

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Monday, July 22

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, acini depepi fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

Softball hosts Warner: U8 at 5:30 p.m. (1), U10B at 6:30 p.m. (DH), U12 at 6:30 p.m. (DH)

Jr. Legion hosts Selby, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Pantry open, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, potluck at Noon.

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



## Tuesday, July 23

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, sweet potatoes, vegetable capri blend, applesauce, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Pantry open at the Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Legion Regions at Clark

## Wednesday, July 24

Senior Menu: Goulash, green beans, pineapple/strawberry ambrosia, whole wheat bread.

Groton Golf Association Fundraiser, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Olive Grove

Legion Regions at Clark

Groton CM&A: Family Fun Night, 7 p.m.

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# 1440

## Biden Bows Out

President Joe Biden ended his reelection bid yesterday, concluding a weeklong pressure campaign after last month's presidential debate reignited concerns about his age and electability. Biden endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to replace him.

The announcement frees almost 3,900 delegates—often party leaders and activists pledged to Biden through states' primary process—to back another candidate. If Harris wins the majority of the Democratic Party's almost 4,700 total delegate votes, she can immediately inherit the more than \$240M raised by the Biden-Harris campaign. If another Democrat successfully challenges Harris, there would be restrictions on accessing those donations. Harris says she plans to "earn and win" the nomination; she has not yet announced her intended vice presidential pick.

Next, the Democratic candidate for president will be decided either through reviving the pre-1968 open convention process when the Democratic National Convention begins Aug. 19, or in a virtual roll call vote planned for early August. Party leaders are likely to work to finalize the Democratic ticket before Ohio's ballot deadline in August.

## Houthi-Israeli Escalation

Israel's military said it intercepted a surface-to-surface missile from Yemen yesterday headed toward the southern Israeli city of Eilat, the latest attack from Houthi rebels in a dayslong escalation.

The announcement comes after an Israeli airstrike in Yemen's western port of Hodeidah Saturday killed at least three people and wounded 80 more. Israel says the attack was designed to disrupt the flow of Iranian weapons to the group, and comes in response to a drone attack by Houthis in Tel Aviv Friday, killing one person and wounding at least 10 others in the group's first direct strike against Israel. Houthis have carried out over 80 attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea since Israel's campaign began in Gaza.

Separately, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lands today in the US before a scheduled meeting with President Biden tomorrow. He will address a joint session of Congress Wednesday.

## Bid for Tagged Towers

A trio of unfinished skyscrapers that have become fixtures in downtown Los Angeles and gained global attention for their graffiti-covered façade may get a new lease on life after an unidentified bidder offered \$500M for the properties.

Oceanwide Plaza, which sits across from the city's convention center and Crypto.com Arena, was abandoned by its Chinese developer in 2019 and became a symbol of the postpandemic challenges faced by urban centers.

The buildings gained global attention in December when graffiti artists broke into the tallest building. The effort triggered a flood of similar—albeit illegal—designs on more than two dozen floors, creating a prominent tapestry of spray-painted artwork. The buildings gained further scrutiny after daredevils base-jumped from the top floor in February, while another performed a tightrope stunt in May.

Analysts say the property needs \$800M at a minimum to complete.

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar tops two-time defending champion Jonas Vingegaard of Denmark to win his third Tour de France title.

Singer and rapper Sean Kingston and his mother indicted on six federal charges related to wire fraud; both face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

American golfer Xander Schauffele wins 152nd British Open, Schauffele's second major championship victory.

Dallas Wings' Arike Ogunbowale leads Team WNBA to 117-109 victory over Team USA in WNBA All-Star Game.

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## Science & Technology

Friday's global computer outage affected 8.5 million Windows users, or 1% of total, despite causing widespread disruption.

Faulty Windows update from cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike triggered outage.

Chemists discover new method to turn waste Styrofoam into conducting polymers for use in electronics.

New imaging technique reveals early stages of how amyloid-beta plaques form in the brain; molecule is believed to play a key role in Alzheimer's disease.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower Friday (S&P 500 -0.7%, Dow -0.9%, Nasdaq -0.8%) in continued shift from tech companies to smaller cap stocks.

Disneyland unions vote to authorize a potential walkout of 14,000 employees amid ongoing contract negotiations; if negotiations fall through, walkout would be Disneyland's first in 40 years.

Federal Aviation Administration investigates Southwest Airlines plane flying at low altitude over Tampa Bay, Florida.

American Airlines reaches deal with flight attendants union to avoid strike.

## Politics & World Affairs

Bangladesh's top court reduces quotas for government jobs sparking deadly protests; policy reserving one-third of government jobs for relatives of veterans led to protests killing over 100 people.

Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle will testify today before the House Oversight Committee after report Secret Service denied requests by former President Donald Trump's security detail for more personnel, resources.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D, TX-18) dies following battle with pancreatic cancer at age 74; Lee spearheaded the cause to make Juneteenth a national holiday, among other efforts,

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## "A Hidden Issue"

Mental health treatment within the criminal justice system plays a pivotal yet often overlooked role in both the well-being and rehabilitation of incarcerated individuals. This is often overlooked by the general population due to attitudes against the incarcerated and the lack of overall media attention. It is my belief that change needs to take place.

Firstly, while many in society have negative outlooks on incarcerated or previously incarcerated individuals, most fail to realize that approximately 45% of Americans have had an immediate family member incarcerated. These individuals are not unknown strangers, they are, have been, and will be your own family members. Furthermore, the vast majority of incarcerated individuals will be released from their correctional facilities at some point in time. This is where the importance of rehabilitation needs to be stressed in order to prevent a revolving door back into the criminal justice system and to promote safer communities. One way this can be done is through consistent and quality mental health treatment for incarcerated individuals.

Access to mental health services can profoundly affect not only an individual's experience behind bars but it can also reduce the likelihood of recidivism (reoffending). Many incarcerated individuals grapple with various mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These mental health issues are often exacerbated or even created by the stresses of incarceration itself. Providing quality and consistent treatment can alleviate suffering and enhance coping mechanisms, thus fostering a safer and more humane environment within correctional facilities and beyond. The research is clear, untreated mental health issues increase the risk of reoffending. Access to mental health treatment aids in equipping individuals with tools to not only effectively manage their conditions within the walls but also reintegrate into society upon release.

How can we increase access to mental health treatment to incarcerated persons? Firstly, we need to acknowledge the issue. Secondly, we need to recognize and take on the systemic barriers that hinder the delivery of mental health treatment within correctional facilities. These barriers include but are not limited to the attitudes surrounding incarcerated peoples, attitudes surrounding the criminal justice system itself, overcrowding, lack of staff, and insufficient funding resources. While we also need to focus on the implementation of quality education in terms of mental health, interpersonal skills, and coping skills within our homes and our educational facilities to aid in the prevention of incarceration, we also need to support incarcerated individuals following their release from correctional facilities. This requires a multi-faceted approach, including investment in community mental health resources, diversion programs, and reentry support.

In conclusion, the prioritization of mental health treatment within the criminal justice system is essential for the promotion of individual well-being, rehabilitation, and successful reintegration of incarcerated individuals into society. This approach is not "soft on crime," it instead embodies the ability of empathy and accountability to co-exist. The road to a safer and happier community takes all of us. We must not forget about those out of sight.



Leah Hendrickson, MSW, LCSW, QMHP

Leah Hendrickson specializes in treating individuals who are currently or formerly incarcerated. She also provides outpatient counseling services for adolescents and adults struggling with anxiety, depression, abuse, stress management, cultural diversity, interpersonal issues, and trauma related to sexual violence. Her eclectic therapeutic style incorporates cognitive behavioral therapy, strength based therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy skills, solution focused therapy, and mindfulness techniques. She currently works at Avera in Brookings, SD and can be contacted by phone at 605-692-2790. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairedoc.org](http://www.prairedoc.org) and on Facebook and Instagram featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show celebrating its 22nd season of health information based on science, built on trust, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

## Brand New Program at

15 N Main St. - Ste. 101  
Downtown Groton

Call/Text Paul: 605-397-7460  
Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



### \$20 Monthly Membership

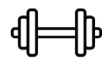
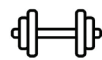
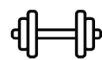
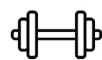
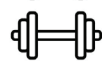
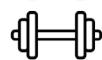
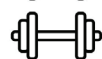
- ☞ for people 60 years of age and older
- ☞ for those who need equipment for physical therapy!



Downtown  
Groton

24/7 access to the facility ~ Cancel any time

**Staying fit and practicing healthy nutrition  
can be linked to benefits, such as:**

-  Reduced levels of stress and anxiety
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-  Increased energy levels and productivity
-  Controlled blood pressure
-  Better blood flow circulation
-  Strengthened bones and muscles
-  Reduced risk of heart disease and other illnesses

Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460

Call/Text Tina at 605-397-7285

## Weekly Vikings Roundup By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings have officially started training camp. Rookies reported to the facilities on Sunday, with the rest of the team showing up a few days later. It seems like only a few days ago the Vikings were preparing for the draft, but in a few weeks we're going to have the first preseason game of the 2024 NFL season (August 10, Raiders at Vikings). As the team gears up for the season, we continue our roster breakdown. This week is the cornerbacks.

Byron Murphy Jr. – The only cornerback on the roster that's a lock to be a starter in week 1, Murphy is entering his sixth season in the NFL and his second as a member of the Minnesota Vikings. In his first year with the Vikings, he had a career-high 13 passes defensed, to go along with his three interceptions. While he is a solid starting CB, the team is hoping he can turn his game up a notch and become a leader in the secondary.

Shaq Griffin – Brought in as a free agent this offseason, Griffin will be battling for the other starting cornerback spot. He brings a ton of experience to the team, considering this will be his eighth season in the NFL. Griffin was drafted by the Seahawks in 2017 and made the Pro Bowl in 2019. However, after starting 67 games in his first five seasons, he's only started 18 since. Can he recapture his Pro Bowl-caliber of play in Brian Flores' defense? That will be an interesting development to watch.

Akayleb Evans – Speaking of things to watch for, keep an eye on Evans this preseason. He was drafted by the Vikings in the fourth round two years ago and claimed a starting spot in his sophomore season. However, despite starting 15 games for the team, his play seemed to decline as the season wore on and he was eventually pulled from games late in the season. This upcoming season seems like a make-or-break situation for Evans.

Mekhi Blackmon – A third-round pick in 2023, Blackmon enters training camp with an eye on a starting role. He started three games last season, and with all the uncertainty surrounding the CB position, he is definitely in the mix for extended playing time in 2024.

Andrew Booth Jr. – In a perfect world, we would be talking about Booth Jr. building off an impressive second season and how well he'll do starting across from Byron Murphy Jr. – unfortunately, this isn't a perfect world. While he will never be considered the biggest flop of Kwesi Adofo-Mensah's inaugural draft class (hint, we'll be covering that play next week), it's discouraging that Booth hasn't made more of an impact on the team. The former second-round pick has only started two games in his career so far, and unless he steps his game up, don't be surprised if he's cut from the team this season.

A.J. Green III, Dwight McGlothern, NaJee Thompson, Jaylin Williams – These four players will be battling it out to make the final roster spot (or the practice squad at least). A.J. Green III has the most experience out of this group, as he's entering his fifth season in the NFL. NaJee Thompson played in 15 games for the Vikings last season as a core special teamer, which is his best shot to make the roster again this year. Jaylin Williams is another candidate for special teams, although he only played in three games last season. And Dwight McGlothern is a rookie and is likely hoping to make the practice squad

This is interesting!

## GETTYSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT



### Is Now a Device-Free Learning Environment!



POUCH

All students grades K-12 will be device-free throughout the school day. Grades 6-12 will lock smartphones, smartwatches, and bluetooth earbuds in a YONDR pouch. Elementary students will turn off devices and store in their classroom or backpack for the day.



SECURE

A YONDR pouch locks with a magnet, and students can unlock them if they are leaving for open lunch (9-12) or as they are leaving campus at the end of the day. Teachers and admin will unlock pouches as needed for classroom use.



EXIT

Each student grades 6-12 will receive a pouch that will be theirs for several years, and may be personalized. If destroyed or lost, a new pouch must be purchased for \$35.

## WHY

To minimize distraction and provide the best learning environment possible for our students. Research has also shown that constant phone use and social media are having a significant effect on students' mental and social-emotional health.

More information to come during registration in August!

## Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 Fall After Big Comeback By Britton U16 Lumberjacks

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 could not hold onto the lead against Britton U16 Lumberjacks on Friday and fell 11-9 despite leading by five at one point.

Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 opened the scoring in the bottom of the first thanks to two singles. Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 first got on the board when Nicholas Morris singled, scoring two runs.

Britton U16 Lumberjacks flipped the game on its head in the top of the sixth, scoring six runs on three hits to take a 8-7 lead. The biggest blow in the inning was a single by Will Richter that drove in two.

Jade Tisher earned the win for Britton U16 Lumberjacks. The right-handed pitcher allowed two hits and two runs (zero earned) over two and two-thirds innings, striking out two and walking four. Karsten Flieth took the loss for Groton Jr. Legion Post 39. The starting pitcher went six innings, allowing eight runs (one earned) on 11 hits, striking out seven and walking five. Dylan Redler started on the bump for Britton U16 Lumberjacks. The righty allowed six hits and seven runs (six earned) over five innings, striking out two and walking five.

Morris provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 with three runs batted in. The shortstop went 2-for-3 on the day. Lincoln Krause led Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 with three hits in five at bats from the leadoff position. Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 had a strong eye at the plate, amassing nine walks for the game. TC Schuster, Morris, and Ryder Shelle led the team with two walks each. Krause and Morris each stole multiple bases for Groton Jr. Legion Post 39. Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 stole six bases in the game. Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 turned one double play in the game.

Britton U16 Lumberjacks tallied 13 hits in the game. Colton Chapin and Ben Suther were a one-two punch in the lineup, as each drove in three runs for Britton U16 Lumberjacks. Suther went 3-for-4 at the plate to lead Britton U16 Lumberjacks in hits. Richter, Ben Folkman, Bryce Heitkamp, and Redler each collected multiple hits for Britton U16 Lumberjacks. Chapin paced Britton U16 Lumberjacks with two walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, accumulating nine walks for the game. Britton U16 Lumberjacks turned one double play in the game.

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Britton U16 Lumberjacks **11 - 9** Groton Jr. Legion Post 39

📍 Home 📅 Friday July 19, 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
BRTT	0	0	1	1	0	6	3	0	0	11	13	2
GRTN	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	9	8	4

## BATTING

Britton U16 Lumberjacks	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Folkman #18 (LF)	5	2	2	1	1	0
B Hawki... #16 (CF)	4	3	0	0	1	2
B Suther #30 (3B)	4	1	3	3	1	1
C Chapin #10 (C)	3	1	1	3	2	0
W Richter #19 (SS)	5	0	2	2	0	1
J Tish... #17/31 (2B)	5	0	0	0	0	1
D Redler #4 (P)	4	1	2	0	1	0
L Kilker #1 (2B)	0	0	0	0	0	0
N Folkman #20 (1B)	4	0	1	0	1	2
B Hei... #33/35 (RF)	4	2	2	0	1	2
L Fredrick #22	4	1	0	0	1	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>

Groton Jr. Legion Post 39	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
L Krause #2 (LF)	5	2	3	2	0	0
J Erdmann #0 (CF)	5	1	0	0	0	0
N Morris #17 (SS)	3	2	2	3	2	0
G Englund #18 (C)	3	0	1	0	1	1
R Shelle #6 (DH)	1	1	0	0	2	0
K Fliehs #10 (P)	2	0	0	0	0	1
N Groebl... #12 (1B)	3	0	1	2	1	1
T McGa... #22 (3B)	3	0	1	2	1	1
B Fliehs #19	4	1	0	0	0	0
G Kroll #8 (RF)	2	0	0	0	0	0
Jordan... #11 (RF)	1	2	0	0	0	1
A Abeln #23 (2B)	2	0	0	0	0	0
T Schus... #3 (2B)	0	0	0	0	2	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>

**TB:** B Suther 3, W Richter 2, N Folkman, B Heitkamp 2, B Folkman 2, C Chapin, D Redler 2, **HBP:** B Hawkinson, **SB:** B Hawkinson, **LOB:** 14

**2B:** N Morris, **TB:** G Englund, N Morris 3, T McGannon, N Groeblinghoff, L Krause 3, **CS:** N Morris, T McGannon, **HBP:** G Englund, Jordan Schwan, **SB:** G Englund, J Erdmann, N Morris 2, L Krause 2, **LOB:** 9

## Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 Roll Past Hamlin/Castlewood 16U

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 won big over Hamlin/Castlewood 16U 8-0 on Sunday.

Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 got on the board in the top of the first inning after Jarrett Erdmann singled, and Tristin McGannon walked, each scoring two runs.

Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 added to their early lead in the top of the second inning after Lincoln Krause walked, Erdmann doubled, and Nick Groeblichhoff grounded out, each scoring one run.

Kellen Antonsen earned the win for Groton Jr. Legion Post 39. The starting pitcher surrendered one hit and zero runs over one inning, striking out one and walking none. Kyrell Baker stepped on the bump first for Hamlin/Castlewood 16U. They gave up four hits and seven runs (five earned) over two innings, striking out none and walking three. Alex Abeln collected the save. Kolton Antonsen pitched one inning of no-run ball for Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 in relief. The reliever allowed two hits, striking out none and walking one.

Erdmann provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 with three runs batted in. The left-handed hitter went 2-for-3 on the day. Karsten Flihs and Erdmann each collected two hits for Groton Jr. Legion Post 39. Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 turned two double plays in the game. Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 didn't commit a single error in the field. Flihs had the most chances in the field with four.

Baker, Kypton Eidson, Dante DeGeest, Talen Olson, and #8 each collected one hit for Hamlin/Castlewood 16U.

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Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 **8 - 0** Hamlin/Castlewood 16U

📍 Away 📅 Sunday July 21, 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
GRTN	4	3	0	1	0	8	7	0
HMLN	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1

## BATTING

Groton Jr. Legion Post	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
L Krause #2 (C)	2	2	1	0	1	1
C Simon #4 (SS)	2	2	1	0	1	0
G Englu... #18 (DH)	3	0	1	0	0	0
J Erdmann #0 (CF)	3	1	2	3	0	0
N Morris #17 (RF)	3	1	0	0	0	0
N Groebl... #12 (1B)	2	1	0	0	0	0
Jordan S... #11 (LF)	2	0	0	0	0	1
T McGa... #22 (3B)	1	0	0	0	1	0
G Kroll #8	2	0	0	0	0	0
K Fliels #10 (2B)	2	1	2	0	0	0
R Shelle #6 (2B)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

**2B:** J Erdmann, G Englund, **3B:** K Fliels, **TB:** K Fliels 4, J Erdmann 3, C Simon, G Englund 2, L Krause, **HBP:** N Groeblinghoff, Jordan Schwan, **SB:** K Fliels, J Erdmann, L Krause, **LOB:** 4

## PITCHING

Groton Jr. Legion Post	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
K Antonsen... #7	1.0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Kolton A... #7	1.0	2	0	0	1	0	0
<b>A Abeln #23</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** K Antonsen, **P-S:** K Antonsen 14-9, A Abeln 36-20, Kolton Antonsen 13-7, **BF:** K Antonsen 4, A Abeln 11, Kolton Antonsen 4

Hamlin/Castlewood 16U	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
K Baker #4 (P)	3	0	1	0	0	1
K Eidson #55 (1B)	1	0	1	0	1	0
T Olson #55 (2B)	1	0	1	0	1	0
D Cokens #33 (SS)	2	0	0	0	0	0
W Granth... #28 (C)	2	0	0	0	0	0
D DeGe... #99 (3B)	2	0	1	0	0	0
#8 (RF)	2	0	1	0	0	0
R Prouty #11 (CF)	2	0	0	0	0	2
J Tharal... #23 (LF)	2	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

**TB:** #8, K Eidson, D DeGeest, K Baker, T Olson, **SB:** #8, K Baker, **LOB:** 4

Hamlin/Castlewood 16U	IP	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
K Baker #4	2.0	4	7	5	3	0
D Coke... #33	3.0	3	1	1	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

**P-S:** K Baker 42-18, D Cokens 28-22, **HBP:** K Baker 2, **BF:** K Baker 16, D Cokens 11

## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: How are satellites helping solve our environmental problems? – B.B., via email

In our ever-evolving quest to address and mitigate environmental problems, the role of satellites has become increasingly significant. Orbiting high above Earth, these technological marvels offer a unique vantage point to observe, collect and analyze data on a global scale, providing critical insights into the planet's changing climate and natural phenomena.

Satellites are indispensable in monitoring atmospheric changes and climate phenomena—such as El Niño—which have profound effects on global weather patterns. According to the Physical Sciences Laboratory of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), satellites play a pivotal role in observing sea level rise and the melting of polar ice, which are key indicators of climate change.

Satellites have also greatly benefited the detection and management of wildfires. NASA's spinoff technologies (commercial products and services which have been developed with the help of NASA) use satellite imagery to detect fires early, often before they cause extensive damage. This early detection is crucial for timely firefighting efforts and effective evacuation planning, ultimately saving lives and reducing property damage. Satellites also help assess the aftermath, vital for recovery and mitigation.

Satellite technology is also crucial in ocean and coastal management. NOAA utilizes satellites to monitor ocean health, track pollution and map coral reefs. These activities are essential for preserving marine environments and ensuring the sustainability of the resources they provide. By providing data on water temperatures, currents and biological productivity, satellites help manage marine ecosystems effectively.

Improving the accuracy of weather forecasts and enhancing the readiness for natural disasters are perhaps some of the most well-known applications of satellites. Their ability to monitor atmospheric conditions and predict weather changes is critical in preparing for and responding to hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters. This real-time data is crucial for disaster response agencies worldwide, enabling more effective planning and potentially saving thousands of lives annually.

The development of satellite technology has not only advanced our capabilities in space but also brought numerous benefits for environmental monitoring on Earth. Innovations such as advanced imaging and sensors initially designed for space applications are now being used to track environmental changes and manage natural resources more effectively. These technologies provide unprecedented levels of detail and timeliness, enhancing our ability to understand and protect our planet.



**Orbiting high above Earth, satellites offer a unique vantage point to observe, collect and analyze data on a global scale.** Credit: Pexels.com.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### President Joe Biden bows out of reelection campaign, Harris vows to win nomination

BY: JACOB FISCHLER AND ASHLEY MURRAY - JULY 21, 2024 1:48 PM

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden dropped out of the 2024 presidential race Sunday, he said in a letter posted to social media, creating an unprecedented vacancy atop the Democratic ticket one month before he was scheduled to officially accept his party's nomination.

In a follow-up post less than 30 minutes later, Biden endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to take his place as the Democratic nominee.

Biden's withdrawal came after a weeks-long pressure campaign from party insiders following a disastrous June 27 debate performance against GOP candidate former President Donald Trump.

The move throws an already-unusual presidential race into further chaos, and it was not immediately clear Sunday how Democrats would choose a replacement for Biden in November's election, though Harris would have a strong claim to lead the ticket.

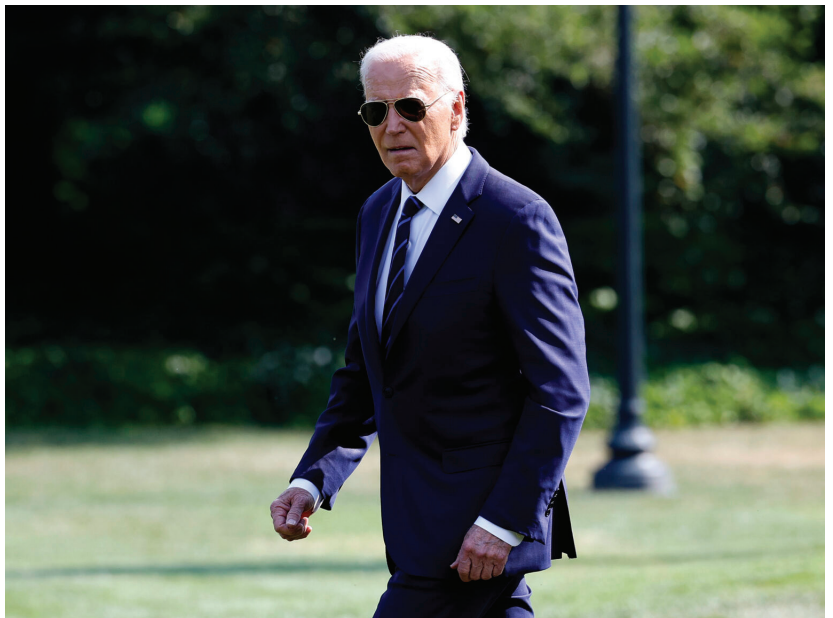
In a written statement, Democratic National Committee Chair Jaime Harrison said the party in picking a new nominee would proceed under "established rules and procedures."

"The work that we must do now, while unprecedented, is clear," Harrison wrote. "In the coming days, the Party will undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward as a united Democratic Party with a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November. This process will be governed by established rules and procedures of the Party. Our delegates are prepared to take seriously their responsibility in swiftly delivering a candidate to the American people."

In his letter, Biden praised Harris as "an extraordinary partner" in the administration's accomplishments. Biden, who has been fighting a COVID-19 infection at home in Delaware since last week, was not specific about his reasons for stepping aside, but said he believed it was in the country's best interest.

"It has been the great honor of my life to serve as your President," he wrote in the one-page letter. "And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term."

Biden, 81, appeared frail and confused at several points throughout the debate, leading to worries among



**U.S. President Joe Biden departs the White House on July 15, 2024, in Washington, D.C. Biden was traveling to Las Vegas, Nevada, to deliver remarks at the NAACP National Convention and the UnidosUS Annual Conference.** (Photo by Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images)

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elected Democrats and the party's voters that he was no longer up to the task of governing or contesting Trump's bid to win back the White House.

As several congressional Democrats called for him to quit the race, others asked that he ramp up his public schedule and include more unrehearsed appearances that could demonstrate his fitness.

But a more robust schedule of news interviews, press conferences and campaign rallies did not sufficiently quiet the Democratic voices saying Biden's candidacy was likely to throw the presidential race to Trump – whom Biden and others have described as an existential threat to U.S. democracy – and deeply handicap Democrats in other races up and down November's ballot.

On Friday, Sens. Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Martin Heinrich of New Mexico brought the number of senators calling on Biden to drop out to four. A day earlier, Montana Sen. Jon Tester said Biden should drop his reelection campaign and that Democrats should hold an open nomination process at their Chicago convention next month.

In the U.S. House, 29 Democrats had called for Biden to withdraw from the race by the end of the day July 19.

In a post following the announcement to his social media site, Truth Social, Trump said Biden was "never" fit to serve as president.

"Crooked Joe Biden was not fit to run for President, and is certainly not fit to serve – And never was!" Trump wrote. "He only attained the position of President by lies, Fake News, and not leaving his Basement. All those around him, including his Doctor and the Media, knew that he wasn't capable of being President, and he wasn't – And now, look what he's done to our Country."

## More details of announcement

In the letter, Biden praised his administration's accomplishments over three-and-a-half years, saying he'd worked to make "historic investments" in the country, lowered prescription drug costs, nominated the first Black woman to the U.S. Supreme Court and "passed the most significant climate legislation in the history of the world."

"Together we overcame a once in a century pandemic and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression," Biden wrote. "We've protected and preserved our Democracy. And we've revitalized and strengthened our alliances around the world."

Biden said he would "speak to the Nation later this week" about the decision.

He praised Harris and other supporters.

"For now, let me express my deepest gratitude to all those who have worked so hard to see me re-elected," he wrote. "I want to thank Vice President Kamala Harris for being an extraordinary partner in all this work. And let me express my heartfelt appreciation to the American people for the faith and trust you have placed in me."

In follow-up posts, Biden said he was endorsing Harris and added a fundraising link.

"My very first decision as the party nominee in 2020 was to pick Kamala Harris as my Vice President," he said. "And it's been the best decision I've made. Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year. Democrats — it's time to come together and beat Trump. Let's do this."

In a statement emailed by the Biden-Harris campaign, Harris called Biden's decision a "selfless and patriotic act."

"I am honored to have the President's endorsement and my intention is to earn and win this nomination. Over the past year, I have traveled across the country, talking with Americans about the clear choice in this momentous election. And that is what I will continue to do in the days and weeks ahead. I will do everything in my power to unite the Democratic Party—and unite our nation—to defeat Donald Trump and his extreme Project 2025 agenda."

## Trump gains in polls

The about face in what was to be a 2020 presidential election rematch leaves Democrats searching for a new candidate as Trump, who promises authoritarian-style leadership, has gained support in recent polls.

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With just 107 days until Election Day, Biden's move marks the latest date in modern presidential history that a candidate has withdrawn from the race.

President Lyndon Johnson announced in March 1968 that he would not seek reelection that year, leaving Democratic delegates to decide on a replacement – ultimately Vice President Hubert Humphrey – at the party's convention that summer in Chicago.

Harris appears to be in a strong position to replace Biden as the party's standard bearer, though questions remain about how the process will play out and who would become the vice presidential nominee.

## Democrats praise decision

Reaction poured in shortly after the Sunday afternoon announcement, with Democrats largely praising Biden's record and calling his decision courageous.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement that he understood Biden's decision to step out of the race was "not easy, but he once again put his country, his party, and our future first."

"Joe Biden has not only been a great president and a great legislative leader but he is a truly amazing human being," the New York Democrat said.

Several high-ranking Democrats endorsed Harris as Biden's successor.

"We are honored to join the President in endorsing Vice President Harris and will do whatever we can to support her," former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in a statement.

Statements from other party leaders, including Schumer, former Speaker Nancy Pelosi and former President Barack Obama did not include endorsements.

Several Republicans called for Biden to resign his office.

"If Joe Biden is not fit to run for President, he is not fit to serve as President," House Speaker Mike Johnson wrote on X. "He must resign the office immediately. November 5 cannot arrive soon enough."

## A crescendoing chorus to step down

Biden faced calls for him to abandon his reelection bid from congressional Democrats, even as he tried to stabilize the debate aftershock by holding a series of campaign rallies, sitting down for interviews and holding a press conference at the annual NATO conference.

Democratic lawmakers largely presented a public front of support for Biden in statements and passing interviews in the U.S. Capitol hallways with reporters.

What began as a trickle of dissent from rank-and-file Democrats — beginning with Rep. Lloyd Doggett of Texas and a handful of doubtful senior House Democrats — steadily grew to a torrent by Friday.

## 50-year career in Washington

Biden's exit marks the closure of a long, storied career in Washington, including 38 years in the U.S. Senate, featuring stints leading the Foreign Affairs and Judiciary committees, and eight years as vice president under President Barack Obama.

Biden's presidency was punctuated with major economic wins for Democrats, beginning with nearly \$2 trillion to combat the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

His leadership with a Democratic majority in Congress resulted in substantial nationwide infrastructure investments, drove financial incentives to tackle climate change and revive the U.S. global role in semiconductor manufacturing, and strengthened flagging tax enforcement.

However, low approval ratings followed Biden throughout his presidency as Americans aimed their frustrations over inflation at the White House and assigned blame for record numbers of border crossings as a divided Congress – after Democrats lost their House majority in the 2022 midterms – failed to pass immigration restrictions negotiated with the administration.

Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war also hurt his support among young and progressive voters as Israel's continued offensive against Hamas militants in the Palestinian territory of the Gaza Strip killed tens of thousands of civilians. Protesters against the U.S. supply of weapons to Israel interrupted dozens of Biden's reelection campaign events through 2024.

*Ariana Figueroa contributed to this report.*

*Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western*

issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

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

## What to know about Vice President Kamala Harris, endorsed by Biden as his successor

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - JULY 21, 2024 3:17 PM

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Sunday endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to be the new Democratic presidential nominee, passing the torch to the California native who has helmed administration initiatives on reproductive rights and gun control.

A former U.S. senator from California who vied for her party's presidential nomination in the 2020 primaries, Harris, 59, would represent a new generation at the top of the ticket after Biden, 81, withdrew from the race under pressure from Democratic leaders following a disastrous late June debate performance.

Harris, the nation's first woman vice president, now has a chance to become the first woman president, depending on what Democrats decide. She is also the first Black vice president and first person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president.

Some in the party publicly floated her as a potential replacement for Biden following the debate. Biden initially refused to end his reelection bid despite a growing number of calls within the Democratic Party for him to step aside. He bowed out on Sunday.

"Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year. Democrats — it's time to come together and beat Trump. Let's do this," Biden said in a Sunday post on X.



**U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris attends a moderated conversation with former Trump administration national security official Olivia Troye and former Republican voter Amanda Stratton on July 17, 2024 in Kalamazoo, Michigan.** (Photo by Chris duMond/Getty Images)

### Policy initiatives

During her time as vice president, Harris became a leading voice in the administration's fight for reproductive rights and abortion access — often seen as Democrats' strongest issue since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022, which ended nearly half a century of the federal constitutional right to abortion.

Harris launched a "Fight for Reproductive Freedoms" tour in early 2024, bringing her to several swing states. And after touring a Planned Parenthood clinic in Minnesota, Harris was believed to be the first sitting president or vice president to tour an abortion clinic.

Harris has also focused on gun safety throughout her vice presidential tenure. She announced the launch of the National Extreme Risk Protection Order Resource Center in March to assist states, local governments and others in "optimizing the usage of red flag laws," according to the White House.



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She also called on states to pass so-called red flag laws — which enable law enforcement to petition civil courts to take away firearms from those who could pose a danger to themselves or others — and use Bipartisan Safer Communities Act funding to “to help implement laws already enacted.”

The administration championed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which Biden signed into law in June 2022. The measure was regarded as the most comprehensive federal gun safety legislation in almost 30 years.

She’s also been a sharp opponent, alongside Biden and other Democrats, of Project 2025 — the nearly 900-page document from the Heritage Foundation that proposes a sweeping conservative agenda if former President Donald J. Trump is elected. Though Trump has distanced himself from the platform, some former members of his administration helped write it.

Harris has also drawn criticism on both sides of the aisle for her efforts surrounding immigration. Biden tapped her in 2021 to help address the “root causes” of migration in Central America.

She visited the U.S.-Mexico border in June 2021 after making stops in Guatemala and Mexico earlier that month, the first international trip for her as vice president.

Republicans have repeatedly called her a “border czar” despite her focus being on migration’s “root causes” in Central American countries.

During the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida was one of several speakers who dubbed her a “border czar,” adding the barb that “appointing Kamala Harris to oversee the border is like appointing Bernie Madoff to oversee your retirement plan.”

Harris also holds the record for the highest number of tie-breaking votes cast in the U.S. Senate.

## Public polling and perception

Since the fallout from the June 27 debate, a slew of polls have offered mixed outcomes as to whether voters would choose Harris over Trump if the two were up against each other.

An Economist/YouGov poll conducted July 13-16 shows both Harris and Biden narrowly behind Trump, with Biden performing slightly better than Harris.

Only 39% said they would choose Harris, compared to 44% who would vote for Trump. Similarly, 41% said they would vote for Biden, compared to 43% choosing Trump.

As of mid-July, her approval ratings also appeared dim, with 50.4% of Americans disapproving of her and 38.6% approving.

## California background

Prior to serving as vice president, Harris was a U.S. senator from California from 2017 to 2021. With a long career in law enforcement, she served as the attorney general of California and was also the district attorney of San Francisco.

Harris vied for the Democratic nomination in the 2020 presidential election before ultimately withdrawing her candidacy months later and subsequently endorsing Biden. She dropped out prior to the Iowa caucuses, ending her bid in December 2019, despite being initially viewed as a top Democratic contender.

She was born in Oakland, California, in 1964 to immigrant parents. She is married to Doug Emhoff, who is the first Jewish spouse of either a U.S. president or vice president, according to the White House. He’s also the first second gentleman in U.S. history.

Harris is an alumna of Howard University, a historically Black institution, and received her law degree from the University of California, Hastings.

*Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom’s Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.*

## South Dakota Democratic Party stops short of endorsing Harris after Biden bows out of the race

**Noem, Thune say eventual Democratic nominee will have to 'answer for' Biden policies**

**BY: JOHN HULT - JULY 21, 2024 4:56 PM**

South Dakota's political leaders reacted Sunday to the news that President Joe Biden has withdrawn from the U.S. presidential race.

Dan Ahlers, executive director of the South Dakota Democratic Party, said the party has taken no position on Biden's choice of successor as 2024 presidential nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris.

The South Dakota Democratic Party's national delegates, he said, had remained committed in recent weeks to supporting Biden at the Democratic National Convention (DNC), which begins Aug. 19 in Chicago. Calls for Biden to step down have grown since a June 27 debate performance widely described as "disastrous."

South Dakota's DNC delegates are Shane Merrill, Jessica Meyers, Deb Knecht and Dennis Olson. The party's website has a full list of delegates and alternates.

"We're not taking any position at this time," Ahlers said of a Harris endorsement. "Our delegates are all committed to Biden. Now Biden has stepped out of the race and is putting his backing behind Kamala Harris. I'm not sure what this will all mean for our delegates. I know up until now we've stood behind the president."

Ahlers said the party awaits guidance from the national party on how the nomination process will play out. The state party will have more to share after consultation with national party leaders and other state-level leaders, Ahlers said. He spoke to South Dakota Searchlight shortly before a virtual meeting with the Association of State Democratic Committees.

The news of Biden's withdrawal came as a surprise, he said. He started his Sunday "dressed in a Transformers t-shirt" with plans to attend a comicon called Voices Against Cancer in Sioux Falls.

"I didn't expect to be doing this today," Ahlers said of the association meeting.

Ahlers expressed gratitude to Biden for "all he's done for South Dakota" saying the decision to step down was "just another example of his selfless leadership."

Ahlers pointed to federal dollars funneled to the state for child care, broadband infrastructure, roads and bridges, water and sewer infrastructure for workforce housing, among other projects. Much of that funding came through the American Rescue Act of 2021 and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

"He has been the most impactful president of our lifetime," he said.



**Members of the South Dakota Democratic Party pose for a photo during the party's state convention in June 2024.** (Courtesy SD Democratic Party)

### Republicans react

Gov. Kristi Noem was the first of the state's political leaders to react publicly to the Biden news, posting on X, formerly Twitter, and on Facebook, at 1:05 p.m. CST Sunday. Biden made his announcement in a letter posted to social media at 12:46 p.m.

Noem said the withdrawal was "the right decision for our nation." The Democratic Party's eventual nomi-

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nee, she said, will have to answer for inflation, violent crime and "weak foreign policy."

"Donald Trump is the leader America needs to get this country back on the right track," she wrote.

Sen. John Thune, South Dakota Republican and Senate minority whip, reacted shortly afterward, hitting similar themes in a post from his campaign account on X.

"Whether it's Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, or someone else, it doesn't matter who's at the top of the ticket. The Democrat Party is synonymous with higher prices, open borders, and global instability. The American people want a change. Republicans will deliver it this November," Thune posted.

Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, posted a statement calling Biden's move the right decision at 4 p.m. CST Sunday. He echoed Thune and Noem, saying the "fundamentals of the race" haven't changed. The Democrats' nominee, he wrote, "will also have had a hand in his policies driving inflation, the border crisis, and overregulation."

Republican Senator Mike Rounds had not posted a reaction as of 4:45 p.m. Sunday. A representative from his office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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

## Democratic delegates face big decisions on a presidential nominee

**BY: JACOB FISCHLER AND ARIANA FIGUEROA - JULY 21, 2024 6:52 PM**

WASHINGTON — Democratic National Convention delegates from across the country praised President Joe Biden's decision Sunday to end his reelection bid, and a few state party leaders followed Biden's endorsement and immediately threw their support to Vice President Kamala Harris.

Delegates are scheduled to hold a virtual roll call vote early next month to officially select the party's pick to face Republican Donald Trump in November, with the nominee to accept the nod at the party's convention on August 22.

Until recently, that candidate was presumed to be Biden, but a poor debate performance on June 27 presaged a weeks-long pressure campaign from Democratic leaders to drop out of the race. Biden heeded those calls Sunday.

Biden endorsed Harris shortly after saying midafternoon Sunday he would not seek reelection. A handful of state delegations were ready Sunday afternoon to shift their support to Harris, though Democratic officials in many more states had not made any statements about whom they'd support at next month's Democratic National Convention.

DNC Chair Jaime Harrison said in a statement Sunday that in "the coming days, the Party will undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward as a united Democratic Party with a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November."

"This process will be governed by established rules and procedures of the Party," he said. "Our delegates are prepared to take seriously their responsibility in swiftly delivering a candidate to the American people."

Harrison did not include details about how the party would formally nominate a presidential candidate.

### Harris gains support

Reaction among state Democratic party officials on Sunday was near universal in praising Biden for his accomplishments as president and decision to leave the race.

Delegates in several states have already thrown their support behind Harris.

"We will be supporting Kamala Harris," Alabama Democratic Party Chair Randy Kelley said, according to the Alabama Reflector.

In Colorado, several delegates and elected officials, some of whom would have a vote after the first round of balloting at the Democratic National Convention, said they would back Harris.

One delegate in Colorado, state Rep. Leslie Herod of Denver, was a co-chair for Harris' 2020 presidential

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campaign in Colorado.

Herod told Colorado Newline that she would be supporting Harris' campaign and that the vice president "is committed to not only our country, but the people in it ... She's not an isolated leader. She is one that leads with the people and alongside of them."

Randal Gaines, chairman of the Louisiana Democratic Party, told the Louisiana Illuminator that the state delegation will support Harris' nomination and that she will "energize our core voters to an unprecedented level."

Tennessee delegates reached Sunday by the Tennessee Lookout indicated they were inclined to support Harris.

"I'm extremely pleased he has endorsed Kamala Harris and it would be awfully difficult to not strongly support her," said Chip Forrester, an at-large delegate from Tennessee.

All the congressional Democrats from Wisconsin, a key battleground state in November's election, quickly endorsed Harris, the Wisconsin Examiner reported. The state's Democratic Gov. Tony Evers and party Chair Ben Wikler both stopped short of endorsing the vice president.

One national delegate reached by the Oregon Capital Chronicle, Medford City Councilor Kevin Stine, said he would vote for Harris.

Indiana state Sen. Karen Tallian said she would support Harris, even as others among the Hoosier State's 88 DNC delegates declined to comment Sunday.

## Holding out on endorsements

But far from all Democratic delegates have lined up behind Harris.

South Dakota delegates have not taken a position on endorsing Harris. Instead, they are waiting for guidance from the national party, the executive director of the South Dakota Democratic Party, Dan Ahlers, said to South Dakota Searchlight.

Delegates in North Dakota praised Biden's decision, according to the North Dakota Monitor. Jamie Selzler, a DNC national committee member from North Dakota, said the process to choose a replacement should be transparent.

Iowa Democratic Party Chair Rita Hart said Sunday that Democrats would "unite behind a candidate who will defeat Donald Trump this November."

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

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



**DNC Chairman Jaime Harrison is joined by business and political leaders during a lakeside event held to announce that Chicago was chosen to host the 2024 Democratic National Convention on April 12, 2023 in Chicago, Illinois. Chicago last hosted the convention in 1996.** (Photo by Scott Olson/Getty Images)

## Democrats praise Biden for a tough decision, and some back Harris endorsement

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - JULY 21, 2024 4:44 PM

WASHINGTON — Democrats Sunday applauded President Joe Biden's decision to bow out of the presidential race, and some quickly said they support his endorsement of Vice President Kamala Harris as the new Democratic nominee, four months before the November elections.

Congressional Democrats lauded Biden for his record and for passing the torch to a new generation. Democrats for weeks pressured the president to withdraw from the race following a disastrous June 27 debate that rattled their belief the president could defeat Donald J. Trump in a rematch.

"While it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term," Biden wrote in a one-page letter he posted to X, formerly Twitter.

Shortly after the announcement, Biden endorsed Harris in a separate social media post.

In a statement, Harris said she was honored

to have Biden's endorsement and that her "intention is to earn and win this nomination."

"We have 107 days until Election Day," she said. "Together, we will fight. And together, we will win."



**First lady Jill Biden, U.S. President Joe Biden, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris and second gentleman Douglas Emhoff join hands as they depart a "Reproductive Freedom Campaign Rally" at George Mason University on January 23, 2024 in Manassas, Virginia.** (Photo by Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images)

### Clintons endorse Harris

Citing Trump as a threat to democracy and the Supreme Court's recent ruling on presidential immunity, former President Bill Clinton and 2016 Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton said in a joint statement that "now is the time to support Kamala Harris and fight with everything we've got to elect her."

Former President Barack Obama said in a statement that Biden is "a patriot of the highest order."

"I also know Joe has never backed down from a fight," Obama said. "For him to look at the political landscape and decide that he should pass the torch to a new nominee is surely one of the toughest in his life."

Obama stopped short of endorsing Harris, but said he has the "extraordinary confidence that the leaders of our party will be able to create a process from which an outstanding nominee emerges."

Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, who chairs the Senate Committee on Appropriations, said in a statement that she is supportive of Harris and believes the vice president can beat Trump.

"She is exactly the woman we need to prosecute the case against Donald Trump, save American democracy, lead the fight to restore abortion rights, and build an economy that puts working people—not billionaires—first," Murray said. "I will do everything I can to help elect Kamala Harris as our next President."

If Harris is formally nominated at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, which is a month away, she would become the first Black woman and first person of South Asian descent to become a major party's presidential nominee.

Florida Democratic Rep. Kathy Castor said in a statement that she has full confidence in Harris as the new Democratic nominee for president.

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"There is a lot at stake in this election," she said. "She is a fighter who stands up for reproductive freedoms, civil rights, lowering costs for families and lifting up all Americans."

Republicans called for Biden to resign from office, arguing that because he is dropping out of the race, he is unfit to continue in the Oval Office.

"If Joe Biden is not fit to run for President, he is not fit to serve as President," House Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana wrote on X.

Montana Republican Steve Daines, who chairs the Senate GOP campaign arm, said in a statement that he is calling on Biden to resign because "of concern for our country's national security."

"Being President is the hardest job in the world, and I no longer have confidence that Joe Biden can effectively execute his duties as Commander-in-Chief," Daines said.

Trump posted a highly critical statement to his social media site, Truth Social.

"Crooked Joe Biden was not fit to run for President, and is certainly not fit to serve – And never was!" he wrote.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell did not call for Biden to step down as president, but criticized his record in a short written statement.

"For four years, the American people have faced historic inflation at home, chaos at the border, and weak leadership on the world stage," the Kentucky Republican wrote. "Our nation is less prosperous and less secure than it was in January, 2021. We cannot afford four more years of failure."

## 'Putting country over ego'

Rep. Lloyd Doggett of Texas, who was the first congressional Democrat to call for Biden to step down, said in a statement that the president is "putting country over ego in a way that Donald Trump never could."

He added that while Harris "is clearly the leading candidate, we should be open to all talented individuals who wish to be considered."

Rhode Island Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse said in a statement that he saluted Biden's decision to end his campaign for a second term.

"Let no one underestimate how hard this was," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries both commended the president on his record, but neither gave their support to Harris.

"Joe Biden has not only been a great president and a great legislative leader but he is a truly amazing human being," Schumer said. "His decision of course was not easy, but he once again put his country, his party, and our future first."

Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet of Colorado, who earlier this month raised concerns that Trump could win in a landslide, thanked Biden in a social media post for stepping aside because it has "given us the chance to beat Donald Trump and give our children the future they deserve."

Maryland Democratic Sen. Chris Van Hollen said in a statement that Biden has "always put our country first, and in making this decision, he has once again done what he thinks is best for the future of our democracy."

Sen. Mark Warner, Democrat of Virginia, said in a statement that he respected Biden's decision to step down.

"While there has to be an orderly process and the decision ultimately rests in the hands of the DNC delegates, I believe Vice President Harris has the experience, energy, and resolve to lead our nation," he said.

Minnesota Sen. Tina Smith said in a statement that she "proudly and enthusiastically" supports Harris "whom I believe is the very best person in this moment to unify the Democratic Party and lead us forward to victory."

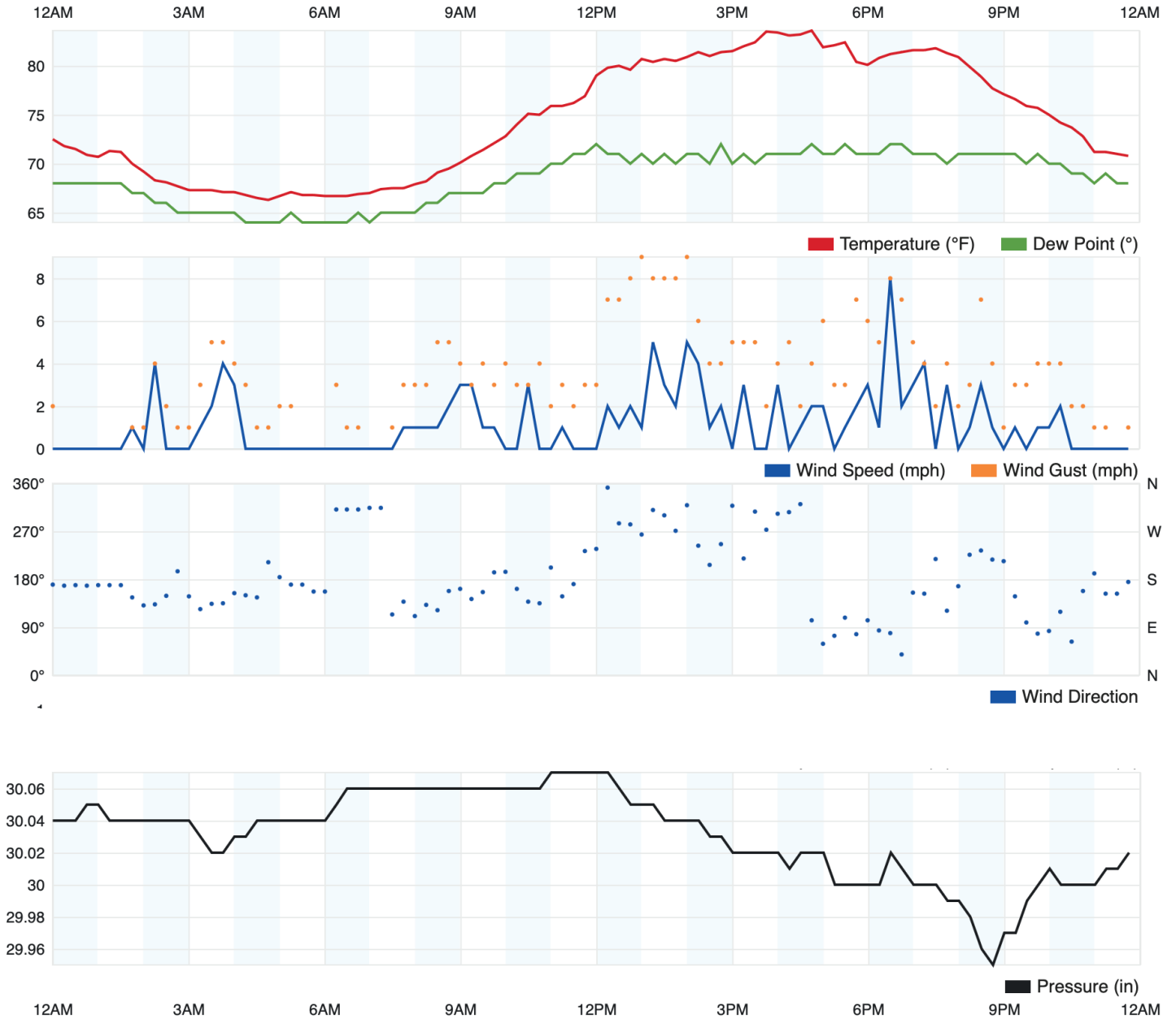
"The work is not done," Smith said. "In fact it is just beginning."

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

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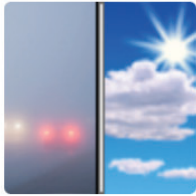
## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Sioux Falls Daily Independent

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Today



High: 87 °F

Patchy Fog  
then Mostly  
Sunny

Tonight



Low: 63 °F

Slight Chance  
T-storms

Tuesday



High: 83 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 61 °F

Mostly Clear

Wednesday



High: 85 °F

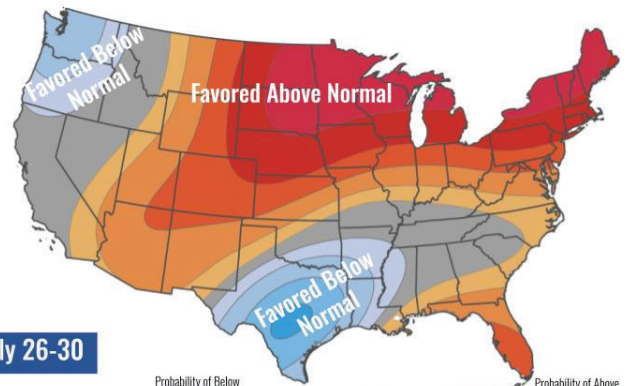
Sunny

## Warm Temperature Outlook

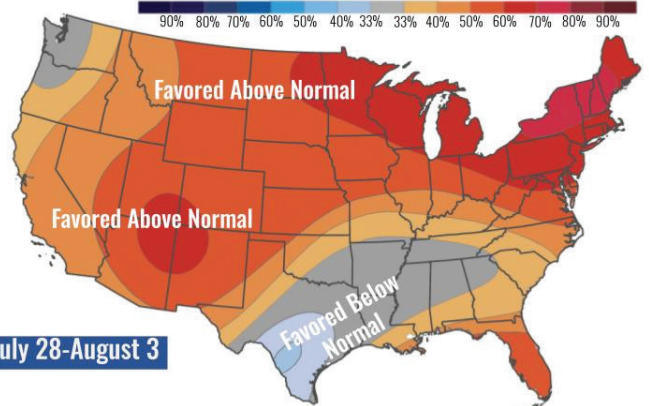
Sun Jul 21, 2024 6:42 AM

### Daily Temperature Outlook

July 21	Below
July 22	Below
July 23	Below
July 24	Below
July 25	Normal
July 26	Above
July 27	Above



July 26-30



July 28-August 3

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
WEATHER.GOV/SIOUXFALLS

After our brief stretch of below normal temperatures in the 70s and lower 80s, warmer temperatures are expected to build back into the region to start off the month of August. Normal highs are in the mid 80s, dropping into the lower 80s by the end of August.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 4:42 PM

Low Temp: 66 °F at 4:43 AM

Wind: 10 mph at 2:06 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 8 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 111 in 1934

Record Low: 46 in 1980

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 2.36

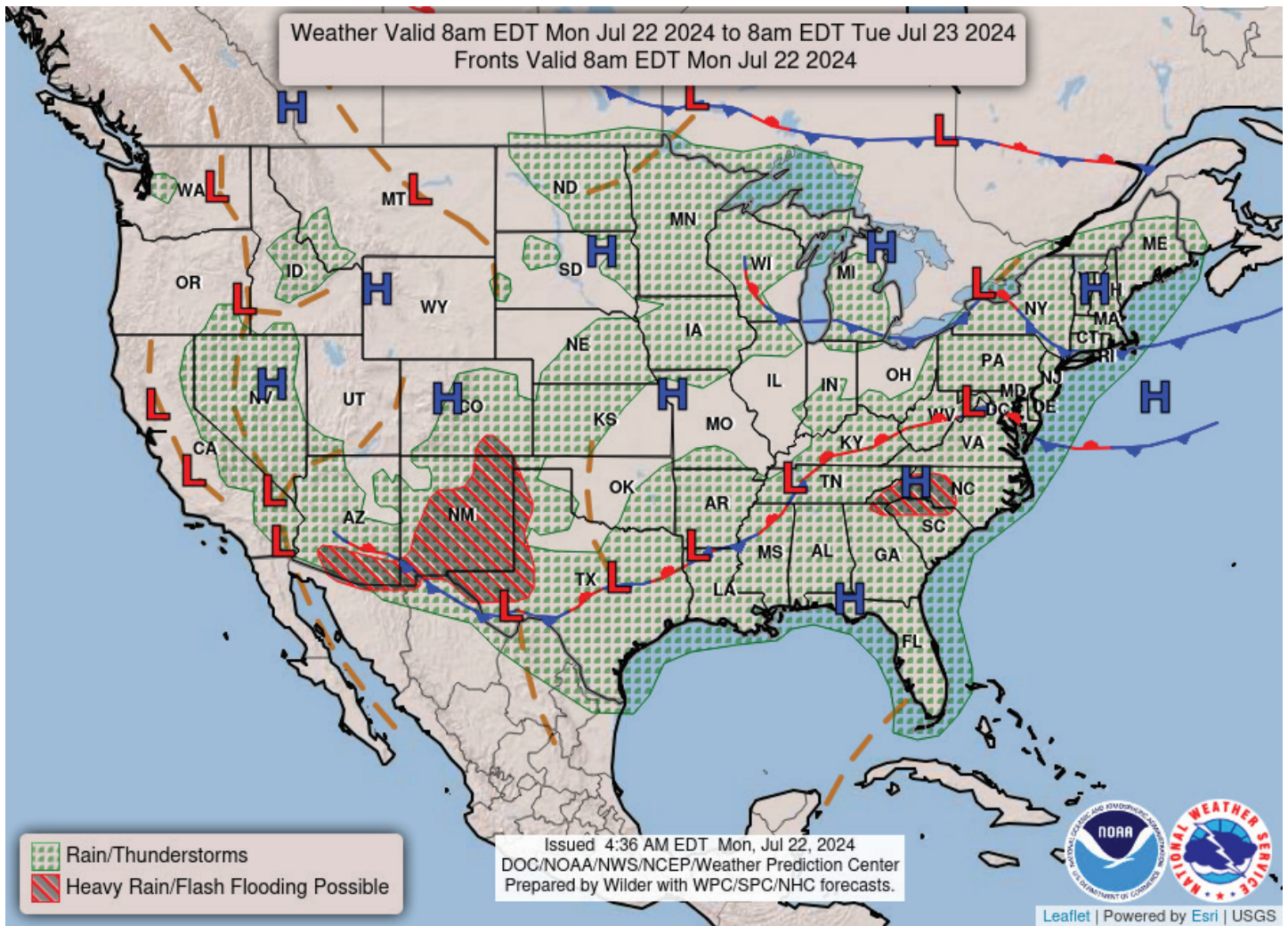
Precip to date in July: 3.56

Average Precip to date: 13.37

Precip Year to Date: 14.51

Sunset Tonight: 9:13:10 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:05:43 am



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## Today in Weather History

July 22, 1926: An estimated F2 tornado moved east across the northern part of Hyde County, destroying two barns.

July 22, 1999: An F0 tornado touched down briefly on a farm southeast of Onida. Over half of the roof of a 40 by 45-foot building was torn off and deposited in a tree belt 200 yards to the north. A grain auger was also damaged when it was pushed up against a granary. A semi-trailer was blown over. About 400 acres of ripe wheat was also flattened, and some sunflowers suffered damage as a result of the tornado.

July 22, 2011: Numerous severe thunderstorms brought hail up to the size of golf balls, damaging winds over 70 mph, along with flash flooding to parts of north central and northeast South Dakota. Most of the hail occurred in Grant and Codington counties. Several roads were flooded by nearly 4 inches of rain in Grant County. Five miles west of South Shore in Codington County, over 3 inches of rain brought flash flooding to several roads. The strong winds were observed in Corson, Walworth, and McPherson counties. About 9 miles west of Long Lake, eighty mph winds ripped a grain bin from the fasteners, pushed the north wall of a garage in, snapped several corral poles, moved a semitrailer four feet, and caused some minor damage to the house. Also, many branches were broken off along with several trees uprooted.

1918 - A single bolt of lightning struck 504 sheep dead in their tracks at the Wasatch National Forest in Utah. Sheep often herd together in storms, and as a result the shock from the lightning bolt was passed from one animal to another. (David Ludlum)

1986 - Hurricane Estelle passed 120 miles south of the Hawaiian Islands creating a ten to twenty foot surf. The large swells resulted from a combination of high tides, a full moon, and 50 mph winds. The hurricane also deluged Oahu Island with as much as 6.86 inches of rain on the 24th and 25th of the month. (Storm Data)

1987 - Barrow, AK, receives 1.38 inches in 24 hours on the 21st and 22nd, an all-time record for that location. The average annual precipitation for Barrow is just 4.75 inches. Thunderstorms in Montana produced 4 to 6 inches of rain in Glacier County causing extensive flooding along Divide Creek. Missoula, MT, received 1.71 inches of rain in 24 hours, a record for the month of July. (The National Weather Summary) (The Weather Channel)

1988: Dust devils are not a unique phenomenon, but usually they stay minimal. This was not the case in Dickinson County, Iowa where a powerful dust devil developed on the edge of Lake Okoboji. It picked up whole sections of several docks and swept away all of the loose dirt in the area. Estimated winds exceeded 60 mph.

1988 - Six cities in the south central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Pueblo, CO, with a reading of 48 degrees. Thunderstorms over the Atlantic Coast Region drenched Wilmington, NC, with 6.49 inches of rain in about eight hours. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms prevailed across the southeastern third of the country. Afternoon thunderstorms in Florida produced wind gusts to 86 mph at Zephyrhills, and gusts to 92 mph at Carrollwood and Lutz. Thunderstorm winds gusting to 69 mph at Crystal Lake damaged nineteen mobile homes. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1993: The levee, holding back the flooding Mississippi River at Kaskaskia, Illinois, ruptures, forcing the town's people to flee on barges. The incident at Kaskaskia was the most dramatic event of the flood. At 9:48 a.m., the levee broke, leaving the people of Kaskaskia with no escape route other than two Army Corp of Engineers barges. By 2 p.m., the entire town was underwater.

Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB

The women which had come with Him out of Galilee followed and saw where His body was laid. There, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the Mother of Joses, sat in front of the tomb.

The others returned and prepared spices and ointments. But on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

On the morrow, the day after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came to Pilate saying, "Sir we remember that the deceiver said while still living, 'After three days I will rise again.' Give orders, therefore, to make the tomb secure until the three days, lest the disciples coming, steal Him and say to His people, 'He was risen from the dead' the last error would be worse than the first!"

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard, go and make it as secure as you know how."

They went therefore, and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to realize that Your presence and power can never be limited by any work of man. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: On the way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside. Mark 16, Matthew 28, Luke 24



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.19.24

10 17 23 50 67 3

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$279,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 40 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.20.24

6 7 13 16 36 1

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$5,520,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 55 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.21.24

2 5 20 36 39 7

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 10 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.20.24

10 20 22 24 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$43,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 10 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.20.24

10 14 31 34 67 20

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 39 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.20.24

18 25 31 40 57 4

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$102,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 39 Mins 27 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

### Israel orders evacuation of part of Gaza humanitarian zone

By WAFAA SHURAFI and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Israeli military on Monday ordered the evacuation of part of an area in the Gaza Strip it has designated a humanitarian zone.

The military said it is planning to begin an operation against Hamas militants who have embedded themselves in the area and used it to launch rockets toward Israel. The area includes the eastern part of the Muwasi humanitarian zone, which is located in the southern Gaza Strip.

Many Palestinians have been uprooted multiple times in search of safety during Israeli's punishing air and ground campaign.

Earlier this month, Israel said it estimates at least 1.8 million Palestinians are now in the humanitarian zone it declared covering a stretch of about 14 kilometers (8.6 miles) along the Mediterranean. Much of that area is now blanketed with tent camps that lack sanitation and medical facilities and have limited access to aid, U.N. and humanitarian groups say. Families live in the midst of mountains of trash and streams contaminated by sewage.

The announcement came during delicate negotiations seeking a cease-fire in Gaza, with U.S. and Israeli officials expressing hope that an agreement is closer than ever. A negotiating team will be sent to continue talks on Thursday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said. Egypt, Qatar and the United States are continuing to push Israel and Hamas toward a phased cease-fire deal that would stop the fighting and free the hostages.

Netanyahu left Monday morning on a much-anticipated trip to the United States to meet with President Joe Biden, who announced Sunday that he will not seek another term, and address Congress.

Netanyahu said that regardless of who becomes the next U.S. president, "our enemies must know that Israel and the United States stand together tomorrow and always." He said he will thank Biden for more than 40 years of friendship, while also pushing him for more support on certain issues.

Also Monday, Israeli police said a Canadian citizen was killed after threatening Israeli security forces with a knife near the Gaza border.

The Israeli military said the man drove to the entrance of an Israeli town close to the border, left his vehicle and approached the security forces with a knife. The forces opened fire and killed the man. There were no other injuries.

The attack took place at the entrance of the Israeli town of Netiv HaAsara, which is just 300 meters (yards) north of the Gaza border. On Oct. 7, Netiv HaAsara was attacked and 20 residents were killed after gunmen passed over the concrete border wall using paragliders, according to Israeli military officials.

Israel has experienced a wave of stabbing attacks across the country during the nine-month war in Gaza.

The war in Gaza has killed more than 38,900 people, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. The war began with an assault by Hamas militants on southern Israel on Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took about 250 hostages. About 120 remain held, about a third of them believed to be dead, according to Israeli authorities.

The Israeli military said on Monday that it is continuing to operate in central and southern Gaza. On Sunday, Israeli airstrikes killed at least 15 people, including women and children, in Gaza, according to hospital officials and a body count by an Associated Press journalist.

The already precarious humanitarian conditions inside besieged Gaza have worsened with the discovery of the polio virus as water and sanitation services have deteriorated for the territory's 2.3 million people, most of them displaced. Traces of the virus were found in sewage samples in Gaza. The World Health Organization has said no one has been treated for symptoms caused by the disease.

Israel's military said soldiers would be vaccinated and it would work with organizations to bring in vaccines for Palestinians.

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Netanyahu has vowed to wipe out Hamas' military and governing capabilities and secure the return of the remaining hostages. Families of hostages and thousands of other Israelis have held weekly demonstrations to urge the prime minister to reach a cease-fire deal that would bring their loved ones home.

## Israel's Netanyahu walks political tightrope on Washington trip following Biden's exit from race

By TIA GOLDENBERG and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu left for Washington on Monday, leaving behind a brutal war to make a politically precarious speech before the U.S. Congress at a time of great uncertainty following Joe Biden's withdrawal from the presidential race.

With efforts ongoing to bring about a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, rising concerns about the war spreading to Lebanon and Yemen, and the U.S. in the midst of a dizzying election campaign, Netanyahu's speech has the potential to cause disarray on both sides of the ocean.

The risks only increased with Biden's decision Sunday to drop out of the race for president, especially since the choice of a replacement Democratic nominee — and the potential next American leader — are still up in the air.

Before stepping on the plane, Netanyahu said he would emphasize the theme of Israel's bipartisanship in his speech and said Israel would remain America's key ally in the Middle East "regardless who the American people choose as their next president."

"In this time of war and uncertainty, it's important that Israel's enemies know that America and Israel stand together," he said, adding that he will meet Biden during his trip and thank him for his support for Israel.

A person familiar with Biden's schedule confirmed Sunday that the president will host Netanyahu at the White House. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly, said the exact timing of the meeting has not been established because Biden is recovering from COVID-19.

Netanyahu is scheduled to address Congress on Wednesday. He is also expected to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris, who is seeking the Democratic Party's presidential nomination.

Netanyahu will deliver his congressional address with an eye on several audiences: his ultranationalist governing partners, the key to his political survival; the Biden administration, which Netanyahu counts on for diplomatic and military support; and Donald Trump's Republican Party, which could offer Netanyahu a reset in relations if he is reelected in November.

His words risk angering any one of those constituencies, which the Israeli leader cannot afford if he hopes to hold on to his tenuous grip on power.

"There are a few land mines and pitfalls on this trip," Eytan Gilboa, an expert on U.S.-Israel relations at Israel's Bar-Ilan University, said before Biden's withdrawal. "He is thought of as a political wizard who knows how to escape from traps. I am not sure he still knows how to do that."

It is Netanyahu's fourth speech to Congress — more than any other world leader. During his address, his far-right governing partners will want to hear his resolve to continue the war and topple Hamas.

The Biden administration will look for progress toward the latest U.S.-backed cease-fire proposal and details on a postwar vision. Republicans hope Netanyahu besmirches Biden and bolsters the GOP's hoped-for perception as Israel's stalwart supporter.

The war, which was sparked by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel, has tested Israel's ties with its top ally as never before.

The Biden administration has stood staunchly beside Israel. But it has grown increasingly alarmed about the conduct of the Israeli military, the continued difficulties of getting humanitarian aid into Gaza, especially after the short-lived U.S. military pier off Gaza coast, as well as Israel's lack of postwar plans and the harm to civilians in Gaza. Similar concerns will likely persist if Americans elect a new Democratic president.

Biden earlier this year froze the delivery of certain bombs over fears they would be used in Israel's incur-



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sion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, which at the time sheltered more than half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million.

The U.S. abstained from a United Nations Security Council vote in March that called for a cease-fire and the release of hostages but did not link the two. Netanyahu called the decision a "retreat" from a "principled position" by Israel's ally.

Biden has had to walk a fine line of his own. He has faced harsh criticism from progressive Democrats and many Arab Americans. Even Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, the highest-ranking elected U.S. Jewish official, lambasted Netanyahu in March for his handling of the war.

Some Democrats will likely demonstrate their anger toward Biden and Netanyahu by skipping Wednesday's speech. Netanyahu is also likely to be hounded by pro-Palestinian activists during his trip.

The last time Netanyahu spoke to Congress in 2015 was at the invitation of the Republican Party. The trip drove Israeli-American politics deep into the partisan divide as Netanyahu railed against then-President Barack Obama's Iran nuclear deal.

Netanyahu has not shied away from making Israel a partisan issue. With his nationalist conservative ideology, he has been perceived as throwing his support behind Republican candidates in the past, rankling Democrats and Israelis who want to keep the U.S.-Israel relationship bipartisan.

It's unclear if he will meet Trump. If there is a meeting, it could expose Netanyahu to accusations that he is once again taking sides. But if he doesn't meet with Trump, the former president could feel slighted.

The speech also offers Netanyahu opportunity. He will be able to show Israelis that despite the tensions with the Biden administration, U.S. support for him remains ironclad.

"He wants the Israeli public to believe that he is very much still very welcome in the United States. And this shows that the American people are with him," said David Makovsky, director of the program on Arab-Israel Relations at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

For critics of Netanyahu, that embrace is unacceptable and grants legitimacy to a deeply polarizing leader whose public support has plummeted. Netanyahu faces widespread protests and calls to resign over the failures of Oct. 7 and his handling of the war.

In a letter to Congress, 500 Israeli writers, scholars and public figures expressed their dismay over the invitation to Netanyahu, saying he will use the platform to advance misguided policies that align with his far-right governing partners.

"His only interest is preserving his own power," they wrote. "Does the United States Congress wish to support such a model of cynical and manipulative leadership in these times?"

Israeli media reported that Netanyahu will be joined by rescued hostage Noa Argamani and her father. But for many of the families of hostages held in Gaza, the trip is an affront.

"This is not the time for trips," Ayelet Levy Shachar, whose daughter Naama was kidnapped on Oct. 7, told reporters.

"Netanyahu: First a deal, then you can travel."

## **Biden's withdrawal injects uncertainty into wars, trade disputes and other foreign policy challenges**

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

Joe Biden's withdrawal from the U.S. presidential race injects greater uncertainty into the world at a time when Western leaders are grappling with wars in Ukraine and Gaza, a more assertive China in Asia and the rise of the far right in Europe.

During a five-decade career in politics, Biden developed extensive personal relationships with multiple foreign leaders that none of the potential replacements on the Democratic ticket can match. After his announcement, messages of support and gratitude for his years of service poured in from near and far.

The scope of foreign policy challenges facing the next U.S. president makes clear how consequential what happens in Washington is for the rest of the planet. Here's a look at some of them.

ISRAEL

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With Vice President Kamala Harris being eyed as a potential replacement for Biden, Israelis on Sunday scrambled to understand what her candidacy would mean for their country as it confronts increasing global isolation over its military campaign against Hamas.

Israel's left-wing Haaretz daily newspaper ran a story scrutinizing Harris' record of support for Israel, pointing to her reputation as Biden's "bad cop" who has vocally admonished Israel for its offensive in Gaza. In recent months, she has gone further than Biden in calling for a cease-fire, denouncing Israel's invasion of Rafah and expressing horror over the civilian death toll in Gaza.

"With Biden leaving, Israel has lost perhaps the last Zionist president," said Alon Pinkas, a former Israeli consul general in New York. "A new Democratic candidate will upend the dynamic."

Biden's staunch defense of Israel since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack has its roots in his half-century of support for the country as a senator, vice president, then president. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant thanked Biden for his "unwavering support of Israel over the years."

"Your steadfast backing, especially during the war, has been invaluable," Gallant wrote on social media platform X.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog praised Biden as a "symbol of the unbreakable bond between our two peoples" and a "true ally of the Jewish people." There was no immediate reaction from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, an ally of former President Donald Trump whose history of cordial relations with Biden has come under strain during the Israel-Hamas war.

## UKRAINE

Any Democratic candidate would likely continue Biden's legacy of staunch military support for Ukraine. But frustration with the Biden administration has grown in Ukraine and Europe over the slow pace of U.S. aid and restrictions on the use of Western weapons.

"Most Europeans realize that Ukraine is increasingly going to be their burden," said Sudha David-Wilp, director of the Berlin office of the German Marshall Fund, a research institute. "Everyone is trying to get ready for all the possible outcomes."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on X that he respected the "tough but strong decision" by Biden to drop out of the campaign, and he thanked Biden for his help "in preventing (Russian President Vladimir) Putin from occupying our country."

Trump has promised to end Russia's war on Ukraine in one day if he is elected — a prospect that has raised fears in Ukraine that Russia might be allowed to keep the territory it occupies.

Trump's vice presidential pick, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, is among Congress' most vocal opponents of U.S. aid for Ukraine and has further raised the stakes for Kyiv.

Russia, meanwhile, dismissed the importance of the race, insisting that no matter what happened, Moscow would press on in Ukraine.

"That's it for Biden," Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Security council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, said on the Telegram messaging app. "The goals of the special military operation will be achieved," he added, using the Kremlin's term for the war in Ukraine.

## CHINA

In recent months, both Biden and Trump have tried to show voters who can best stand up to Beijing's growing military strength and belligerence and protect U.S. businesses and workers from low-priced Chinese imports. Biden has hiked tariffs on electric vehicles from China, and Trump has promised to implement tariffs of 60% on all Chinese products.

Trump's "America First" doctrine exacerbated tensions with Beijing. But disputes with the geopolitical rival and economic colossus over wars, trade, technology and security continued into Biden's term.

China's official reaction to the U.S. presidential race has been careful.

"The U.S. elections are U.S. internal politics. I have no comment on this," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning.

The official Xinhua news agency treated the story of Biden's decision as relatively minor. The editor of the party-run Global Times newspaper, Hu Xijin, downplayed the impact of Biden's withdrawal.

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"Whoever becomes the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party may be the same," he wrote on X.  
IRAN

With Iran's proxies across the Middle East increasingly entangled in the Israel-Hamas war, the U.S. confronts a region in disarray.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis struck Tel Aviv for the first time last week, prompting retaliatory Israeli strikes inside war-torn Yemen. Simmering tensions and cross-border attacks between Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group and the Israeli military have raised fears of an all-out regional conflagration.

Hamas, which also receives support from Iran, continues to fight Israel even nine months into a war that has killed 38,000 Palestinians and displaced over 80% of Gaza's population.

The U.S. and its allies have accused Iran of expanding its nuclear program and enriching uranium to an unprecedented 60% level, near-weapons-grade levels.

After then-President Trump in 2018 withdrew from Tehran's landmark nuclear deal with world powers, Biden said he wanted to reverse his predecessor's hawkish anti-Iran stance. But the Biden administration has maintained severe economic sanctions against Iran and overseen failed attempts to renegotiate the agreement.

The sudden death of Ebrahim Raisi — the supreme leader's hard-line protege — in a helicopter crash vaulted a new reformist to the presidency in Iran, generating new opportunities and risks. Masoud Pezeshkian has said he wants to help Iran open up to the world but has maintained a defiant tone against the U.S.

## EUROPE AND NATO

Many Europeans were happy to see Trump go after his years of disparaging the European Union and undermining NATO. Trump's seemingly dismissive attitude toward European allies in last month's presidential debate did nothing to assuage those concerns.

Biden, on the other hand, has supported close American relations with bloc leaders.

That closeness was on stark display after Biden's decision to bow out of the race. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk called his choice "probably the most difficult one in your life." The newly installed British prime minister, Keir Starmer, said he respected Biden's "decision based on what he believes is in the best interests of the American people."

There was also an outpouring of affection from Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris, who called Biden a "proud American with an Irish soul."

The question of whether NATO can maintain its momentum in supporting Ukraine and checking the ambitions of other authoritarian states hangs in the balance of this presidential election, analysts say.

"They don't want to see Donald Trump as president. So there's quite a bit of relief but also quite a bit of nervousness" about Biden's decision to drop out, said Jeremy Shapiro, research director of the European Council on Foreign Relations. "Like many in the United States, but perhaps more so, they are really quite confused."

## MEXICO

The close relationship between Mexico and the U.S. has been marked in recent years by disagreements over trade, energy and climate change. Since President Andrés Manuel López Obrador took power in 2018, both countries have found common ground on issue of migration — with Mexico making it more difficult for migrants to cross its country to the U.S. border and the U.S. not pressing on other issues.

The López Obrador administration kept that policy while Trump was president and continued it into Biden's term.

On Friday, Mexico's president called Trump "a friend" and said he would write to him to warn him against pledging to close the border or blaming migrants for bringing drugs into the United States.

"I am going to prove to him that migrants don't carry drugs to the United States," he said, adding that "closing the border won't solve anything, and anyway, it can't be done."

## **Biden's decision to drop out leaves Democrats across the country relieved and looking toward future**

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI, MIKE HOUSEHOLDER and CHARLOTTE KRAMON Associated Press

HARPER WOODS, Mich. (AP) — After weeks of uncertainty about who would be at the top of the Democratic Party's ticket in November, many voters expressed relief over the news that President Joe Biden would drop his reelection bid and began to think about who might replace him in a dramatically altered election landscape.

Jerod Keene, a 40-year-old athletic trainer from swing-state Arizona, had planned to vote for Biden in November but was thankful for the president's decision, calling it "inevitable." Keene said he's excited about the next candidate, hoping it will be Vice President Kamala Harris, whom Biden endorsed on Sunday.

"Kamala Harris is the easiest pick based on the fact that she's vice president and it would be tough for the party to try to go a different direction on that," said Keene, who lives in Tucson. "And I think she seems ready."

The Democratic Party has been deeply divided since Biden's poor debate performance on June 27, which left many questioning his ability to defeat Republican Donald Trump in November and secure another term. Party leaders had increasingly called for Biden to step aside, but his reluctance to bow out left voters nationwide uncertain about who would face Trump in November.

Recent AP-NORC polling revealed that nearly two-thirds of Democrats felt Biden should withdraw from the presidential race, while a majority believe Harris would perform well in the top slot.

Keene's relief that the saga surrounding Biden's decision was over was echoed by voters nationwide in interviews with The Associated Press. In key swing states such as Wisconsin, Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Nevada, many expressed optimism about the party's next nominee — whether it be Harris or someone else.

In Pittsburgh, Fred Johnston said he has been terrified of another Trump presidency and had long worried that Biden couldn't beat Trump again. After seeing Biden's wobbly debate performance, he was eager for Biden to drop out and hand off his candidacy to Harris.

"Kamala is someone we can vote for, and that's what we need," Johnston said.

He also thinks she can win Pennsylvania: "I have no logical basis for this, but it's good to have hope. I haven't had hope for a while."

In Las Vegas, Lucy Ouano, 68, said she was proud of both Biden's decision to drop out of the race and his move to quickly endorse Harris.

"He's ending on a great note," Ouano said. "Trump should be worried. He's now running against someone strong."

Ouano, who emigrated in 1960 to the U.S. from Thailand as a young child with her parents, said she couldn't have imagined this outcome just a few weeks ago when she attended a Harris rally in Las Vegas meant to quiet concerns about Biden's reelection campaign.

At the time, she told the AP that while she planned on voting for Biden, she wanted Harris at the top of the ticket.

"She's going to get the Asians drummed up, and she's going to get the women drummed up," Ouano said Sunday after learning about Biden's decision.

Similarly, Arthur L. Downard Jr., a 72-year-old resident of Portland, Oregon, viewed Biden's presidency favorably but said he was "very pleased" that Biden stepped aside. The Democratic voter, who cast his ballot for Biden in 2020, said his opinion of Biden changed after what he called a "disastrous" debate.

"He's been a great president and he's gotten a lot done for our country. But he's too old, he's not articulate," he said. "He's not a good messenger for the Democratic Party."

Some voters, like Nebraska resident Lacey LeGrand, had planned to reluctantly vote for Biden simply because he wasn't Trump.

"I'm definitely not supporting Trump," LeGrand said. "So I think by default I was going to end up supporting Biden. I wasn't very happy about it."

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LeGrand, a registered Democrat in Nebraska's Omaha swing district, a potentially decisive electoral vote that Biden and Obama both won previously, believes Harris "has a shot" at defeating Trump, though she added, "I wouldn't say it's a great shot."

But not all voters were happy about Sunday's news. Georgia voter Dorothy Redhead, 76, was "disappointed" that Biden dropped out of the race but said she is "just having to accept" Biden's decision as one between the president and God.

Jarvia Haynes, a real estate agent in New Orleans, said she has "mixed feelings" about Biden's decision to leave the race.

"I don't think President Biden should have dropped out," she said. "On the other hand, maybe it's for the best."

Haynes, 72, of Harvey, Louisiana, a suburb of New Orleans, quickly focused on who should lead the Democratic ticket, saying she is "very positive about Vice President Kamala Harris being able to handle the job."

She added that she hopes Harris would choose Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to be her running mate.

"I think two women would change the whole dynamic of the race," said Haynes, who joins Harris as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the first intercollegiate historically African American sorority. The group boasts more than 360,000 members in graduate and undergraduate chapters in 12 countries and could be a formidable political force of its own.

Barbara Orr, a psychotherapist in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania area, said she thought Biden was capable of running for president, beating Trump and serving as president. She viewed his decision to end his candidacy, however, as a sign that he is not guided by ego and recognized that, because of his debate performance, voters assume that he can't do the job.

Orr, 65, said she isn't "super impressed" with Harris, "but she might rise to the occasion. That's happened before in history."

She also acknowledged that Harris hasn't had the chance to prove her mettle as a candidate against Trump.

Orr, a self-described progressive who favored Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders or Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren for president in 2020, said she would probably prefer Whitmer to replace Biden on the Democratic ticket.

"I love what she stands for," Orr said.

Joe DeFrain was out kayaking when a text informed him that Biden had dropped out. While the Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan, resident said he wasn't stunned to learn of the development, one thing did surprise him.

"I was waiting to see if all the boaters out there were going to be screaming with joy, because a lot of them are Trump fans. And I didn't hear anything," DeFrain said after sitting down for dinner at They Say, a restaurant in the Detroit suburb of Harper Woods.

Biden visited They Say earlier this year, a moment that manager George Ledbetter said was "the best ever."

Ledbetters' first reaction to the news came down to a single word: "Why?"

"He's a good president. I like Biden," Ledbetter said. But, he added, "You gotta do what you gotta do."

Ledbetter said he'll support Harris despite his disappointment.

"I'll take that, too. I think she can do it. First woman president. That'd be nice. African American president. It'd be nice again," said Ledbetter, who is Black.

As for DeFrain, he said he'll be watching to see what happens before and during the Democratic National Convention.

"It's going to be something we have never seen in our lifetime," said DeFrain, who has voted for Democrats in recent elections. "It should be entertaining."

## Harris looks to lock up Democratic nomination after Biden steps aside, reordering 2024 race

By ZEKE MILLER and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris moved swiftly to lock up Democratic delegates behind her campaign for the White House after President Joe Biden stepped aside amid concerns from within their own party that he would be unable to defeat Donald Trump.

Biden's exit Sunday, prompted by Democratic worries over his fitness for office, was a seismic shift to the presidential contest that upended both parties' carefully honed plans for the race.

Aiming to put weeks of intraparty drama over Biden's candidacy behind them, prominent Democratic elected officials, party leaders and political organizations quickly lined up behind Harris in the hours after Biden announced he was dropping his reelection campaign.

Biden's departure frees up his delegates to vote for whomever they choose. Harris, whom Biden backed after ending his candidacy, is thus far the only declared candidate and was working to quickly secure endorsements from a majority of delegates.

It's only the first item on a staggering political to-do list for her after Biden's decision to exit the race, which she learned of on a Sunday morning call with the president. If she's successful at locking up the nomination, she must also pick a running mate and pivot a massive political operation to boost her candidacy instead of Biden's with just over 100 days until Election Day.

On Sunday afternoon, Biden's campaign formally changed its name to Harris for President, reflecting that she is inheriting his political operation of more than 1,000 staffers and a war chest that stood at nearly \$96 million at the end of June.

Harris spent much of Sunday surrounded by family and staff, making more than 100 calls to Democratic officials to line up their support for her candidacy, according to a person familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the effort. It comes as she tries to move her party past the painful, public wrangling that had defined the weeks since the Biden's disastrous June 27 debate with Trump.

Speaking to party leaders, Harris expressed gratitude for Biden's endorsement, but insisted she was looking to earn the nomination in her own right, the person said.

In a sign that the Democratic party was moving to coalesce behind her, Harris quickly won endorsements from the leadership of several influential caucuses and political organizations, including the AAPI Victory Fund, which focuses on Asian American and Pacific Islander voters, The Collective PAC, focused on building Black political power, and the Latino Victory Fund, as well as the chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the entire Congressional Black Caucus. Harris, if elected, would be the first woman and first person of South Asian descent to be president.

Notably, a handful of men who had already been discussed as potential running mates for Harris — Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper and Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly — also swiftly issued statements endorsing her. Aides to Shapiro and Cooper confirmed that Harris spoke with them Sunday afternoon. In her brief call with Cooper, the North Carolina governor told Harris he was backing her to be the Democratic nominee, according to Cooper spokeswoman Sadie Weiner.

But former President Barack Obama held off on an immediate endorsement, as some in the party have expressed worry that the quick shift to Harris would appear to be a coronation, instead pledging his support behind the eventual party nominee.

Meanwhile, West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, who left the party earlier this year to become an independent, is considering re-registering as a Democrat to vie for the nomination against the vice president, according to Jonathan Kott, a longtime adviser to Manchin.

Harris was to make her first public appearance Monday morning at the White House, where she is scheduled to speak at an event honoring National Collegiate Athletic Association championship teams. She is filling in for Biden, who is recovering after contracting COVID-19 last week.

Harris, in a statement, praised Biden's "selfless and patriotic act" in deciding to leave the race and said she intends to "earn and win" her party's nomination.

"I will do everything in my power to unite the Democratic Party — and unite our nation — to defeat Donald Trump and his extreme Project 2025 agenda," she said.

Biden planned to discuss his decision to step aside later this week in an address to the nation. He wrote in a letter posted Sunday to his X account, "I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term."

Nearly 30 minutes after he delivered the news that he was folding his campaign, Biden threw his support behind Harris.

"Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year," he said in another post on X. "Democrats — it's time to come together and beat Trump."

The Democratic National Convention is scheduled to be held Aug. 19-22 in Chicago, but the party had announced it would hold a virtual roll call to formally nominate Biden before in-person proceedings begin. The convention's rules committee is scheduled to meet this week to finalize its nomination process and it is unclear how it will be adjusted to reflect Biden's exit.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus chairwoman Nanette Barragan, who emphasized that she was "all in" behind the vice president, said she spoke Sunday with Harris, who communicated that she preferred to forego a virtual roll call for the nomination process and instead hold a process that adheres to regular order.

The Democratic National Committee's chair, Jaime Harrison, said in a statement that the party would "undertake a transparent and orderly process" to select "a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November."

## **Vice President Kamala Harris leads list of contenders for spots on the Democratic ticket**

By The Associated Press undefined

President Joe Biden's decision to step down as the Democratic Party's nominee for president opens the door for other contenders to become the Democratic nominee in November. The president has thrown his support behind Vice President Kamala Harris, and other prominent Democrats moved quickly to rally around her candidacy, but it's unclear just how smooth her path to the party's nomination is. Here are some of the leading contenders for a spot on the Democratic ticket:

**Kamala Harris**

Born in Oakland, California, Vice President Kamala Harris calls Thurgood Marshall an inspiration and talks often about growing up with parents deeply involved in the civil rights movement.

Her economist father and cancer specialist mother met as graduate students at the University of California, Berkeley, where Harris recalled they spent ample time "marching and shouting about this thing called justice."

In choosing Harris as his running mate in 2020, Biden called her a "fearless fighter for the little guy." She has not wavered as his vice-presidential nominee and has become more visible campaigning for the Biden-Harris ticket in recent weeks.

Harris, who is Black and also of South Asian descent, is the nation's first female vice president and the first person of color to hold that office. A graduate of Howard University, she also is the first person from a historically Black college or university to hold the office of either president or vice president.

Harris won her seat in the U.S. Senate in 2016 after twice being elected California attorney general. As a Senate candidate, she stressed her fights with big banks during the mortgage crisis, for-profit colleges that were financially exploiting students and environmental wrongdoers.

She's talked for years about recidivism and criminal justice reform, and pushed for a different approach to non-violent crimes that emphasizes rehabilitation instead of severe, one-size-fits-all punishment. She calls it smart on crime.

As vice president, Harris has been asked by Biden to take on some of the most challenging tasks his administration has faced, including securing the nation's borders. As the presiding officer of the U.S. Sen-

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ate, she has cast a record number of tie-breaking votes on legislation promoted by Democrats, who are defending a razor-thin majority in both houses of Congress in this year's elections.

Harris, 59, is married to Los Angeles lawyer Douglas Emhoff.

— By Christopher Weber

J.B. Pritzker

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, the richest politician holding office in the U.S., is an heir to the Hyatt Hotel fortune, a former private equity investor and philanthropist. His net worth of \$3.4 billion puts him at No. 250 on the Forbes 400 list of the richest Americans.

The 59-year-old Pritzker won the nomination for governor in 2018, besting a crowded Democratic field. He beat one-term incumbent Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner and inherited mountains of state debt, unpaid bills and ratings by Wall Street credit houses just above junk status because of Rauner's two-year feud with legislative Democrats that resulted in the state going without a budget plan.

Working with Democratic supermajorities in the House and Senate, Pritzker has boasted balanced budgets and paid down billions of dollars in debt, prompting multiple credit upgrades. He also has overseen increased education funding, the centralization of early childhood services, and new laws to make health insurance more comprehensive, accessible and affordable.

After receiving generally high marks for his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, he defeated a Trump-endorsed MAGA Republican with 55% of the vote, becoming the first Illinois governor to be elected to a second term in 16 years. He then promptly delivered a victory speech that sounded like it came from a national candidate, denouncing Trump and asking, "Are you ready to fight?"

Even before his reelection, when there was speculation Biden might not seek a second term, Pritzker was criticized for saying he was happy being governor while traveling to the early primary state of New Hampshire and campaigning for or funding Democratic candidates nationally. And he's continued to boost his coast-to-coast profile by bankrolling a political organization called "Think Big America" that aims to protect abortion rights and has supported state constitutional amendments to strengthen those protections in Ohio, Arizona and Nevada.

— By John O'Connor

Gretchen Whitmer

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has rapidly risen in prominence within the Democratic Party since first winning the 2018 gubernatorial election after serving for a decade and a half in the state Legislature.

Her national profile grew significantly during the final years of Donald Trump's presidency when she emerged as one of the Democratic Party's most effective voices opposing the then-president. She delivered the Democratic response to Trump's 2020 State of the Union address and frequently clashed with him over how the federal government handled the COVID-19 pandemic.

Near the end of 2020, the FBI uncovered a plot to kidnap Whitmer, which led to nine men either being convicted by jury or pleading guilty.

In her 2022 reelection campaign, Whitmer focused on reproductive rights, resulting in a double-digit victory and passage of a voter-approved measure codifying abortion rights in the state. Her party also flipped both chambers of the state Legislature, securing a Democratic trifecta for the first time in nearly four decades.

The massive Democratic victories in a swing state that Trump won in the 2016 presidential election positioned Whitmer as a leading advocate for reproductive freedom and a strong contender for a future presidential nomination.

Whitmer — who was one of the top surrogates for Biden's reelection campaign — has long deflected questions about whether she has interest in higher office, telling The Associated Press earlier this month that she would not step in as a candidate this year if Biden were to step aside.

But the 52-year-old Democrat has been working to boost her national profile. She met with Biden in 2020 as he considered who to select as a running mate and she is currently on a national press tour for her new memoir. Whitmer has also set up a national political action committee that has raised millions this election cycle.



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— By Joey Cappelletti

Gavin Newsom

California Gov. Gavin Newsom is a native of San Francisco who got involved in politics by volunteering for Willie Brown's 1995 campaign for mayor. Two years later, Mayor Brown appointed Newsom to a vacant seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, where he was later elected and reelected.

Newsom then became mayor himself and received national attention in 2004 when he directed the San Francisco clerk to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

He was elected lieutenant governor in 2010 and unapologetically pushed a progressive agenda when he successfully ran for governor eight years later. Now in his second term, he says he is "standing up for California values — from civil rights, to immigration, environmental protection, access to quality schools at all levels, and justice," according to his official bio.

Newsom, 56, has maintained a high national profile this year, challenging Republican presidential candidates in public appearances despite not being a candidate himself. He has been one of Biden's staunchest defenders even as criticism mounted following the president's faltering debate performance. During an early July stop in New Hampshire on behalf of the president, Newsom said of Biden: "He's going to be our nominee."

The governor was a baseball star at Santa Clara University. After graduating, he worked briefly in sales before starting a retail wine shop that grew into the PlumpJack Group, which includes restaurants, resorts and vineyards throughout California.

He is married to Jennifer Siebel Newsom. They have four children.

— By Christopher Weber

Josh Shapiro

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, long seen as a rising political star in Pennsylvania, is halfway through his second year as governor after easily winning his last election by trouncing a far-right, Donald Trump-endorsed candidate in the premier presidential battleground.

Shapiro, 51, has been a surrogate for Biden, backing the president in appearances on cable networks, and has years of experience making former President Trump the focus of his attacks, first as state attorney general and now as governor.

If he joins a Democratic ticket, Shapiro would become the first presidential nominee of Jewish heritage or the second vice presidential nominee of that background, after former Democratic Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut in 2000.

Shapiro has won three statewide races — two as attorney general, one as governor — with a tightly scripted, disciplined campaign style, offering voters something of a lower-key alternative to the state's brash political star, U.S. Sen. John Fetterman.

As governor, Shapiro has begun to shed a buttoned-down public demeanor and become more confident and plain-spoken. In one recent MSNBC appearance, he said Trump should "quit whining" and stop "sh—talking America."

Shapiro has aggressively confronted what he viewed as antisemitism cropping up from pro-Palestinian demonstrations, and has professed solidarity with Israel in its drive to eliminate Hamas.

He is a staunch proponent of abortion rights in Pennsylvania and routinely touts his victories in court against Trump, including beating back challenges to the 2020 election results.

He also has positioned himself as a moderate on energy issues in the nation's No. 2 natural gas state and plays up the need for bipartisanship in the politically divided state government.

— By Marc Levy

Roy Cooper

North Carolina Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper has won six statewide general elections over two decades in a state where Republicans routinely prevail in similar federal races and also control the legislature.

Cooper, 67, has received strong job-approval ratings as governor, benefitting from a booming state economy, for which his administration and lawmakers takes credit. He also portrays himself as a fighter for

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public education and abortion rights. While Cooper finally persuaded GOP legislators last year to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, other efforts have been thwarted by a General Assembly with veto-proof majorities that has eroded his formal powers.

A native of small-town Nash County, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) east of Raleigh, Cooper was his high school quarterback and head of the Young Democrats at the University of North Carolina, where he obtained both his undergraduate and law degrees. "Coop," as he was known to friends, came home and worked at his father's law firm.

Cooper upset the Democratic incumbent in a 1986 state House primary race and was elected to the General Assembly. He served 14 years there and later became the Senate majority leader.

Cooper was elected attorney general in 2000, a position he held for 16 years. In that post, he's likely best known nationally for declaring three former Duke University lacrosse players innocent after they were wrongly accused of sexual assault by an escort service dancer.

Cooper unseated another incumbent in 2016, this time Republican Gov. Pat McCrory by roughly 10,000 votes. A top campaign issue was the "bathroom bill" that McCrory signed requiring transgender people to use public restrooms that corresponded with the sex on their birth certificates. As governor, Cooper quickly reached an agreement with legislators to partially repeal the law.

His time as governor also was marked by restricting business and school activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. He won reelection in 2020 by 4.5 percentage points, even as Donald Trump won the state's electoral votes.

Cooper and his wife, Kristin, have three grown daughters.

— By Gary Robertson

Andy Beshear

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear secured his reputation as a rising Democratic star by beating Trump-endorsed Republicans in his bright red state.

He displayed a disciplined, tenacious style in winning reelection last year, defeating then-Attorney General Daniel Cameron. The governor has urged Democrats to follow his winning formula by focusing on the everyday concerns of Americans, from good-paying jobs to quality education and health care.

Beshear supports abortion rights, but in Kentucky has tailored his message to push back against what he calls an extreme ban that lacks exceptions for rape and incest victims.

The governor won widespread praise for his empathy and attention to detail in guiding the Bluegrass State through the COVID-19 pandemic and leading the response to tornadoes and flooding that caused massive damage. He honed his speaking skills by holding regular news conferences that often last an hour or so.

Beshear has presided over record-setting economic growth in Kentucky, and he typically begins his briefings by touting the state's latest economic wins. He frequently mentions his Christian faith and how it guides his policymaking.

An attorney by trade, Beshear won election as state attorney general in 2015. He then unseated Trump-backed Republican incumbent Matt Bevin to first win the governorship in 2019.

Beshear entered politics with a strong pedigree as the son of former two-term Gov. Steve Beshear, but the son has faced tougher political obstacles. Andy Beshear, unlike his dad, has dealt with an entirely GOP-controlled Legislature and Republican lawmakers have stymied some of his priorities. One of them is state-funded preschool for every Kentucky 4-year-old.

— By Bruce Schreiner

Mark Kelly

U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly of Arizona leveraged his career as an astronaut to build a brand as a moderate in a state that long supported Republicans.

In his two campaigns — the first in 2020 to finish the late Republican Sen. John McCain's last term, and the second two years later for a full term — Kelly has earned more votes than any other Democrat on the ballot. He outpolled Biden, who narrowly won Arizona, by 2 percentage points in 2020.

Kelly's first turn in the national political spotlight came through tragedy. His wife, then-U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, was shot in the head while meeting with constituents outside a grocery store in Tucson, a shoot-

ing that left six people dead and spawned an early reckoning with political violence and partisan rancor. Giffords' improbable survival made her a national inspiration but snuffed out a promising political career of her own. She and Kelly went on to found a gun-control advocacy group, and Giffords has been a powerful surrogate as Kelly has taken her place in politics.

In the Senate, Kelly has focused on national security and the military as well as the drought plaguing the U.S. West. He was instrumental in crafting the CHIPS and Science Act, a bill signed by Biden to boost U.S. semiconductor manufacturing.

Kelly was a Navy test pilot and flew 39 combat missions during the Gulf War before joining NASA, where he flew three missions on the space shuttle.

Originally from New Jersey, he settled with Giffords in Tucson after retiring from NASA and the Navy.

Unlike Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, who was elected as a Democrat two years before Kelly but later left the party to become an independent, Kelly has managed to retain the support of the party's grassroots base without alienating independent voters. —By Jonathan J. Cooper

## Venezuelan opposition voters band to safeguard election, warning of the ruling party's tricks

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

SABANETA, Venezuela (AP) — Tears roll down the face of Tanyia Colmenares when she recalls her truncated dream of being a lawyer, which ended after two semesters in law school when she had to drop out to survive Venezuela's complex crisis.

While she never got to defend a client in court, she has agreed to try to defend something far greater at the end of this month: Venezuela's democracy.

Colmenares is among the thousands of supporters of Venezuela's typically fractured opposition who have agreed to organize, mobilize and support voters during the highly anticipated July 28 presidential election.

The main opposition coalition is banking on their efforts, some led by parties and others formed organically, to get people to the polls to cast ballots as well as to deter government actors from intimidating or coercing voters.

The lack of a truly independent electoral authority makes such work critical for the alliance's ability to verify or contest the outcome. The Unitary Platform coalition hopes the mere presence of large numbers of watchful voters outside polling places will neutralize some ruling party strategies that in the past left them without representatives inside the facilities, kept them away from vote counts and rendered them voiceless in the event of irregularities.

The western Venezuela city of Sabaneta is the cradle of Chavismo — the self-described socialist movement founded by the late President Hugo Chávez that has dominated Venezuela since the turn of the century. It is also where Colmenares is banding with nine other neighbors to promote the vote and ensure opposition supporters reach their polling place. They are ready to find voters rides, provide support should they encounter ruling-party checkpoints or hand out water or food if long lines form.

"Whether through social media, calls, text messages (or) personally, whatever way is easier for people, the important thing is to engage with the community and get the job done," Colmenares, a stay-at-home mother of three, said after a neighborhood group meeting earlier this month.

This month's election is unlike any the ruling party has faced since Chávez was elected president in December 1998 and began transitioning Venezuela into what he described as the 21st century's socialism.

Now led by Chávez's heir, President Nicolás Maduro, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela is as unpopular as ever among many voters. Weak oil prices, corruption and economic mismanagement by the government plunged the country into a crisis that has lasted more than 11 years. Young people have had to give up college dreams, children have gone hungry and millions have emigrated.

Economic sanctions imposed last decade failed to topple Maduro, as the United States and other governments hoped, but they contributed to Venezuela's decline.

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Opposition politicians for years boycotted elections they saw as rigged, but they overcame deep divisions to coalesce behind a single candidate this time. They also kept that spot on the ballot despite sustained government repression, including the ban from the race of María Corina Machado, the strongest challenger to Maduro's bid for a third term in office.

Machado, who overwhelmingly won the coalition's October primary, is now backing the coalition's replacement candidate, former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia.

Pollsters project up to 13 million people will cast ballots July 28.

The opposition estimates that more than a half million people have registered for its somewhat loose structure of neighborhood groups nicknamed "comanditos" — or tiny commandos.

Group members, by now all familiar with the ruling party's efforts to tilt the balance on election days, expect gas stations to not open, power outages to affect opposition strongholds, police and Maduro loyalists to block roads, and the military to limit access to polling centers.

Some groups are holding raffles and selling traditional tamale-like hallacas to raise funds to print promotional materials for their neighborhoods and cook meals for opposition supporters. Others are storing gasoline at home and offering their cars or motorcycles to transport voters.

All have been instructed by the coalition to remain outside polling centers after voting to fight fear among voters and their voting center representatives, whose duties include securing a copy of tally certificates printed by electronic voting machines after polls close. Ruling party loyalists, including armed gangs, are known to have intimidated voting center representatives, known as witnesses, into staying home or abandoning their duties halfway through an election day.

Electoral rules allow parties to have one witness for every voting station set up at polling places.

"We have agreed as a comandito that after we vote, we are going to monitor and be a guarantor of the votes on July 28," local organizer Fidel Ortega said during a group meeting. "God willing, we are going to defend our right to vote as Venezuelans. On the 28th, we vote; on the 29th, we celebrate; and from then on, we all win."

Ortega estimated opposition supporters have formed at least 40 neighborhood groups in the municipality that includes Sabaneta, which sits in a vast tropical grassland plain.

The government-controlled National Electoral Council chose to set up about 36,000 voting machines. Many polling places are spread thin, making it harder for the opposition to monitor them. About a third of registered voters in this election are assigned to polling places with only one or two voting machines.

The ruling party has traditionally obtained the bulk of its vote in these smaller polling places, and for this election, the electoral council added 1,700 single-machine centers. Reports of ruling party efforts to coerce and control voting during previous elections have mostly been associated with these one- and two-machine vote centers.

Although thousands have registered in their neighborhood groups, fear of retribution should the data be leaked has kept some opposition supporters from formally joining the mobilizing effort. But they are still managing groups of friends, family and coworkers with whom they plan to coordinate on July 28.

"We must accompany people so that they lose their fear," said high school teacher Edgar Cuevas, who will work the polls on election day. "Before they did overshadow us with their armed gangs and their stuff, but now, if 10 gang members arrive, well, they will find 20 of us."

## **JD Vance makes solo debut as GOP vice presidential candidate with Monday rallies in Virginia, Ohio**

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

MIDDLETOWN, Ohio (AP) — Republican JD Vance will make his first solo appearances on the campaign trail Monday, a day after the 2024 presidential race was thrown into upheaval as President Joe Biden dropped out of the race, making the Democratic candidate an open question.

Vance, an Ohio senator, is scheduled to hold a rally in his hometown of Middletown on Monday after-

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noon, followed by a second rally Monday evening in Radford, Virginia, fresh off his rally debut with Donald Trump over the weekend.

Vance was expected to eventually face Vice President Kamala Harris in a debate. But with Biden dropping out and the Democratic ticket unsettled, the senator is following Trump's lead and focusing on attacking Biden and Harris jointly.

"President Trump and I are ready to save America, whoever's at the top of the Democrat ticket," Vance said Sunday in a post on X. "Bring it on."

Trump's campaign plans to use Vance, who became the Republican vice presidential nominee last week, in Rust Belt states that are seen as pivotal for Democrats' path to the White House, including Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, and places where the senator's blue collar roots and populist views are expected to resonate.

His hometown of Middletown, which sits between Cincinnati and Dayton, is considered to be part of the Rust Belt. Using it as the location for his first solo event as the vice presidential nominee not only allows Vance to lean into his biography, which he laid out in his bestselling memoir "Hillbilly Elegy," but it gives the campaign a chance to establish a fresh groundswell in a former swing state that has been trending Republican.

Vance's second event on Monday will be held in a part of western Virginia that is considered a part of the Appalachia region.

In his speech at the Republican National Convention last week introducing himself to America, Vance spoke about "forgotten communities" where "jobs were sent overseas and children were sent to war."

The 39-year-old Republican also leaned into his relative youth, contrasting Biden's decades in government with the milestones in his own life. It's not clear how Vance will shift his message toward Harris, whom many Democrats were lining up to support, or any other contender for the nomination.

Despite his presence on the primetime debate stage and his bestselling book, Vance is still working to introduce himself to voters.

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

After Vance was named as Trump's running mate, a startling number of Republican delegates, who are typically party insiders and activists, said they didn't know much about the senator.

Vance has served in the Senate for less than two years. He has morphed from being a harsh Trump critic, at one point likening him to Hitler, to becoming a staunch defender of the former president, hitting the campaign trail on his behalf and even joining him at his Manhattan criminal trial this summer.

## Takeaways from a day that fundamentally changed the presidential race

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

President Joe Biden's abrupt decision to bow out of the presidential race and endorse Vice President Kamala Harris to be the Democratic candidate against former President Donald Trump caused a political earthquake on Sunday. It also changes the contours of a presidential race — which most voters said they did not want to see — that has seemed rigidly set for more than a year.

Here are some takeaways from the historic day.

Democrats who had been in disarray are falling in line

Since Biden's disastrous debate in June, the Democratic party has been in disarray. Drip by drip, high-level party officials reversed course and started to send signals that the president needed to step aside.

Before Sunday, seeing Biden step aside did not necessarily mean making room for Harris. The vice president's approval ratings were as grim as Biden's, and there's widespread skepticism on the left about her electability after her disappointing performance in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary.

But on Sunday, Democrats started lining up behind Harris. Dozens of members of Congress and senators

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endorsed her. Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro — himself a dream nominee for many Democrats who have hoped Biden would step aside — also came out in favor of Harris, as did California Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Two big names — former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and former President Barack Obama — notably withheld endorsements. But with less than two months before early voting begins in the presidential election, Democrats may be deciding they don't have time for further turmoil.

It's also a reminder of the stark difference between the Democratic and Republican parties. Trump took over the Republican Party on the strength of his personality and loyal following of party voters. Harris has been assiduously working the phones to key Democratic members of Congress to assemble a durable coalition. Democrats are still trying to balance multiple power centers.

The GOP only has one power center now.

Will the election be about Trump, or Harris, or someone else?

Normally, a president's reelection campaign is a referendum on the incumbent. For months, Biden tried to make it about Trump.

When pushed in interviews about his own poor debate performance, Biden tried to counter it by highlighting Donald Trump's deceptions. He made the perceived threat of another Trump presidency his big pitch to donors, saying that the Republican would end U.S. democracy. But after the debate, the framing quickly turned to Biden, and whether he had the capacity to serve another four years.

Now Democrats hope Harris, at 59, can cast a spotlight on Trump, who is just three years younger than Biden.

The GOP made no secret that it preferred to run against Biden, but it's pivoting to attack Harris in similar ways. Republicans are already criticizing Harris for defending Biden's ability to do his job over the past several years. They're tying her to the least popular aspects of Biden's presidency, like border policy and immigration. During last week's GOP convention, speaker after speaker called Harris the "border czar" — which has never been her title, but was shorthand for how Biden tasked her with handling immigration early in his term.

Voters: Are you happy now?

The one constant since Trump announced in November of 2022 has been voters pleading, begging for a different matchup.

The desire is clear in both polls and conversations with regular voters. In late 2023, an AP-NORC poll found that 58% would be unhappy with Trump as the GOP nominee and 56% with Biden. Democrats were more likely to be dissatisfied with Biden than Republicans with Trump.

The problem for the replace-Biden movement is no single candidate captured the imagination of Democratic voters. Running essentially unopposed, Biden cleaned up in the Democratic primary. It wasn't until the June 27 debate that Democratic powerbrokers began to listen to voters' unease.

Now there's a different election. But the question remains — will voters be happy about a fresher face? Or will they treat Harris like they did Biden, either because they see her as tightly connected to him or because their unhappiness wasn't just about the re-run of the 2020 race, but other factors in American life?

A new battle over a diverse electorate?

The main contours of the presidential race were set with Trump's announcement in November of 2022. Now, if Democrats choose Harris, those battle lines come into much sharper focus. Harris, as the nation's first Black woman vice president, and first of South Asian descent, has the potential to generate an overperformance among women, particularly women of color, while Trump will try to do the same among white men.

But Trump isn't putting all his eggs in a single demographic basket. After performing better than expected with Latinos in 2020 his campaign has been trying to boost his numbers with that ethnicity even more and also targeting Black voters. Meanwhile, Biden's hold on older white voters — who are more likely to cast ballots — kept him competitive.

Will Harris be able to blunt Trump's potential gains among more diverse parts of the electorate? Will she be able to replicate her boss' strength in Rust Belt states where white voters are disproportionately powerful? Can she put in play states like Georgia and North Carolina that have a higher share of Black voters?

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Any changes between Harris' coalition and Biden's are likely to be small, but this election is likely to be close and turn on tiny shifts in the electorate.

Will Harris be able to make a second first impression?

Harris has long been an electoral mystery. She has the resume of a top-of-the-line electoral juggernaut — female career prosecutor of racially mixed descent, quick and charismatic. But she's underperformed in the races she ran in California. Though she won her statewide contests, she usually didn't get as many votes as other Democrats running statewide.

The nadir came in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary. Harris ended up dropping out before voting began to preserve her viability after doing so poorly in the initial stretch of the race.

Harris' checkered electoral history may have been a factor on Democratic disquiet about Biden, because they didn't trust his heir apparent to beat Trump. They now may have no choice but to believe in her and have been encouraged by her sharper, clearer attacks on the Republican nominee recently.

## Harris gets chance to press reset on 2024 race against Trump

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the past year, the presidential campaign seemed destined to be a monotonous slog featuring two candidates, President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, that voters didn't really want.

But that all changed on a quiet Sunday afternoon just 107 days before the election.

Biden's decision to drop out of the race and endorse Vice President Kamala Harris as his successor resets the campaign with a swiftness that is unparalleled in modern American politics.

Once a contest between two elderly white men, the election will likely force Trump to contend with the much younger Harris, who was consolidating support among Democrats and would be the first woman of color atop a major party's ticket.

"It shakes things up entirely," said Dan Pfeiffer, a former adviser to President Barack Obama. "It turns everything on its head."

The crumbling of Biden's reelection effort, which began with his shaky debate performance last month, has left both parties scrambling. Although no one has stepped forward to challenge Harris for the Democratic nomination, she still faces the unprecedented challenge of taking over a campaign only four weeks before the party gathers in Chicago for its convention.

At the same time, Trump must pivot his focus to Harris after designing his campaign for a rematch with Biden. Trump's team claimed they were prepared to run against the vice president, and Republicans stepped up their criticism during the party's convention last week in Milwaukee.

However, Trump himself expressed disappointment that "we have to start all over again" with the campaign. He mused on Truth Social, his social media platform, that Republicans should be "reimbursed for fraud" for all the money they've spent running against Biden.

The shakeup in the presidential race came after an extraordinarily tumultuous month in American politics, starting with an unusually early debate between Biden and Trump.

The June 27 showdown catalyzed concerns that Biden, 81, was too old for a second term.

As Democrats pushed to dislodge him from the top of the ticket, Trump barely survived an assassination attempt on July 13 during a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Then, on Sunday, Biden bowed to pressure within his party to step aside. He swiftly endorsed Harris, who is the first woman, Black person and person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president.

The breakneck developments left the political world gasping for breath as everyone tried to reorient themselves to a new reality.

Trump, who is 78, will almost certainly be the oldest candidate on the ballot after spending months battering Biden over his age. Harris is only 59, giving her a claim to representing generational change that Biden could never fulfill.

In addition, Harris is a former prosecutor, providing a fresh opportunity to assail Trump's status as a

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convicted felon after being found guilty in a hush money trial earlier this year.

She is also the daughter of immigrants, raised by a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, a background that heightens the contrast with Trump, who has used racist, sexist and nativist rhetoric.

Harris tried to summarize their differences in a campaign advertisement five years ago, when she was seeking the Democratic nomination before dropping out and joining Biden's campaign as his running mate.

"In every possible way, this is the anti-Trump," the narrator said. "So if that's what you're looking for in your next president, there's really only one — Kamala."

The leaders of Trump's campaign dismissed the dramatic change, saying, "Kamala Harris is just as much of (a) joke as Biden is."

"They own each other's records, and there is no distance between the two," said a statement from senior advisers Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles.

Immigration will remain a key line of attack against Democrats, especially because Harris was tasked by Biden to work on migration issues early in the administration. Republicans claimed she was appointed as a "border czar" and blamed her for unauthorized crossings.

"They're still going to run the Gotham City playbook with an added dose of racism and sexism," said Cornell Belcher, a Democratic pollster. "And let's not pretend that those things don't matter, because they do."

However, Belcher said, Harris' "X factor" is her potential appeal to a diversifying electorate.

"When you look at her, she is the Democrats' best chance right now to re-engage and energize that coalition of younger, browner voters," he said.

Democrats were eager to turn a political weakness that hounded Biden — his age — into an attack on Trump.

"This will probably boil down to Donald Trump, who is the oldest nominee in history, against Kamala Harris," said Rep. Maxwell Frost, a 27-year-old Democrat from Florida who has worked to reach young voters for Biden's campaign.

Frost, who endorsed Harris, pointed to the vice president's work on gun violence protection as an issue that could engage young voters and said she "will be able to win back a lot of the youth vote."

"She is someone who really values young voices in general," he said.

At last week's Republican National Convention, Trump pollster and senior advisor Tony Fabrizio said the campaign was "100% ready" to take on Harris. He noted speakers at the event often referred to the "Biden-Harris" administration in their speeches and said the campaign had prepared anti-Harris videos to swap in just in case Biden stepped down sooner.

However, Trump seemed to have some doubts. After Biden dropped out of the race, Trump suggested he was having second thoughts about participating in another debate hosted by ABC News on Sept. 10.

"Now that Joe has, not surprisingly, has quit the race, I think the Debate, with whomever the Radical Left Democrats choose, should be held on FoxNews, rather than very biased ABC," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

## Democrats are rallying around Harris as she vows to 'earn and win' party nomination for president

BY LISA MASCARO and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats quickly rallied around Vice President Kamala Harris as their likely presidential nominee Sunday after President Joe Biden's ground-shaking decision to bow out of the 2024 race, a volatile fast-moving political situation just months before the November election.

Shortly after Biden stepped aside he firmly endorsed Harris, who would make history as the nation's first Black and South Asian woman to become a major party's presidential nominee. Other endorsements flowed from former President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton, the first major female presidential nominee, and prominent U.S. senators, a wide swath of House representatives and members of the influential Congressional Black Caucus.

Would-be challengers for the job became instant Harris supporters.

As Democrats organize to confront Republican Donald Trump this fall, Biden said choosing Harris as his



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vice president had been the first and “best decision” he made. “Let’s do this,” he said.

“My intention is to earn and win this nomination,” Harris declared in a statement.

Yet, the political and logistical situation ahead for Democrats remains somewhat uncertain as the party that had expected to sail to November’s election portraying Trump as a quasi-authoritarian leader and threat to American democracy, now must rearrange the top of its ticket in a matter of weeks — before the party’s nominating convention begins Aug. 19.

A groundswell appeared to be gathering for Harris to lead the party — within hours Biden’s campaign formally changed its name to Harris for President, reflecting that she is inheriting his political operation — but there are notable holdouts.

Former President Barack Obama and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, who are widely seen as engineering Biden’s withdrawal from the race as they worried about not only keeping the White House but winning control of Congress, did not explicitly endorse Harris, and Pelosi favors an open primary to strengthen an eventual nominee.

And West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, who left the Democratic Party earlier this year to become an independent, is considering reregistering as a Democrat to vie for the nomination against the vice president, according to his longtime adviser Jonathan Kott.

Key Democrats believe Harris would benefit from what some call a “mini-primary.” They argue a fast primary campaign would showcase to the American people, party donors and skeptics that Harris is best for the job, and give would-be contenders a chance to compete — or at least debut as potential running mates.

Harris was making calls late in the day to congressional lawmakers and racking up support, including from Rep. Annie Kuster of New Hampshire, the chair of the New Democrat Coalition, a moderate caucus on Capitol Hill, who endorsed Harris Sunday. Harris and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer spoke Sunday afternoon, according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private conversation.

Democratic National Committee chairman Jaime Harrison promised a “transparent and orderly process.”

With early voting underway in a matter of months, Democrats have no time to spare if they hope to compete against an energized GOP that has embraced Trump’s return. They must quickly pivot to unify a shaken Democratic Party, refocus an entire campaign apparatus around a new presidential ticket and organize the ground game to get out the vote.

Trump’s team faces its own challenge, refocusing its relentless attacks from Biden’s age, 81, stamina and ability to govern to a yet-to-be-named Democratic nominee, which appears increasingly likely to be Harris. Among top potential contenders, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has said she won’t run, and Govs. Gavin Newsom of California, Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania and Roy Cooper of North Carolina all endorsed Harris on Sunday.

“She has what it takes to defeat Donald Trump and lead our country thoughtfully and with integrity,” Cooper said on social media.

Before Biden’s announcement, Republicans had already signaled their early strategy of criticizing Harris as complicit in standing by him, despite his fumbles, and they are working on legal challenges to the 2024 election.

“Not only would Harris be a disaster in the White House, but she also helped Biden cover up his declining health while in office, which destroys her credibility,” said a statement from the Republican National Committee chairman Michael Whatley and co-chairman Lara Trump.

Even with Biden’s endorsement of Harris, there’s been an active debate over her rise among Democratic heavyweights — lawmakers, deep-pocketed donors and former high-ranking officials of the Biden, Obama and Clinton administrations, according to a Democrat with deep ties to the Biden-Harris administration.

The person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal conversations, said a mini-primary would help Harris seal her bona fides as a strong, sharp candidate and help diminish criticism that she’s been undemocratically anointed—something that the Trump campaign has already sought to use against her.

But for a number of Democratic allies and lawmakers who immediately backed Harris for the nomination,

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it would be untenable for the party to skip past what would be her history-making candidacy.

Washington Sen. Patty Murray said she is behind Harris "100 percent." Virginia Sen. Mark Warner said Harris "has the experience, energy, and resolve to lead our nation." Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy said he will be "enthusiastically supporting my friend."

Hawaii Sen. Mazie Hirono, Minnesota Sen. Tina Smith, Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine and California Sen. Laphonza Butler also said they would support Harris, who had served as a U.S. senator, as did a growing number of Democratic House lawmakers.

Still, other Democrats have been silent on supporting Harris, or pushing for an open process.

Democratic Sen. Peter Welch of Vermont said in an interview with The Associated Press that he thinks the party needs to "be making our decisions first and foremost about who can best represent us so we can defeat Trump."

Donors are weighing in. Chad Griffin, a member of the campaign's national finance committee and a top Democratic fundraiser in the Los Angeles area, said the party is lucky to have Harris. "She's the trusted, tested leader we need to carry us to victory in November," he said in a statement.

The Democratic convention in Chicago that was supposed to be a coronation for Biden now becomes an open contest in which nearly 4,700 delegates will be responsible for picking a new standard-bearer.

Biden had won every state primary and caucus earlier this year and only lost the territory of American Samoa. At least 3,896 delegates have been pledged to support him.

Current party rules do not permit Biden to pass them to another candidate. Politically, though, his endorsement is likely to be very influential.

The immediate burden is on Harris to solidify support across almost 4,000 delegates from the states, territories and District of Columbia, plus more than 700 so-called superdelegates who include party leaders, certain elected officials and former presidents and vice presidents.

## **Biden drops out of 2024 race after disastrous debate inflamed age concerns. VP Harris gets his nod**

By ZEKE MILLER, COLLEEN LONG and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden dropped out of the 2024 race for the White House on Sunday, ending his bid for reelection after a disastrous debate with Donald Trump that raised doubts about the incumbent's fitness for office. The unprecedented announcement, delivered less than four months before the election, immediately upended a campaign that both political parties view as the most consequential in generations.

The president — intent on serving out the remainder of his term in office — quickly endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to take on Trump and encouraged his party to unite behind her, making her the party's instant favorite for the nomination at its August convention in Chicago.

The announcement is the latest jolt to a tumultuous campaign for the White House, coming a week after the attempted assassination of Trump at a Pennsylvania rally.

A party's presumptive presidential nominee has never stepped out of the race so close to the election. President Lyndon Johnson, besieged by the Vietnam War, announced in March 1968 that he would not seek another term after just a single state's primary. Biden's July decision comes after more than 14 million Democrats cast votes supporting him through the primary process.

Harris, in a statement, praised Biden's "selfless and patriotic act" and said she intends to "earn and win" her party's nomination.

"I will do everything in my power to unite the Democratic Party — and unite our nation — to defeat Donald Trump and his extreme Project 2025 agenda," she said.

Biden's decision to bow out came after escalating pressure from his Democratic allies to step aside following the June 27 debate, in which the 81-year-old president trailed off, often gave nonsensical answers and failed to call out the former president's many falsehoods.

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"It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term," Biden wrote in a letter posted Sunday to his X account.

Nearly 30 minutes after he delivered the news that he was folding his campaign, Biden threw his support behind Harris.

"Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year," he said in another post on X. "Democrats — it's time to come together and beat Trump."

Harris faces a staggering political to-do list in the coming days: securing the votes of delegates to claim her party's nomination, picking a running mate, and pivoting a massive political operation that had been built to reelect Biden to boost her candidacy instead. Harris, if elected, would be the first woman and the first person of South Asian descent to be president.

There were early signs that the party was moving to coalesce around Harris, who scored the endorsements of the Congressional Black Caucus and former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton even before she had commented on Biden's decision to quit the race. But notably, former President Barack Obama held off, pledging support behind the eventual party nominee.

"We are honored to join the President in endorsing Vice President Harris and will do whatever we can to support her," the Clintons said in a statement.

But Obama, who had privately shared doubts about Biden's reelection chances, stopped short of endorsing Harris even as he praised Biden for his decision to leave the race.

"I have extraordinary confidence that the leaders of our party will be able to create a process from which an outstanding nominee emerges," he said in a statement.

Biden's decision came as he has been isolating at his Delaware beach house after being diagnosed with COVID-19 last week, huddling with a shrinking circle of close confidants and family members about his political future. Biden said he would address the nation later this week to provide "detail" about his decision.

Harris found out about Biden's plans on Sunday morning and senior campaign and White House staff were notified just minutes before the letter went out, according to people familiar with the matter who commented on the private discussions on condition of anonymity. Biden had been reflecting on his future for the past couple days and the decision was closely held.

Now, Democrats have to urgently try to bring coherence to the nominating process in a matter of weeks and convince voters in a stunningly short amount of time that their nominee can handle the job and beat Trump. And for his part, Trump must shift his focus to a new opponent after years of training his attention on Biden.

The decision marks a swift and stunning end to Biden's 52 years in electoral politics, as donors, lawmakers and even aides expressed to him their doubts that he could convince voters that he could plausibly handle the job for another four years.

Biden won the vast majority of delegates and every nominating contest but one, which would have made his nomination a formality. Now that he has dropped out, those delegates will be free to support another candidate.

Harris, 59, appeared to be the natural successor, in large part because she is the only candidate who can directly tap into the Biden campaign's war chest, according to federal campaign finance rules.

Biden's campaign formally changed its name to Harris for President, reflecting that she is inheriting his political operation — a sign of the advantage she has in the race for the Democratic nomination. Democratic groups, including the Democratic National Committee, also filed paperwork changing the names of their joint fundraising committees to reflect Harris' candidacy.

The Democratic National Convention is scheduled to be held Aug. 19-22 in Chicago, but the party had announced it would hold a virtual roll call to formally nominate Biden before in-person proceedings begin.

It remained to be seen whether other candidates would challenge Harris for the nomination. California Gov. Gavin Newsom, who had been discussed as a possible replacement for Biden last year, and Trans-

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portation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, who challenged both Biden and Harris for the Democratic nomination in 2020, threw their support behind her Sunday.

The Democratic National Committee's chair, Jaime Harrison, said in a statement that the party would "undertake a transparent and orderly process" to select "a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November."

West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, who left the Democratic Party earlier this year to become an independent, is considering re-registering as a Democrat to vie for the nomination against the vice president, according to Jonathan Kott, a longtime adviser to Manchin.

Harris was spending Sunday afternoon calling Democratic elected officials and delegates as she works to lock up the nomination.

Harris received her first delegates for the Democratic presidential nomination on Sunday. The Tennessee Democratic Party posted on X that its delegation voted during a meeting Sunday to back Harris after Biden's departure from the campaign.

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper and Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly — each from a swing state and mentioned as a possible running mate for Harris — also endorsed Harris Sunday evening.

Trump reacted to the news in a post on his Truth Social site, in which he said Biden "was not fit to run for President, and is certainly not fit to serve."

"We will suffer greatly because of his presidency, but we will remedy the damage he has done very quickly," he added. "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

While Trump and his team had made their preference for facing Biden clear, his campaign had nonetheless ramped up its attacks on Harris as pressure on Biden to step down intensified.

Democratic officials, including many who were behind the effort to push Biden from the race, quickly released statements praising Biden's decision.

"His decision of course was not easy, but he once again put his country, his party, and our future first," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "Joe, today shows you are a true patriot and great American."

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York praised Biden as "one of the most accomplished and consequential leaders in American history."

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson said Biden should immediately resign if he is not fit enough to run for office. In a statement, Johnson said, "November 5 cannot arrive soon enough."

In addition to his planned address to the country, Biden still intends to host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House this week, according to a person familiar with the president's schedule who was not authorized to comment publicly.

The exact timing of the meeting is still not set in stone as Biden continues to recover from COVID. Netanyahu is scheduled Wednesday to deliver an address to Congress and he is also expected to meet with Harris while in Washington.

In 2020, Biden pitched himself as a transitional figure who wanted to be a bridge to a new generation of leaders. But once he secured the job he spent decades struggling to attain, he was reluctant to part with it.

Biden was once asked whether any other Democrats could beat Trump.

"Probably 50 of them," Biden replied. "No, I'm not the only one who can defeat him, but I will defeat him."

Biden is already the country's oldest president and had insisted repeatedly that he was up for the challenge of another campaign and another term, telling voters all they had to do was "watch me."

And watch him they did. His poor debate performance prompted a cascade of anxiety from Democrats and donors who said publicly what some had said privately for months, that they did not think he was up to the job for four more years.

Concerns over Biden's age have dogged him since he announced he was running for reelection, though Trump is just three years younger at 78. Most Americans view the president as too old for a second term, according to an August 2023 poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. A

majority also doubt his mental capability to be president, though that is also a weakness for Trump.

Biden often remarked that he was not as young as he used to be, doesn't walk as easily or speak as smoothly, but that he had wisdom and decades of experience, which were worth a whole lot.

"I give you my word as a Biden. I would not be running again if I didn't believe with all my heart and soul I can do this job," he told supporters at a rally in North Carolina a day after the debate. "Because, quite frankly, the stakes are too high."

But voters had other problems with him, too — he has been deeply unpopular as a leader even as his administration steered the nation through recovery from a global pandemic, presided over a booming economy and passed major pieces of bipartisan legislation that will impact the nation for years to come. A majority of Americans disapprove of the way he's handling his job, and he's faced persistently low approval ratings on key issues including the economy and immigration.

Biden's motivation for running was deeply intertwined with Trump. He had retired from public service following eight years serving as vice president under Obama and the death of his son Beau but decided to run after Trump's comments following a "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017, when white supremacists descended on the city to protest the removal of its Confederate memorials.

Trump said: "You had some very bad people in the group, but you also had people that were very fine people on both sides. On both sides."

Biden's wife, first lady Jill Biden, responded to the president's announcement by reposting Biden's letter announcing his decision and adding red heart emojis.

Granddaughter Naomi Biden Neal said on social media, "I'm nothing but proud of my Pop." She said he has served the country "with every bit of his soul and with unmatched distinction" and "our world is better today in so many ways thanks to him."

## **Delta Air Lines says cancellations continue as it tries to restore operations after tech outage**

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — Airlines, including Delta Air Lines, continued to struggle to restore operations two days after a faulty software update caused technological havoc worldwide and resulted in several carriers grounding flights.

Total cancellations within, into or out of the U.S. on Sunday clocked in at 1,461, according to the latest data from FlightAware. Delta and United Airlines topped the cancellations.

Delta Chief Executive Ed Bastian said in a message to customers Sunday that flight cancellations continued as the airline tried to recover its systems and restore operations. He noted that the pause in Delta's operations resulted in more than 3,500 Delta and Delta Connection scrubbed flights. Delta has been offering waivers to affected customers.

Bastian noted that that one of their crew tracking-related tools was affected and unable to effectively process the unprecedented number of changes triggered by the system outage.

"The technology issue occurred on the busiest travel weekend of the summer, with our booked loads exceeding 90%, limiting our re-accommodation capabilities," Bastian wrote. "I want to apologize to every one of you who have been impacted by these events."

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg spoke to Bastian on Sunday about the airline's high number of cancellations since Friday. The Transportation Department said its top officials have reminded Delta of the airline's obligation to provide refunds to passengers whose flights were canceled and who don't want to be rebooked on a later flight.

"I have made clear to Delta that we expect the airline to provide prompt refunds to consumers who choose not to be rebooked, and free rebooking and timely reimbursements for food and overnight hotel stays to consumers affected by the delays and cancellations, as well as adequate customer service assistance to all of their passengers," Buttigieg said.

"No one should be stranded at an airport overnight or stuck on hold for hours waiting to talk to a cus-

tomers service agent," Buttigieg said. "I will ensure that our department supports Delta passengers by enforcing all applicable passenger protections."

## 2024 Election Latest: Biden ends reelection bid, endorses VP Harris for Democratic nomination

By The Associated Press undefined

President Joe Biden announced Sunday that he is dropping his reelection bid against Donald Trump, in a social media post that sent political shockwaves around the country and threw an element of turmoil into the election just months before voters go to the polls.

Biden's decision came on the heels of a poor debate performance that prompted many rank-and-file Democratic lawmakers to urge him to withdraw from the race. The president said he will address the nation later this week "in more detail about my decision."

Biden threw his support behind Vice President Kamala Harris to be the Democrats' new candidate, and she vowed to "earn and win" the nomination.

Republican leaders attacked Harris and said she shares responsibility for the policies of the Biden administration. Former President Donald Trump said Biden "was not fit to run for president," and he also called for the second debate to be moved from ABC to the Fox News Channel, which is seen as friendlier to him.

Follow the AP's Election-2024 coverage at: <https://apnews.com/hub/election-2024>.

Here's the Latest:

Democrats hail Biden's decision to not seek reelection as selfless. Republicans urge him to resign

Democratic lawmakers are hailing President Joe Biden's historic decision not to seek reelection as putting his country and his party before himself.

Republicans are calling on him to leave office as well, saying that if he is unable to run, then he's unable to serve as president.

Read more about Democrats' and Republicans' reactions.

Homeland Security secretary names independent panel to review Trump assassination attempt

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has appointed a bipartisan, independent panel to review this month's assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump, officials said Sunday.

The panel members will have "extensive law enforcement and security experience to conduct a 45-day independent review of the planning for and actions taken by the U.S. Secret Service and state and local authorities before, during, and after the rally, and the U.S. Secret Service governing policies and procedures," the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement.

The first people named to the panel are former Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano; Frances Townsend, former Homeland Security adviser to President George W. Bush; Mark Filip, a former federal judge and deputy attorney general to President George W. Bush; and David Mitchell, former Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Homeland Security for the state of Delaware.

Additional experts could be asked to join the group in the coming days.

Read more about the naming of the panel.

Small-dollar donations total \$46.7 million for Harris

ActBlue, the Democratic fundraising platform, announced that it had collected \$46.7 million as of 9 p.m. ET from small-dollar donations for Vice President Harris' campaign.

The Biden campaign and affiliated groups previously had about \$96 million in cash on hand. The Republican National Convention, by contrast, reported a campaign fund of \$102 million in June.

Trump's campaign quickly pivots to Harris after Biden withdraws

Donald Trump's campaign has spent the last year and a half viciously attacking Joe Biden, ridiculing his policies, mocking his fumbles and relishing a rematch they felt they were winning.

But it has also spent weeks preparing for the possibility that he might exit the race, readying a bevy of attacks against Vice President Kamala Harris that it unleashed as soon as Biden made his stunning announcement Sunday that he would step aside.

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Biden soon after endorsed Harris, who was quickly winning support from Democrats to be the party's nominee.

The shakeup less than four months before Election Day lays out new challenges for Trump's team, which had until recently been focused on contrasting the former president's vigor and mental acuity with Biden's. Read more about the Trump campaign's pivot toward Harris.

Some states' convention delegates begin shifting support to Harris

The Democratic delegations of multiple states have decided to back Vice President Kamala Harris for the party nomination at next month's national convention.

"Tonight, all 168 delegates of the North Carolina Democratic Party made history," North Carolina party chair Anderson Clayton said in a post on the social platform X.

In South Carolina, party chair Christale Spain said in an email statement Sunday night that that state's delegation met virtually. The vice president "has been fully vetted, and she has earned our unwavering support," Spain said.

Harris received her first delegates earlier in the day from Tennessee, when the state party posted on X that its delegation voted during a meeting to back her.

Another state where the switch was made was New Hampshire, where the 25 pledged delegates voted unanimously Sunday night to endorse Harris.

Black state attorneys general back Harris

The nation's six Black state attorneys general threw their support behind Vice President Harris. In a statement on X, they laid out her qualifications and said she "has staunchly defended our right to choose and preserved our most sacred right to vote. There is no one more qualified to lead and continue to uphold the values of our great nation."

The statement listed Letitia James, New York; Kwame Raoul, Illinois; Anthony Brown, Maryland; Andrea Campbell, Massachusetts; Keith Ellison, Minnesota; and Aaron Ford, Nevada.

Democrats promise 'orderly process' to replace Biden. Harris is favored, but questions remain

Shortly after President Joe Biden announced that he would drop his reelection campaign, Democratic National Committee Chair Jaime Harrison had a message: There would be no automatic coronation for his replacement.

"In the coming days, the party will undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward," Harrison said in a statement. "This process will be governed by established rules and procedures of the party. Our delegates are prepared to take seriously their responsibility in swiftly delivering a candidate to the American people."

The comment reflected the reality that while Vice President Kamala Harris is emerging as the prohibitive favorite to become the nominee — backed already by Biden and many Democrats — it's not so simple. And for now, the party isn't offering many details on what happens next.

Read more about the process of replacing Biden on the Democratic ticket.

Outside the White House: 'We love you Joe!'

Dozens of people came to the street outside the presidential residence as news of Biden's withdrawal from the campaign set in.

There were signs with messages like "We love you Joe!" and chants of "Thank you Joe!" as adults and some children took photos or just gazed at the complex that serves as both the president's home and the seat of executive power.

Biden was not at the White House this weekend. Instead he was recuperating from COVID-19 at his vacation home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

Another sign read: "You did it, Joe! Now let's make some history," a reference to Harris' exclamation of "We did it, Joe!" during a phone call with Biden after their ticket was determined to have won the 2020 election.

Biden's decision to drop out crystalized Sunday. His staff knew one minute before the public did

At 1:45 p.m., President Joe Biden's senior staff was notified that he was stepping away from the 2024

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race. At 1:46 p.m., that message was made public.

It was never Biden's intention to leave the race: Up until he decided to step aside Sunday, he was all in. His campaign was planning fundraisers and events and setting up travel over the next few weeks. But even as Biden was publicly dug in and insisting he was staying in the race, he was quietly reflecting on the disaster of the past few weeks, on the past three years of his presidency and on the scope of his half-century career in politics.

In the end, it was the president's decision alone, and he made it quietly, from his vacation home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, sick with COVID-19, the first lady with him as he talked it through with a small circle of people who have been with him for decades.

Read more about his decision.

Sen. Manchin considers reregistering as a Democrat to seek the presidential nomination

Though some potential challengers to Harris for the Democratic bid have already made it clear they would not run, there is some early indication that she might not be alone in seeking the nomination.

West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, who left the party earlier this year to become an independent, is considering reregistering as a Democrat to vie for the nomination against the vice president, according to Jonathan Kott, a longtime adviser to Manchin.

Manchin, who repeatedly irked Democrats with his independent streak but was also a lynchpin for the Biden administration's biggest legislative accomplishments, was the latest senator to call on Biden to drop his candidacy before the president made his announcement Sunday.

In Harris' hometown, a voter looks forward to having her as a candidate but says she must move quickly. Christian Garcia of Oakland, California, said he's looking forward to having Harris become more widely known to voters nationwide. But Garcia also said Harris, who was born in Oakland, must move fast if she is to get the nomination and beat Trump.

"I mean, you're talking about a really quick turnaround," Garcia said. "She's got a lot of work to do, and the party's got a lot of work to do to get behind her."

In his view, one of Harris' main challenges is a problem that hurt Hillary Clinton: an ability to be relatable to average voters. Garcia also worries that the Trump campaign will stop at nothing to go after Harris.

"We know Trump and his allies will do anything they can to lie and make up stories and bring out old skeletons," he said.

Garcia, 36, commended Biden for stepping aside, calling him a "statesman."

In swing state Pennsylvania, a Trump backer says Biden's exit long overdue

Kristine Stoll is a Trump backer from Dunmore, which is next door to Scranton, where Biden was born. She said Biden isn't mentally stable enough to run the country.

"It's about time, he should have dropped out a long time ago," said Stoll, 56.

She does not fear Harris or really anyone else who could top the Democratic ticket when it comes to winning the key battleground state.

"Trump's going to take Pennsylvania this time, definitely going to take Pennsylvania," Stoll said. "There's no doubt about it, doesn't matter who runs."

Democrats begin to rally around Harris after Biden exits, though campaign dynamics remain in flux

Democrats quickly rallied around Vice President Kamala Harris as their likely presidential nominee Sunday after President Joe Biden's ground-shaking decision to bow out of the 2024 race.

Among others, endorsements came from Biden; Bill and Hillary Clinton; prominent U.S. senators; a wide swath of House representatives and members of the influential Congressional Black Caucus; and Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, who has been the subject of speculation as a potential running mate.

But the fast-moving political situation remains volatile just months before the November election.

Read more here about Democrats rallying around Harris.

Zelenskyy: 'We will always be thankful for President Biden's leadership'

"We respect today's tough but strong decision," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a post on the social platform X.

"We will always be thankful for President Biden's leadership. He supported our country during the most



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dramatic moment in history, assisted us in preventing Putin from occupying our country, and has continued to support us throughout this terrible war.”

Zelenskyy spoke with former President Trump by phone Friday. Both men described it as a good call on X. Democrats are poised to attack Trump’s age

A political weakness that hounded Biden — age — could become an avenue for attack against Trump.

“This will probably boil down to Donald Trump, who is the oldest nominee in history, against Kamala Harris,” said Rep. Maxwell Frost, a 27-year-old Democrat from Florida who has worked to reach young voters for Biden’s campaign.

Frost, who endorsed Harris, pointed to the vice president’s work on gun violence protection as an issue that could engage young voters and said she “will be able to win back a lot of the youth vote.”

“She is someone who really values young voices in general,” he said.

Harris could become first woman, second Black person to be president

She’s already broken barriers, and now Kamala Harris could shatter several more after President Joe Biden abruptly ended his reelection bid and endorsed her.

Harris is the first woman, Black person or person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president. If she becomes the Democratic nominee and defeats Republican candidate Donald Trump in November, she would be the first woman to serve as president.

Read a profile of Harris here.

Trump says Biden was ‘not fit to run’

Former president Donald Trump posted on his social network Truth Social that “Crooked Joe Biden was not fit to run for president” and is not fit to serve.

“All those around him, including his Doctor and the Media, knew that he wasn’t capable of being President, and he wasn’t,” he said.

Trump and members of the RNC spent much of their week at the Republican National Convention calling for a ratcheting down of the political temperature and touting the importance of American unity in light of last week’s assassination attempt.

The former president is also calling for the second debate to be switched to the Fox News Channel, which is seen as friendlier to him, now that Biden has dropped out.

He said in a Truth Social post that whoever becomes the Democratic nominee should face him on that network “rather than the very biased ABC.” Trump and Biden had previously agreed to meet in a second debate Sept. 10 hosted by ABC.

Harris hits the phones

As Vice President Harris looks to lock up the nomination, she is hitting the phones and making her case to Democrats in Congress.

She spoke with Democratic lawmakers Sunday including Rep. Annie Kuster, who chairs a moderate group called the New Democrat Coalition and endorsed Harris in the afternoon.

Harris also quickly won endorsements from leadership in several influential caucuses.

While some Democrats remained silent on who they want for a nominee, many others said the party should immediately assemble behind Harris. They want to quickly move past the painful, public deliberations of the weeks since the July 27 debate.

Harris inherits Biden’s campaign infrastructure

President Biden’s campaign formally changed its name to Harris for President, reflecting that she is inheriting his political operation — a sign of the prohibitive leg up she has for the Democratic nomination.

Democratic groups, including the Democratic National Committee, also filed paperwork changing the names of their joint fundraising committees to reflect Harris’ candidacy.

Meanwhile Biden urged his vast list of supporters to contribute to what is now the Harris campaign, saying in an email sent Sunday afternoon that picking her as his running mate is the “best decision I’ve made.”

“Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year,” Biden wrote. “Democrats — it’s time to come together and beat Trump. And if you’re with us,

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donate to her campaign.”

Biden’s legacy: far-reaching accomplishments that didn’t translate into political support

Historians and political advisers say history will be kinder to President Joe Biden than voters have been.

David Axelrod, a former senior adviser to President Barack Obama, said Biden’s legacy will include many legislative achievements, but above all, he will be remembered as the president who defeated Donald Trump.

Read more about Biden’s legacy.

White House expects no serious challenge to Harris; convention delegates show early signs of unity

Inside the White House, there’s low expectation that Harris will get a serious challenge following Biden’s endorsement, according to a person familiar with deliberations who requested anonymity to discuss the private conversations.

Among potential top tier contenders, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has already said she won’t run, while California Gov. Gavin Newsom has said he would back Harris if she became the nominee.

Other names that have been bandied about as viable contenders — including Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro and North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper — would also seem unlikely to run in light of Biden’s endorsement for Harris and the expected fundraising advantage she would hold over anyone else.

Meanwhile delegates who are pledged to support Biden at the Democratic National Convention expressed admiration for the president and also showed early signs of uniting around Harris.

“I believe it’s her time and has earned the right to be our nominee,” said Paul Pezzella, a Massachusetts delegate who has been active in Democratic politics for decades. “I can’t think any American isn’t sad about Biden’s decision and that he has proven to be a patriot.”

Lee Cutler, political coordinator for the Northeast Area Labor Council affiliated with the Minnesota AFL-CIO, said he wishes Democrats had been able to start the process of replacing Biden earlier in the electoral cycle but he is also proud of the president.

“When we were voting for Biden, we were also voting for Kamala Harris,” Cutler said. “We were voting for an 82-year-old man.”

— Amer Madhani

Upcoming Biden-Netanyahu meeting is still on

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will meet with President Joe Biden at the White House this week as planned, despite Biden’s withdrawal from the presidential race, a person familiar with Biden’s schedule said Sunday.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly, said the exact timing of the meeting has not been established because Biden is recovering from COVID-19.

Netanyahu is scheduled to deliver an address to Congress on Wednesday. He is also expected to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris, who is now seeking the Democratic Party’s nomination.

An official in Netanyahu’s office confirmed that the Israeli leader was set to travel to Washington, as scheduled, on Monday. The official also spoke on condition of anonymity pending a formal announcement.

— Amer Madhani and Josef Federman

Some world reactions to Biden’s withdrawal

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov urged Russians to “pay attention” and “watch what will happen” in the U.S. election in November now that Biden has withdrawn his candidacy.

Peskov was quoted by Russian pro-Kremlin tabloid Life.ru as saying that “there are still four months until the elections. And this is a long period, during which a lot can change.”

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called Biden a friend and said the president has achieved a lot for the U.S., Europe and the world. Scholz cited a strong NATO and close transatlantic cooperation as examples.

New British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who met Biden for the first time this month, said he knows he reached his decision based on what he believes is in the “best interests of the American people.”

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau thanked Biden and the first lady Jill Biden, saying on the social platform X; “He’s a great man, and everything he does is guided by his love for his country. As President, he is a partner to Canadians — and a true friend.”

And Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese praised the U.S. president for his “leadership and ongoing

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ing service" and said the two countries' alliance "has never been stronger with our shared commitment to democratic values, international security, economic prosperity and climate action for this and future generations."

Clyburn, credited with helping Biden win the 2020 nomination, endorses Harris

South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn, who is credited with helping President Joe Biden win the party's nomination four years ago with his endorsement, has thrown his support behind Vice President Kamala Harris.

Clyburn, a co-chair of Biden's campaign, said the president showed good judgment in choosing a running mate who has the necessary "values and vision." He said he is proud to follow Biden's lead in supporting Harris.

Clyburn also heaped praise on Biden. He said the president "improved the lives of countless Americans through his selfless service" and thanked him for his strong leadership."

Vance says Harris 'owns' Biden's policies

Trump's running mate, JD Vance, who was initially expected to face off against Kamala Harris in a debate, linked her Sunday to all of Biden's policies.

Vance said Harris "co-signed" Biden's border and climate policies and that those drove up prices for housing and groceries.

"She owns all of these failures," Vance said on the social platform X.

"President Trump and I are ready to save America, whoever's at the top of the Democrat ticket," the Ohio senator said. "Bring it on."

Kamala Harris says she's honored to have Biden's support

Vice President Kamala Harris says she is honored to have President Joe Biden's support to replace him as the Democratic nominee heading into the November election.

Harris said she intends to "earn and win this nomination."

She released a statement calling the 81-year-old Biden's decision to end his reelection campaign a "selfless and patriotic act."

She also thanked Biden for "extraordinary leadership" and argued that his legacy as a one-term president would surpass the records of many chief executives who served two terms in office.

Some Democratic governors praise Biden but don't immediately endorse Harris as his successor

Govs. J.B. Pritzker of Illinois, Laura Healy of Kansas, Andy Beshear of Kentucky and Tim Walz of Minnesota are among Democrats who are praising Biden's record of public service. But they didn't follow the president's lead and endorse Harris as his successor.

Beshear said Biden will be remembered as a "consequential president" who, with Harris, led the country through the aftermath of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Walz, who heads the Democratic Governors Association, said "history will look fondly on his legacy."

Healy said few could have "risen to the challenge" like Biden. The Massachusetts governor had issued a statement several weeks ago urging Biden to think hard about his campaign.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer also praised Biden's public service Sunday, saying on social media platform X that Biden "knows better than anyone what it takes to defeat Donald Trump."

"My job in this election will remain the same: doing everything I can to elect Democrats and stop Donald Trump, a convicted felon whose agenda of raising families' costs, banning abortion nationwide, and abusing the power of the White House to settle his own scores is completely wrong for Michigan," she said.

Former President Barack Obama praises Biden, stops short of endorsing Harris

Former President Barack Obama has praised President Joe Biden's decision to abandon his reelection quest. But Obama stopped short of endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris to replace Biden as the Democratic nominee the 2024 presidential race.

Obama called Biden, his former vice president, "one of America's most consequential presidents, as well as a dear friend and partner to me."

Obama said Sunday that when he picked Biden as his running mate in the 2008 campaign, "what I came to admire even more was his character — his deep empathy and hard-earned resilience; his fundamental

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decency and belief that everyone counts.”

Obama said Biden “has never backed down from a fight,” adding that “he wouldn’t make this decision unless he believed it was right for America.

Of what’s to come, Obama said he has “extraordinary confidence that the leaders of our party will be able to create a process from which an outstanding nominee emerges.” That nominee will face Republican and former President Donald Trump in November.

Clintons throw their support behind Kamala Harris

Former President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued a joint statement endorsing Kamala Harris, saying it’s time to “fight with everything we’ve got” to elect her.

The Clintons said Biden in his “extraordinary career” had “lifted America out of an unprecedented pandemic, created millions of new jobs, rebuilt a battered economy, strengthened our democracy, and restored our standing in the world.”

They added that Biden’s leadership had “advanced our founders’ charge to build a more perfect union and his own stated goal of restoring the soul of our nation.”

DNC says top priority is a candidate who can beat Trump

Democratic National Committee Chairman Jaime Harrison says following President Joe Biden’s abandoning his reelection bid that “the work that we must do now, while unprecedented, is clear.”

“In the coming days, the party will undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward,” Harrison said in a statement, with “a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November.”

“This process will be governed by established rules and procedures of the party,” Harrison added. “Our delegates are prepared to take seriously their responsibility in swiftly delivering a candidate to the American people.”

His statement also noted: “In short order, the American people will hear from the Democratic Party on next steps and the path forward for the nomination process.”

Biden throws support behind his vice president, Kamala Harris

President Joe Biden has endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to take on Trump in November, and encouraged the Democratic Party to unite behind her.

In a stunning social media post Sunday, Biden announced he was pulling out of the race for a second term in the White House.

“It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term,” Biden wrote in a letter posted to his X account.

Biden threw his support behind Harris.

“Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year,” he said in a separate post. “Democrats — it’s time to come together and beat Trump.”

Schumer, first lady react to decision by Biden to drop reelection bid

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in a statement that President Joe Biden “has not only been a great president and a great legislative leader but he is a truly amazing human being.

Biden announced Sunday that he was dropping out of the 2024 presidential race.

“His decision of course was not easy, but he once again put his country, his party, and our future first,” said Schumer, who traveled to Rehoboth Beach earlier this month to speak to Biden directly about the race. “Joe, today shows you are a true patriot and great American.”

First lady Jill Biden responded by reposting the president’s letter announcing his decision and adding red heart emojis.

Granddaughter Naomi Biden Neal said on social media that “I’m nothing but proud of my Pop.”

She said he has served the country “with every bit of his soul and with unmatched distinction” and that “our world is better today in so many ways thanks to him.”

Biden ends his bid for reelection

President Joe Biden announced that he is ending his bid for reelection after a disastrous debate inflamed

doubts he's fit for four more years on the job.

He made the announcement Sunday.

The president said he will address the American people later this week "in more detail about my decision."

## **Kamala Harris is now in a bright spotlight as she fights to secure the Democratic presidential nod**

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris is being thrust into the most scrutinizing of spotlights, suddenly the leading candidate to succeed President Joe Biden as the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee and her party's main hope of defeating Republican Donald Trump.

She spoke multiple times with Biden on Sunday, according to people familiar with the conversations — a day after Biden huddled with his closest aides in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, as he began to conclude that he would end his reelection bid. About two hours after the surprise Sunday announcement from Biden, Harris released her own statement, making it clear she knew the nomination would not just be handed to her.

"I am honored to have the President's endorsement and my intention is to earn and win this nomination," Harris said. "Over the past year, I have traveled across the country, talking with Americans about the clear choice in this momentous election. And that is what I will continue to do in the days and weeks ahead."

Then Harris quickly got to work. She spent much of Sunday afternoon calling Democratic elected officials and delegates as she worked to lock up her party's nomination. One call was with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. Another was with Congressional Hispanic Caucus chairwoman Nanette Barragán, who emphasized that she was "all in" behind the vice president and urged donations on her behalf.

Barragán said she was caught in a moment of both sadness and excitement as she digested the news of Biden's withdrawal. But in her call with Harris, the vice president stressed to her: "We're in this to win it."

Harris also communicated that she preferred to forego a virtual roll call for the nomination process and instead hold a process that adheres to regular order.

"This is the moment for us to unite and coalesce around the vice president and focus around Donald Trump," Barragán said.

Harris also spoke with Rep. Annie Kuster, who leads the New Democrat Coalition, an influential bloc of center-left lawmakers. Kuster endorsed Harris on Sunday afternoon.

Notably, a handful of men who had already been discussed as potential running mates for Harris — Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper and Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly — also swiftly issued statements endorsing her. Aides to Shapiro and Cooper confirmed that Harris spoke with them Sunday afternoon. In her brief call with Cooper, the North Carolina governor told Harris that he was backing her to be the Democratic nominee, according to Cooper spokeswoman Sadie Weiner.

Harris also quickly won endorsements from the leadership of several influential caucuses and political organizations, including the AAPI Victory Fund, which focuses on Asian American and Pacific Islander voters, The Collective PAC, focused on building Black political power, and the Latino Victory Fund. While some Democrats remained silent on whom they want for a nominee, many others said the party should immediately assemble behind Harris, wanting to move past the painful, public deliberations that have marked the weeks since the July 27 Biden-Trump debate.

"Joe Biden is a great American, and we all owe him our immense gratitude for his service to our country as president, vice president, and senator," Rep. Grace Meng, D-N.Y., said. "There is no better person than Vice President Harris for him to pass the baton to."

But there were early signs that she may not be alone in the Democratic race. West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, who left the party earlier this year to become an independent, is considering re-registering as a Democrat to vie for the nomination against the vice president, according to Jonathan Kott, a longtime adviser to Manchin.

Harris had also yet to consolidate the party's top heavyweights behind her. While former President Bill

Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton endorsed her even before she had commented on Biden's decision to quit the race, former President Barack Obama held off, merely pledging support behind the eventual party nominee.

Sunday evening, Harris issued her first fundraising email that declared: "I am running to be President of the United States."

"It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve alongside our Commander-in-Chief, my friend, President Joe Biden -- one of the finest public servants we will ever know," she wrote in the solicitation. "And I am honored to have his support and endorsement. And I am eager to run on the record of what Joe and I have accomplished together."

The campaign dollars were already coming in for Harris. The Democratic fundraising platform ActBlue said Sunday night that as of 9 p.m. Eastern time, small-dollar donors had contributed nearly \$47 million since Harris announced her candidacy.

"Grassroots supporters are energized and excited to support her as the Democratic nominee," the group said on X, the social media site.

But as she works to consolidate the party behind her, Harris still has her day job – at a time when Biden has been sidelined due to a bout with COVID-19. Harris will host an event on the South Lawn of the White House on Monday with sports teams from across the country that won NCAA championships this year, and is slated to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his visit to Washington later this week. Harris also has a previously scheduled campaign swing to Milwaukee on Tuesday.

## **Biden's decision to drop out crystallized Sunday. His staff knew one minute before the public did**

By COLLEEN LONG, SEUNG MIN KIM, ZEKE MILLER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press  
WASHINGTON (AP) — At 1:45 p.m. Sunday, President Joe Biden's senior staff was notified that he was stepping away from the 2024 race. At 1:46 p.m., that message was made public.

It was never Biden's intention to leave the race: Up until he decided to step aside Sunday, he was all in. His campaign was planning fundraisers and events and setting up travel over the next few weeks. But even as Biden was publicly dug in and insisting he was staying in the race, he was quietly reflecting on the disaster of the past few weeks, on the past three years of his presidency and on the scope of his half-century career in politics.

In the end, it was the president's decision alone, and he made it quietly, from his vacation home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, sick with COVID-19, the first lady with him as he talked it through with a small circle of people who have been with him for decades.

"This has got to be one of the hardest decisions he's ever made," said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., the president's closest ally in Congress, who spoke with him Sunday. "I know he wanted to fight and keep going and show that he could beat Donald Trump again, but as he heard more and more input, I think he was wrestling with what would be the best for the country," Coons said in an interview with the Associated Press.

This story is based on interviews with more than a dozen people familiar with the president's thinking over the past few weeks, days and hours as he made his decision. They spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to talk about private discussions.

### **DECIDING TO LEAVE THE RACE**

It wasn't until Saturday evening that Biden began to come to the conclusion that he would not run for reelection. He started writing a letter to the American people.

Biden had been off the campaign trail for a few days, isolated because of COVID-19, when it all started to deeply sink in — his worsening chances of being able to defeat Donald Trump with so much of his party in open rebellion, seeking to push him out of the race — not to mention the persistent voter concerns about his age that were only exacerbated by the catastrophic debate.

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Biden was at his beach home with some of his and Jill Biden's closest aides: chief strategist Mike Donilon, counselor to the president Steve Ricchetti, White House deputy chief of staff Annie Tomasini, and Anthony Bernal, senior adviser to the first lady.

By Sunday, his decision crystallized. He spoke multiple times with Vice President Kamala Harris, whom he would endorse. He informed White House chief of staff Jeff Zients, and his longtime aide and campaign chairwoman Jen O'Malley Dillon.

A small group of senior advisers from both the campaign and the White House were assembled for the 1:45 p.m. call to relay Biden's decision, while his campaign staff released the social media announcement one minute later.

"It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term," Biden wrote.

Just about a half-hour later came his public vote of support for Harris. It was a carefully choreographed strategy meant to give the president's initial statement full weight, and to put a period on the moment before launching forward into the next step.

"Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year," Biden said in another post on X. "Democrats — it's time to come together and beat Trump."

Elizabeth Alexander, Jill Biden's communications director, said, "down to the last hours of the decision only he could make, she was supportive of whatever road he chose.

"She's his biggest believer, champion, and always on his side, in that trusted way only a spouse of almost 50 years can be," Alexander said.

## ABOUT THAT DEBATE

It's not like things had been going great before the June 27 debate. In an August 2023 poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, fully 77% of U.S. adults said Biden was too old to be effective for four more years. Not only did 89% of Republicans say that, but so did 69% of Democrats.

And it hadn't gotten any better by April, when more than half of U.S. adults thought Biden's presidency hurt the country on issues like the cost of living and immigration.

But Biden had insisted — to himself, to the nation, to his supporters — that he would be able to bring voters around if he got out there, told people about his record, explained it to them. Talked to them. Looked them in the eye.

He had a lifetime of experience that told him that if he stuck to it, he'd overcome. His campaign was so confident, in fact, that they arranged to go around the Commission on Presidential Debates to set up a series of faceoffs with Trump under a new set of rules.

That produced the June 27 debate that set Biden's downfall in motion. Biden gave nonsensical answers, trailed off mid-sentence and appeared to stare blankly in front of an audience of 51 million people. Perhaps most distressing to other Democrats, Biden didn't go after Trump's myriad falsehoods about his involvement in the violence around the insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021, abortion rights or immigration.

Biden and his team blamed the night on so many different things. He had a cold. He was jet-lagged. He needed to get more sleep. That night opened the door for his party to push him out.

## A SLOW ACCEPTANCE

Publicly and privately Biden was fighting to stay in the race. He was working to convince voters that he was up for the task for another four years. He was frustrated by the Democrats coming out publicly against him, but even angrier about the leaks and anonymous sources relaying how even former President Barack Obama and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi were working to get him to drop out.

It looked like he'd won out a couple times; the chorus of naysayers seemed to die down. He had some well-received speeches mixed with so-so TV interviews and a day featuring an extended news conference in which he displayed a nuanced grasp of policy but also committed a few gasp-inducing gaffes.

But the doubts didn't go away.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer eventually invited top Biden staff to a meeting on July 11 to talk

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about their concerns. It didn't go well. Senators expressed their concerns, and almost none of them said they had confidence in the president. But even afterwards, Schumer was worried it wasn't getting to Biden.

Following the meeting, Schumer called Democratic House Leader Hakeem Jeffries, former Speaker Nancy Pelosi and former President Obama. Schumer decided that day to request a meeting with Biden.

At a July 13 meeting in Rehoboth, Schumer told Biden he was there out of love and affection. And he delivered a personal appeal focused on Biden's legacy, the country's future and the impact the top of the ticket could have on congressional races — and how that could potentially affect the Supreme Court. That same day came the attempted assassination of Donald Trump.

Schumer told the president he didn't expect him to make an immediate decision, but he hoped Biden would think about what he said, according to a person familiar with the conversation.

Biden responded, "I need another week," and the two men hugged.

## SUNDAY'S DECISION

It was full steam ahead until Biden pulled the emergency brake.

The president had lost his voice, but he was recovering well and his doctor had sent an update to the public shortly before 1 p.m. on his condition. His small circle decided to post the statement on X on Sunday, rather than let it leak out for days before he was prepared to address the nation, which he is expected to do sometime early this week.

Much of his campaign was blindsided, and it was clear by how little had changed after he dropped out. For hours after the announcement, Biden's campaign website reflected that he was still running and KamalaHarris.com still redirected to Biden's page.

Even Harris' statement announcing her intent to succeed Biden was sent from "Joe Biden for President."

After the public announcement, Zients held a senior staff call, and sent out an email, and spoke with members of Biden's Cabinet, emphasizing to them that nothing had changed when it came to the business of governing and that the administration still had a lot of work to do, according to two people with knowledge of the message. And the president was also making personal calls.

"Team — I wanted to make sure you saw the attached letter from the President," Zients wrote in the staff email. "I could not be more proud to work for President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, and the American people — alongside all of you, the best White House team in history. There's so much more to do — and as President Biden says, 'there is nothing America can't do — when we do it together.'"

Vermont Sen. Peter Welch, a Democrat who had called for Biden to bow out, was gardening with his wife when the news broke, and said he was momentarily "stunned." Senators texted each other questioning if it was really happening.

Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal was at an event in his state, and there was spontaneous applause when it was announced to the crowd that Biden wouldn't run, he said.

There was a sense of excitement and energy in the crowd "that has been completely lacking," Blumenthal said.

"It was also, let's be blunt, a sense of relief," he said. "And a sense of reverence for Joe Biden."

By Sunday evening, Biden for President had formally changed to Harris for President.

O'Malley Dillon told campaign staff their jobs were safe, because the operation was shifting to a campaign for Harris.

## **Biden's legacy: Far-reaching accomplishments that didn't translate into political support**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sitting in the Oval Office behind the iconic Resolute desk in 2022, an animated President Joe Biden described the challenge of leading a psychologically traumatized nation.

The United States had endured a life-altering pandemic. There was a jarring burst of inflation and now global conflict with Russia invading Ukraine, as well as the persistent threat to democracy he felt Donald Trump posed.



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How could Biden possibly heal that collective trauma?

"Be confident," he said emphatically in an interview with The Associated Press. "Be confident. Because I am confident."

But in the ensuing two years, the confidence Biden hoped to instill steadily waned. And when the 81-year-old Democratic president showed his age in a disastrous debate in June against Trump, he lost the benefit of the doubt as well. That triggered a series of events that led him Sunday to step down as his party's nominee for the November's election.

Democrats, who had been united in their resolve to prevent another Trump term, suddenly fractured. And Republicans, beset by chaos in Congress and the former president's criminal conviction, improbably coalesced in defiant unity.

Biden never figured out how to inspire the world's most powerful country to believe in itself, let alone in him.

He lost the confidence of supporters in the 90-minute debate with Trump, even if pride initially prompted him to override the fears of lawmakers, party elders and donors who were nudging him to drop out. Then Trump survived an assassination attempt in Pennsylvania and, as if on cue, pumped his fist in strength. Biden, while campaigning in Las Vegas, tested positive for the coronavirus Wednesday and retreated to his Delaware beach home to recover.

The events over the course of three weeks led to an exit Biden never wanted, but one that Democrats felt they needed to maximize their chance of winning in November's elections.

Biden seems to have badly misread the breadth of his support. While many Democrats had deep admiration for the president personally, they did not have the same affection for him politically.

Rice University historian Douglas Brinkley said Biden arrived as a reprieve from a nation exhausted by Trump and the pandemic.

"He was a perfect person for that moment," said Brinkley, noting Biden proved in era of polarization that bipartisan lawmaking was still possible.

Yet, there was never a "Joe Biden Democrat" like there was a "Reagan Republican." He did not have adoring, movement-style followers as did Barack Obama or John F. Kennedy. He was not a generational candidate like Bill Clinton. The only barrier-breaking dimension to his election was the fact that he was the oldest person ever elected president.

His first run for the White House, in the 1988 cycle, ended with self-inflicted wounds stemming from plagiarism, and he didn't make it to the first nominating contest. In 2008, he dropped out after the Iowa caucuses, where he won less than 1% of the vote. In 2016, Obama counseled his vice president not to run. A Biden victory in 2020 seemed implausible, when he finished fourth in Iowa and fifth in New Hampshire before a dramatic rebound in South Carolina that propelled him to the nomination and the White House.

David Axelrod, a former senior adviser to Obama who also worked closely with Biden, said that history would treat Biden kinder than voters had, not just because of his legislative achievements but because in 2020 he defeated Trump.

"His legacy is significant beyond all his many accomplishments," Axelrod said. "He will always be the man who stepped up and defeated a president who placed himself above our democracy."

But Biden could not avoid his age. And when he showed frailty in his steps and his speech, there was no foundation of supporters that could stand by him to stop calls for him to step aside.

It was a humbling end to a half-century career in politics, yet hardly reflective of the full legacy of his time in the White House.

In March of 2021, Biden launched \$1.9 trillion in pandemic aid, creating a series of new programs that temporarily halved child poverty, halted evictions and contributed to the addition of 15.7 million jobs. But inflation began to rise shortly thereafter as Biden's approval rating as measured by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research fell from 61% to 39% as of June.

He followed up with a series of executive actions to unsnarl global supply chains and a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package that not only replaced aging infrastructure but improved internet access and

prepared communities to withstand the damages from climate change.

In 2022, Biden and his fellow Democrats followed up with two measures that reinvigorated the future of U.S. manufacturing.

The CHIPS and Science Act provided \$52 billion to build factories and create institutions to make computer chips domestically, ensuring that the U.S. would have access to the most advanced semiconductors needed to power economic growth and maintain national security. There was also the Inflation Reduction Act, which provided incentives to shift away from fossil fuels and enabled Medicare to negotiate drug prices.

Biden also sought to compete more aggressively with China, rebuild alliances such as NATO and completed the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan that resulted in the death of 13 U.S. service members.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022 worsened inflation as Trump and other Republicans questioned the value of military aid to the Ukrainians. Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack in Israel sparked a war that showed divisions within the Democratic party about whether the United States should continue to support Israel as tens of thousands of Palestinians died in months of counterattacks. The president was also criticized over illegal border crossings at the southern border with Mexico.

Yet it was the size of the stakes and the fear of a Biden loss that prevailed, resulting in a bet by Democrats that the tasks he began could best be completed by a younger generation.

"History will be kinder to him than voters were at the end," Axelrod said.

## **Xander the Great! Schauffele wins the British Open for his 2nd major this year**

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

TROON, Scotland (AP) — Xander Schauffele went from the most nerve-wracking putt of his career to the coolest walk toward an 18th green he ever imagined.

He won a nail-biter at the PGA Championship in May. He delivered a masterpiece Sunday in the British Open. Two different finishes, two different feelings.

One major conclusion.

Schauffele has more than enough game and all the confidence in the world to win the biggest championships. Questioned at the start of the season whether he could win a major, he now has two of them.

Schauffele closed with a 6-under 65 with a final round that ranks among the most memorable in British Open history, particularly the 31 on the back nine. It matched the best score of the week at Royal Troon with nothing less than the claret jug riding on the outcome.

He played bogey-free in a daunting wind and turned a two-shot deficit into a two-shot victory for his second major of the year.

It also gave the Americans a sweep of the four majors for the first time since 1982.

"It's a dream come true to win two majors in one year," Schauffele said. "It took me forever just to win one, and to have two now is something else."

He won the PGA Championship at Valhalla by making a 6-foot birdie putt on the final hole for a 65. In a final round set up for high drama at Royal Troon — six players one shot behind, nine players separated by three shots — Schauffele made a tense Sunday look like a nice walk along the Irish Sea.

"I think winning the first one helped me a lot today on the back nine," he said. "I had some feeling of calmness come through. It was very helpful on what has been one of the hardest back nines I've ever played in a tournament."

It sure didn't show. Standing on the 18th tee, Schauffele said he turned to caddie and longtime friend Austin Kaiser and told him that he had felt calm down the decisive back nine.

"He said he was about to puke," Schauffele said.

In the 90-year history of four majors, Schauffele became the first player to win two majors in one season with a final-round 65. Jack Nicklaus is the only other player to do that in his career.

And he never looked more calm, oozing that cool California vibe even as the wind presented so much trouble at Royal Troon.

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Schauffele pulled away with three birdies in a four-hole stretch early on the back nine to go from two shots behind to leading by as many as three.

He won by two shots over American Billy Horschel and Justin Rose, the 43-year-old from England who had to go through 36-hole qualifying just to get into the field. They were among four players who had at least a share of the lead at one point Sunday.

They just couldn't keep up with Schauffele. No one could.

"He has a lot of horsepower," Rose said. "He's good with a wedge, he's great with a putter, he hits the ball a long way, obviously his iron play is strong. So he's got a lot of weapons out there. I think probably one of his most unappreciated ones is his mentality. He's such a calm guy out there.

"I don't know what he's feeling, but he certainly makes it look very easy."

Even with so many players in contention early, the engraver was able to get to work early on those 16 letters across the base of the silver claret jug.

Schauffele kept staring at golf's oldest trophy in his press conference, looking forward to gazing at it in private, wondering what kind of drink to pour from it. He said he'd leave that up to his father, Stefan, who missed his son's first major title and was blubbing on the phone with him.

As to where that final round ranks -- Henrik Stenson shot 63 when he won his duel with Phil Mickelson at Royal Troon in 2016 -- Schauffele left no doubt where it stood in his own career.

"At the very tip-top," Schauffele said. "Best round I've played."

Playing in the third-to-last group, he matched the round of the championship with a score that was just over eight shots better than the field average.

The final birdie was a pitch over a pot bunker to 4 feet on the par-5 16th. The grandstands at The Open are among the largest, lining both sides of the fairway as Schauffele walked through and soaked up the cheers.

"I got chills," he said.

The 30-year-old from San Diego became the first player since Jordan Spieth in 2015 to win his first two majors in the same season. And he extended American dominance on this Scottish links as the seventh Open champion in the last eight visits to Royal Troon.

It was the 11th straight year for a first-time British Open champion, tying a tournament record.

Rose started one shot behind and closed with a 67. That was only good for second place. He had a chance to set a record by going the longest time between majors after his 2013 U.S. Open win.

"Gutted when I walked off the course and it hit me hard because I was so strong out there today," Rose said. "Xander got it going. I hit a couple of really good putts that didn't fall, and then suddenly that lead stretched. I left it all out there. I'm super proud of how I competed."

Horschel, who started the final round with a one-shot lead in his bid to win his first major, dropped back around the turn and birdied his last three holes for a 68.

"I'm disappointed. I should feel disappointed. I had a chance to win a major," Horschel said. "I just made a few too many mistakes today when I didn't need to."

The player Schauffele had to track down was Thriston Lawrence of South Africa, who birdied three of four holes to end the front nine with a 32.

Schauffele was two shots behind when it all changed so suddenly. Schauffele hit a wedge out of the left rough on the difficult 11th and judged it perfectly to 3 feet for birdie. He hit another wedge to 15 feet for birdie on the 13th, and capped his pivotal run with a 12-foot birdie putt on the par-3 14th.

Lawrence finally dropped a shot on the 12th and didn't pick up any shots the rest of the day. He closed with a 68 and earned a small consolation — a trip to the Masters next April, his first time to Augusta National.

Scottie Scheffler, who got within one shot of the lead briefly on the front nine, lost his way with a three-putt from 6 feet for a double bogey on the ninth hole. Scheffler finished his round by topping a tee shot on the 18th and making another double bogey. The world's No. 1 player closed with a 72 and tied for seventh.

He stuck around to share a hug with Schauffele, the two top players in golf. Schauffele was the only player this year to finish in the top 10 in all four majors.

He finished at 9-under 275 and earned \$3.1 million, pushing him over \$15 million for the season. Schaufele went from the heaviest major trophy at the PGA Championship to the smallest and oldest, the famed claret jug.

"I just can't wait to drink out of it," he said, smiling as wide as ever.

## **Civilians killed and wounded as Russia and Ukraine trade attacks. Russia claims gains in the east**

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia and Ukraine exchanged drone, missile and shelling attacks on Sunday. At least two people were killed in Ukrainian strikes on the partly Russian-occupied Donetsk region, Russian state media said, while Ukrainian officials said Russian strikes wounded at least five people.

Along the front line in the east, Russia said it had taken control of two villages, one in the Kharkiv region and one in the Luhansk region.

Ukrainian shelling of Russia-held areas of the Donetsk region killed two people in the village of Horlivka, Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said.

Three people were wounded by Russian drone strikes in southern Ukraine's partly occupied Kherson region, local officials said Sunday morning. In the country's northeast, officials in the Kharkiv region said two people were wounded when a village was hit by Russian shells.

Overnight into Sunday, Ukraine's air defenses intercepted 35 of the 39 drones launched by Russia, according to air force commander Mykola Oleschuk. In addition, Russia launched three ballistic missiles and two guided air missiles, which did not reach their targets, he said.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said Sunday that its troops had taken control of two villages: Pishchane Nizhne in the Kharkiv region and Andriivka, sometimes referred to as Rozivka, in the Luhansk region. Kyiv did not immediately comment.

Officials in the northern Sumy region said Sunday that Russia launched a missile strike on "critical infrastructure facilities" in the city of Shostka. City mayor Mykola Noha specified that "two heating facilities" had been destroyed and called on residents to use electricity sparingly and stock up on water.

With few changes reported along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line, where a recent push by the Kremlin's forces in eastern and northeastern Ukraine has made only incremental gains, both sides in the war have taken aim at infrastructure targets — seeking to curb each other's ability to fight in a war that is now in its third year.

Russian air defense systems overnight destroyed eight drones over the country's Belgorod region and over the Black Sea, the Russian Ministry of Defense said.

Russian air defense also shot down two long-range ballistic ATACMS missiles in the sky over the Kherson region heading for Russia-annexed Crimea, Russia-installed Kherson governor Vladimir Saldo said.

Nine people were wounded over the previous day in shelling in the town of Shebekino in Russia's Belgorod region, bordering Ukraine, Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said on Sunday morning.

## **Here's the letter that Biden wrote to say he would no longer seek reelection**

Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Sunday posted a letter to social media announcing that he would no longer seek reelection.

The decision by the Democrat came after building pressure from lawmakers, donors, activists and voters within his own party who had concerns about his ability to beat Republican Donald Trump in November's election. The letter ended weeks of speculation after the 81-year old's troubling performance at the June 27 presidential debate. Below is the text of the letter that Biden sent on his personal stationery:

My Fellow Americans,

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Over the past three and a half years, we have made great progress as a Nation.

Today, America has the strongest economy in the world. We've made historic investments in rebuilding our Nation, in lowering prescription drug costs for seniors, and in expanding affordable health care to a record number of Americans. We've provided critically needed care to a million veterans exposed to toxic substances. Passed the first gun safety law in 30 years. Appointed the first African American woman to the Supreme Court. And passed the most important climate legislation in the history of the world. America has never been better positioned to lead than we are today.

I know none of this could have been done without you, the American people. Together, we overcame a once in a century pandemic and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. We've protected and preserved our Democracy. And we've revitalized and strengthened our alliances around the world.

It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term.

I will speak to the Nation later this week in more detail about my decision.

For now, let me express my deepest gratitude to all those who have worked so hard to see me reelected. I want to thank Vice President Kamala Harris for being an extraordinary partner in all this work. And let me express my heartfelt appreciation to the American people for the faith and trust you have placed in me.

I believe today what I always have: that there is nothing America can't do — when we do it together. We just have to remember we are the United States of America.

## **What happens next: Joe Biden wants to pass the baton to Kamala Harris. Here's how that might work**

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — With President Joe Biden ending his reelection bid and endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris, Democrats now must navigate a shift that is unprecedented this late in an election year.

Democrats are set to hold their convention in Chicago on Aug. 19-22. What was supposed to be a coronation for Biden now becomes an open contest in which nearly 4,700 delegates will be responsible for picking a new standard-bearer to challenge Republican Donald Trump in the fall.

The path ahead is neither easy nor obvious, even with Biden endorsing Harris. There are unanswered questions about logistics, money and political fallout.

Can Biden redirect his delegates?

Biden won every state primary and caucus earlier this year and only lost the territory of American Samoa. At least 3,896 delegates had been pledged to support him.

Current party rules do not permit Biden to pass them to another candidate. Politically, though, his endorsement is likely to be influential.

What could happen at the convention?

With Biden stepping aside, Democrats technically start with an open convention. But realistically, his endorsement pushes Democrats into murky territory.

The immediate burden is on Harris to solidify support across almost 4,000 delegates from the states, territories and District of Columbia, plus more than 700 so-called superdelegates that include party leaders, certain elected officials and former presidents and vice presidents.

Will anyone challenge Harris?

Even before Biden announced his decision, Democrats floated California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer as potential contenders in addition to Harris. Yet some Democrats argued publicly, and many privately, that it would be a no-brainer to elevate the first woman, first Black woman and first person of south Asian descent to hold national office.

Given how important Black voters — and Black women especially — were to Biden's nomination and his choice of Harris as running mate, it would be risky, to say the least, for Democrats to pass her over for a white nominee. Democrats already faced historical headwinds before Biden's withdrawal. Newsom and

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Whitmer, both of whom are white, and any other Democrat would also have to weigh the short-term and long-term benefits of challenging Harris now versus preserving goodwill for a future presidential primary.

Yet, fair or not, Harris also has not been viewed as an especially beloved or empowered vice president. The best scenario for her and Democrats is to quickly shore up support and project a united front. Democrats could even go forward with their plans for an early virtual vote – a move they'd planned to make sure Biden was selected ahead of Ohio's general election ballot deadline.

What happens to Biden's campaign money?

Biden's campaign recently reported \$91 million cash on hand. Allied Democratic campaign committees brought the total at his disposal to more than \$240 million. Campaign finance experts agree generally that Harris could control all those funds since the campaign was set up in her name as well as Biden's. If Democrats do nominate someone other than Harris, party accounts could still benefit the nominee, but the Biden-Harris account would have more restrictions. For example, legal experts say it could become an independent expenditure political action committee but not simply transfer its balance to a different nominee.

How will a vice presidential nomination work?

The vice presidential nomination is always a separate convention vote. In routine years, the convention ratifies the choice of the nominee. If Harris closes ranks quickly, she could name her choice and have the delegates ratify it. In an extended fight, though, the vice presidency could become part of horse-trading — again, a return to conventions of an earlier era.

Can Republicans keep Harris off state ballots?

Any curveball during a U.S. presidential campaign is certain to produce a flurry of state and federal lawsuits in this hyper-partisan era, and some conservatives have threatened just that.

State laws, though, typically do not prescribe how parties choose their nominees for president. And some GOP figures – Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey – have worked already this year to ensure their party did not deny Democrats' routine ballot access.

## **The Secret Service acknowledges denying some past requests by Trump's campaign for tighter security**

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

REHOBOTH BEACH, Del. (AP) — The Secret Service has acknowledged it denied some requests by Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's campaign for increased security at his events in the years before the assassination attempt on him at a recent rally.

In the immediate aftermath of the July 13 attack, the law enforcement agency had denied rejecting such requests. But the Secret Service acknowledged late Saturday, a week after the attempt on Trump's life, that it had turned back some requests to increase security around the former president.

The reversal is likely to be a key focus of a congressional hearing Monday where Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle is expected to appear before lawmakers who have been expressing anger over security lapses that allowed a 20-year-old gunman to climb atop the roof of a nearby building at Trump's rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, and fire his weapon.

Trump was wounded in the right ear, one rallygoer was killed and two others were injured. Secret Service gunmen killed the shooter.

The attack on Trump was the most serious attempt to assassinate a president or presidential candidate since Ronald Reagan was shot in 1981. It was the latest in a series of security lapses by the agency that has drawn investigations and public scrutiny over the years.

"The Secret Service has a vast, dynamic, and intricate mission. Every day we work in a dynamic threat environment to ensure our protectees are safe and secure across multiple events, travel, and other challenging environments," the agency's chief spokesperson, Anthony Guglielmi, said in a statement released late Saturday to The Washington Post. The newspaper was first to report on the agency's reversal, which it said was based on detailed questions submitted to the agency.

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"We execute a comprehensive and layered strategy to balance personnel, technology, and specialized operational needs," Guglielmi said.

He said the agency will rely on state and local law enforcement departments in some cases where specialized Secret Service units are unavailable.

"In some instances where specific Secret Service specialized units or resources were not provided, the agency made modifications to ensure the security of the protectee," Guglielmi said. "This may include utilizing state or local partners to provide specialized functions or otherwise identifying alternatives to reduce public exposure of a protectee."

After the assassination attempt, as reports began to circulate that the agency had denied the Trump campaign's requests, Guglielmi issued a denial.

There is "an untrue assertion that a member of the former President's team requested additional security resources & that those were rebuffed," Guglielmi said in a social media post. "This is absolutely false. In fact, we added protective resources & technology & capabilities as part of the increased campaign travel tempo."

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has called what happened a "failure" while several lawmakers have called on Cheatle to resign or for President Joe Biden to fire her. The Secret Service has said Cheatle does not intend to step down. So far, she retains the support of Biden, a Democrat, and Mayorkas.

But the agency's acknowledgement that it had denied some of the campaign's requests sparked fresh condemnation on Sunday.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said on CNN's "State of the Union, that the reversal "is just beyond the pale" and that Cheatle's "got a lot to answer for."

Johnson said lawmakers on Monday would release details about a bipartisan congressional task force that will investigate the Secret Service.

Rep. James Comer, chairman of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee, which has subpoenaed Cheatle to appear at a hearing on Monday, said the Secret Service has a more than \$3 billion annual budget that "is more than enough" to provide adequate protection.

"We want to know who's at fault for what happened," the Kentucky Republican said.

Trump's son, Eric Trump, said Cheatle should resign in "absolute disgrace."

"The fact that she is still in her job is beyond," he said on Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures,"

Biden has ordered an independent investigation. The Homeland Security Department and congressional committee are also investigating.

Trump says he was given no indication that law enforcement had identified a suspicious person when the former president took the stage in Pennsylvania. Some rallygoers said in interviews after the attempted assassination that they saw the gunman on the roof before Trump walked out onto the stage and had alerted law enforcement authorities on site.

In an interview with Fox News host Jesse Watters set to air Monday, Trump said, "No, nobody mentioned it, nobody said there was a problem" before he took the stage and a gunman opened fire. "They could've said, 'Let's wait for 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 5 minutes, something.' Nobody said. I think that was a mistake."

Trump also questioned the security lapses and how the gunman was able to access the roof of the building.

"How did somebody get on that roof? And why wasn't he reported? Because people saw that he was on the roof," Trump said. "So you would've thought someone would've done something about it."

Local law enforcement officers had seen the man and deemed him suspicious enough to circulate his photo and witnesses reported seeing him scaling the building.

Trump's campaign and the White House did not immediately respond to emailed requests for comment.

## Israel shoots down a missile fired from Yemen hours after a deadly Israeli strike on Houthi rebels

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and MICHAEL WAKIN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli military said it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen early Sunday, hours after Israeli warplanes struck several Houthi targets in the Arabian Peninsula country.

The Israeli airstrikes — in response to a deadly Houthi drone strike on Tel Aviv — were the first time Israel is known to have responded to repeated Houthi attacks throughout its nine-month war against Hamas. The burst of violence between the distant enemies has threatened to open a new front as Israel battles a series of Iranian proxies across the region.

The Israeli army late Saturday confirmed the airstrikes in the western Yemeni port city of Hodeidah, a Houthi stronghold and crucial entry point for aid and other supplies. It said the strikes, carried out by dozens of aircraft, including U.S.-made F-15 and F-35 warplanes, were a response to hundreds of Houthi attacks.

The Health Ministry in Yemen said the Israeli strikes killed six people and wounded 83 others, many with severe burns from a major fire. Another three people were missing, the ministry said in a statement shared by the Houthi-run al-Masirah TV.

Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam posted on X that the “blatant Israeli aggression” targeted fuel storage facilities and the province’s power station.

“The Israeli enemy picked those targets specifically as part of their targeting of the Yemeni economy,” said Abdul-Malek al-Houthi, leader of the rebels.

The Israeli military said that the surface-to-surface missile fired Sunday was intercepted before reaching Israeli territory.

Israel, along with the U.S., the U.K. and other Western allies with forces in the region, have intercepted almost all of the Houthi missiles and drones. But early Friday, a Houthi drone penetrated Israel’s air defenses and crashed into Tel Aviv, Israel’s commercial and cultural capital, killing one person.

An Israeli air force official said Sunday that human error accidentally classified the drone as a non-threat as Israel was simultaneously tracking other drones launched from Yemen and approaching Israel from the east.

The Israeli military said Saturday’s strike on Hodeidah, about 1,700 kilometers (more than 1,000 miles) from Israel, was among the most complicated and longest-distance operations by its air force. It said it hit the port because the area is used to deliver Iranian arms to Yemen.

Israel’s defense minister, Yoav Gallant, vowed to carry out similar strikes “in any place where it may be required.”

The Houthis are among several Iranian-backed groups to have attacked Israel in solidarity with Hamas since the Oct. 7 attack by the Palestinian militant group triggered the ongoing Israeli offensive in Gaza.

In addition to fighting Hamas, the Israeli military has been engaged in daily clashes with the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon. These clashes have raised concerns that the fighting could spill over into a full-blown war with Lebanon and beyond.

Yemen has been engulfed in civil war since 2014, when the Houthis seized much of the north and forced the internationally recognized government to flee from Sanaa. A Saudi-led coalition intervened in support of government forces, and in time the conflict turned into a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The war has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians, and created one of the world’s worst humanitarian disasters.

The Houthis said Israel’s attacks will only make Yemen’s people and armed forces more determined to support Gaza. “There will be impactful strikes,” Mohamed Ali al-Houthi of the Supreme Political Council in Yemen wrote on X.

“All of this won’t stop the Yemeni people or the Yemeni leadership, military and missile forces in targeting the Israeli entities,” said Moatasem Abdel Salah, a Sanaa resident.

Since January, U.S. and U.K. forces have been striking targets in Yemen, in response to the Houthis’ attacks on commercial shipping that the rebels have described as retaliation for Israel’s actions in the war



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in Gaza. However, many of the ships targeted weren't linked to Israel.

On Sunday, officials said that the Houthis repeatedly targeted a Liberia-flagged container vessel transiting the Red Sea, the latest assault by the group on the crucial maritime trade route.

The captain of the ship reported attacks from three small Houthi vessels, an uncrewed Houthi aerial vehicle and missile fire off the coast of Mocha, Yemen, resulting in "minor damage" to the ship, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said. The Joint Maritime Information Center, a coalition overseen by the U.S. Navy, identified the ship as the Pumba and reported "all crew on board safe."

Early Sunday, the Houthis claimed responsibility for the attack on the Pumba.

Analysts and Western intelligence services have long accused Iran of arming the Houthis, a claim Tehran denies. The joint force airstrikes so far have done little to deter them.

The Houthis have long-range ballistic missiles, smaller cruise missiles and "suicide drones," all capable of reaching southern Israel, according to weapons experts. The Houthis are open about their arsenal, regularly parading new missiles through the streets of Sanaa.

## **With AI, jets and police squadrons, Paris is securing the Olympics — and worrying critics**

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A year ago, the head of the Paris Olympics boldly declared that France's capital would be "the safest place in the world" when the Games open this Friday. Tony Estanguet's confident forecast looks less far-fetched now with squadrons of police patrolling Paris' streets, fighter jets and soldiers primed to scramble, and imposing metal-fence security barriers erected like an iron curtain on both sides of the River Seine that will star in the opening show.

France's vast police and military operation is in large part because the July 26-Aug. 11 Games face unprecedented security challenges. The city has repeatedly suffered deadly extremist attacks and international tensions are high because of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

Rather than build an Olympic park with venues grouped together outside of the city center, like Rio de Janeiro in 2016 or London in 2012, Paris has chosen to host many of the events in the heart of the bustling capital of 2 million inhabitants, with others dotted around suburbs that house millions more. Putting temporary sports arenas in public spaces and the unprecedented choice to stage a river-borne opening ceremony stretching for kilometers (miles) along the Seine, makes safeguarding them more complex.

Olympic organizers also have cyberattack concerns, while rights campaigners and Games critics are worried about Paris' use of AI-equipped surveillance technology and the broad scope and scale of Olympic security.

Paris, in short, has a lot riding on keeping 10,500 athletes and millions of visitors safe. Here's how it aims to do it.

The security operation, by the numbers

A Games-time force of up to 45,000 police and gendarmes is also backed up by a 10,000-strong contingent of soldiers that has set up the largest military camp in Paris since World War II, from which soldiers should be able to reach any of the city's Olympic venues within 30 minutes.

Armed military patrols aboard vehicles and on foot have become common in crowded places in France since gunmen and suicide bombers acting in the names of al-Qaida and the Islamic State group repeatedly struck Paris in 2015. They don't have police powers of arrest but can tackle attackers and restrain them until police arrive. For visitors from countries where armed street patrols aren't the norm, the sight of soldiers with assault rifles might be jarring, just as it was initially for people in France.

"At the beginning, it was very strange for them to see us and they were always avoiding our presence, making a detour," said Gen. Eric Chasboeuf, deputy commander of the counter-terror military force, called Sentinelle.

"Now, it's in the landscape," he said.

Rafale fighter jets, airspace-monitoring AWACS surveillance flights, Reaper surveillance drones, heli-

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copters that can carry sharpshooters, and equipment to disable drones will police Paris skies, which will be closed during the opening ceremony by a no-fly zone extending for 150 kilometers (93 miles) around the capital. Cameras twinned with artificial intelligence software — authorized by a law that expands the state's surveillance powers for the Games — will flag potential security risks, such as abandoned packages or crowd surges,

France is also getting help from more than 40 countries that, together, have sent at least 1,900 police reinforcements.

Trump assassination attempt highlights Olympic risks

Attacks by lone individuals are major concern, a risk driven home most recently to French officials by the assassination attempt against Donald Trump.

Some involved in the Olympic security operation were stunned that the gunman armed with an AR-style rifle got within range of the former U.S. president.

"No one can guarantee that there won't be mistakes. There, however, it was quite glaring," said Gen. Philippe Pourqué, who oversaw the construction of a temporary camp in southeast Paris housing 4,500 soldiers from the Sentinelle force.

In France, in the last 13 months alone, men acting alone have carried out knife attacks that targeted tourists in Paris, and children in a park in an Alpine town, among others. A man who stabbed a teacher to death at his former high school in northern France in October had been under surveillance by French security services for suspected Islamic radicalization.

With long and bitter experience of deadly extremist attacks, France has armed itself with a dense network of police units, intelligence services and investigators who specialize in fighting terrorism, and suspects in terrorism cases can be held longer for questioning.

Hundreds of thousands of background checks have scrutinized Olympic ticket-holders, workers and others involved in the Games and applicants for passes to enter Paris' most tightly controlled security zone, along the Seine's banks. The checks blocked more than 3,900 people from attending, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said. He said some were flagged for suspected Islamic radicalization, left- or right-wing political extremism, significant criminal records and other security concerns.

"We're particularly attentive to Russian and Belorussian citizens," Darmanin added, although he stopped short of linking exclusions to Russia's war in Ukraine and Belarus' role as an ally of Moscow.

Darmanin said 155 people considered to be "very dangerous" potential terror threats are also being kept away from the opening ceremony and the Games, with police searching their homes for weapons and computers in some cases.

He said intelligence services haven't identified any proven terror plots against the Games "but we are being extremely attentive."

Critics fear intrusive Olympic security will stay after the Games

Campaigners for digital rights worry that Olympic surveillance cameras and AI systems could erode privacy and other freedoms, and zero in on people without fixed homes who spend a lot of time in public spaces.

Saccage 2024, a group that has campaigned for months against the Paris Games, took aim at the scope of the Olympic security, describing it as a "repressive arsenal" in a statement to The Associated Press.

"And this is not a French exception, far from it, but a systematic occurrence in host countries," it said. "Is it reasonable to offer one month of 'festivities' to the most well-off tourists at the cost of a long-term securitization legacy for all residents of the city and the country?"

## Small businesses grapple with global tech outages created by CrowdStrike

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and HALELUYA HADERO AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — An owner of a consumer insights research firm couldn't pay her employees, make Friday's deadline to sign a contract for a new business or send key research to a key client. A psychiatrist, who runs a virtual mental health practice in Maryland, saw his business hobbled as some of his virtual

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assistants and therapists couldn't either make phone calls or log on to their computers. And a restaurant owner in New York City was worried about how he was going to pay his vendors and his workers.

Businesses from airlines to hospitals have been grappling with a faulty software update that caused technological havoc worldwide on Friday, and its repercussions continued through the weekend. The breadth of the outages highlighted the fragility of a digitized world dependent on a few providers for key computing services.

But the problem appeared to divide those affected into haves and have-nots. Major customers of Microsoft and CrowdStrike are getting IT support to resolve the issues, but many smaller businesses whose Windows PCs may have received the problematic update are still struggling.

Take Tsvetta Kaleynska, owner and founder of the Manhattan-based consumer insights company RILA Global Consulting, which has Fortune 500 clients. As of Saturday, she resolved the payroll issue and she got an extension until Monday on the research project. But the prospective client will not move forward with the new contract, cutting her annual earnings by nearly 25%, she estimated. The problem: she couldn't sign the contract because DocuSign, which runs on Microsoft software affected by the faulty update, was down.

"If I were part of a big company, then I would be able to delegate and get support from computer science or security services," Kaleynska said. "But as a small business owner, I am depending only on myself. It's pretty devastating."

On top of Kaleynska's business issues, she had to bring her ill daughter to a local hospital Friday because the hospital's phone lines were down.

Kaleynska, an immigrant from Bulgaria who became a U.S. citizen in 2023, said she's learned a hard lesson: "Our lives are very fragile because they're based on technology, and we depend on technology."

CrowdStrike is one of the largest cybersecurity firms in the U.S. and has a list of customers that includes more than half of the Fortune 500 companies as well as small and medium-sized businesses.

Following the outage, the company provided an initial fix through a software update. But many computers are expected to need hands-on work that could take days, if not longer, to complete.

For many small businesses that are impacted, that could mean working around the clock this weekend to make sure their systems are up and running, said Wedbush tech analyst Dan Ives.

"Small businesses rely on third parties for this not to happen and instead, it became a 'code red' situation," Ives said.

Overall, Ives noted tech problems can be easier to fix for big companies that have a sizable number of experts on their payroll as opposed to small businesses who could face more of an "uphill battle" because they have fewer technical resources.

"The ripple effects from this could be felt for days and weeks ahead," Ives said. "It's not just a black eye moment for CrowdStrike, but for the broader industry. You can't have one fat finger update take down a global ecosystem."

Ari Lightman, a professor of digital media at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College, agreed, noting the amount of money big companies spend on Microsoft and CrowdStrike is likely a large portion of their IT budget. On the other hand, small businesses can look at information online on how to resolve the outage. CrowdStrike has posted step-by-step manual fixes to its blog, but it can be intimidating for those who are less tech savvy.

Lightman said those corporations could sue for a loss of business, but small ones might use class action suits to go after CrowdStrike for compensatory damages.

The issue is affecting small businesses differently.

Heather Garlich, a spokeswoman at Arlington, Va., grocery industry group FMI, said the outages were "somewhat spotty and inconsistent depending on how businesses use certain Microsoft tools." She said she was aware of one with an issue with a human resource system, while another had problems with their routing system for distribution. Yet another had issues with its cash registers.

Chris Seabrook, who owns a locksmith services business in Melbourne, Australia, called Asguard Locksmiths, told The Associated Press in a Friday email that the IT outage had thrown a "significant wrench"

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in his daily operations. He hasn't been able to send and receive emails, access critical files, manage his schedule or create invoices.

"My Microsoft PC is essential for many important functions in my business," he wrote. "As a one-man business, every minute counts and this disruption has forced me to adapt quickly to ensure my services remain as uninterrupted as possible."

To minimize the disruption, Seabrook borrowed a non-Microsoft device from a friend that enabled him to sign into his accounts and access some of his critical tools and information. He's also using his smart-phone for important messages and organizing his schedule. And he's been contacting clients to update them on the situation. Seabrook didn't immediately respond to a follow-up email sent by The Associated Press on Saturday.

Some small business owners have improvised to get work done.

Dr. Ozan Toy, a psychiatrist, and chief medical officer at the Maryland-based Telapsychiatry, which has 25 employees across the U.S., said some employees with Microsoft phone lines instead turned to the Ring Central System, while others shifted from Microsoft Teams to Zoom.

Toy said his business was fortunate to have several backups of its electronic medical record system, allowing them to resume communications with each other and their patients. As of Sunday, the practice's cloud based services were running, he said. Toy noted financial losses were "minimal" as it has an external answering service taking calls from patients.

Chris Delmond, the co-owner of Handcraft Hospitality, which operates three restaurants in Manhattan and one in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, said his restaurants remained open for business. But the outage meant he could not have access to his cloud-based accounting software app on the Microsoft platform. That prevented him from seeing receipts and invoices, and slowed his ability to process checks to his employees and suppliers. He had to resort to calling his banks to see whether deposits had been made and check balances.

"I'm a small business owner. I have two other partners and we kind of do everything," he said. "So it's up to us to find out what the issues are. I don't have large platforms that help me track."

But by late Friday afternoon, all the issues related to his business' cloud based systems were back to normal, Delmond said. He noted he didn't suffer any financial losses, but he added, "It's frustrating, but as a small business owner you deal with the ups and downs."

## **Secret Service chief noted a 'zero fail mission.'**

### **After Trump rally, she's facing calls to resign**

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Kimberly Cheatle led the Secret Service's operations to safeguard the American president and other dignitaries, she said she would talk to agents in training about the "awesome responsibility" of their job.

"This agency and the Secret Service has a zero fail mission," Cheatle, who is now director of the agency, said in 2021 during a Secret Service podcast called "Standing Post." "They have to come in every day prepared and ready with their game face on."

Now, the Secret Service and its director are under intense scrutiny over that "zero fail" mission following an assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump during a July 13 rally in Pennsylvania that wounded his ear. Lawmakers and others across the political spectrum are questioning how a gunman could get so close to the Republican presidential nominee when he was supposed to be carefully guarded.

Adding to that scrutiny is the agency's acknowledgment late Saturday that it had refused to grant some of the Trump campaign's requests for added security at his events, after initially denying that it had done so.

Cheatle, who will testify before lawmakers Monday after congressional committees and the Biden administration launched a series of investigations, told ABC News that the shooting was "unacceptable." When asked who bears the most responsibility, she said ultimately it is the Secret Service that protects

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the former president.

"The buck stops with me," Cheatle said. "I am the director of the Secret Service." She said she has no plans to resign, and so far she has the administration's backing.

Democratic President Joe Biden appointed Cheatle in August 2022 to take over an agency with a history of scandals, and she worked to bolster diverse hiring, especially of women in the male-dominated service. The second woman to lead the Secret Service, Cheatle worked her way up for 27 years before leaving in 2021 for a job as a security executive at PepsiCo. Biden brought her back.

Now, she faces her most serious challenge: figuring out what went wrong with the agency's core responsibility to protect presidents and whether she can maintain the support — or the job itself — to make changes.

Details are still unfolding about signs of trouble the day of the assassination attempt, including the steps taken by the Secret Service and local authorities to secure a building that the shooter, Thomas Matthew Crooks, climbed within an estimated 147 yards (135 meters) of where Trump was speaking. An ex-fire chief at the rally, Corey Comperatore, was killed and two others were wounded.

The Biden administration has directed an independent review of security at the rally. The Homeland Security Department's inspector general has opened three investigations and congressional committees have launched others as calls mount for Cheatle to resign. Two Republican senators demanding answers followed her as she walked through the Republican National Convention this past week.

"The nation deserves answers and accountability," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., posted on the social media platform X. "New leadership at the Secret Service would be an important step in that direction."

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said on X that Biden should fire Cheatle immediately, noting Comperatore's death and saying that "we ... were millimeters away from losing President Trump. It is inexcusable." Rep. Brendan Boyle, D-Pa., said in a statement Saturday that "the evidence coming to light has shown unacceptable operational failures" and he would have no confidence in Cheatle's leadership if she were to stay in the job.

The House Oversight and Accountability Committee subpoenaed Cheatle to appear Monday, and she is expected to be there. Kristie Canegallo, Homeland Security's acting deputy secretary, said the department has the "utmost confidence" in Cheatle.

The committee chairman, Rep. James Comer, R-Ky., said "the American people have lots of questions and they deserve answers. And this hearing tomorrow will serve as the beginning of that process to get answers for the American people as to what went wrong with an agency that has a no-fail mission." He told "Fox News Sunday" that Cheatle should expect about a six-hour hearing with "hundreds of questions that she's going to have to answer and the American people will be watching."

After the shooting, Cheatle and the female Secret Service agents who protected Trump have faced scathing criticism and questions about whether Cheatle lowered hiring standards. Supporters are adamant that has not happened.

"It is disrespectful to the women of the Secret Service of the Department of Homeland Security and to women law enforcement officers around the nation to imply that their gender disqualifies them from service to the nation and their communities," said Canegallo.

Like many law enforcement agencies, the Secret Service has been wrestling with how to attract and retain agents and officers.

Women account for about 24% of the agency's staff, according to the agency's website. In a May 2023 interview with CBS News, Cheatle said she was conscious of the "need to attract diverse candidates and ensure that we are developing and giving opportunities to everybody in our workforce, and particularly women."

Two years ago, Cheatle took over the agency of 7,800 special agents, uniformed officers and other staffers whose main purpose is protecting presidents, vice presidents, their families, former presidents and others. In announcing her appointment, Biden said Cheatle had served on his vice presidential detail

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and called her a “distinguished law enforcement professional with exceptional leadership skills” who had his “complete trust.”

Cheatle took the reins from James M. Murray as multiple congressional committees and an internal watchdog investigated missing text messages from when Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. The Secret Service says they were purged during a technology transition.

Going back further, there have been other problems at the Secret Service, including a prostitution scandal before President Barack Obama’s trip to Colombia in 2012 and a man who jumped over the White House fence in 2014 and made it into the building.

The Homeland Security Department did not make Cheatle available for an interview, but Canegallo defended her work. Canegallo said Cheatle advocated for a law passed this year that authorized overtime pay for Secret Service agents and successfully oversaw nine high-profile events such as political conventions. The agency under her watch protected Biden during his trip to Ukraine without problems, Canegallo said.

During the podcast, Cheatle talked about how much planning goes into events that the Secret Service oversees — from bad weather and COVID-19 to threats of violence.

“It’s our job to kind of sit back and ‘What if?’ every potential threat and scenario,” she said.

Cheatle applied for the Secret Service while she was still in college. She was told to wait until she had graduated and said in the podcast that it ultimately took a little over two years to get hired: “I was pretty persistent.”

After training, she was assigned to the Detroit office where she spent a little over four years. Cheatle transferred to Washington where she served on the Treasury secretary’s detail and protected Vice President Dick Cheney, including on 9/11.

Other positions during her time with the agency include special agent in charge of the Atlanta field office and special agent in charge of the agency’s training facility in Maryland. She became the first woman to be named assistant director of protective operations, the division that provides protection to the president and other dignitaries where she oversaw a \$133.5 million budget.

## **Bangladesh’s top court scales back government jobs quota after deadly unrest that has killed scores**

By JULHAS ALAM, AL EMRUN GARJON and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — Bangladesh’s top court on Sunday scaled back a controversial quota system for government job applicants, a partial victory for student protesters after days of nationwide unrest and deadly clashes between police and demonstrators that have killed scores of people.

Students, frustrated by shortages of good jobs, have been demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh’s war of independence in 1971. The government previously halted it in 2018 following mass student protests, but in June, Bangladesh’s High Court reinstated the quotas and set off a new round of protests.

Ruling on an appeal, the Supreme Court ordered that the veterans’ quota be cut to 5%, with 93% of jobs to be allocated on merit. The remaining 2% will be set aside for members of ethnic minorities and transgender and disabled people.

The protests have posed the most serious challenge to Bangladesh’s government since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won a fourth consecutive term in January elections that the main opposition groups boycotted. Universities have been closed, the internet has been shut off and the government has ordered people to stay at home.

With most communications offline, it was unclear whether the verdict satisfied protesting students, but a lawyer representing some student groups called the court’s decision historic. Shah Monjurul Haque said it was a start to reforming the problematic quota system.

“Everyone should abide by the verdict. I urge all protestors to return to their homes,” said Haque.

Law Minister Anisul Haq of the ruling Awami League party also welcomed the court’s decision and said

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it “well thought of.”

The protests turned deadly on Tuesday, a day after students at Dhaka University began clashing with police. Violence continued to escalate as police fired tear gas and rubber bullets and hurled smoke grenades to scatter stone-throwing protesters.

Bangladeshi authorities haven’t shared any official numbers of those killed and injured, but at least four local newspapers on Sunday reported that over 100 people have been killed.

An Associated Press reporter on Friday saw security forces fire rubber bullets and tear gas at a crowd of more than 1,000 protesters who had gathered outside the head office of state-run Bangladesh Television, which was attacked and set on fire by protesters the previous day. The incident left streets littered with bullets and marked by smears of blood.

Sporadic clashes in some parts of Dhaka, the capital, were reported on Saturday but it was not immediately clear whether there were any fatalities.

Hasnat Abdullah, a leader from the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, spearheading the protests, said many people have been killed, “so the state should take responsibility.”

Ahead of the Supreme Court hearing, soldiers patrolled cities across the South Asian country. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the stay-at-home order will be relaxed from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday for people to run essential errands.

Meanwhile, the government has declared Sunday and Monday as public holidays, with only emergency services allowed to operate.

Protesters argue the quota system is discriminatory and benefits supporters of Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement, saying it should be replaced with a merit-based system. Hasina has defended the quota system, saying that veterans deserve the highest respect for their contributions in the war against Pakistan, regardless of their political affiliation.

Representatives from both sides met late Friday in an attempt to reach a resolution and Law Minister Anisul Huq said the government was open to discussing their demands. In addition to quota reform, the demands included the reopening of university dormitories and for some university officials to step down after failing to protect campuses.

The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party has backed the protests, vowing to organize its own demonstrations as many of its supporters have joined the student-led protests. However, BNP said in a statement its followers were not responsible for the violence and denied the ruling party’s accusations of using the protests for political gains.

The Awami League and the BNP have often accused each other of fueling political chaos and violence, most recently ahead of the country’s national election, which was marred by a crackdown on several opposition figures. Hasina’s government had accused the opposition party of attempting to disrupt the vote.

## Meet some of the world’s cleanest pigs, raised to grow kidneys and hearts for humans

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

BLACKSBURG, Va. (AP) — Wide-eyed piglets rushing to check out the visitors to their unusual barn just might represent the future of organ transplantation – and there’s no rolling around in the mud here.

The first gene-edited pig organs ever transplanted into people came from animals born on this special research farm in the Blue Ridge mountains – behind locked gates, where entry requires washing down your vehicle, swapping your clothes for medical scrubs and stepping into tubs of disinfectant to clean your boots between each air-conditioned barn.

“These are precious animals,” said David Ayares of Revivicor Inc., who spent decades learning to clone pigs with just the right genetic changes to allow those first audacious experiments.

The biosecurity gets even tighter just a few miles away in Christiansburg, Virginia, where a new herd is being raised – pigs expected to supply organs for formal studies of animal-to-human transplantation as

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soon as next year.

This massive first-of-its-kind building bears no resemblance to a farm. It's more like a pharmaceutical plant. And part of it is closed to all but certain carefully chosen employees who take a timed shower, don company-provided clothes and shoes, and then enter an enclave where piglets are growing up.

Behind that protective barrier are some of the world's cleanest pigs. They breathe air and drink water that's better filtered against contaminants than what's required for people. Even their feed gets disinfected – all to prevent them from picking up any possible infections that might ultimately harm a transplant recipient.

"We designed this facility to protect the pigs against contamination from the environment and from people," said Matthew VonEsch of United Therapeutics, Revivacor's parent company. "Every person that enters this building is a possible pathogen risk."

The Associated Press got a peek at what it takes to clone and raise designer pigs for their organs – including a \$75 million "designated pathogen-free facility" built to meet Food and Drug Administration safety standards for xenotransplantation.

### Creating pigs to ease the shortage of human organs

Thousands of Americans each year die waiting for a transplant, and many experts acknowledge there never will be enough human donors to meet the need.

Animals offer the tantalizing promise of a ready-made supply. After decades of failed attempts, companies including Revivacor, eGenesis and Makana Therapeutics are engineering pigs to be more humanlike.

So far in the U.S. there have been four "compassionate use" transplants, last-ditch experiments into dying patients — two hearts and two kidneys. Revivacor provided both hearts and one of the kidneys. While the four patients died within a few months, they offered valuable lessons for researchers ready to try again in people who aren't quite as sick.

Now the FDA is evaluating promising results from experiments in donated human bodies and awaiting results of additional studies of pig organs in baboons before deciding next steps.

They're semi-custom organs — "we're growing these pigs to the size of the recipient," Ayares noted — that won't show the wear-and-tear of aging or chronic disease like most organs donated by people.

Transplant surgeons who've retrieved organs on Revivacor's farm "go, 'Oh my god that's the most beautiful kidney I've ever seen,'" Ayares added. "Same thing when they get the heart, a pink healthy happy heart from a young animal."

The main challenges: how to avoid rejection and whether the animals might carry some unknown infection risk.

The process starts with modifying genes in pig skin cells in a lab. Revivacor initially deleted a gene that produces a sugar named alpha-gal, which triggers immediate destruction from the human immune system. Next came three-gene "knockouts," to remove other immune-triggering red flags. Now the company is focusing on 10 gene edits — deleted pig genes and added human ones that together lessen risk of rejection and blood clots plus limit organ size.

### They clone pigs with those alterations, similar to how Dolly the sheep was created.

Twice a week, slaughterhouses ship Revivacor hundreds of eggs retrieved from sow ovaries. Working in the dark with the light-sensitive eggs, scientists peer through a microscope while suctioning out the maternal DNA. Then they slip in the genetic modifications.

"Tuck it in nice and smooth," murmurs senior researcher Lori Sorrells, pushing to just the right spot without rupturing the egg. Mild electric shocks fuse in the new DNA and activate embryo growth.

Ayares, a molecular geneticist who heads Revivacor and helped create the world's first cloned pigs in 2000, says the technique is "like playing two video games at the same time," holding the egg in place with one hand and manipulating it with the other. The company's first modified pig, the GalSafe single gene knockout, now is bred instead of cloned. If xenotransplantation eventually works, other pigs with the desired gene combinations would be, too.

Hours later, embryos are carried to the research farm in a handheld incubator and implanted into waiting sows.



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Luxury accommodations for important pigs

On the research farm, Tom Petty's "Free Fallin'" was serenading a piglet barn, where music acclimates the youngsters to human voices. In air-conditioned pens, the animals grunted excited greetings until it's obvious their visitors brought no treats. The 3-week-olds darted back to the security of mom. Next door, older siblings laid down for a nap or checked out balls and other toys.

"It is luxury for a pig," Ayares said. "But these are very valuable animals. They're very smart animals. I've watched piglets play with balls together like soccer."

About 300 pigs of different ages live on this farm, nestled in rolling hills, its exact location undisclosed for security reasons. Tags on their ears identify their genetics.

"There are certain ones I say hi to," said Suyapa Ball, Revivicor's head of porcine technology and farm operations, as she rubbed one pig's back. "You have to give them a good life. They're giving their lives for us."

A subset of pigs used for the most critical experiments – those early attempts with people and the FDA-required baboon studies – are housed in more restricted, even cleaner barns.

But in neighboring Christiansburg is the clearest signal that xenotransplantation is entering a new phase — the sheer size of United Therapeutics' new pathogen-free facility. Inside the 77,000-square-foot building, the company expects to produce about 125 pig organs a year, likely enough to supply clinical trials.

Company video shows piglets running around behind the protective barrier, chewing on toys and nosing balls back and forth.

They were born in sort of a porcine birthing center connected to the facility, weaned a day or two later and moved into their super-clean pens to be hand-raised. In addition to the on-site shower, their caretakers must put on a new protective suit and mask before entering each suite of pig pens — another precaution against germs.

The pig zone is surrounded on all sides by security and mechanical systems that shield the animals. Outside air enters through multiple filtration systems. Giant vats hold backup supplies of drinking water. Standing over the pig rooms, VonEsch showed how pipes and vents were placed to allow maintenance and repair without any animal contact.

It will take years of clinical trials to prove whether xenotransplantation really could work. But if it succeeds, United Therapeutics' plan is for even larger facilities, capable of producing up to 2,000 organs a year, in several places around the country.

The field is at a point where multiple kinds of studies "are telling us that there's no train wrecks, that there's no immediate rejection," Ayares said. "The next two or three years are going to be super exciting."

## What to know about the Kids Online Safety Act and its chances of passing

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

The last time Congress passed a law to protect children on the internet was in 1998 — before Facebook, before the iPhone and long before today's oldest teenagers were born. Now, a bill aiming to protect kids from the harms of social media, gaming sites and other online platforms appears to have enough bipartisan support to pass, though whether it actually will remains uncertain.

Supporters, however, hope it will come to a vote later this month.

Proponents of the Kids Online Safety Act include parents' groups and children's advocacy organizations as well as companies like Microsoft, X and Snap. They say the bill is a necessary first step in regulating tech companies and requiring them to protect children from dangerous online content and take responsibility for the harm their platforms can cause.

Opponents, however, fear KOSA would violate the First Amendment and harm vulnerable kids who wouldn't be able to access information on LGBTQ issues or reproductive rights — although the bill has been revised to address many of those concerns, and major LGBTQ groups have decided to support of

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the proposed legislation.

Here is what to know about KOSA and the likelihood of it going into effect.

What would KOSA do?

If passed, KOSA would create a “duty of care” — a legal term that requires companies to take reasonable steps to prevent harm — for online platforms minors will likely use.

They would have to “prevent and mitigate” harms to children, including bullying and violence, the promotion of suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, sexual exploitation and advertisements for illegal products such as narcotics, tobacco or alcohol.

Social media platforms would also have to provide minors with options to protect their information, disable addictive product features, and opt out of personalized algorithmic recommendations. They would also be required to limit other users from communicating with children and limit features that “increase, sustain, or extend the use” of the platform — such as autoplay for videos or platform rewards. In general, online platforms would have to default to the safest settings possible for accounts it believes belong to minors.

“So many of the harms that young people experience online and on social media are the result of deliberate design choices that these companies make,” said Josh Golin, executive director of Fairplay, a nonprofit working to insulate children from commercialization, marketing and harms from Big Tech.

How would it be enforced?

An earlier version of the bill empowered state attorneys general to enforce KOSA’s “duty of care” provision but after concerns from LGBTQ groups and others who worried they could use this to censor information about LGBTQ or reproductive issues. In the updated version, state attorneys general can still enforce other provisions but not the “duty of care” standard.

Broader enforcement would fall to the Federal Trade Commission, which would have oversight over what types of content is “harmful” to children.

Who supports it?

KOSA is supported a broad range of nonprofits, tech accountability and parent groups and pediatricians such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Federation of Teachers, Common Sense Media, Fairplay, The Real Facebook Oversight Board and the NAACP. Some prominent tech companies, including Microsoft, X and Snap, have also signed on. Meta Platforms, which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, has not come out in firm support or opposition of the bill, although it has said in the past that it supports the regulation of social media.

ParentSOS, a group of some 20 parents who have lost children to harm caused by social media, has also been campaigning for the bill’s passage. One of those parents is Julienne Anderson, whose 17-year-old daughter died in 2022 after purchasing tainted drugs through Instagram.

“We should not bear the entire responsibility of keeping our children safe online,” she said. “Every other industry has been regulated. And I’m sure you’ve heard this all the time. From toys to movies to music to, cars to everything. We have regulations in place to keep our children safe. And this, this is a product that they have created and distributed and yet over all these years, since the ‘90s, there hasn’t been any legislation regulating the industry.”

KOSA was introduced in 2022 by Senators Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn. It currently has 68 cosponsors in the Senate, from across the political spectrum, which would be enough to pass if it were brought to a vote.

Who opposes it?

The ACLU, the Electronic Frontier Foundation and other groups supporting free speech are concerned it would violate the First Amendment. Even with the revisions that stripped state attorneys general from enforcing its duty of care provision, EFF calls it a “dangerous and unconstitutional censorship bill that would empower state officials to target services and online content they do not like.”

Kate Ruane, director of the Free Expression Project at the nonprofit Center for Democracy and Technology, said she remains concerned that the bill’s care of duty provision can be “misused by politically motivated actors to target marginalized communities like the LGBTQ population and just politically divisive information generally,” to try to suppress information because someone believes it is harmful to kids’ mental health.

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She added that while these worries remain, there has been progress in reducing concerns.

The bigger issue, though, she added, is that platforms don't want to get sued for showing minors content that could be "politically divisive," so to make sure this doesn't happen they could suppress such topics — about abortion or transgender healthcare or even the wars in Gaza or Ukraine.

Sen. Rand Paul, R-K.Y., has also expressed opposition to the bill. Paul said the bill "could prevent kids from watching PGA golf or the Super Bowl on social media because of gambling and beer ads, those kids could just turn on the TV and see those exact same ads."

He added he has "tried to work with the authors to fix the bill's many deficiencies. If the authors are not interested in compromise, Senator (Chuck) Schumer can bring the bill to the floor, as he could have done from the beginning."

Will it pass Congress?

Golin said he is "very hopeful" that the bill will come to a vote in July.

"The reason it has not come to a vote yet is that passing legislation is really hard, particularly when you're trying to regulate one of the, if not the most powerful industry in the world," he said. "We are outspent."

Golin added he thinks there's a "really good chance" and he remains very hopeful that it will get passed.

Senate Majority Leader Schumer, D-N.Y., who has come out in support of KOSA, would have to bring it to a vote.

Schumer has backed the legislation but has not yet set aside floor time to pass it. Because there are objections to the legislation, it would take a week or more of procedural votes before a final vote.

He said on the floor last week that passing the bill is a "top priority" but that it had not yet moved because of the objections.

"Sadly, a few of our colleagues continue to block these bills without offering any constructive ideas for how to revise the text," he said. "So now we must look ahead, and all options are on the table."

## Today in History: July 22, First solo around-the-world flight

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, July 22, the 204th day of 2024. There are 162 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 22, 1933, Aviator Wiley Post landed at Floyd Bennett Field in New York City, completing the first solo flight around the world in 7 days, 18 hours and 49 minutes.

Also on this date:

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln presented to his Cabinet a preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation.

In 1934, bank robber John Dillinger was shot to death by federal agents outside Chicago's Biograph Theater, where he had just seen the Clark Gable movie "Manhattan Melodrama."

In 1937, the U.S. Senate rejected President Franklin D. Roosevelt's proposal to add more justices to the Supreme Court.

In 1942, the Nazis began transporting Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to the Treblinka concentration camp.

In 1943, American forces led by Gen. George S. Patton captured Palermo, Sicily, during World War II.

In 1975, the House of Representatives joined the Senate in voting to restore the American citizenship of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.

In 1991, police in Milwaukee arrested Jeffrey Dahmer, who later confessed to murdering 17 men and boys.

In 1992, Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar escaped from his luxury prison near Medellin (meh-deh-YEEN'). (He was slain by security forces in December 1993.)

In 1999, the Woodstock '99 four-day music festival began; the event would ultimately be marred by destruction and violence by concertgoers amid lax security and stifling heat.

In 2011, Anders Breivik (AHN'-durs BRAY'-vihk), a self-described "militant nationalist," massacred 69 people

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at a Norwegian island youth retreat after detonating a bomb in nearby Oslo that killed eight others in the nation's worst violence since World War II.

In 2015, a federal grand jury indictment charged Dylann Roof, the young man accused of killing nine Black church members in Charleston, South Carolina, with 33 counts including hate crimes that made him eligible for the death penalty. (Roof would become the first person sentenced to death for a federal hate crime; he is on death row at a federal prison in Indiana.)

In 2022, Steve Bannon, a longtime ally of former President Donald Trump, was convicted of contempt charges for defying a congressional subpoena from the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. (Bannon is currently serving his four-month sentence in federal prison.)

Today's Birthdays: Author Tom Robbins is 92. Actor Terence Stamp is 86. Singer George Clinton is 83. Actor-singer Bobby Sherman is 81. Former Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, is 81. Movie writer-director Paul Schrader is 78. Actor Danny Glover is 78. Singer Mireille Mathieu is 78. Actor-comedian-director Albert Brooks is 77. Rock singer Don Henley is 77. Author S.E. Hinton is 76. Film composer Alan Menken is 75. Jazz musician Al Di Meola (mee-OH'-lah) is 70. Actor Willem Dafoe is 69. Actor John Leguizamo is 64. R&B singer Keith Sweat is 63. Folk singer Emily Saliers (Indigo Girls) is 61. Actor-comedian David Spade is 60. Actor Rhys Ifans (rees EYE'-fanz) is 57. Actor/singer Jaime Camil is 51. Singer Rufus Wainwright is 51. Actor Franka Potente (poh-TEN'-tay) is 50. Actor Selena Gomez is 32. NFL running back Ezekiel Elliott is 29. Britain's Prince George of Wales is 11.