooks, a nursing-home employee from suburban Pittsburgh, fired multiple shots at Trump with an AR-style rifle. A spectator was killed and two others were critically injured.

Authorities said the shooting was an attempted assassination, but haven't yet determined what motivated Crooks to try to kill Trump, the AP has reported.

Posts misrepresent photo to claim Trump was shot in the chest and saved by a bulletproof vest

CLAIM: A photo shows a bullet hole in Trump's suit jacket, proving that he was shot in the chest during the attempted assassination.

THE FACTS: The photo actually shows a fold in the suit jacket of a Secret Service agent protecting Trump. Another Associated Press image taken moments before clearly shows there is no hole in Trump's jacket. What appears to be a hole can be seen diminishing as the agent moves in video of the shooting's aftermath.

Social media users are sharing the photo from the assassination attempt to claim that the former president was shot in the chest. Some posts suggest he survived because he was wearing a bulletproof vest.

In the image, what seems to be a small hole appears inches below Trump's right underarm. Many posts use a zoomed-in version of the photo that has a circle around the supposed hole to emphasize the hard-to-notice detail.

"#Trump was also shot in the chest," reads one X post. "The bulletproof vest saved him #We support Trump.

Another X post similarly reads, "It appears that Trump was shot in the chest, as the bullet seem to have pierced his suit; he was wearing a bulletproof vest."

But the apparent hole is actually a fold in the sleeve of the Secret Service agent's jacket, not the aftermath of a bullet.

The photo taken by an AP photographer shows the agent bending over as she protects Trump, her jacket appearing slightly darker than the former president's. The fold can be seen by following the edge of the agent's jacket from her neck to just below her left shoulder.

Moreover, another AP image taken moments before the one with the supposed hole clearly shows the right side of Trump's jacket as he raises his fist. No hole can be seen in the jacket.

Trump wrote on his social media platform that he was "shot with a bullet that pierced the upper part of my right ear." Photos and video from the rally show blood on his right ear and on the right side of his face.

The Secret Service declined to comment on details of the shooting, including where the bullets hit, and did not respond to a follow-up inquiry about whether Trump was wearing a bulletproof vest. Trump's campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

Photo edited to make it appear Secret Service agents were smiling after attempt on Trump's life

CLAIM: A photo from the attempted assassination of Trump shows Secret Service agents smiling as they surround him after the shooting.

THE FACTS: The photo was edited to make it appear the agents were smiling. In the original, taken by

an Associated Press photographer, the same agents can be seen with neutral expressions.

After the shooting, social media users shared the altered image, with some suggesting it was evidence that the assassination attempt had been staged.

The photo shows Trump with blood on his face and ear, pumping his fist in front of an American flag while Secret Service agents surround him. Three agents whose faces are visible seem to be grinning as they protect the former president.

"Why are all 3 Secret Service agents smiling, at least that is how it appears to me," reads one post on X. "Do to the seriousness of the situation, I would think their expressions would be grim + determined. Now, if it was a staged event, these expressions would make more sense."

But the agents were not smiling at that moment. The photo was edited to make it appear otherwise.

The original image shows the same three agents with neutral expressions. One man is positioned behind Trump, a second man stands by his left shoulder and a woman is bent over on his right side, beneath his raised arm.

The man killed at a Trump rally died shielding his family. Neighbors share stories of 2 others hurt

By MARK SCOLFORO, MARYCLAIRE DALE, HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and MICHAEL RUBINKAM Associated Press

BUTLER, Pa. (AP) — The bystander killed when a sniper opened fire at a rally for former President Donald Trump in Pennsylvania was a beloved family man and girl dad who served his community with "quiet resilience," his loved ones said Monday.

Corey D. Comperatore, 50, of Sarver, raised two daughters with his high school sweetheart while working as a project and tooling engineer. He also spent a decade as an Army reservist and many years as a volunteer firefighter, where he also served for a time as chief, according to his obituary.

"His courage was not the loud and boisterous kind; it was the courage of quiet resilience," the tribute said. "Corey's legacy is not just in the major milestones he achieved but in the small acts of kindness that marked his everyday life."

Comperatore died Saturday during an attempt to kill Trump at the rally in Butler, which left the former president bloodied from an injury to his ear. Comperatore spent his final moments shielding his family from gunfire before he was killed, Gov. Josh Shapiro said.

Two other bystanders injured in the attack remained hospitalized Monday in critical but stable condition, according to an Allegheny General Hospital spokesperson. David Dutch, 57, of New Kensington, is an ex-Marine who has spent decades working as a machinist with Siemens USA. James Copenhaver, 74, of Moon Township, had retired after managing a Pennsylvania state liquor store.

Dutch had served in both Desert Shield and Desert Storm during his time with the Marines from 1986 to 1992, winning several medals, including one for combat. More recently, he has served as commandant of the local chapter of the Marine Corps League, a fraternal group.

A relative reached by phone Monday said the family did not want to discuss his condition.

"Please pray for the victims and Mr. Trump," said the relative, who hung up before giving his full name.

A former next-door neighbor said that, like most people on the street, Dutch took care of his family, pets and property while working to make ends meet. He occasionally grumbled about the government, the neighbor said, but no more than anyone else.

"Everybody was too busy trying to keep their head above water. He was no different than anybody else," said Chris Race, who said he lived next door to Dutch for about a decade.

"He didn't have a 10-foot American flag above his house," he said. "He was your standard citizen who was a former Marine. Just concerned about his country like anybody else. Just got caught in a bad situation, it sounds like."

Copenhaver had become more interested in local issues about three years ago, when he joined neighbors in raising concerns about a proposed housing development up the road, according to Albert Quaye,

a Moon Township supervisor and friend.

After the issue died down, people eventually drifted away — but not Copenhaver, who has faithfully attended municipal meetings ever since.

“He just liked local politics. He starting getting into it,” Quaye said. “There were times when he was the only person there and we’d go, ‘Jim, what do you think?’”

Eventually, Copenhaver was tapped to serve on the township’s military banner committee. Quaye said Copenhaver’s son is an Air Force officer, and that he is married with several grandchildren.

“He’s a healthy 74,” Quaye said.

Mike Joos, who was president of the Buffalo Volunteer Fire Department when Comperatore served as chief, said he led his colleagues into burning buildings — and they followed, knowing they could trust him.

“That takes a certain kind of person,” Joos said.

High school classmate Natalie Thimons said neither Comperatore nor his wife had ever dated anyone else. Their daughters are now in their 20s.

“I don’t think you can find anyone that would say anything bad about either of them,” said Thimons, 50, of Brackenridge. “He loved and adored his daughters. They were his life.”

Scientists have confirmed a cave on the moon that could be used to shelter future explorers

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Scientists have confirmed a cave on the moon, not far from where Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed 55 years ago, and suspect there are hundreds more that could house future astronauts.

An Italian-led team reported Monday that there’s evidence for a sizable cave accessible from the deepest known pit on the moon. It’s located at the Sea of Tranquility, just 250 miles (400 kilometers) from Apollo 11’s landing site.

The pit, like the more than 200 others discovered up there, was created by the collapse of a lava tube.

Researchers analyzed radar measurements by NASA’s Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, and compared the results with lava tubes on Earth. Their findings appeared in the journal *Nature Astronomy*.

The radar data reveals only the initial part of the underground cavity, according to the scientists. They estimate it’s at least 130 feet (40 meters) wide and tens of yards (meters) long, probably more.

“Lunar caves have remained a mystery for over 50 years. So it was exciting to be able to finally prove the existence” of one, Leonardo Carrer and Lorenzo Bruzzone of the University of Trento, wrote in an email.

Most of the pits seem to be located in the moon’s ancient lava plains, according to the scientists. There also could be some at the moon’s south pole, the planned location of NASA’s astronaut landings later this decade. Permanently shadowed craters there are believed to hold frozen water that could provide drinking water and rocket fuel.

During NASA’s Apollo program, 12 astronauts landed on the moon, beginning with Armstrong and Aldrin on July 20, 1969.

The findings suggest there could be hundreds of pits on the moon and thousands of lava tubes. Such places could serve as a natural shelter for astronauts, protecting them from cosmic rays and solar radiation as well as from micrometeorite strikes. Building habitats from scratch would be more time-consuming and challenging, even when factoring in the potential need of reinforcing the cave walls to prevent a collapse, the team said.

Rocks and other material inside these caves — unaltered by the harsh surface conditions over the eons — also can help scientists better understand how the moon evolved, especially involving its volcanic activity

Tuskegee syphilis study whistleblower Peter Buxtun has died at age 86

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Peter Buxtun, the whistleblower who revealed that the U.S. government allowed hundreds of Black men in rural Alabama to go untreated for syphilis in what became known as the Tuskegee study, has died. He was 86.

Buxtun died May 18 of Alzheimer's disease in Rocklin, California, according to his attorney, Minna Fernan.

Buxtun is revered as a hero to public health scholars and ethicists for his role in bringing to light the most notorious medical research scandal in U.S. history. Documents that Buxtun provided to The Associated Press, and its subsequent investigation and reporting, led to a public outcry that ended the study in 1972.

Forty years earlier, in 1932, federal scientists began studying 400 Black men in Tuskegee, Alabama, who were infected with syphilis. When antibiotics became available in the 1940s that could treat the disease, federal health officials ordered that the drugs be withheld. The study became an observation of how the disease ravaged the body over time.

In the mid-1960s, Buxtun was a federal public health employee working in San Francisco when he overheard a co-worker talking about the study. The research wasn't exactly a secret — about a dozen medical journal articles about it had been published in the previous 20 years. But hardly anyone had raised any concerns about how the experiment was being conducted.

"This study was completely accepted by the American medical community," said Ted Pectorius of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, speaking at a 2022 program marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the study.

Buxtun had a different reaction. After learning more about the study, he raised ethical concerns in a 1966 letter to officials at the CDC. In 1967, he was summoned to a meeting in Atlanta, where he was chewed out by agency officials for what they deemed to be impertinence. Repeatedly, agency leaders rejected his complaints and his call for the men in Tuskegee to be treated.

He left the U.S. Public Health Service and attended law school, but the study ate at him. In 1972, he provided documents about the research to Edith Lederer, an AP reporter he had met in San Francisco. Lederer passed the documents to AP investigative reporter Jean Heller, telling her colleague, "I think there might be something here."

Heller's story was published on July 25, 1972, leading to Congressional hearings, a class-action lawsuit that resulted in a \$10 million settlement and the study's termination about four months later. In 1997, President Bill Clinton formally apologized for the study, calling it "shameful."

The leader of a group dedicated to the memory of the study participants said Monday they are grateful to Buxtun for exposing the experiment.

"We are thankful for his honesty and his courage," said Lille Tyson Head, whose father was in the study.

Buxtun was born in Prague in 1937. His father was Jewish, and his family immigrated to the U.S. in 1939 from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia, eventually settling in Irish Bend, Oregon on the Columbia River.

In his complaints to federal health officials, he drew comparisons between the Tuskegee study and medical experiments Nazi doctors had conducted on Jews and other prisoners. Federal scientists didn't believe they were guilty of the same kind of moral and ethical sins, but after the Tuskegee study was exposed, the government put in place new rules about how it conducts medical research. Today, the study is often blamed for the unwillingness of some African Americans to participate in medical research.

"Peter's life experiences led him to immediately identify the study as morally indefensible and to seek justice in the form of treatment for the men. Ultimately, he could not relent," said the CDC's Pectorius.

Buxtun attended the University of Oregon, served in the U.S. Army as a combat medic and psychiatric social worker and joined the federal health service in 1965.

Buxtun went on to write, give presentations and win awards for his involvement in the Tuskegee study. A global traveler, he collected and sold antiques, especially military weapons and swords and gambling equipment from California's Gold Rush era.

He also spent more than 20 years trying to recover his family's properties confiscated by the Nazis and was partly successful.

"Peter was wise, witty, classy and unceasingly generous," said David M. Golden, a close friend of Buxtun's for over 25 years. "He was a staunch advocate for personal freedoms and spoke often against prohibition, whether it be drugs, prostitution or firearms."

Another longtime friend Angie Bailie said she attended many of Buxtun's presentations about Tuskegee.

"Peter never ended a single talk without fighting back tears," she said

Buxtun himself could be self-effacing about his actions, saying he did not anticipate the vitriolic reaction of some health officials when he started questioning the study's ethics.

At a Johns Hopkins University forum in 2018, Buxtun was asked where he got the moral strength to blow the whistle.

"It wasn't strength," he said. "It was stupidity."

In beachy Galveston, locals buckle down without power after Beryl's blow during peak tourist season

By JAMES POLLARD Associated Press

GALVESTON, Texas (AP) — Vacuums sucked the water out of the seaside inn run by Nick Gaido's family in Galveston since 1911 as power was still spotty nearly one week after a resurgent Hurricane Beryl swept into Texas. Blue tarp covered much of the torn off roof. Gaido scheduled cleanup shifts for the hotel and restaurant staff who couldn't afford to lose shifts to the enduring outages.

The July Fourth weekend was supposed to kickstart a lucrative tourism season for this popular getaway's hospitality industry. But just dozens dotted the typically crowded beaches a week later. Gaido felt an urgent need to send the message that Galveston, Texas, is back open.

"We've dealt with storms in late August or in September," Gaido said. "But when you have a storm that hits in the beginning of July, that's different."

Galveston, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southeast of Houston, has certainly weathered its share of natural disasters. Etched into its collective memory is the fury of a 1900 hurricane that killed thousands back when the island was emerging as a crown jewel for the state. More recently, Hurricane Ike's 2008 wrath flooded its historic downtown with storm surge as high as 20 feet (6 meters) and caused more than \$29 billion in damage.

Yet even Greater Houston's storm-seasoned neighbors got taken off guard by Beryl's sudden arrival. Crashing unusually early in the calendar, the Category 1 hurricane brought the island's tourism-based economy to a halt during a time when local restaurants rely on an influx of beachgoers to lift revenues. Despite the widespread power outage, businesses and residents are buckling down.

In the harder-hit west side of Jamaica Beach, Way West Grill and Pizzeria was still without electricity on Saturday afternoon. Owner Jake Vincent felt stuck in limbo: he had heard power would return by July 19 but had hope that it might come sooner.

The loss ruined his entire inventory. He said enough mozzarella cheese to fill the back of his truck had gone to waste. Also spoiled was an 8-foot chest full of fries and an estimated 300 pounds (130 kg) of pepperoni.

Vincent no longer expects much from a year he had anticipated would finally bring "daylight" for his family-run restaurant founded in 2018. He said most of their annual sales come during the three summer months and that "this tourism season is probably done for."

"It complicates things," he said. "You bank all your summer money to get through the winter."

Downed cables and orange construction cones could be found along the road linking the touristy strand's seafood shacks to the west end's colorful short-term rentals. Crews from Houston-area utility CenterPoint stood atop lifts, sweating as they restored line after line.

Still without power Saturday morning, Greg Alexander raked debris to the edge of the street in his Jamaica Beach neighborhood. Despite sleeping in a balcony-level room in a house already raised high off

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the ground, he said water poured into the windows. Beryl's horizontal winds blew rain right onto his bed.

It's just a part of life here for Alexander. His family moved full-time to Galveston in 2017 after he said Hurricane Harvey dumped 38 inches (nearly 1 meter) of water into their Lake City home. Without power, he said they've been "appreciating our car's air conditioning more than ever."

He doesn't plan to leave. He said trials only strengthen the community.

"People on the west end aren't like everybody else," he said.

Steve Broom and Debra Pease still lacked power on Saturday but had been beating the heat elsewhere. Broom said they'd already booked a hotel in Houston this week so his daughter could use the Galveston beach house where they've lived full-time for about five years. They spent only the first night in Galveston and opted to sleep the rest of the week in their nonrefundable room.

Broom, 72, said he had never seen a hurricane come as early or increase as quickly as Beryl. Still, he joked that just one factor could force him to move off the island where he grew up.

"If they wipe out all these houses, then we'll be front row and our property value will probably double or triple," he said, before clarifying: "No, I hope that doesn't happen."

Anne Beem and her husband come every July from San Antonio to celebrate their birthdays. For her, the aftermath has been far worse than the hurricane itself.

They enjoyed a nice breeze with the windows open after the storm passed Monday. But she said Tuesday night brought "mosquitogeddon." Hundreds of bugs filled the house so they slept in their car with the air conditioning blasting.

She said they also bought a kiddie pool to cool off before the power came back Thursday night.

"We just tried to look at it as an adventure," she said. "Each day was some fresh hell."

NFL Hall of Famer says he was unjustly handcuffed and 'humiliated' on a flight

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Pro Football Hall of Famer Terrell Davis said Monday he was "humiliated" after being handcuffed and removed from a United Airlines flight, then later apologized to by law enforcement, over the weekend.

Davis, who previously played for the Denver Broncos, wrote in an Instagram post that he had tapped a flight attendant on the arm, prompting the employee to shout "don't hit me" and hurry toward the front of the plane.

Once the flight from Denver to Orange County, California, landed, Davis wrote, law-enforcement boarded the plane, put Davis in handcuffs without explanation and removed him from the flight.

"I was - and remain - humiliated, embarrassed, powerless, and angry," Davis wrote.

While in questioning, Davis said law enforcement determined the flight attendant's accusations didn't have merit and apologized.

United Airlines said in a statement that they reached out to Davis' team to apologize and have removed the flight attendant from duty while they review the incident.

"This is clearly not the kind of travel experience we strive to provide," the statement read.

FBI spokesperson Laura Eimiller said in a statement that agents and law enforcement partners at Orange County's John Wayne Airport responded to a report of an incident aboard a flight, and detained and then released an individual who was cooperative.

Wrapping up his Instagram post, Davis demanded an investigation into the flight attendant "who blatantly lied and placed undue harm on me and my family."

Parker Stinar, Davis' attorney, said in a statement: "We plan on fully investigating the events that took place and are actively contacting United Airlines in this matter."

From Biles to Sha'Carri, Team USA packed with star power heading into Olympic Games

By PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writer

From Simone Biles to Sha'Carri Richardson and Diana Taurasi to Katie Ledecky, Team USA will provide some of the biggest star power at the 2024 Olympic Games.

And it will be the women leading the way as the U.S. looks to top the overall medal table for the eighth consecutive Summer Games.

The nearly 600 athletes going to the Paris Olympics include more than 250 returning Olympians and 122 Olympic medalists. Golfers Xander Schauffele and Nelly Korda, along with surfer Carissa Moore, are among the numerous Olympians set to defend their titles in France.

It's a loaded U.S. roster where the women outnumber the men 314 to 278 — at last count — and ages range from 16 to 59. The most decorated member of Team USA in Paris will be Ledecky, who's trying to add to her collection of 10 medals (seven golds).

Comebacks and redemption

Biles is back in action after pulling out of multiple gymnastics finals in Tokyo to protect her mental health and safety. There's Richardson making her Olympic debut after a much-debated absence three years ago because of a positive marijuana test.

The 27-year-old Biles leads a U.S. women's gymnastics team filled with familiar faces and looking for redemption in Paris. The team settled for silver three years ago behind the Russian athletes competing as the Russian Olympic Committee.

Richardson has become a media sensation for her speed, charisma and perseverance. The 100-meter world champion earned a spot for Tokyo in 2021 but was banned following her positive test for marijuana. It sparked an intense debate about whether she was being unfairly singled out for taking a substance that doesn't improve performance.

The 24-year-old Richardson, who graces the cover of Vogue magazine, said she was "overwhelmed with the emotions of just joy" after making the team.

Star power on the court

On the court, hoops royalty LeBron James and Taurasi lead their teams. And it's no surprise that the men's and women's basketball squads brimming with talent are heavy favorites to bring home the gold.

James, Joel Embiid, Kevin Durant and Steph Curry join forces to lead a U.S. contingent going for a fifth straight Olympic title. A'ja Wilson, Brittney Griner and Taurasi headline a women's squad that has won seven consecutive Olympic gold medals. Taurasi has been a part of five of them.

Who else is on the Team USA roster?

Decorated swimmers Ledecky and Caeleb Dressel are on deck to shine again in the pool, and majors winners and world No. 1 golfers Scottie Scheffler and Korda take to the links.

"We're telling these stories — we're laughing, we're crying, we're cheering them on," said Lyndsay Signor, senior vice president of consumer engagement at NBC Sports. "So that really warrants both the combination of the athletes themselves and the celebrities we've partnered with."

NBC has been airing promotional Olympic material around the clock. There's Biles being interviewed by singer SZA. Other athletes featured in spots include Richardson, sprinter Noah Lyles, 400-meter hurdles world-record holder Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, Ledecky and reigning Olympic all-around gymnastics winner Suni Lee.

The U.S. women's soccer team, led by new coach Emma Hayes, chases after its first Olympic gold since 2012 and Victor Montalvo — "B-Boy Victor" — will be a contender when breaking makes its Olympic debut in Paris. Coco Gauff is among the favorites to bring home a medal on the clay courts at Roland Garros, the site of the French Open.

Medal forecast

That abundance of star power is why Nielsen's Gracenote forecasts the U.S. hauling in 123 medals. That's ahead of China (87), Britain (62) and France (56). This could be the eighth straight Summer Games where

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the Americans have topped the medal table.

"If American athletes win, that drives ratings and endorsements, and makes it attractive for American corporations to invest in the Olympic movement," said Dr. Yoav Dubinsky, an instructor of sports business from the Lundquist College of Business at the University of Oregon. "All part of the story of American lifestyle. Their successes, and at times failures or adversities, contribute to Brand America."

Olympic entertainers

NBC brought in Academy Award-winning director Steven Spielberg to narrate a short film titled, "Land of Stories," where the Olympics set a scene to tell tales.

Even more stars will participate in the network's coverage as celebrities Snoop Dogg, Kelly Clarkson, Peyton Manning, Colin Jost, Leslie Jones and Jimmy Fallon make appearances.

Snoop already is trotting out his tracksuits to get in some work. The 52-year-old hip-hop star ran a 200-meter race against Ato Boldon and Wallace Spearmon at the Olympic track trials in Eugene, Oregon, last month.

His time was 34.44 seconds. Usain Bolt's world record of 19.19 remains safe.

"(Snoop) has really brought a perspective that's not only fun and interesting," Signor said, "it's lovable as well."

Lawmakers are moving quickly to launch investigations into the Trump assassination attempt

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional committees are moving quickly to investigate the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump at a campaign event in Pennsylvania that also saw one rallygoer killed and two others seriously wounded.

Lawmakers are alarmed at how the would-be-assassin was able to open fire from a rooftop within 150 meters (164 yards) of the former president. President Joe Biden has also directed an independent review of the security at the rally.

A look at some of the action Monday as lawmakers sought to ensure that their panels would play a leading role in the various follow-up investigations.

House panel lines up first hearing

The first hearing about the shooting has been scheduled for next Monday, July 22, with the director of the U.S. Secret Service, Kimberly Cheatle. She'll testify before the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

"The United States Secret Service has a no-fail mission, yet it failed on Saturday when a madman attempted to assassinate President Trump, killed an innocent victim, and harmed others," said Rep. James Comer, the committee's Republican chairman.

Comer said lawmakers were grateful to the Secret Service agents who acted quickly to protect Trump, "but questions remain about how a rooftop within proximity to President Trump was left unsecure."

Comer's panel isn't the only House committee taking action.

The chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, Rep. Mark Green, R-Tenn., sent a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas demanding that he provide the plan to secure the perimeter of the event site, any communications about adding to Trump's security detail, and materials used to brief President Biden about the assassination attempt.

"The seriousness of this security failure and chilling moment in our nation's history cannot be understated," Green wrote in his letter, which includes a request of a briefing for committee members no later than July 22.

Senate committees weigh in

The leaders of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee announced Monday they will also conduct an investigation.

First, they are requesting a briefing from the U.S. Secret Service, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. That will be followed by a public hearing as well as requests for documents.

In a letter to Mayorkas and FBI Director Christopher Wray, senators said they want to understand how the shooter was able to get so close to Trump and what steps the department is taking to "increase its protection of presidential candidates and ensure the safety of the election."

Lawmakers also want to know what additional security requests have been made by Trump's campaign or protective team since Nov. 15, 2022.

Sen. Gary Peters, the Democratic chairman of the committee, and Rand Paul, the ranking Republican,, said the briefing for members should happen before July 25, while a hearing will be sought as soon as possible, but no later than August 1.

"This committee has an obligation to unearth the truth about the failures on Saturday and before, no matter how inconvenient to the government," Paul said. "We will leave no stone unturned."

Committee members also sought to emphasize the investigation would be bipartisan, as lawmakers from both parties called for it.

"As we move forward, we need to come together as Americans, reject baseless conspiracy theories on both sides, and focus on a fact-based effort to get all available information and ensure accountability so that this never happens again," said Sen. Jacky Rosen, D-Nev.

Meanwhile, Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee wrote to the panel's chairman, Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., seeking a hearing with Cheatle, Mayorkas and Wray as witnesses.

"Our hearts are broken and our prayers are with those murdered and injured by this senseless violence," the Republicans wrote. "Chair Durbin, we hope to work with you to investigate this matter publicly, and to bring answers and confidence in our system to the American people."

Celebrities are getting \$2,000 MRI scans to learn about their health. Should you?

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — What if there was a way to peer into your body and spot early signs of cancer and other life-threatening ailments before they became serious?

That's the pitch from a new cluster of companies selling high-tech scans to healthy people interested in learning more about their wellness.

These whole-body MRI scans aren't cheap. Startup companies like Prenuvo charge between \$1,000 to \$2,500 for various scanning options, none of which are currently covered by insurance.

Proponents say consumer-driven medical scans are the next logical step in preventive medicine. The industry has received a big publicity push from celebrities and influencers like Kim Kardashian, who posted about her Prenuvo scan last year.

But many medical experts say the companies are selling expensive, unproven technology that may cause extra worries and unnecessary treatment, while driving up costs for the U.S. health system.

Here's what to know before considering a scan:

What is an MRI?

MRI stands for magnetic resonance imaging. It's a type of medical scan that uses magnetic fields to produce detailed images of organs, bones and other structures inside the body. Unlike many other types of scans, MRIs don't use radiation.

Doctors will order an MRI to help diagnose cancer, brain injuries, damaged blood vessels and other medical conditions. Full-body scans can take an hour or more, with patients lying motionless inside a cylindrical tube.

Medical societies only recommend routine, full-body scans for certain high-risk groups, such as people who have a heightened genetic risk of cancer.

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"MRIs are great for what they're typically used for," said Dr. Ernest Hawk, a vice president at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. "But now you're moving them much earlier into an average risk population and that's where you can run into these questions that haven't been answered."

Why are people paying for them now?

Companies like Penuvo say their scans can help identify more than 500 medical conditions that can go undetected at a typical doctor's visit.

The company charges \$999 to scan the torso, \$1,799 for the head and torso or \$2,499 for the entire body. Several other companies offer similar services and pricing.

Penuvo's chief medical officer, Dr. Daniel Durand, says customers can decide for themselves if the price is worth it.

"We're trying to give people the opportunity to be more proactive about their health," Durand said.

Along with the scans and a reader-friendly summary of the results, customers can consult with a nurse or physician employed by Penuvo to talk about next steps.

The company says it doesn't pay for endorsements but will sometimes "provide a complimentary scan for an unbiased review."

What are the potential downsides of MRI screening services?

Many radiologists say the likelihood of finding a serious problem, such as a cancerous tumor or brain aneurysm, in someone with no symptoms is very low. Instead, scans are likely to flag growths that are usually harmless. Definitively ruling out a problem could require additional tests, appointments and even surgeries.

"You're going to end up finding a lot of incidental things," said Dr. Mina Makary, a radiologist at Ohio State Wexner Medical Center. "That's going to create more psychological stress or trauma for the patient, including additional costs for tests and procedures that may have risks."

Experts also worry that people who undergo MRI scans may start skipping other routine exams, such as mammograms.

"You've gone through a scan and it didn't find anything so you say 'Gee, I don't need to do the other routine things my doctor recommends that have been proven to extend life,'" said Hawk.

What do medical authorities say?

The American College of Radiology does not recommend MRI screening in people without symptoms, stating that there is "no documented evidence" the technique is "cost-efficient or effective in prolonging life."

The Food and Drug Administration has not approved any MRI machines for preventive screening, but doctors are free to use the devices however they choose.

There are examples of imaging practices that were once considered experimental but have subsequently become standard practice. Penuvo executives say their approach could follow a similar path.

"The evidence will evolve over time but patients don't necessarily want to wait 30 years to be in a position to benefit from it," said Penuvo's Durand.

When will we know if MRI screening helps people live longer?

The studies needed to show such a benefit would have to be very large and long, tracking a diverse population for years, according to experts.

Penuvo recently announced plans to screen 100,000 people and study their health over time. The study isn't expected to wrap up until 2034 or later.

Most people enrolling in Penuvo's study are expected to pay a \$2,200 fee. But eventually academic or government studies could offer individuals a chance to participate in such research without paying out-of-pocket.

"This is a great area in which to participate in a research study that might provide the information you're seeking, while also helping answer whether this is beneficial or not," Hawk said. "But doing so outside of a study makes no sense."

A giant panda has given birth to a cub in a Dutch zoo, in a boost for the endangered mammals

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — A giant panda has given birth to a cub at a Dutch zoo, in a boost to the captive population of the vulnerable mammals.

Ouwehands Dierenpark announced Friday's birth on Monday, and released video of mom Wu Wen as she gave birth to her cub, whose gender has yet to be determined.

"Mother and her cub are in the maternity den and are doing well. Ouwehands Dierenpark is happy and proud that it can again contribute to the conservation of this endangered species in a natural way," the zoo said in a statement.

The video shows Wu Wen in a bed of hay as a high-pitched squeal and a series of low growls signal the birth of the cub. The mother can then be seen carrying the cub in her mouth.

A second cub was born about an hour later but died shortly after the birth, the zoo said.

The surviving new cub is the second born at the central Dutch zoo. In 2020, a cub that was later named Fan Xing was born as a part what was once known as China's "panda diplomacy" program. Fan Xing was sent to China last year, where she joined a breeding program that is helping preserve the species.

For decades, China gifted friendly nations with its national mascot. The country more recently has loaned pandas to zoos on commercial terms.

Battered by Hurricane Idalia last year, Florida village ponders future as hurricane season begins

By DORANY PINEDA and REBECCA BLACKWELL Associated Press

HORSESHOE BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Lisa Bregenzer's waterfront home was her "little slice of heaven." She watched sunsets and migrating birds from the porch, the Gulf of Mexico in the distance. There, she felt close to God and her late father.

When Hurricane Idalia tore through Florida in late August, Bregenzer lost everything in the northwest fishing village of Horseshoe Beach. For months, she and her husband slept where they could with friends, neighbors and family: in Tennessee, Georgia, West Virginia, eastern Florida.

For nearly 11 months, Bregenzer felt she was no better off than after the storm.

"I'm spent. I'm tired. I'm weak. And I'm weary," Bregenzer said in May inside a temporary, state-issued camper she lives in several miles away. "Everyday I am reminded of the storm."

Almost a year later, many people in Horseshoe are asking themselves: Do I sell and move? Should I buy a recreational vehicle to live in on my property? Do I have the means to rebuild on stilts, as code requires? As they ask these questions, U.S. officials predict this year's hurricane season in Florida will be busier than usual.

Coastal climate impacts

In the U.S., more than 128 million people — nearly 40% of the nation's population — live in coastal counties along the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans, as well as the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. These seaside communities produce \$10 trillion in goods and services annually, employ 54.6 million people, and pay \$4 trillion in wages, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

To live along the coast in a time of climate change is to contend with increasing vulnerabilities. Seas are rising and warming up, eroding coastlines, intensifying storms and making floods a more frequent occurrence.

In Horseshoe, those who lost homes to Idalia have few options. They can either rebuild on pricey stilts — up to 19 feet (5.8 meters) above sea level as required for buildings closest to water — or live in RVs they can move from a hurricane's path.

Located 70 miles (113 kilometers) west of Gainesville, Horseshoe is a quiet town in Dixie County. Residents zip around in golf carts and move with the days' rhythms — lounging when it's hottest, fishing when the tide is right, watching sunsets, beers in hand. Less than 200 full-time residents, both recent retirees and

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long-timers, as well as weekenders and seasonal tourists, are spread over an area about three-quarters of a mile long and wide. There is one church, one firehouse and one restaurant. There is no gas station or grocery store, and only one road goes in and out.

Horseshoe residents say they are proud of strong community bonds and sunsets that paint the sky brilliant hues. Homes approaching \$1 million are interspersed with some as low as \$50,000. Historically, it's a place where a blue collar worker could live by the sea.

Many residents are still reeling from last summer's Category 3 storm that pummeled homes, businesses and other infrastructure, leaving debris and rubble in its wake. Recovery for some has been long and slow. Elevated homes withstood severe damage. Homes with little elevation were destroyed. Many weren't insured, and those who did have flood insurance were not covered for repairs from wind-driven water. Scientists have said that Gulf waters warmed by climate change helped Idalia rapidly intensify

Today, the signs of destruction remain. A house lies flat like a pancake. Abandoned homes with shattered windows – some boarded up with wood – stand askew. Inside, washers and driers are turned on their sides. A tattered American flag flaps where a house was swept away and flags reading "Horseshoe Strong" hang from balconies, made after Idalia by a local who lost her business.

Storms reshape Horseshoe

People talk about keeping Horseshoe unchanged, but before Idalia storms had begun reshaping the town's character and landscape.

Hurricane Hermine in 2016, and before that, the so-called Storm of the Century in 1993, caused widespread damage. People sold their properties. Some houses went up on stilts. In 1993, Tina Brotherton lost her marina and the cafe next door, and had to replace the floors and beds at her inn. Most of the damaged buildings were on the waterfront, she recalled.

Idalia dealt another blow.

Brotherton, 88, said she doesn't plan to rebuild this time. Her business, Tina's Dockside Inn, was completely destroyed, as was her home that she planned to put on the market days before the storm. She says she is tired and it's expensive to rebuild.

"Once I got all my cats out, I don't care to go back," she said inside her home a couple of miles away, where she lives with her son and more than a dozen cats. "There's nothing there for me anymore."

Long road to recovery

By midcentury, more than 48,000 properties could be below the high tide lines, mostly in Louisiana, Florida and Texas, according to a 2022 study by Climate Central.

While Horseshoe residents say they know storms and flooding will continue, it's hard to think about that when trying to survive the present.

Eileen Lilley, 75, is living in a camper after 5 feet (1.5 meters) of water damaged her home. On a recent day, she spoke of her late husband and missing the screened porch where she liked to paint. Despite the longing, she feels safe knowing her mobile home can be moved when another hurricane strikes.

"It's better for me at my age to get somebody who can pull me out of here and move me to another area," she said, while at her side snoozed Katy the cat and Kelly the dog laid at her feet.

Some residents are waiting to know if they qualify for state or federal loans and grants to help them rebuild. Mayor Jeff Williams said insuring new property will also be cost prohibitive for many. "In a town when you're in a flood zone, you pay the highest rate," he said. "And the rate of insurance over the last two to three years has just skyrocketed."

All this added to Bregenzer's anxiety. To rebuild they needed financial help. Her husband had a stroke and back surgery years ago, and medical bills and income loss sapped their savings. She's grateful to have a roof over her head.

"It's humbling," she said.

They want to be homeowners again, she said while sitting inside her camper, tears in her eyes. To have a house to show for their lives' work. For nearly a year, she didn't know if that would happen or when. And she wondered: is it even worth it?

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Then just last week, Bregenzer finally found hope. Her family was approved for a program that will help them build a new home. If all goes as planned, they'll move into an stilted two-bedroom house on their lot by year's end.

"After 11 months of what seemingly felt and appeared to be a nightmare, I just," she said over the phone in July, her voice trailing off. "I lack words."

Floor fights, boos and a too-long kiss. How the dramatic and the bizarre define convention history

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In 1948, the Republican and Democratic parties did something unthinkable in today's climate of ferocious political animosity: They not only held their national conventions in the same city but also shared some of the props.

Both gathered in Philadelphia, largely because its Municipal Auditorium had already been fitted with the wiring needed for then-groundbreaking live convention coverage on national television.

To save money, Democrats asked Republicans to leave the American flags and bunting up to be reused at their event 17 days later. The GOP complied, though some items became faded and worn in the interval.

Like party comradery, the more informal way conventions were staged has evaporated. Once bare-knuckled showdowns to hammer out presidential nominees, modern gatherings have evolved into carefully scripted, made-for-TV events meant to showcase party unity.

Republicans are largely on track to deliver that as they nominate former President Donald Trump in Milwaukee this week. The Democratic convention could feature more drama when it opens Aug. 19, given the bitter debate over whether President Joe Biden should stay atop the party's ticket.

But even with conventions now choreographed down to tiny details, the unexpected can still happen. Here's a look at the floor fights, street battles and other memorable convention scenes that were uplifting, outlandish or just plain awkward:

Ted Cruz's non-endorsement

As the last candidate Donald Trump defeated during the 2016 GOP primary, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz amassed enough delegates to address the party's convention in Cleveland — but balked at endorsing his ex-rival.

Still smarting over Trump calling him "Lyin' Ted," mocking his wife, Heidi Cruz's, appearance and suggesting the senator's Cuba-born father was involved in the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Cruz implored delegates to "vote your conscience." It drew prolonged boos.

Cruz reversed himself and endorsed Trump that fall, and today he's among his staunchest defenders. But, at the time, the vitriol was high enough that Heidi Cruz was led from the convention floor, just in case.

Clint Eastwood's empty chair

A head-scratching moment came in 2012, when Clint Eastwood addressed the Republican gathering in Tampa, Florida, with an empty chair standing in for then-President Barack Obama.

The actor and director spent 12 minutes conversing with the piece of furniture, and even dodging barages of imaginary obscenities from it.

"What do you mean shut up?" Eastwood crowed.

He also joked about then-Vice President Biden's reputation for gaffes — launching criticisms that may prove prescient given current questions about whether Biden can handle a second term, following his disastrous debate performance.

"Of course, we all know Biden is the intellect of the Democratic party," Eastwood told the chair. "Just kind of a grin, with a body behind it."

'Audacity of hope'

The year 2004 was otherwise terrible for Democrats, President George W. Bush won reelection and Republicans retained control of Congress. But one bright spot came from Obama, then a little-known Illinois state senator, electrifying his party's Boston convention.

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Obama dubbed himself “a skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him, too” and summed up his political philosophy as being built around “the audacity of hope.”

Gore’s extra-long kiss

As he stepped on stage to deliver a speech accepting his party’s 2000 presidential nomination in Los Angeles, Al Gore embraced his wife, Tipper, and gave her a full-mouthed kiss, hanging on much longer than usual for a display of passion in public.

The crowd cheered, but the kiss eventually encompassed an uncomfortable three seconds of screen time.

Gore had been battling criticisms that he was too stiff during public appearances, which may have explained how hard he leaned in. Regardless, the smooch was remembered more than Gore’s speech.

He went on to narrowly lose that November to Bush. A decade later, the Gores separated after 40 years of marriage.

Women on the ticket

At the Democrats’ 1984 convention in San Francisco, presidential nominee Walter Mondale announced Geraldine Ferraro as his running mate, making her the first woman on a major presidential ticket. Ferraro declared, “America is the land where dreams can come true for all of us,” though she and Mondale went on to win just 13 electoral votes compared to President Ronald Reagan’s 525.

Twenty years later, Sen. John McCain chose Sarah Palin as his vice presidential candidate, and her speech at the Republican convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, was a hit, mixing the then-Alaska governor’s compelling personal story with humor and political punch. It gave McCain a boost, but he still lost to Obama.

At the 2016 Democratic convention in Philadelphia, Hillary Clinton became the first major party female presidential nominee, declaring, “When any barrier falls in America, for anyone, it clears the way for everyone.” She eventually lost to Trump.

Kamala Harris was the first woman on a winning ticket, accepting being Biden’s running mate during a mostly virtual convention last cycle — and now is some Democrats’ choice to replace Biden in this year’s presidential race.

Opposing the incumbent

In 1976, Reagan, then California’s governor, challenged President Gerald Ford from the right and touched off a bitter struggle at the GOP’s convention in Kansas City. Ford narrowly prevailed with 1,187 votes to 1,070, but lost that November to Democrat Jimmy Carter.

Four years later, at the Democratic convention in New York, Carter himself faced a floor challenge from Massachusetts Sen. Ted Kennedy, who badly trailed the president in delegates but tried to loosen rules on how they were pledged to vote. Tensions ran high and, though the change was defeated, Carter later lost to Reagan.

Eagleton’s 18-day vice presidential candidacy

Biden facing increasing pressure to leave the race is without modern precedent at the top of a presidential ticket — but not when it comes to a nominee’s running mate.

Shortly after the 1972 Democratic convention in Miami, reports surfaced that Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern’s vice presidential pick, Missouri Sen. Thomas Eagleton, had previously undergone electroshock therapy to treat depression.

A divided convention had prompted McGovern to tap Eagleton on its final day, after he was turned down by several alternatives. Eagleton therefore didn’t receive much vetting of his record, which might have surfaced the medical disclosures earlier.

Eagleton resigned after 18 days on the ticket and was replaced by Sargent Shriver. Incumbent Republican President Richard Nixon went on to win 49 out of 50 states that November.

Chaos in Chicago

After President Lyndon B. Johnson opted not to seek reelection and Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated, Vice President Hubert Humphrey secured the 1968 Democratic nomination at the party’s convention. But that was only after a raucous floor fight which ended with delegates defeating a peace platform seeking an end to the Vietnam war.

What happened at the convention was overshadowed by thousands of anti-war protesters who marched

in the streets. Demonstrators were attacked by police, sparking such turmoil that the tear gas fired reached the 25th floor hotel suite where Humphrey was preparing for his appearance at a hotel five miles from the convention site.

The Democratic convention returns to Chicago in a few weeks, and widespread demonstrations are being planned to oppose the Biden administration's support for Israel in its war with Hamas — leaving some to wonder whether a 1968 redux could be coming. With questions about Biden staying in the race still being raised, things inside the convention might get equally heated.

Authorities hunt for clues, but motive of man who tried to assassinate Donald Trump remains elusive

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER, MICHAEL BALSAMO and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The 20-year-old man who tried to assassinate former President Donald Trump first came to law enforcement's attention at Saturday's rally when spectators noticed him acting strangely outside the campaign event. The tip sparked a frantic search but officers were unable to find him before he managed to get on a roof, where he opened fire.

In the wake of the shooting that killed one spectator, investigators were hunting for any clues about what may have drove Thomas Matthew Crooks, of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, to carry out the shocking attack. The FBI said they were investigating it as a potential act of domestic terrorism, but the absence of a clear ideological motive by the man shot dead by the Secret Service led conspiracy theories to flourish.

"I urge everyone — everyone, please, don't make assumptions about his motives or his affiliations," President Joe Biden said in remarks Sunday from the White House. "Let the FBI do their job, and their partner agencies do their job. I've instructed that this investigation be thorough and swift."

The FBI said it believes Crooks, who had bomb-making materials in the car he drove to the rally, acted alone. Investigators have found no threatening comments on social media accounts or ideological positions that could help explain what led him to target Trump before the Secret Service rushed the presumptive Republican presidential nominee off the stage, his face smeared with blood.

Trump said on social media the upper part of his right ear was pierced in the shooting, but advisers said he was "great spirits" ahead of his arrival Sunday in Milwaukee for the Republican National Convention. Two spectators were critically injured, while a former fire chief from the area, Corey Comperatore was killed. Pennsylvania's governor said Comperatore, 50, died a hero by diving onto his family to protect them.

Relatives of Crooks didn't respond to numerous messages from The Associated Press. His father, Matthew Crooks, told CNN late Saturday that he was trying to figure out "what the hell is going on" but wouldn't speak about his son until after he talked to law enforcement. An FBI official told reporters that Crooks' family is cooperating with investigators.

Several rallygoers reported to local officers that Crooks was acting suspiciously and pacing near the magnetometers, according to a law enforcement official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the investigation. Officers were then told Crooks was climbing a ladder, the official said. Officers searched for him but were unable to find him before he made it to the roof, the official added.

Butler County Sheriff Michael Slupe told the AP that a local officer climbed to the roof and encountered Crooks, who saw the officer and turned toward him just before the officer dropped down to safety. Slupe said the officer couldn't have wielded his own gun under the circumstances. The officer retreated down the ladder, and Crooks quickly took a shot toward Trump, and that's when Secret Service snipers shot him, according to two officials who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation.

FBI officials said Sunday that they were combing Crooks' background and social media activities while working to get access to his phone. The chatting app Discord, a social media platform popular with people playing online games, said Crooks appears to have had an account but used it rarely and not in the last several months. There's no evidence he used his account to promote violence or discuss his political views,

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a Discord spokesperson said.

Crooks' political leanings were not immediately clear. Records show Crooks was registered as a Republican voter in Pennsylvania, but federal campaign finance reports also show he gave \$15 to a progressive political action committee on Jan. 20, 2021, the day Biden was sworn into office.

Crooks graduated from Bethel Park High School in 2022. In a video of the school's graduation ceremony posted online, Crooks can be seen crossing the stage to receive his diploma, appearing slight of build and wearing glasses. The school district said it will cooperate fully with investigators. His senior year, Crooks was among several students given an award for math and science, according to a Tribune-Review story at the time.

Crooks tried out for the school's rifle team but was turned away because he was a bad shooter, said Frederick Mach, a current captain of the team who was a few years behind Crooks at the school.

Jason Kohler, who said he attended the same high school but did not share any classes with Crooks, said Crooks was bullied at school and sat alone at lunch time. Other students mocked him for the clothes he wore, which included hunting outfits, Kohler said.

"He was bullied almost every day," Kohler told reporters. "He was just a outcast, and you know how kids are nowadays."

Crooks worked at a nursing home as a dietary aide, a job that generally involves food preparation. Marcie Grimm, the administrator of Bethel Park Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation, said in a statement she was "shocked and saddened to learn of his involvement." Grimm added that Crooks had a clean background check when he was hired.

A blockade had been set up Sunday preventing traffic near Crooks' house, which is in an enclave of modest brick houses in the hills outside Pittsburgh and about an hour's drive from the site of the Trump rally. Police cars were stationed at an intersection near the house and officers were seen walking through the neighborhood.

Crooks used an AR-style rifle, which authorities said they believe was purchased by his father. Kevin Rojek, FBI special agent in charge in Pittsburgh, said that investigators do not yet know if he took the gun without his father's permission.

A video posted to social media and geolocated by AP shows Crooks wearing a gray t-shirt with a black American flag on the right arm lying motionless on the roof of a manufacturing plant just north of the Butler Farm Show grounds where Trump's rally was held.

The roof where Crooks lay was less than 150 meters (164 yards) from where Trump was speaking, a distance from which a decent marksman could reasonably hit a human-sized target. That is a distance at which U.S. Army recruits must hit a scaled human-sized silhouette to qualify with the M-16 rifle.

Images of Crooks' body reviewed by AP show he appears to have been wearing a T-shirt from Demolition Ranch, a popular YouTube channel that regularly posts videos of its creator firing off handguns and assault rifles at targets that include human mannequins.

Matt Carriker, the Texas-based creator of Demolition Ranch, did not respond to a phone message or email on Sunday, but posted a photo of Crooks' bloody corpse wearing his brand's T-shirt on social media with the comment "What the hell."

Today in History: July 16, Trinity nuclear weapon test

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 16, the 198th day of 2024. There are 168 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 16, 1945, the United States exploded its first experimental atomic bomb in the desert of Alamogordo, New Mexico; the same day, the heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis left Mare (mar-AY') Island Naval Shipyard in California on a secret mission to deliver atomic bomb components to Tinian Island in the Marianas.

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Also on this date:

In 1790, a site along the Potomac River was designated the permanent seat of the United States government; the area became Washington, D.C.

In 1862, Flag Officer David G. Farragut became the first rear admiral in the United States Navy.

In 1951, the novel "The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger was first published by Little, Brown and Co.

In 1957, Marine Corps Maj. John Glenn set a transcontinental speed record by flying a Vought F8U Crusader jet from California to New York in 3 hours, 23 minutes and 8.4 seconds.

In 1964, as he accepted the Republican presidential nomination in San Francisco, Barry M. Goldwater declared that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice" and that "moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

In 1969, Apollo 11 launched from Cape Kennedy in Florida on the first manned mission to the surface of the moon.

In 1999, John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife, Carolyn, and her sister, Lauren Bessette, died when their single-engine plane, piloted by Kennedy, plunged into the Atlantic Ocean near Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

In 2004, Martha Stewart was sentenced to five months in prison and five months of home confinement by a federal judge in New York for lying about a stock sale.

In 2008, Florida resident Casey Anthony, whose 2-year-old daughter, Caylee, had been missing a month, was arrested on charges of child neglect, making false official statements and obstructing a criminal investigation. (Casey Anthony was later acquitted at trial of murdering Caylee, whose skeletal remains were found in December 2008; Casey was convicted of lying to police.)

In 2015, a jury in Centennial, Colorado, convicted James Holmes of 165 counts of murder, attempted murder and other charges in the 2012 Aurora movie theater rampage that left 12 people dead.

In 2017, 10 people died at a popular swimming hole in Arizona's Tonto National Forest after a rainstorm unleashed a flash flood.

In 2018, after meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, President Donald Trump openly questioned the finding of his own intelligence agencies that Russia had meddled in the 2016 U.S. election to his benefit. (Trump said a day later that he misspoke.)

Today's Birthdays: International Tennis Hall of Famer Margaret Court is 82. Football Hall of Famer Jimmy Johnson is 81. Violinist Pinchas Zukerman is 76. Actor-singer Ruben Blades is 76. Rock composer-musician Stewart Copeland is 72. Playwright Tony Kushner is 68. Dancer Michael Flatley is 66. Former actor and teen model Phoebe Cates is 61. Actor Daryl "Chill" Mitchell is 59. Actor-comedian Will Ferrell is 57. Football Hall of Famer Barry Sanders is 56. Actor Corey Feldman is 53. Actor Jayma Mays is 45. Retired soccer star Carli Lloyd is 42. Actor AnnaLynne McCord is 37. Actor-singer James Maslow (Big Time Rush) is 34. Actor Mark Indelicato is 30. Pop singer-musician Luke Hemmings (5 Seconds to Summer) is 28.