

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 1 of 66

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Groton Post 39 Defeats Moberidge Legion 18U On Back Of Clutch Display From Braxton Imrie](#)
- [5- Bradin Althoff Drives In 4 To Lead Groton Post 39 Past W.I.N. Legion Baseball; Groton on 7 game winning streak](#)
- [6- GDI Fitness New Program ad](#)
- [7- SD SearchLight: Gamblers spend \\$750 million in Deadwood during first half of 2024](#)
- [7- SD SearchLight: Doctors form group to support abortion-rights ballot measure](#)
- [8- SD SearchLight: Democratic delegates swiftly give Harris enough support to clinch presidential nomination](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: State police warned Secret Service about Trump shooter, Pennsylvania chief says](#)
- [11- Weather Pages](#)
- [16- Daily Devotional](#)
- [17- Subscription Form](#)
- [18- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [19- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [20- News from the Associated Press](#)

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.

Legion Region 6B at Clark: Groton vs. Hitmen, 7 p.m.

Thursday, July 25

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, Harvard beets, acini depepi fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA (bring a guest, light supper and guest speaker: Kristi Anderson)

Story Time at Wage Memorial Library 10 a.m.

Summer Downtown Sip & Shop, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Treasures Amidst the Trials, Emmanuel Lutheran, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Legion Regions at Clark

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Friday, July 26

Senior Menu: Bratwurst on bun, sauerkraut, 3-bean salad, whole wheat bread.

Ferney Open Golf Tourney, 9 a.m., Olive Grove Golf Course

State Teener Tournament at Garretson

Legion Regions at Clark

Saturday, July 27

Common Cents Community Thrift Store open, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Celebration in the Park, 1 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

State Softball Tournament in Watertown (U10B, U12)

State Teener Tournament at Garretson

Legion Regions at Clark

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

1440

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Netanyahu on the Hill

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will address Congress today at the request of House Speaker Mike Johnson (R, LA-4) to shore up support for Israel's war in Gaza. Netanyahu will meet President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris this week and former President Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, Friday. Protesters opposing the war are poised to descend on Capitol Hill today.

Meanwhile, Palestinian factions led by Hamas and its rival group Fatah signed a declaration of unity in Beijing to form a temporary government for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The Chinese-brokered deal, which includes 12 smaller factions, outlines how the two bigger rival groups could work together following the end of the Israel-Hamas war. Israel has said it opposes a government in Gaza run by Hamas or the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority.

Separately, the World Health Organization warned of a potential polio outbreak in Gaza after finding traces of the virus in groundwater.

Delta Air Lines Probe

The US Department of Transportation has launched an investigation into Delta Air Lines' treatment of passengers following last week's CrowdStrike outage. The outage caused widespread disruptions to 8.5 million Microsoft Windows-based systems and led to the airline canceling over 7,000 flights since Friday.

While the outage affected booking, check-in, and boarding pass processes across many airlines, most carriers have largely resumed normal operations. Delta, which uses Microsoft for more than half of its IT infrastructure, cites issues with its crew-tracking tool's ability to process the high number of changes as the primary cause for its ongoing delays. The DOT has received numerous complaints about Delta's customer service, including long wait times and stranded passengers. Delta says it has offered travel waivers, meal vouchers, and compensation to affected travelers.

While airlines can determine their own compensation policies for flight delays, federal law mandates refunds for significant delays or flight cancellations. Southwest Airlines was fined a record \$140M for a similar operational meltdown during the 2022 holiday season.

Chandra Turns 25

NASA marked 25 years since it launched its X-ray observatory Chandra yesterday by publishing 25 previously unseen cosmic images the telescope has collected since its inception.

Named after Indian American Nobel laureate and astrophysicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, Chandra is the most powerful X-ray observatory in operation. X-rays originate when matter is heated to millions of degrees, commonly in high-energy regions with extreme magnetic or gravitational forces. The telescope has helped reveal the nature of supernovas and galaxy clusters, and has detected X-rays from within 55 miles of a black hole's event horizon, among other discoveries.

The 65-foot structure orbits Earth in an elliptical shape every 64 hours, swinging close to Earth before hurtling far beyond the Van Allen radiation belts—dense rings of magnetized solar particles around Earth. From there, it can capture X-ray data unobstructed for 55 hours every orbit.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 3 of 66

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2024 Paris Olympics kick off today with men's soccer and rugby sevens; see full schedule of events. Saturday's WNBA All-Star Game hauled in 3.44 million viewers, the third highest telecast ever for a WNBA game and more than four times the viewers of 2023's All-Star Game.

The 81st Venice Film Festival's (Aug. 28-Sept. 7) full lineup announced, including world premieres of sequels to "Joker" and "Beetlejuice".

Science & Technology

Meta launches Llama 3.1, the newest version of its flagship large language model and the largest open-source model available; platform was trained on more than 400 billion parameters.

Preliminary data suggest Sunday was Earth's warmest day on record since scientists began tracking global averages in 1940; worldwide surface air temperature notched 62.76 degrees Fahrenheit.

Scientists discover sex-based differences in the brain circuitry linked to different rates of neurological and mental health conditions between males and females.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.2%, Dow -0.1%, Nasdaq -0.1%) in continued turn from tech stocks.

Tesla shares fall 8% in after-hours trading after earnings report reveals profit fell for second consecutive quarter.

Israeli cybersecurity company Wiz rejects \$23B Google takeover amid antitrust concerns, will instead launch initial public offering; deal would have been Google's biggest-ever acquisition.

US existing home prices reach record high in June for second consecutive month, with median home price soaring to \$426.9K; home sales declined to lowest levels since December.

Politics & World Affairs

President Joe Biden to deliver Oval Office address tonight at 8 pm ET on his decision to end his 2024 reelection bid.

Vice President Kamala Harris speaks at first campaign rally in Milwaukee since securing enough delegate pledges to win the Democratic nomination.

Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle resigns following House Oversight Committee testimony surrounding assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump.

House leaders announce a bipartisan task force to investigate Trump assassination attempt.

Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) announces he will resign next month following conviction on corruption charges.

Region Tournament at Clark

Groton Post 39 Defeats Mobridge Legion 18U On Back Of Clutch Display From Braxton Imrie

By GameChanger Media

Braxton Imrie drove in four runs on two hits to lead Groton Post 39 past Mobridge Legion 18U 25-2 on Tuesday. Imrie doubled in the second scoring two, walked in the first scoring one, walked in the fourth scoring one, and singled in the fifth scoring one.

Groton Post 39 jumped out to the lead in the top of the first inning after Bradin Althoff grounded out, scoring two runs, Colby Dunker doubled, scoring one run, and Imrie drew a walk, scoring one run.

Mack Saxon homered to left field, scoring two runs in the bottom of the first for the Mobridge Legion 18U.

Groton Post 39 scored six runs on two hits in the top of the second inning. Althoff grounded out, scoring one run, Gavin Englund was struck by a pitch, driving in a run, Imrie doubled, scoring two runs, and Taylor Diegel doubled, scoring two runs.

Groton Post 39 scored nine runs on five hits in the top of the third inning. Dunker grounded out, scoring one run, Ryan Groeblichhoff singled, scoring one run, Korbin Kucker singled, scoring two runs, Dillon Abeln drew a walk, scoring one run, Brevin Flihs hit a sacrifice fly, scoring one run, Althoff tripled, scoring two runs, and a wild pitch scored one run.

Nick Morris pitched three innings in relief for Groton Post 39. The reliever gave up zero hits and zero runs while, striking out two and walking one. Groeblichhoff led things off on the hill for Groton Post 39. They surrendered three hits and two runs over two innings, striking out one and walking none. Saxon opened the game for Mobridge Legion 18U. The righty surrendered two hits and four runs over two-thirds of an inning, striking out one and walking five.

Groton Post 39 tallied 14 hits in the game. Imrie and Diegel each collected two hits for Groton Post 39. Althoff and Imrie each drove in four runs for Groton Post 39. Groton Post 39 had a strong eye at the plate, amassing 15 walks for the game. Abeln and Imrie led the team with three walks each. Abeln, Imrie, Dunker, and Diegel each stole multiple bases for Groton Post 39. Groton Post 39 ran wild on the base paths, accumulating 13 stolen bases for the game. Groton Post 39 didn't commit a single error in the field. Althoff had the most chances in the field with six.

Saxon drove the middle of the lineup, leading Mobridge Legion 18U with two runs batted in. The cleanup hitter went 1-for-2 on the day. Saxon, Wesley Arnott, and Taylor Carmody each collected one hit for Mobridge Legion 18U.

Region Tournament at Clark

Bradin Althoff Drives In 4 To Lead Groton Post 39 Past W.I.N. Legion Baseball; Groton on 7 game winning streak **By GameChanger Media**

Bradin Althoff drove in four runs on three hits to lead Groton Post 39 past W.I.N. Legion Baseball 9-2 on Tuesday. Althoff tripled in the first scoring two, doubled in the second scoring one, and singled in the fourth scoring one.

Groton Post 39 jumped out to the lead in the top of the first inning after Althoff tripled, scoring two runs, and Ryan Groeblichhoff singled, scoring one run.

Groton Post 39 added to their early lead in the top of the second inning after Teylor Diegel singled, W.I.N. Legion Baseball committed an error, and Althoff doubled, each scoring one run.

Dillon Abeln stepped on the mound first for Groton Post 39. The starting pitcher allowed five hits and two runs (zero earned) over five innings, striking out four and walking none. Ashton Remily stepped on the hill first for W.I.N. Legion Baseball. The lefty surrendered nine hits and eight runs (three earned) over four and one-third innings, striking out six and walking two. Althoff threw one and one-third innings of scoreless ball for Groton Post 39 in relief. The southpaw surrendered two hits, striking out one and walking none.

Groton Post 39 piled up 11 hits in the game. Colby Dunker and Brevin Fliehs each collected multiple hits for Groton Post 39.

Devon Fischbach and Dawson Ward each collected two hits for W.I.N. Legion Baseball.

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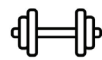
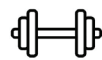
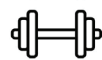
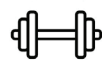
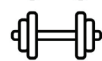
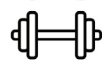
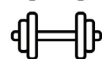
- ☞ for people 60 years of age and older
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SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Gamblers spend \$750 million in Deadwood during first half of 2024

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - JULY 23, 2024 9:19 PM

Spending on gambling in Deadwood reached nearly \$750 million during the first half of the year, according to new monthly data from the state Department of Revenue.

Through June in the city, gamblers had spent about \$700 million playing slot machines, \$43.95 million buying chips for table games, and \$4.36 million betting on sports.

The total spending of \$748.3 million was up 1.5% from the first half of 2023.

The biggest increase was in the relatively new category of sports wagering, which was up 9% from the same period in 2023. South Dakota voters approved sports betting for Deadwood in 2020, adding it to the city's pre-existing gambling offerings.

Casinos kept about \$68 million during the first half of this year after payouts to winners. A 9% tax on that amount produced about \$6 million to help fund the state budget, state efforts to promote tourism, Lawrence County (of which Deadwood is the county seat), and the state Gaming Commission.

Casinos also pay annual license fees to the Gaming Commission that help fund state historical preservation efforts, gambling addiction treatment and counseling, and cities and schools in Lawrence County.

Deadwood and Native American reservations are the only places in the state where full-fledged casino gambling is legal. The National Indian Gaming Commission reported last month that revenue among 45 Native American casinos in the four-state region including South Dakota grew 5% in the 2023 fiscal year to a total of \$426 million.

Doctors form group to support abortion-rights ballot measure

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JULY 23, 2024 5:25 PM

A new group of doctors will join the effort to pass a ballot measure that would reinstate abortion rights in South Dakota.

"Hopefully we can inject some reality into what I'm sure will be a little bit of a contentious, very rhetoric-filled issue," said Amy Kelley, a Sioux Falls OB-GYN and co-chair of the group.

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

The new group is called Doctors for Freedom. It was introduced during an online press conference Tuesday hosted by the Freedom Amendment Coalition, which was also formed to support the ballot measure.

"I think talking about what we have seen as health care providers and what our patients have gone through, and the reality of reproductive care, is really important," Kelley said. "People who don't work in our field, they don't always understand. They don't understand that abortion care is really integral to what we do as OB-GYNs, even if we've never worked in a Planned Parenthood."

Planned Parenthood was formerly the sole abortion provider operating in the state. The group ended its abortion services in South Dakota in 2022, in anticipation of a U.S. Supreme Court decision that overturned federal constitutional abortion rights.

Doctors for Freedom Co-Chair and Rapid City OB-GYN Marvin Buehner said during Tuesday's press conference that he has dealt with many complicated pregnancies for which abortion was a necessary option.

"But we can't offer that here," he said. "And several times in the last month I've had to tell patients that,

'In other states, this is the conversation we'd be having, but I can't offer you that here, and if you think that's best for your care, then we'll have to arrange transfer to another state.'"

South Dakota voters will consider an abortion-rights ballot question on Nov. 5, pending litigation from an anti-abortion group seeking to disqualify the measure from the ballot. A judge dismissed the lawsuit earlier this month, but that decision has been appealed to the state Supreme Court.

The anti-abortion group, Life Defense Fund, responded to Tuesday's news with a statement from co-chair Leslee Unruh.

"I expect more from any doctor," Unruh said in part, adding, "I've been working over 40 years to help women with abortion recovery — so it's absolutely pathetic that this is what pro-abortionists are pushing for."

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

Democratic delegates swiftly give Harris enough support to clinch presidential nomination

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JULY 23, 2024 10:31 AM

Vice President Kamala Harris has won enough endorsements from Democratic delegates to make her the party's presidential nominee, according to unofficial delegate trackers.

A delegate tracker from The Associated Press counted 2,688 delegates who had said by Tuesday morning they would vote for Harris on the first ballot of the party's nominating vote. A candidate needs 1,976 delegates on the first ballot to secure the Democratic nomination.

If the delegates who have endorsed her follow through, Harris will officially become the nominee when the vote occurs next month.

Several state parties met Sunday and Monday after President Joe Biden — who had been the party's presumptive nominee after racking up delegates by sweeping primaries and caucuses this year — took the unprecedented step Sunday afternoon of ending his reelection bid.

Biden endorsed Harris shortly after bowing out, as did many of the state parties holding emergency meetings, elected officials, unions and influential outside groups.

Harris claimed victory in the uncontested nomination race in a Monday night statement after her home-state California delegation endorsed her.

"Tonight, I am proud to have secured the broad support needed to become our party's nominee, and as a daughter of California, I am proud that my home state's delegation helped put our campaign over the top," Harris said in the statement. "I look forward to formally accepting the nomination soon."

The Democratic National Committee is scheduled to meet Wednesday to set up a nomination framework and virtual roll call to select a presidential candidate ahead of the party's national convention from Aug. 19 to Aug. 22 in Chicago.

The pre-convention virtual roll call was meant to comply with an Ohio law requiring parties select a candidate 90 days before Election Day, which Democrats said would have caused problems with their convention schedule.

Harris will also need to select a running mate. The campaign has requested vetting materials from five potential picks, according to an MSNBC report. They are Govs. Roy Cooper of North Carolina, Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan and Tim Walz of Minnesota and Sen. Mark Kelly of Arizona.

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.

State police warned Secret Service about Trump shooter, Pennsylvania chief says

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - JULY 23, 2024 5:56 PM

WASHINGTON — Pennsylvania's top police officer faced questions Tuesday from lawmakers who wanted details on how the U.S. Secret Service and state and local law enforcement communicated when a gunman attempted to assassinate former President Donald Trump, killed one rallygoer and injured two others in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Lawmakers were aghast to learn state police relayed information to the U.S. Secret Service of a suspicious man with a range finder roughly 20 to 25 minutes prior to the July 13 shooting, and that a photo of him was texted to a phone number provided by the federal agency.

The hours-long hearing before the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security occurred as lawmakers continued to probe how an agency tasked with protecting the nation's current and former leaders could allow a 20-year-old wielding a rifle to reach a rooftop in such close proximity to Trump.

The committee's hearing was still ongoing when Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle resigned Tuesday following days of outrage about the agency's failure to stop the gunman before he fired several rounds and injured the former president's right ear. The shots were fired just as Trump turned his head.

Pennsylvania State Police Commissioner Col. Christopher Paris testified that in the lead up to Trump taking the stage in Butler, authorities were responding to several simultaneous incidents — heat-related illnesses among attendees, a missing 6-year-old — and they also had eyes on four suspicious individuals, including Thomas Matthew Crooks of Bethel Park, who was later killed by a Secret Service counter sniper and identified as the shooter.

Paris said that he could not speak to the minute-by-minute timeline of events but told lawmakers that two Butler County Emergency Services Unit officers assigned to monitor the area, including the rooftop, left their post to locate the man who had been spotted with a range finder.

Alert sent

Pennsylvania state police sent an alert and photo of the man to the Secret Service via a phone number the federal agency provided to state authorities, Paris said.

Committee Chair Mark Green, a Tennessee Republican, said he was "totally blown away" that federal law enforcement did not heed the warning and pause the event.

"I find it interesting that this guy is so suspicious, has a range finder, they leave their post that they are manning to go look for him, yet Secret Service, they get told about it 20 to 25 minutes beforehand, but (they) still let the president go on stage," Green said. "But again, there's more details to be had."

Rep. Dan Bishop, a North Carolina Republican, said the agency committed a "colossal failure."

State police participated in a walk-through of the site on July 11 and were told by Secret Service that Butler County ESU would be responsible for monitoring the rooftop where the gunman perched days later, Paris said.

Secret Service was "the lead agency," Paris said.

Paris told the committee that his agency's role in supporting federal law enforcement during presidential and other high-profile visits is "routine" and that his force "provided the Secret Service with everything they requested."

Working with FBI

Paris told lawmakers his agency is now conducting an investigation "parallel to and in concert with" the FBI into the homicide of local former fire chief Corey Comperatore and the attempted murder of two other spectators. As is routine in officer-involved shootings, state police are also investigating the Secret Service counter sniper's killing of Crooks.

"I can tell you that the Pennsylvania State Police will fully cooperate with that investigation," Paris said

in his opening statement. He said he would provide the committee answers that did not compromise that investigation

Paris also told lawmakers that the Secret Service has yet to produce for the state police the detailed day-of operations plan for the ongoing investigation.

Communications concerns

Democratic Rep. Lou Correa of California questioned how the various agencies were using real-time communication technology to talk to each other and said he worried about possible failures as the November election approaches.

"Pennsylvania is a battleground state. You will have these kinds of events again," Correa said. "And to know that we don't have the facts, let alone execute a plan to fix the holes is unacceptable to our democracy, to our country."

Patrick Yoes, national president of Fraternal Order of Police, stressed the importance of interagency communications and said that a platform called FirstNet was developed after 9/11 in response to communication lapses.

"There's infrastructure, but they're not always used in every event," Yoes said, adding that he could not speak to the specific communications on July 13.

"We're not where we need to be on that," ranking Democrat Bennie Thompson of Mississippi said.

'I stood on that roof'

Lawmakers from the Homeland Security Committee visited the site of the attempted assassination Monday and climbed the rooftop to see for themselves how close Crooks was able to get to the event.

At Tuesday's hearing, Rep. Eli Crane of Arizona presented a video he recorded from the rooftop location. "It's not that steep at all. We just had a 70-year-old man back here climb up on the roof," he said, revealing Rep. Carlos Giménez of Florida behind him.

Earlier during questioning Giménez said "I stood on that roof, and yes, I am 70 years old."

The Florida Republican's age was mentioned multiple times as a reference point for Cheate's comments last week that the roof's slope presented too much of a danger to post Secret Service personnel there.

Cheate told ABC News on July 16 that the roof's slope was a "safety factor" in the decision to post law enforcement inside of the building rather than on top.

When asked for his thoughts on Cheate's remarks, Paris said that he "can't agree" with that decision.

Cheate faced nearly five hours of questioning on Capitol Hill Monday, and top lawmakers on the Committee on Oversight and Accountability called for her resignation.

Bipartisan task force

U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries announced Tuesday they will form a task force to understand "what went wrong on the day of the attempted assassination."

The Louisiana Republican and New York Democrat issued a joint press release detailing plans for the task force that will seat seven Republicans and six Democrats, and make legislative and policy recommendations.

"The security failures that allowed an assassination attempt on Donald Trump's life are shocking," the House leaders said. "The task force will be empowered with subpoena authority and will move quickly to find the facts, ensure accountability, and make certain such failures never happen again."

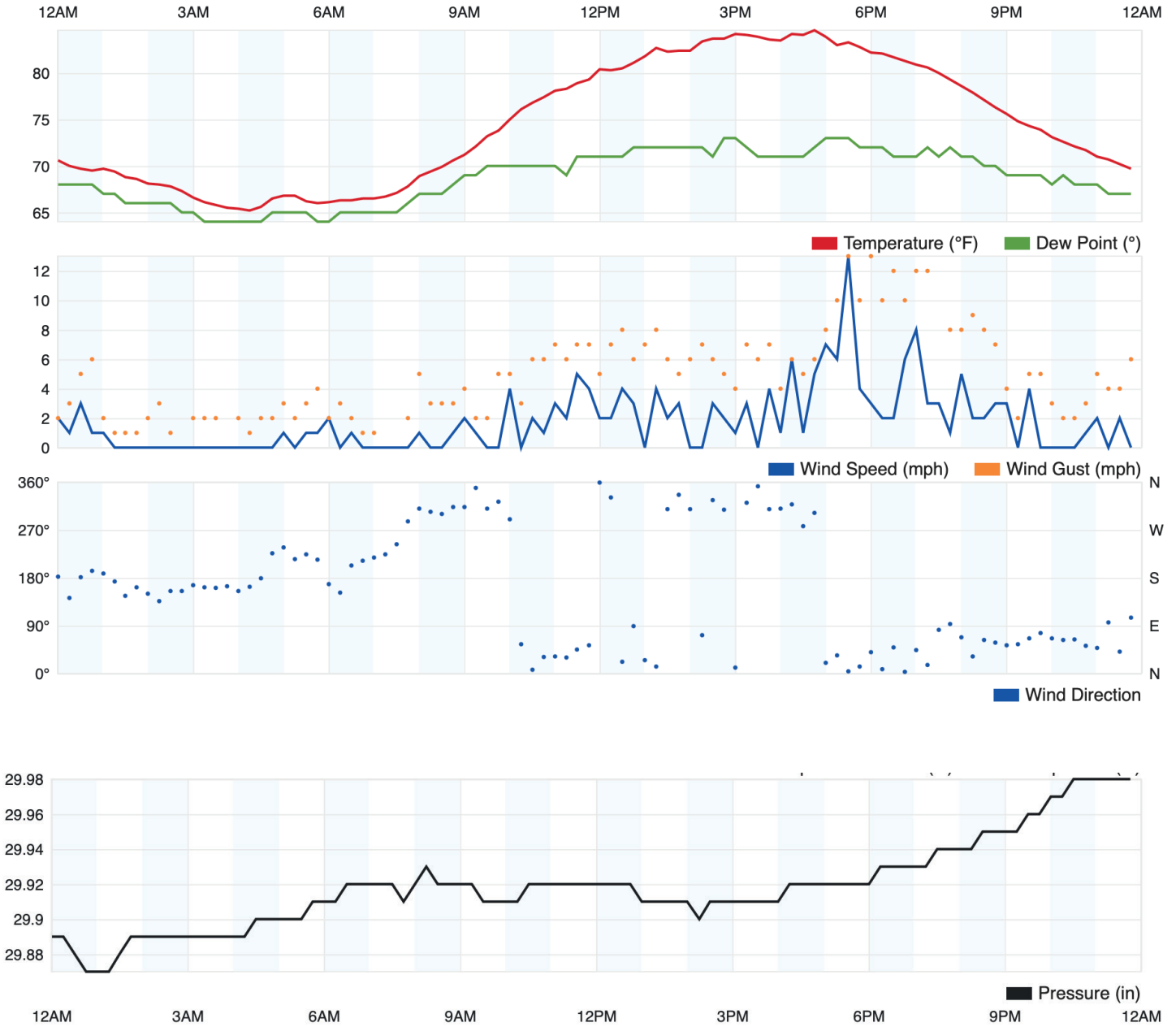
GOP Rep. Mike Kelly, who represents the Butler area, introduced a resolution to establish the task force and attended Tuesday's hearing.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 11 of 66

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 12 of 66

Today



High: 88 °F

Patchy Fog
then Patchy
Smoke

Tonight



Low: 67 °F

Patchy Smoke
then Partly
Cloudy

Thursday



High: 93 °F

Mostly Sunny
then Mostly
Sunny and
Breezy

Thursday
Night



Low: 71 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 95 °F

Hot and
Breezy



Temperatures Warming Through The Week

July 23, 2024
2:31 PM

- Highs for Wednesday reaching the mid to upper 80s, the hottest temperatures of the week and west of the river.
- Hazy with smoke through Wednesday.
- Temperatures will be increasing through rest of the week into the weekend.



HAZE



Make sure to have plenty of water and take breaks if spending time outside!

Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	7/24 Wed	7/25 Thu	7/26 Fri	7/27 Sat	7/28 Sun	Maximum
Aberdeen	88	92	97	95	92	97
Britton	82	88	92	91	88	92
Brookings	80	84	87	88	87	88
Chamberlain	90	92	97	95	92	97
Clark	82	85	90	89	89	90
Eagle Butte	92	96	94	90	85	96
Ellendale	86	91	95	94	86	95
Eureka	87	92	95	88	89	95
Gettysburg	88	91	94	91	89	94
Huron	87	90	93	94	91	94
Kennebec	92	95	97	94	93	97
McIntosh	92	96	95	86	86	96
Milbank	79	85	90	90	88	90
Miller	88	90	95	92	91	95
Mobridge	94	97	97	95	91	97
Murdo	94	96	99	94	91	99
Pierre	96	98	102	97	94	102
Redfield	88	90	95	93	91	95
Sisseton	81	87	92	92	85	92
Watertown	81	85	89	89	88	89
Webster	80	85	89	88	87	89
Wheaton	79	84	90	90	86	90



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Isolated thunderstorms (15-25%) are possible again this afternoon into the evening along with ongoing hazy conditions through Wednesday. Temps will warm up through the week into the weekend.

Broton Daily Independent

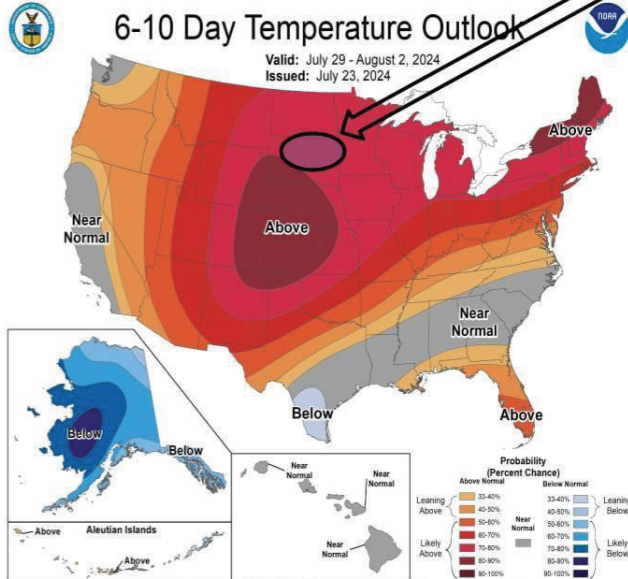
Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 13 of 66



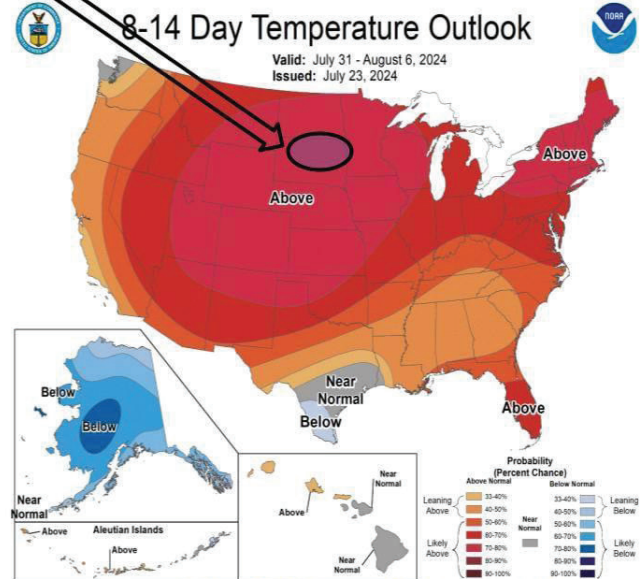
What Does The Beginning Of August Look Like?

July 23, 2024
7:22 PM

This Forecast Area Is Currently Solidly Into The 70-80% Probability Of Above Normal Temperature



From July 29th Through August 2nd



From July 31st Through August 6th



The summer heat is taking over. Above normal temperatures appear to be setting up for the last seven days of July and the first seven days of August.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 14 of 66

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 2:40 PM

Low Temp: 65 °F at 4:07 AM

Wind: 13 mph at 5:31 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 4 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 108 in 1931

Record Low: 46 in 1905

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 2.52

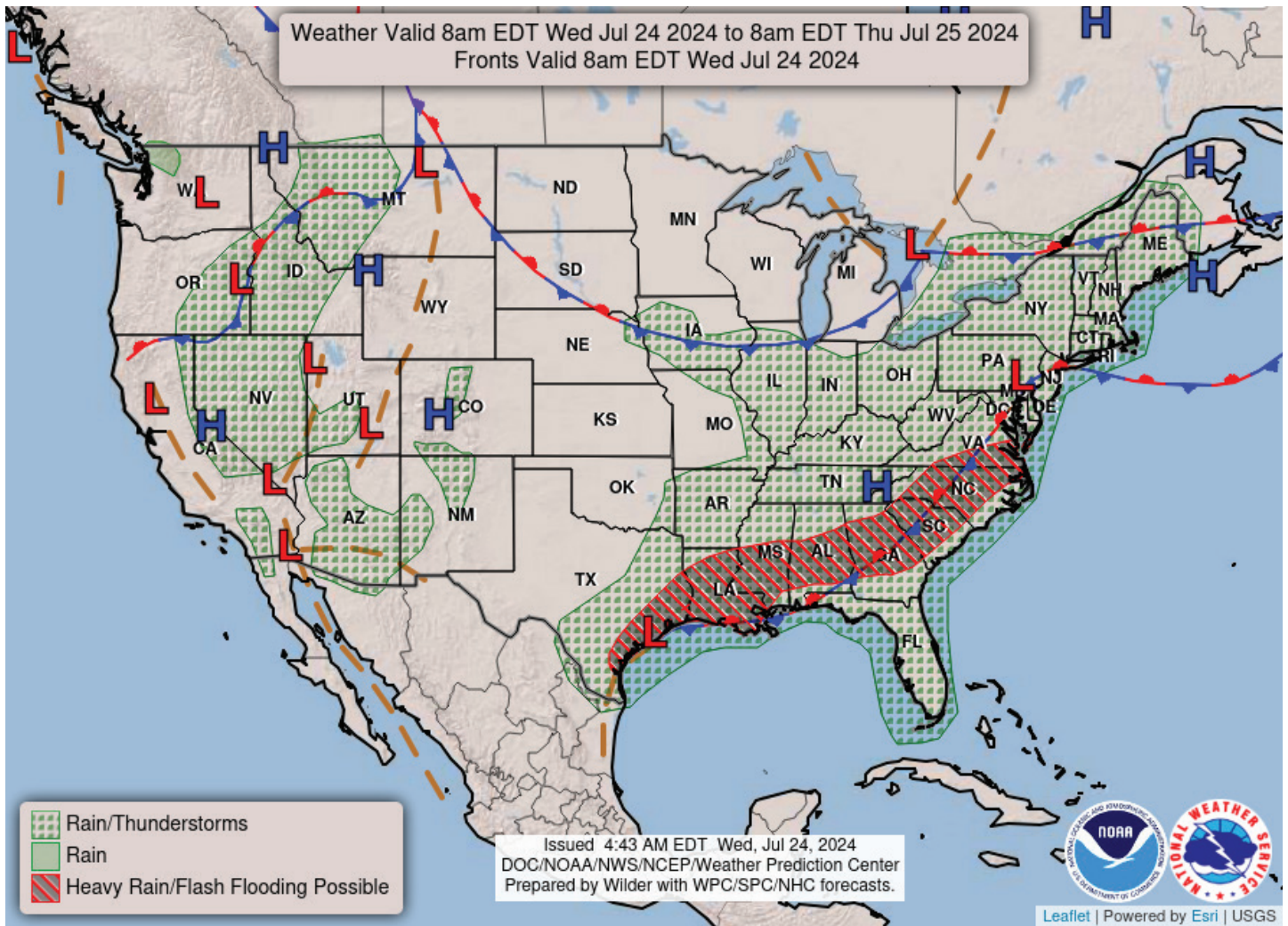
Precip to date in July: 3.56

Average Precip to date: 13.53

Precip Year to Date: 14.51

Sunset Tonight: 9:11:05 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:07:54 am



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 15 of 66

Today in Weather History

July 24, 1993: A severe thunderstorm struck southern Hyde County, including the city of Highmore, with winds more than 60 mph and heavy rains of two to four inches. Near Stephan, in far southern Hyde County, an estimated of over four inches of rain in 20 minutes caused flooding damage to a bridge. Three to nine inches of rain caused widespread flash flooding and flood damage to Day, Roberts, and southeastern Marshall Counties. Especially hard hit was an area from Webster, northeastward through the Pickerell and Buffalo Lakes area, to Sisseton. A state of emergency was declared in Sisseton. The heavy rains overwhelmed a small creek that flows through Sisseton, swelling it to three blocks wide and up to five feet deep. The rushing water carried lumber, railroad ties, propane tanks, and several vehicles. Flood damage occurred to 70 percent of all buildings in Sisseton, including 100 homes. In Webster, the excessive rain flooded all the sewer lifts that pump water out of low-lying areas in town. The sewer system then backed up into homes and businesses. The rainstorm flooded nine of the 12 main floor rooms at the Super 8 motel in Webster. Roads and bridge damage was also extensive in Roberts, Day, and Marshall Counties with about 50 roads and bridges in Day County damaged by the flooding. Areas lakes, including Pickerell, Blue Dog, Enemy Swim, and Buffalo lakes rose over two feet, inundating areas around lake homes and submerging docks. Some estimated storm total rainfall amounts include; 4.60 inches in Webster; 3.91 in Waubay; 3.90 in Britton; and 3.60 inches near Ashton.

July 24, 1997: Over 6 inches of rain fell in the Conde area in far northeast Spink County. Water was over Highway 37, and many town basements were flooded. One basement filled with 5 feet of water. Nearly 7 inches of rain was received at Lake Poinsett, and over 6 inches of rain was received in Estelline. Hidewood Creek in Hamlin County overflowed its banks. Water went into many residences homes, and some people were evacuated. A small bridge was taken out by the high water, and Highway 28 was closed for an hour.

1886 - Rain fell at Lawrence, KS, for the first time in four weeks. Rain fell over much of the state of Kansas that day relieving a severe drought which began in May. The very dry weather ruined crops in Kansas. (David Ludlum)

1930: An estimated, F5 tornado tore through Montello, Veneto, and Friuli in Italy. The tornado killed 23 people along its 50 miles path.

1936 - A record all time Kansas state high temperature set just 6 days earlier was tied in the town of Alton, located in Osborne County. (US National Weather Service Wichita)

1942 - The temperature at Las Vegas, NV, hit 117 degrees to set an all-time record for that location. The record was tied on July 19, 2005.

1947 - One of the most powerful strokes of lightning ever measured yielded 345,000 amperes of electricity in Pittsburgh, PA. (The Weather Channel)

1952: The temperature at Louisville, Georgia soared to 112 degrees to establish a state record. The temperature also hit 112 degrees in Greenville, Georgia on August 20, 1983.

1980 - Claudette, a weak tropical storm, deluged southeastern Texas with torrential rains. The Houston suburb of Alvin received 43 inches, a 24 hour record for the U.S. (David Ludlum)

1988 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in Oklahoma, and over Nebraska and Wisconsin. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Brainerd, NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Afternoon thunderstorms produced some flash flooding in New Mexico. Albuquerque, NM, was deluged with an inch and a half of rain in forty minutes. Evening thunderstorms soaked Whie Pine, PA, with two inches of rain in one hour. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2008: A tornado fluctuated between the category EF1 and the more destructive EF2 strikes Northwood and Pittsfield, as well as nine other towns in New Hampshire. It first touches down in Deerfield, then travels through Northwood, Epsom, Pittsfield, Barnstead, and Alton. From there, it rages through New Durham, Wolfeboro, Freedom, Ossipee, and Effingham. The storm destroys several homes, damaged dozens of others and kills at least one person.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 16 of 66

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

TODAY IS NOT TOMORROW

Abraham Lincoln spent years as a circuit riding lawyer. On one of his trips he and a friend were faced with crossing the dangerous Fox River. While traveling through a small village he decided to ask a minister about the best place to cross it.

“Well,” said the minister, “it’s always pretty bad. I am familiar with all its dangers. But I have one fixed rule that I never change: I never cross it until I reach it.”

Planning for tomorrow is time well spent. But worrying about what might happen tomorrow is a foolish use of our time. When we worry we close our eyes and ears and cannot see or hear our Heavenly Father at work in our lives. So what do we do?

First, we must release the problem to the Lord in prayer. We must hand the problem to Him as a quarterback hands off the football to a running back. The football can get to its final destination when it is let go.

Second, we must fix our thoughts on the power of God to solve the problem. We must allow His Spirit to guide us and give us insight to solve the problem.

Third, we must activate our faith and believe that God will lead us to the solution that He has for us - not necessarily the solution we want. To combat worry and anxiety we must take God’s promises at face value.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to believe that You will solve our problems and take away our anxieties when we look to You in faith and accept Your will in our lives. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today. Matthew 6:33-34



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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 17 of 66

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 18 of 66



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.23.24

3 9 14 26 51 21

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$306,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 15 Mins 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.22.24

2 12 15 43 52 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$5,660,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 30 Mins 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.23.24

1 4 15 25 31 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 45 Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.20.24

10 20 22 24 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$43,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 45 Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.22.24

17 34 44 49 66 9

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 14 Mins 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.22.24

31 36 56 58 69 20

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$114,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 14 Mins 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 19 of 66

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

Harris to address historically Black sorority as her campaign hopes to win women of color

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Voters in Indiana haven't backed a Democratic presidential candidate in nearly 16 years. But when Vice President Kamala Harris heads to the solidly Republican state on Wednesday, she'll speak to a constituency she hopes will turn out for her in massive numbers in November: women of color.

Just three days after launching her bid for the White House following President Joe Biden's departure from the race, Harris will address the biennial gathering of the historically Black sorority Zeta Phi Beta in Indianapolis.

It's a moment for Harris, a woman of Black and South Asian descent, to speak to a group already excited by her historic status as the likely Democratic nominee and one that her campaign hopes can expand its coalition. In a memo released on Wednesday, campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon pointed to support among women, nonwhite and younger voters as critical to success.

"Where Vice President Harris goes, grassroots enthusiasm follows," O'Malley Dillon wrote. "This campaign will be close, it will be hard fought, but Vice President Harris is in a position of strength — and she's going to win."

Still, Democrats face challenges as the country is nursing frustrations over higher prices following a spike in inflation, while former President Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, survived a recent assassination attempt that further energized his already loyal base. But the memo was more optimistic than the narrow path the campaign saw after the 81-year old Biden delivered a disastrous debate performance in June.

While the campaign will keep emphasizing the "Blue Wall" states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania in order to get the needed 270 electoral votes, Harris hopes to be competitive in North Carolina, Georgia, Arizona and Nevada.

Trump has generally run stronger with white voters who do not hold a college degree. AP VoteCast found that group composed 43% of all voters in 2020 and Trump won them by a margin of 62% to 37%, even though overall he lost the election.

For Democrats, Black women would likely make a fundamental difference in November and Harris has already shown signs of galvanizing their support.

In the 2020 election, AP VoteCast found that Black women were just 7% of the electorate. But 93% of them voted for Biden, helping to give him narrow victories in states such as Michigan, Pennsylvania and Georgia.

After Harris announced her candidacy, roughly 90,000 women Black women logged onto a video call Sunday night for her campaign — a sudden show of support for an alumni of Howard University and sister in the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority who has made Beyonce's song "Freedom" her walk-on music at events.

Harris will follow her Indiana trip by going to Houston, Texas to speak at the national convention of the American Federation of Teachers, which endorsed Harris' candidacy on Monday.

Plane crashes just after takeoff from Nepal's capital, killing 18 people. Pilot is lone survivor

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — A plane crashed Wednesday just after taking off from Nepal's capital, killing 18 people and injuring a pilot who was the lone survivor.

Police official Basanta Rajauri said authorities have pulled out all 18 bodies. The pilot has injuries to his eyes but his life is not in any danger, said a doctor at Kathmandu Medical College Hospital, where the pilot is being treated. The doctor spoke on condition of anonymity because she was not authorized to speak

to media.

A press statement issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal said the Saurya Airlines domestic plane, which was scheduled to head to the resort town of Pokhara, took off at 11:11 a.m. local time from Kathmandu airport and turned right but crashed moments later in the eastern section of the airport.

It is monsoon rain season in Kathmandu but was not raining at the time of the crash. Visibility was low across the capital, however.

The Kathmandu airport, the main airport serving Nepal, is located inside a valley surrounded by mountains on most sides. It is considered a challenging airport for pilots and bigger planes have to come through an opening on the mountain to land. It is right next to the city, and is surrounded by houses and neighborhoods.

The bodies have been taken to the T.U. Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu for autopsy. The airline manifest showed there were two pilots and 17 passengers on board. The crew and 16 passengers were Nepali nationals and one passenger was identified as a Yemeni national.

Tribhuvan International Airport, the main airport in Nepal for international and domestic flights, has been closed as emergency crew and investigators began their work.

Saurya Airlines operates the Bombardier CRJ 200 on domestic routes.

In 2019, a Bangladeshi airliner crashed at Tribhuvan airport, killing 51 people while 20 on board survived. An investigation confirmed the plane was misaligned with the runway and its pilot was disoriented and tried to land in "sheer desperation" when the plane crashed.

In 2015, a Turkish Airlines jet landing in dense fog skidded off a slippery runway at the airport. The plane was carrying 238 people but there were no serious injuries.

As Olympic hosts, 'Les Français' are in the spotlight. Here's why the French can't be pigeon-holed

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — They're often thought to have practically cornered the market on romance, with Edith Piaf seemingly speaking for a nation of amorous souls when she sang: "It's crazy how much I love you."

Yet they also can bicker and squabble as though they were Olympic sports.

They practically wrote the book on fraternity, liberty and equality — words inscribed on their schools and town halls — but also recognize that those ideals aren't always applied to citizens of color.

Les Français — the French, as the people of France call themselves — simply don't fit neatly into any one box.

Now that they're hosting the Olympics, here's a look at some of the particularities that make the French, well, French:

The basics

France has one of Europe's most diverse populations thanks to centuries of conquest and, in the last 200 years, immigration from Italy, Spain, eastern Europe, and France's former colonies overseas.

Although comic-strip hero Asterix the Gaul is something of a national icon, loved by generations of French readers for his feisty ingenuity and pluck, the ancient Gauls who populated much of what is now France more than two millennia ago — and who some in France still call "our ancestors" — were followed by waves of others.

Romans, Franks (from whom France got its name), Normans (who lent their name to what is now Normandy) and more fought for the rich lands boxed in by the Mediterranean's waters and mountains of the Alps and Pyrenees in the south, the mighty Rhine river in the east, and seas to the west and north.

Those natural barriers still largely delineate the borders of what is the largest territory in the European Union and its roughly five-sided shape — the reason the French often refer to their country as "the Hexagon."

The national statistics agency, Insee, says France's population at the start of this Olympic year numbered 68.4 million. That includes the 2.2 million inhabitants of five formerly colonized territories in the Caribbean,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 22 of 66

South America and Indian Ocean that are administered as overseas regions of France — considered as French as Paris, the Olympic host city.

By Insee's count, France has 2 million more women than men. But France has never had a female president and counts dozens of women killed in domestic violence each year. Of the 78 luminaries honored by being inducted in the Panthéon, the centuries-old Paris resting place for the good and great of France, just five are women. The first, scientist Marie Curie, wasn't added until 1995.

A colorblind rainbow nation

Officially, France is blind to the many colors of its inhabitants. Intending to treat all equally, the republic doesn't count citizens by race or religion. But people of color and human-rights watchdogs say France's ideal of colorblind universalism results in discrimination that goes unmeasured and unsolved. Some French people, especially those who are white, consider it racist to even discuss skin color.

Yet pervasive discrimination has repeatedly boiled over into violent unrest, often in underprivileged parts of France with immigrant populations. Racial and religious intolerance have contributed to a deep polarization of French politics.

The anti-immigration, far-right National Rally party surged this year in elections marked by unusual violence. Its leaders have long targeted immigrants and their France-born children for supposedly failing to integrate.

A godless nation of many religions

After centuries of religious conflict, modern France is constitutionally secular, with church and state separated. Faiths are kept out of shared public spaces like schools, hospitals, courts and sports fields, where students, staff and players aren't allowed to wear ostentatious crosses, kippahs or Islamic head coverings. France won't allow its Olympians to wear headscarves at the Paris Games — a blanket ban that won't apply to athletes from other nations.

But France also legally guarantees the right to believe — or to not believe — and to practice one's faith. Its religious architecture — from Paris' iconic Notre Dame Cathedral to modernist architect Le Corbusier's Chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut in Ronchamp, eastern France — is stunning in its variety, beauty and history.

France has about 100,000 places of worship, including those that are no longer used, with the vast bulk of them built for the Catholic faith, according to the Observatory of Religious Patrimony, a preservation group.

Quiet churches and busy mosques speak to a changing picture of faith and worship in France. A major and rare public study published by Insee last year, which questioned more than 27,000 adults aged 18-59, found interest in religion fading. Just over half of the respondents declared that they have no faith, a growing trend particularly pronounced among people born in France and without any immigrant backgrounds.

Less than one-third identified as Catholic — still the largest single group of believers, although under 10% of them said they are regular churchgoers.

Muslims were the second-largest group of believers, accounting for 10% of respondents.

Wine and food

Ah, the reds, whites and rosés! The French used to guzzle their wines without moderation. It wasn't until 1956 that the government barred children — under 14, that is — from being served alcohol in school canteens.

But since the 1960s, when French drinkers were downing a woozy 130 or so liters (35 or so gallons) of wines each per year, plus many more liters of beer and cider, they have steadily sobered up, cutting their consumption by around three-quarters and drinking higher-quality wines than the rotgut that washed down older generations' meals, Insee data shows.

Food habits are changing, too. Schools play a key role in passing from generation to generation France's high regard for freshly cooked meals, with canteens typically offering a starter and a main course followed by a milk product (cheese, yogurt) and/or a dessert.

The Agriculture Ministry says about 60% of students eat at their school canteens at least four times a week. Schools also offer tasting classes and school canteens are obliged to offer at least one vegetarian menu per week.

"Does your family pray before eating?" asks one joke about French eating habits. The punchline: "No, we are French, we know how to cook."

The French are just behind the Italians as the least overweight population in the European Union, according to the most recent figures from the EU's statistics agency, from 2019. It found that 47% of French adults were overweight, with a body mass index of 25 or above, compared with 46% of Italian adults.

But French people also have become fans of what they call "le fast food" — burgers, pizzas, kebabs, etc. In the 45 years since McDonald's opened its first restaurant in France in 1979, the country has become one of its largest markets in Europe, with 1,560 eateries in cities and towns nationwide.

Monday breaks the record for the hottest ever day on Earth

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

Monday was recorded as the hottest day ever globally, beating a record set the day before, as countries around the world from Japan to Bolivia to the United States continue to feel the heat, according to the European climate change service.

Provisional satellite data published by Copernicus on Wednesday showed that Monday broke the previous day's record by 0.06 degrees Celsius (0.1 degree Fahrenheit).

Climate scientists say the world is now as warm as it was 125,000 years ago because of human-caused climate change. While scientists cannot be certain that Monday was the very hottest day throughout that period, average temperatures have not been this high since long before humans developed agriculture.

The temperature rise in recent decades is in line with what climate scientists projected would happen if humans kept burning fossil fuels at an increasing rate.

"We are in an age where weather and climate records are frequently stretched beyond our tolerance levels, resulting in insurmountable loss of lives and livelihoods," Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology.

Copernicus' preliminary data shows the global average temperature Monday was 17.15 degrees Celsius, or 62.87 degrees Fahrenheit. The previous record before this week was set just a year ago. Before last year, the previous recorded hottest day was in 2016 when average temperatures were at 16.8 degrees Celsius, or 62.24 degrees Fahrenheit.

While 2024 has been extremely warm, what kicked this week into new territory was a warmer-than-usual Antarctic winter, according to Copernicus. The same thing happened on the southern continent last year when the record was set in early July.

Copernicus records go back to 1940, but other global measurements by the United States and United Kingdom governments go back even further, to 1880. Many scientists, taking those into consideration along with tree rings and ice cores, say last year's record highs were the hottest the planet has been in about 120,000 years. Now the first six months of 2024 have broken even those.

Without human-caused climate change, scientists say that extreme temperature records would not be broken nearly as frequently as is happening in recent years.

Former head of U.N. climate negotiations Christiana Figueres said "we all scorch and fry" if the world doesn't immediately change course.

"One third of global electricity can be produced by solar and wind alone, but targeted national policies have to enable that transformation," she said.

Taiwan prepares for a strong typhoon that worsened monsoon rains in the Philippines, killing 13

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Taiwan shuttered offices, schools and tourist sites across the island on Wednesday ahead of a powerful typhoon that already worsened seasonal rains in the Philippines, killed at least 13 people and displaced 600,000.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 24 of 66

Typhoon Gaemi's outer skirt was bringing heavy rain to much of Taiwan, where a direct landfall was expected Wednesday evening in the northern county of Ylan. Fishing boats were recalled to port amid turbulent seas, while air travelers were rushing to board overseas flights before the storm arrives, amid numerous cancellations.

On Wednesday morning, the typhoon was east of Taiwan moving at 18 kilometers (11 miles) per hour with maximum sustained wind speeds of 183 kilometers (113 miles) per hour, the Central Weather Administration said. In the capital Taipei, heavy rain was falling, but high winds had not yet arrived.

Gaemi, which was called Carina in the Philippines, did not make landfall in the archipelago but enhanced its seasonal monsoon rains. The rains set off at least a dozen landslides and floods over five days, killing at least eight and displacing 600,000 people, including 35,000 who went to emergency shelters, the Philippines' disaster risk mitigation agency said.

A landslide buried a rural shanty Tuesday in the mountainside town of Agoncillo in Batangas province, and the bodies of a pregnant woman and three children, aged 9 to 15, were dug out Wednesday morning. A rice porridge vendor was hit by a falling tree in another Batangas town Tuesday night, raising the toll in the country to 13 dead.

In the densely populated region around the Philippine capital, government work and school classes were suspended after nonstop rains flooded many areas overnight, trapping cars in rising floodwater and stranding people in their homes. Residents who ventured out of their homes waded into knee- and chest-high floodwaters with some using improvised dinghies and paddling their way alongside cars, trucks and SUVs.

In Marikina city in the eastern fringes of the Manila region, the continuing downpour swelled a major river, prompting many residents to flee to safety. The strong currents swept away a steel cargo container, refrigerators, pieces of home furniture and tree trunks, according to Associated Press journalists at the scene.

Some residents called radio stations and asked to be rescued by authorities from rooftops or upper floors of their low-slung houses amid rising floodwaters. Mayor Jeannie Sandoval of Malabon, a flood-prone city in the northern section of the capital region, assured one alarmed mother that rescue boats and trucks have been scrambling all day to help trapped residents like her.

"Stay calm. We're doing everything we can. The local government won't leave you behind," Sandoval told the DZRH radio network.

Rear Admiral Armando Balilo said the Philippine coast guard, where he serves as a spokesperson, has been overwhelmed with pleas from floodwater-trapped residents in the capital to be rescued, including those who were waiting for help from rooftops.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered authorities to speed up efforts to deliver food and other aid to isolated rural villages. "People there may not have eaten for days," Marcos said in a televised emergency meeting.

The Philippine coast guard said more than 350 passengers and cargo truck drivers and workers were stranded in seaports after ferries and cargo ships were prohibited from venturing into rough seas. It added that coast guard personnel helped more than 200 residents evacuate a coastal village in Batangas province south of Manila where storm-tossed waves have hit coastal houses.

The storm prompted the cancellation of air force drills off Taiwan's east coast and ferry services Tuesday. Despite occasional flooding, Taiwan has substantially improved its resiliency through early warnings and preparations. The effects of the storm were expected to continue into Friday as it moved in a northwestern direction toward mainland China.

200,000 people were abused in New Zealand institutions that failed for decades to stop it

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — New Zealand's wide-ranging independent inquiry into the abuse of children and vulnerable adults in care over the span of five decades released a blistering final report Wednesday that found the country's state agencies and churches failed to prevent, stop or admit to the abuse of those they were supposed to look after — even when they knew about it.

The scale of the abuse was "unimaginable" with an estimated 200,000 people abused in seven decades, the report said. Scrutiny of state and faith-run institutions was lax and predators rarely faced repercussions.

In response to the findings, New Zealand's government agreed for the first time that historical treatment of some children in a notorious state-run hospital amounted to torture, and pledged an apology to all those abused in state, foster and religious care since 1950. But Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said it was too soon to divulge how much the government expected to pay in compensation — a bill the inquiry said would run to the billions of dollars — or to promise that officials involved in denying and covering up the abuse would lose their jobs.

The publication of findings by the Royal Commission — the highest level of inquiry that can be undertaken in New Zealand — capped a six-year investigation that followed two decades of similar probes around the world, echoing other nations' struggles to reckon with authorities' transgressions against children removed from their families and placed in state and religious care.

The results were a "national disgrace," the inquiry's report said. Of 650,000 children and vulnerable adults in state, foster, and church care between 1950 and 2019 — in a country that today has a population of just 5 million — nearly a third endured physical, sexual, verbal or psychological abuse. Many more were exploited or neglected, the report said. The figures were likely higher, though precise numbers would never be known because complaints were disregarded and records were lost or destroyed.

"These gross violations occurred at the same time as Aotearoa New Zealand was promoting itself, internationally and domestically, as a bastion of human rights and as a safe, fair country in which to grow up as a child in a loving family," the inquiry heads wrote, using both the Māori and English names for the country.

"If this injustice is not addressed, it will remain as a stain on our national character forever," read the 3,000-page report.

Hundreds of survivors and their supporters filled the public gallery Wednesday in New Zealand's Parliament, where lawmakers responded to the findings.

The report lambasted some senior figures in government and faith institutions, who it said continued to cover up and excuse abuse throughout public hearings into the matter. Many of the worst episodes had long been common knowledge, it said, and officials at the time of the abuse were "either oblivious or indifferent" about protecting children, instead shoring up the reputations of their institutions and of abusers.

The inquiry made 138 recommendations across all areas of New Zealand law, society and government. It adds to dozens of interim recommendations in 2021 that urged swift redress for those abused, some of whom were sick or dying — of which little has been enacted.

The government pledged Wednesday to supply answers by the end of the year about plans for redress, although the inquiry decried the scant progress made by successive governments to date.

The fresh recommendations include seeking apologies from state and church leaders, including Pope Francis, for the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and for disbelieving decades of accounts. The inquiry also endorsed creating dedicated offices to prosecute abusers and enact redress, renaming the streets and monuments that are currently dedicated to abusers, reforming civil and criminal law, rewriting the child welfare system, and searching for unmarked graves at psychiatric facilities.

Among investigations worldwide, New Zealand's inquiry was notable for its scale — the widest-ranging such probe ever undertaken, according to those leading it. It examined abuse in state institutions, foster care, faith-based care, and medical and educational settings, interviewing nearly 2,500 survivors of abuse.

Children were removed arbitrarily and unfairly from their families, the report said, and the majority of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 26 of 66

New Zealand's criminal gang members and prisoners are believed to have spent time in care.

As in Australia and Canada, Indigenous children were targeted for placement in harsher facilities and subject to worse abuse. The majority of children in care were Māori, despite the group comprising less than 20% of New Zealand's population during the period examined.

The average cost of abuse in a survivor's lifetime is 857,000 New Zealand dollars (\$508,000), the inquiry found. Health care and other government-funded measures account for less than a quarter of that cost, while the remainder quantifies the toll on the survivor of their pain, suffering, lost opportunities and early death.

Those abused have had little recourse under New Zealand law to sue or seek compensation, with some accepting small out-of-court settlements. As recently as 2015, New Zealand governments rejected the need for such an inquiry and government agencies argued that abuse had not been endemic.

Tu Chapman, a survivor and advocate, attended Parliament on Wednesday, where she told The Associated Press that immediate action was needed on redress to prove that the government took the findings seriously.

"Announce the redress system as soon as possible," she said. "Further delay is just impacting survivors even more who have waited 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 years."

In comments to reporters Wednesday ahead of the report's release, Luxon said the government now heard and believed survivors, and that he had been shocked by the findings.

"New Zealanders just don't think this thing would happen, that abuse on this scale would ever happen in New Zealand," the prime minister said. "We always thought that we were exceptional and different, and the reality is we're not."

Luxon said that when survivors tried to speak up with "horrific and harrowing" stories of abuse, the people charged with protecting them "turned a blind eye." The findings marked "a dark and sorrowful day" for the country, Luxon added.

While he could not yet say which recommendations he would commit to enacting, he said the government would formally apologize to survivors on Nov. 12.

Following Luxon's speech, hundreds of survivors stood and sang a Māori song in an emotional scene.

Karen Chhour, a lawmaker for the libertarian ACT party who grew up in state care, told Parliament that New Zealand had "tolerated rape and abuse of vulnerable people and the abuse of power" for too long.

"It's time we faced this poison that is rotting our nation from the inside," said Chhour, whose party is a member of the governing bloc.

Children and vulnerable adults were "devalued and dehumanized," said Chris Hipkins, leader of Labour — New Zealand's main opposition party, which commissioned the inquiry while in power. The episode was "a nationwide intergenerational shame" that was far from over, he added.

Debbie Ngarewa-Packer, an opposition lawmaker and co-leader of the Māori Party, said she did not accept the government needed time to digest the report.

"What the hell has changed for us?" Ngarewa-Packer asked Parliament on Wednesday, referring to what the inquiry said was continuing abuse of people in care — and current government crackdowns on gangs and youth offenders, many of whom spent time in care.

The report singled out churches — particularly the Catholic Church — as failing to address or prevent abuse. As many as 42% of those in faith-based care by all denominations were abused, according to a report produced for the inquiry. The Catholic Church said in a 2020 briefing to the commission that accusations had been made against 14% of its New Zealand clergy during the time covered by the inquiry.

In one recommendation, the inquiry's authors exhorted an investigation into priests from one Catholic order who had been sent to Papua New Guinea to evade accusations of abuse in Australia and New Zealand, adding that little was known about "the nature and extent of abuse and neglect there or the needs of potential survivors."

Senior Catholic figures in New Zealand said in a written statement Wednesday that they had received the report and "will now read and review it carefully."

Harris tells roaring Wisconsin crowd November election is 'a choice between freedom and chaos'

By CHRIS MEGERIAN, JOSH BOAK and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WEST ALLIS, Wisconsin (AP) — A roaring crowd of battleground state voters greeted Vice President Kamala Harris on Tuesday as she opened her public case against Republican former President Donald Trump by declaring November's election will be "a choice between freedom and chaos."

"In this campaign, I promise you, I will proudly put my record against his any day of the week," Harris said. "We believe in a future where every person has the opportunity not just to get by, but to get ahead."

Harris arrived in the Milwaukee area having locked up nomination support from Democratic delegates after President Joe Biden dropped his reelection bid on Sunday. It was her first campaign rally since she jumped into the race just two days ago with Biden's endorsement.

The event reflected a vibrancy that had been lacking among Democrats in recent weeks, and Harris was intent on projecting a sense of steady confidence about the November election. She's pulled in \$100 million in donations since Sunday afternoon and on Tuesday picked up the backing of more Democratic officials and political groups, including congressional leaders Charles Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries.

By stopping in Wisconsin, Harris was putting down a marker in one of the "blue wall" states along with Michigan and Pennsylvania that Democrats see as essential for securing a presidential victory.

The visit comes a week after the Republican National Convention wrapped up in the city and as Harris works to sharpen her message against the GOP nominee with just over 100 days until Election Day.

Harris' trip to the state was a sharp contrast to Biden's July 6 visit, when he was trying to reassure Democrats who were wary after his troubling performance in the June 27 debate against Trump. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, who is up for reelection this year, had skipped the Biden event, but she spoke before Harris on Tuesday.

Harris is leaning into her resume as a former district attorney and California attorney general, seeking to draw a contrast with Trump who is the first former president to be convicted of felony crimes.

"She's prepared to meet this moment because she was professionally trained to prosecute a criminal, and unfortunately that's who the Republicans have put forward," said Sen. Laphonza Butler, D-Calif.

Harris strode onto the stage Tuesday to the anthem "Freedom" from Beyonce's "Lemonade" album and set about contrasting herself with Trump.

"I took on perpetrators of all kinds. Predators who abused women. Fraudsters who ripped off consumers. Cheaters who broke the rules for their own gain. So hear me when I say, I know Donald Trump's type," she said.

Harris cast her campaign as a "people first" endeavor, again aiming to draw a contrast with Trump, who she said represented special interests and corporations.

She also portrayed her rival's policies as being antiquated and backward looking. "We are not going back," she said. "And I'll tell you why we are not going back. Ours is a fight for the future." That echoed Barack Obama who frequently deployed the refrain during his 2012 reelection fight to argue against Republican ideas.

Harris' swift ascent over the past few days has required her to vet possible running mates, a process being led by Eric Holder, who was attorney general during Barack Obama's presidency. But her key impact so far has been galvanizing Democrats.

Before the Tuesday speech, Diane Walter, 68, of South Milwaukee said she was thrilled that Harris is the candidate.

"I've been a Democrat my whole life," Walter said. "She's energizing the party again."

Tevin Humphrey, 21, came with his mother Myeesha Johnson, 41, and described the vice president as "a great figure to look up to."

"She's a better representative of the diversity we're looking for," he said.

Trump and his campaign have quickly turned most of their focus on Harris and have asserted that they were prepared for the change and it did not alter their plans.

The former president has nicknamed the vice president "Lyn' Kamala Harris," accused her of not being tough enough on crime as a prosecutor and sought to bind her to the administration's policies on the border as he seeks to make immigration a focus of his campaign.

But there are signs that Trump seems to be unhappy about facing the younger vice president rather than making his case against the aging president. Twice since Biden dropped out, Trump has said the planned second presidential debate should not be hosted by ABC News and suggested it be moved to Fox News, which has a perception of being friendlier to him.

Harris' husband, Doug Emhoff, at an appearance in Washington, said he was unimpressed by Trump's attacks, telling reporters Tuesday, "That's all he's got?"

In addition to Baldwin, Harris was joined by major elected officials in Wisconsin, including Gov. Tony Evers, Attorney General Josh Kaul, Secretary of State Sarah Godlewski and Wisconsin Democratic Party Chair Ben Wikler.

Republican leaders in Wisconsin, for their part, branded Harris as an "extreme liberal" who is out of step with most voters in the swing state.

"Kamala Harris' favorables are as bad as Joe Biden's," said Wisconsin Republican Party Chairman Brian Schimming at a news conference ahead of the Harris event at a high school outside of Milwaukee. "So they are exchanging one bad candidate for another bad candidate in the hope that the people of this state and this country don't notice where she actually stands on the issues."

Under President Milei, the worst economic crisis in decades puts Argentine ingenuity to the test

By ALMUDENA CALATRAVA and ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — In the crush of anti-government protests paralyzing downtown Buenos Aires in the last months, some Argentines saw a traffic-induced headache. Others saw a reaction to President Javier Milei's brutal austerity measures.

Alejandra, a street vendor, saw people with nowhere to urinate.

Plazas provided no privacy and cafes insisted on pricey purchases to use the toilet. With little more than a tent and a bucket, Alejandra started a small business that has surged alongside Argentina's angry rallies and sky-high inflation rate. She charges whatever people are willing to pay.

"I haven't had a job for a year, it's now my sole income," said Alejandra, who declined to give her last name for fear of reprisals from neighbors. Every four or five patrons, she puts on gloves and empties her bucket into the trash.

The political establishment's failure to fix decades of crisis in Argentina explains the tide of popular rage that vaulted the irascible Javier Milei, a self-declared "anarcho-capitalist," to the presidency.

But it also explains the emergence of a unique society that runs on grit, ingenuity and opportunism — perhaps now more than ever as Argentina undergoes its worst economic crisis since its catastrophic foreign-debt default of 2001.

"It's the famous resilience of Argentines," said Gustavo González, a sociologist at University of Buenos Aires. "It's the result of more than three generations that have grappled with adverse circumstances, great uncertainty and abrupt changes."

The libertarian leader warned that things would get worse before they got better.

To reverse the decades of reckless spending that brought Argentina infamy for defaulting on its debts, Milei scrapped hundreds of price controls. He slashed subsidies for electricity, fuel and transportation, causing prices to skyrocket in a country that already had one of the world's highest inflation rates.

He laid off over 70,000 public sector workers, cut pensions by 30% and froze infrastructure projects, pushing the country deeper into recession. Supermarket sales fell 10% last month. The International Monetary Fund lowered its 2024 growth outlook for Argentina, projecting a 3.5% contraction.

Poverty now afflicts a staggering 57% of Argentina's 47 million people, and annual inflation surpasses

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 29 of 66

270% — a level unseen in a generation.

"Argentina is at a turning point," Milei said in his Independence Day speech on July 9. "Breaking points in the history of a nation are not moments of peace and tranquility but moments of difficulty and conflict."

Well-heeled Argentines have responded by stashing stacks of \$100 bills in safe-deposit boxes and resorting to cryptocurrency to avoid their country's chronically depreciating pesos.

Middle-class families — whose energy bills shot up last month by 155% — have pared down comforts they once took for granted: No more eating out. No more travel. No more private school. Public hospitals say they're overwhelmed.

In a country where barbecued beef, or asado, is not only a national dish but a social ritual, meat consumption has dropped to the lowest level ever recorded, according to the Rosario Board of Trade.

The crisis has hit the poor hardest.

"They cannot hedge," said Eduardo Levy Yeyati, an economist at Torcuato Di Tella University in Buenos Aires. "They cannot save, they cannot travel. They are stuck here and are most affected by inflation and the fiscal adjustment."

In the last five months, the official unemployment rate jumped two points to 7.7%, a figure that appears far lower than it really is, experts say, because Argentina's underground economy accounts for some half of its gross domestic product.

Rising joblessness and poverty have forced even more Argentines into the informal workforce. "Those who cannot find a job must invent one," said Eduardo Donza, a poverty researcher at the Catholic University of Argentina.

For 34-year-old Armando Fernández, a broom has become a tool of survival.

Last month Fernández trekked hundreds of kilometers south by foot from his impoverished hometown in Santa Fe province, seeking work in Buenos Aires. Now he sweeps the capital's sidewalks for whatever pesos that shop owners toss his way.

As Milei takes his chainsaw to the state's anti-poverty programs, the poorest Argentines don't have the coping mechanisms they once did.

"Politicians talk a lot but do nothing," Fernández said, scarfing down chicken stew provided by Solidarity Network, a charity born out of Argentina's successive crises. "I survive thanks to these soup kitchens, these people who offer me a bit of food."

Seven days a week at nightfall, hundreds of people line up for free meals in the capital's downtown square outside the presidential palace, which Solidarity Network turns into an open-air dining hall.

"We are serving more and more people every night," said 31-year-old volunteer Pilar Christiansen. "There are more and more people who cannot afford to buy food."

In line on a recent evening were homeless men like Fernández, but also newcomers — a chef whose work had dried up, a bank employee who was recently laid off, an electrician whose salary had lost the bulk of its value.

Argentina's downward spiral has long been visible in the southern suburbs ringing Buenos Aires. Streets are unpaved. Sewer lines don't reach. The walls of Noelia López's home are covered in haphazard patches of concrete.

From an attic spangled with laundry lines, López and her 21-year-old son Patricio run the only laundromat in their urban slum. By dawn their floor is shaking with the rumble of washing machines as they sort coats and quilts for some dozen neighbors a day.

What started as an impromptu income boost during the pandemic has become their livelihood.

"There is no greater thing than being able to recognize that this country is just like this," López's said of Argentina's volatility. "Now we have to bite the bullet once again."

Growing up destitute as the daughter of Paraguayan immigrants in Buenos Aires, Maybel Delvalle was determined that her own children avoid the same fate.

She soon found herself a single mom with two hungry toddlers and realized that selling empanadas wouldn't cover her bills.

Today the 25-year-old is a successful content creator on the platform OnlyFans, where she sells sexual

fantasies to subscribers around the world and promotes her bootstraps story to legions of like-minded women. Her monthly income of \$6,000 would be unthinkable for any Argentine doctor, lawyer or professor.

The work wasn't easy. Few had heard of the platform in 2020 when Delvalle stumbled across it. She had to teach herself how to stay anonymous and safe while posting explicit content, convert her dollar income to pesos at a favorable exchange rate and speak enough English to act as a "virtual girlfriend" to U.S.-based subscribers.

Once she got her windfall, she became Argentina's premier OnlyFans teacher. Delvalle is scrambling to keep pace with demand for her classes. "It's been amazing," she said of the past seven months since Milei took office.

Some 5,000 female students, 4,000 of them from Argentina, have enrolled in her trainings as they try to claw their way out of their country's deepening poverty.

"There won't be a miracle to get us through this," she said. "You have to trust yourself more than anybody else."

Trump expected to turn his full focus on Harris at first rally since Biden's exit from 2024 race

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Donald Trump is holding his first public campaign rally since President Joe Biden dropped out of a 2024 matchup that both major parties had spent months preparing for, leaving the former president to direct his ire toward his likely new opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris.

Trump is expected to turn his full focus on Harris as he stops Wednesday in North Carolina, a swing state that Trump has carried in the past, but Democrats have seen as pivotal. The former president's trip to the state shows he's still concerned about keeping it in his column this November, even as his team reaches for wins in traditionally Democratic-leaning states like Minnesota, where Trump is set to visit Saturday.

With Biden's abrupt departure from the presidential race and Harris edging closer and closer to officially being the Democrats' general election pick, Trump has ramped up his criticism of the vice president, whom he's characterized as "the same as Biden but much more radical."

He has blamed her for what he portrays as the Biden administration's failures, particularly on security along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Trump has also hedged on plans for an expected debate with Harris, first saying that he wanted Fox News, not ABC, to host the matchup he had originally scheduled for September with Biden. On Tuesday, Trump appeared to tweak that message again, saying on a call with reporters that he'd like to debate Harris "more than once" but not committing to appearing at the debate currently on the books and saying he'd only agreed to debate Biden twice, not Harris.

Quietly, Republicans have spoken about how subbing Harris in for Biden nullifies a portion of their party's argument in favor of Trump's vitality and vigor.

At 81, Biden had been the oldest nominee heading into a general election. Now, the 78-year-old Trump occupies that slot. Harris, 59, has launched a campaign that at least in some corners appears to be stoking interest among the younger voters who could be key in deciding an anticipated close general election.

North Carolina is a state Trump carried in both his previous campaigns but by less than 1.5 percentage points over Biden in 2020, the closest margin of any state Trump won. Trump stumped heavily in North Carolina even as the COVID-19 pandemic wore on, while Biden largely kept off the physical campaign trail and did not personally visit the state in the last 16 days of the election.

Mecklenburg County, home to Charlotte — the state's biggest city — was also the scene of Trump's narrowest margin of victory in North Carolina's GOP primary, edging out Nikki Haley by fewer than 8 percentage points.

This year, Trump had planned to hold his first rally since the start of his hush money trial in Fayetteville, but that event was called off due to inclement weather. Trump called in from his private plane instead.

Democrats also have been working to win North Carolina, where the party's most recent presidential win was Barack Obama's 2008 victory, despite recent GOP dominance.

Biden held a campaign event in Raleigh the day after his disastrous June debate with Trump. While he was much more forceful in that appearance than he was on the debate stage, it did not help much to quell the growing concern from members of his party about his ability to win the White House again.

With Harris now poised to take his spot, she may again be turning to North Carolina for some political help: the state's Gov. Roy Cooper is among the Democrats that Harris' campaign is vetting for a possible pick as her vice presidential running mate.

Cooper is term limited and cannot seek reelection. The highly competitive race to replace him pits Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein against Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, a staunch Trump supporter who is North Carolina's first Black major party nominee for governor.

Trump's Charlotte event is his second campaign rally since a July 13 assassination attempt at a Pennsylvania rally. Days later, Trump accepted the GOP presidential nomination and gave a speech at the Republican National Convention, where his ear — injured in the shooting — was bandaged.

Wednesday's rally also is the first since the resignation of Secret Service director Kimberly Cheatle, who said she took "full responsibility for the security lapse" that led to a gunman being able to get so close to Trump at the outdoor event in Pennsylvania.

The Charlotte rally, like the one over the weekend in Grand Rapids, Michigan, will be held in an indoor arena.

FBI chief to face questions over Trump assassination attempt as he returns to Capitol Hill

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI Director Christopher Wray is set to testify Wednesday about the bureau's investigation into the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump, with lawmakers at a congressional hearing likely to press him for fresh details about the gunman's motive and background.

The hearing before the House Judiciary Committee will represent Wray's most detailed comments to date about a shooting that has again thrust the FBI into the political maelstrom as agents continue to investigate the 20-year-old gunman, Thomas Matthew Crooks, and the most serious attempt to assassinate a president or presidential candidate since Ronald Reagan was shot in 1981.

The hearing had been scheduled well before the June 13 shooting as part of the committee's routine oversight of the FBI and Justice Department, and though lawmakers may touch on a broad array of topics, questions about the shooting are expected to dominate the session.

Despite being appointed by Trump, Wray typically faces antagonistic questions from the Republican-led panel, a reflection of lingering discontent over the FBI's investigation into potential ties between Russia and the 2016 campaign. Though the FBI has avoided the same level of scrutiny directed at the Secret Service over security lapses that preceded the shooting, culminating Tuesday in the resignation of Director Kimberly Cheatle, Wray is likely to be questioned by lawmakers skeptical of the bureau's assessment that Crooks left behind no obvious ideological motive that could explain his actions.

The FBI has said that it is investigating the Butler, Pennsylvania, shooting, which killed one rallygoer and seriously injured two others, as an act of domestic terrorism and an attempted assassination.

Wray and other senior officials privately briefed members of Congress last week, telling them that Crooks had photos on his phone of Trump and President Joe Biden and other officials, and had also looked up the dates for the Democratic National Convention as well as Trump's appearances. A law enforcement official told The Associated Press last week that Crooks had also flown a drone above the rally site before the event in an apparent effort to scope out the scene in advance.

Biden will make a case for his legacy - and for Harris to continue it - in his Oval Office address

By SEUNG MIN KIM and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Even though President Joe Biden won't be on the ballot this November, voters still will be weighing his legacy.

As Vice President Kamala Harris moves to take his place as the Democratic standard-bearer, Biden's accomplishments remain very much at risk should Republican Donald Trump prevail.

How Biden's single term — and his decision to step aside — are remembered will be intertwined with Harris' electoral success in November, particularly as the vice president runs tightly on the achievements of the Biden administration.

Biden will have an opportunity to make a case for his legacy — sweeping domestic legislation, renewal of alliances abroad, defense of democracy — on Wednesday night when he delivers an Oval Office address about his decision to bow out of the race and “what lies ahead.”

And no matter how frustrated Biden is at being pushed aside by his party — and he's plenty upset — he has too much at stake simply to wash his hands of this election.

Biden endorsed Harris shortly after he announced Sunday that he would end his candidacy, effectively giving her a head start over would-be challengers and helping to jumpstart a candidacy focused largely on continuing his own agenda.

“If she wins, then it will be confirmation that he did the right thing to fight against the threat that is Trump, and he will be seen as a legend on behalf of democracy,” said presidential historian Lindsay Chervinsky, executive director of the George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon. “If she loses, I think there will be questions about, did he step down too late? Would the Democratic Party have been more effective if he had said he was not going to run?”

Similar what-ifs play out at the end of every presidency. But Biden's defiance in the face of questions about his fitness for office and then his late submission to his party's crisis of confidence heighten the stakes.

The last vice president to run for the top job was Democrat Al Gore, who sought to distance himself from President Bill Clinton during the 2000 campaign after the president's affair with a White House intern and subsequent impeachment.

Harris, in contrast, has spent the better part of the last three years praising Biden's doings — meaning any attempt to now distance herself would be difficult to explain. And she has to rely on the Biden political operation she inherited to win the election with just over 100 days to go before polls close.

Speaking to campaign staff on Monday, Harris said Biden's legacy of accomplishment “just over the last three and a half years is unmatched in modern history.”

Trump and his allies, for their part, were eager to tie Harris to Biden's record even before the president left the race — and not in a good way.

One campaign email to supporters declared “KAMALA HARRIS IS BIDEN 2.0 – Kamala Harris owns Joe Biden's terrible record because it is her record as well,” calling out high inflation and border policies, among other things.

Biden this week promised the staffers of his former campaign that he was still “going to be on the road” as he handed off the reins of the organization to Harris, adding, “I'm not going anywhere.”

His advisers say he intends to hold campaign events and fundraisers benefiting Harris, albeit at a far slower pace than had he remained on the ballot himself.

Harris advisers will ultimately have to decide how to deploy the president, whose popularity sagged as voters on both sides of the aisle questioned his fitness for office.

The president's allies insist that no matter what, Biden's place in the history books is intact.

Biden's win in 2020 “was that election that protected us from a Donald Trump presidency,” said Rep. Steven Horsford, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. “Yes, we have to do it again this November. But had Donald Trump been in office another four years, the damage, the destruction, the decay of our democracy would've gone even further.”

Matt Bennett, co-founder of the center-left think tank Third Way, predicted there will be a difference between short-term recollections of Biden and his legacy if Democrats lose in November.

"It is true that if we lose, that will cloud things for him in the near-term" because Democrats will have to confront Trump, Bennett said. "In the long term, when history judges Biden, they'll look at him on his own terms. They will judge him for what he did or did not do as president, and they will judge him very favorably."

Biden's decision to end his candidacy buoyed the spirits of congressional Democrats who had been fretting that the incumbent president would drag down their prospects of retaining the Senate and retaking the House. An all-Republican Washington would threaten to do even more damage to Biden's legacy.

Already, congressional Republicans have tried to unravel pieces of the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, a central Biden achievement that was passed on party lines in 2022. And they could succeed next year, with a President Trump waiting to sign a repeal into law.

GOP lawmakers could also vote to reverse key federal regulations that had arrived later in the Biden administration.

"If the Republicans get dual majorities, they're going to claw back as much as they can, they're going to undo as much as they can and not only will that be a disaster for America and the world, it'll be really bad for the Biden legacy," Bennett said.

Biden aides point to the thus-far seamless nature of Harris' takeover of his political apparatus as evidenced that the president has set up his vice president to successfully run on their shared record. But the ultimate test of that organization will come in November.

No one will be cheering her on more than the president.

As Biden said to Harris: "I'm watching you, kid."

Democrats hope Harris' bluntness on abortion will translate to 2024 wins in Congress, White House

By COLLEEN LONG, CHRISTINE FERNANDO and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden might not often use the word "abortion" when he talks about the overturning of Roe v. Wade, but Vice President Kamala Harris sure does. She's also toured a Planned Parenthood clinic where the procedure is performed, and routinely links the fall of Roe to the larger issue of rising maternal mortality nationwide.

Now that Harris is running for president in place of Biden, Democrats and advocates for reproductive rights are hoping that her bluntness on abortion — coupled with the administration's policies — will help sway voters to deliver them not just the White House but key congressional seats as well.

"The president on the record was fabulous and the campaign was turning out multiple repro-focused ads a week, and had an army of surrogates," said Mini Timmaraju, president of Reproductive Freedom for All. "But, you know, nothing is more compelling than the top of the ticket being the most compelling on the issue, and that's what we have now."

In her first official rally as a candidate on Tuesday, Harris touched on the issue of abortion briefly. But she's expected to make it a major feature of the campaign going forward, as she works to draw a stark contrast between herself and Republican Donald Trump.

She's eager to portray herself as a direct and consistent advocate with a history of fighting for reproductive health issues, especially Black maternal health.

"We who believe in reproductive freedom will stop Donald Trump's extreme abortion bans, because we trust women to make decisions about their own bodies and not have their government tell them what to do," she said to loud cheers at a Wisconsin rally.

The Supreme Court on June 24, 2022, overturned abortion rights that had been in place since 1973. Since then, roughly half the states have put some sort of ban in place.

The consequences of these bans go far beyond restricting access for those who wish to end unwanted

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 34 of 66

pregnancies. And generally, the states with the most restrictions also have the worst rates of maternal mortality.

Trump has repeatedly taken credit for the overturning of the federally guaranteed right to abortion. He nominated three of the Supreme Court justices who voted to overturn Roe. But he has publicly resisted supporting a national abortion ban.

Trump's running mate, JD Vance, has said he adheres to Trump's views. But in 2022, when he was running for the Senate, Vance said: "I certainly would like abortion to be illegal nationally."

Dr. Jamila Perritt, leader of the nonpartisan group Physicians for Reproductive Health, laid out a bleak landscape for women today that she hopes will change.

"The destruction of the health care safety net, assaults on bodily autonomy, and the rising maternal mortality rate clearly show us that pregnant people and those with the capacity for pregnancy do not have access to the options they need to stay safe and healthy," she said, adding that it's worse for Black women who must navigate racism on top of worsening healthcare.

"We need bold solutions to combat these crises on multiple fronts," she said.

Even before dropping out of the race, Biden had made Harris his chief messenger on the issue. In the days following the overturning of Roe, the vice president met with lawmakers in conservative states to discuss how to protect abortion rights in the ruling's aftermath. They convened meetings at the White House. Earlier this year, she did a reproductive rights tour in battleground states, starting in Wisconsin.

Harris' husband, Doug Emhoff, has said reproductive freedom is an "everyone" issue, not a "women's" issue. On Tuesday, in his first public appearance since his wife started pursuing the top slot on the ticket, he visited an abortion clinic.

"We've seen the stories of women who had to literally be on death's door before they got treatment. It's barbaric, it's immoral and it must change," Emhoff said.

The president's personal views have evolved over his 50 years in public service, but the 81-year-old Catholic has always been more comfortable leaving the blunt talk to his vice president.

On the policy side, Biden has sought to make medication abortion more available, access to contraception easier, and his administration has gone before the Supreme Court to argue hospitals have a duty under federal law to perform the procedure in life-threatening situations even in states where abortion is now banned. Biden also has said the Hyde Amendment should be eliminated. Among other things, the amendment bars the use of federal funds to pay for abortion.

But when the president had the opportunity to hit Trump on the issue during their June 27 debate, Biden faltered, giving jumbled and even nonsensical responses, and he failed to check Trump's false claims about Democrats' views on the subject. That debate set his undoing in motion.

Harris' views have been consistent, from her time in the U.S. Senate and as attorney general in California. She links the issue of abortion to the larger problems in the U.S. with maternal mortality and morbidity — plainly discussing how Black women are at a significantly greater risk for complications and less likely to be believed when something goes wrong.

As senator, she advocated for maternal health legislation. In 2019, she sponsored the Maternal CARE Act, calling for grants addressing implicit bias in maternal health care. In 2020, she introduced a law aimed at addressing maternal health outcomes for marginalized populations. She's also co-sponsored bills addressing birth control access and funding care for uterine fibroids.

During her time as California's attorney general, Harris also sued an anti-abortion group that secretly recorded videos of abortion providers.

Mary Ruth Ziegler, a law professor at the University of California, Davis School of Law, said Harris is poised to become among the most, if not the most, pro-abortion-rights candidates ever nominated by a major political party.

"If Harris prevails, it may have a big impact on how we address abortion rights because it'll show that a more unapologetic, full-throated embrace of reproductive rights can lead you to win politically and overcome other political obstacles," said Ziegler, one of the nation's leading abortion rights scholars.

Renee Bracey Sherman, founder and co-executive director of the national abortion rights organization

WeTestify, said Harris' identity as a Black and South Asian woman uniquely positions her to speak more personally about how abortion bans disproportionately impact women of color. She said it "means something for all of us" when people of color speak thoughtfully and unapologetically.

She added: "I'm looking forward to working with someone who we don't have to beg to use the word 'abortion.'"

Netanyahu visit sparks wave of protests in DC, with all sides criticizing the Israeli PM

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The arrival of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has touched off a flurry of protests in the nation's capital, including a sit-in at a congressional office building that ended with multiple arrests. Some of the demonstrations have condemned Israel but others have expressed support while pressuring Netanyahu to strike a cease-fire deal and bring home the hostages still being held by Hamas.

Netanyahu arrived in Washington Monday for a visit that includes meetings with President Joe Biden and a Wednesday speech before a joint session of Congress. Dozens of protesters rallied outside his hotel Monday evening, and on Tuesday afternoon, hundreds of demonstrators staged a flashmob-style protest in the Cannon Building, which houses offices of House of Representatives members.

Organized by Jewish Voice for Peace, protesters wearing red T-shirts that read "Not In Our Name" took over the building's rotunda, sitting on the floor, unfurling signs and chanting "Let Gaza Live!"

After about a half-hour of clapping and chanting, officers from the U.S. Capitol Police issued several warnings, then began arresting protesters — binding their hands with zip ties and leading them away one-by-one.

"I am the daughter of Holocaust survivors and I know what a Holocaust looks like," said Jane Hirschmann, a native of Saugerties, New York, who drove down for the protest along with her two daughters — both of whom were arrested. "When we say 'Never Again,' we mean never for anybody."

The demonstrators focused much of their ire on the Biden administration, demanding that the president immediately cease all arms shipments to Israel.

"We're not focusing on Netanyahu. He's just a symptom," Hirschmann said. "But how can (Biden) be calling for a cease-fire when he's sending them bombs and planes?"

As of 8 p.m. Tuesday night, the Capitol Police said they did not have a final tally of the number of people arrested. But JVP claimed in a statement that 400 people, "including over a dozen rabbis," had been arrested.

Mitchell Rivard, chief of staff for Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Mich., said in a statement that his office called for Capitol Police intervention after the demonstrators "became disruptive, violently beating on the office doors, shouting loudly, and attempting to force entry into the office."

Kildee later told The Associated Press that he was confused why his office was targeted, saying he had voted against a massive supplemental military aid package to Israel earlier this year.

Families of some of the remaining hostages held a protest vigil Tuesday evening on the National Mall, demanding that Netanyahu come to terms with Hamas and bring home the approximately 120 Israeli hostages remaining in Gaza. About 150 people wearing yellow shirts that read "Seal the Deal NOW!" chanted "Bring Them Home" and listened to testimonials from relatives and former hostages. The demonstrators applauded when Biden's name was mentioned, but several criticized Netanyahu — known by his nickname "Bibi" — on the belief that he was dragging his feet or playing hardball on a proposed cease-fire deal that would return all of the hostages.

"I'm begging Bibi. There's a deal on the table and you have to take it," said Aviva Siegel, 63, who spent 51 days in captivity and whose husband, Keith, remains a hostage. "I want Bibi to look in my eyes and tell me one thing: that Keith is coming home."

Multiple protests are planned for Wednesday, when Netanyahu is slated to address Congress. In anticipation, police have significantly boosted security around the Capitol building and closed multiple roads

for most of the week.

Biden and Netanyahu are expected to meet Thursday, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of the White House announcement. Vice President Kamala Harris will also meet with Netanyahu separately that day.

Harris, as Senate president, would normally sit behind foreign leaders addressing Congress, but she'll be away Wednesday, on an Indianapolis trip scheduled before Biden withdrew his reelection bid and she became the likely Democratic presidential candidate over the weekend.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump announced on Truth Social that he would meet with Netanyahu on Friday.

Physicality and endurance win the World Series of perhaps the oldest game in North America

BY GRAHAM LEE BREWER Associated Press

CHOCTAW, Miss. (AP) — As the drummers walk onto the field, the players behind them smack their hickory sticks to the beat. The rhythm envelops the stands and a palpable sense of anticipation flows through the crowd.

Indigenous peoples have been playing stickball for hundreds of years, and every summer since 1975, teams have competed in Mississippi to become champion of perhaps the oldest game in North America.

A game of physicality and endurance, stickball is often referred to as the grandfather of field sports and the annual tournament in Mississippi is the game's premier event. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has been producing some of the country's best players for generations. A team from Mississippi will almost certainly be the one to beat in any tournament or exhibition game in the country.

No pads, no timeouts, no mercy

As the July sun set on another sweltering day, hundreds of people gathered at the Choctaw Central High School football field and sat down on the Indian blankets they had draped across the metal seating. Others lined their folding chairs along the chain-link fence to get a glimpse of the action.

Stickball, known as ishtaboli in the Choctaw language, is played with 30 players on the field, each carrying two netted sticks called kabotcha, and a small woven leather ball painted bright orange, called a towa.

Stickball fans say it remains pure. There are no pads, no timeouts and no mercy. Players typically don't even wear shoes. It is not uncommon for people to leave the stickball field with broken bones from full contact, or gashes from taking a stick to the face. Any player possessing the ball can expect to be tackled or torn down by their jersey or breechcloth.

"It makes your heart just beat like a drum. Just the intensity of the sport," Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Chief Cyrus Ben said. "At the end of the day, it doesn't matter what color jersey or what team, it's being Choctaw."

Although the game is high-contact, it is so respected by the Choctaw, and so central to their cultural identity, that no hit is taken personally, no matter how intense. Players often slam each other so hard that their sticks go flying through the air, and they simply get back up, nod to each other, and race down the field after the ball.

Variations on stickball have traditionally been played by several tribal nations using rules created by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Players are not allowed to hit each other with their sticks, although that happens routinely when players huddle around a loose ball. Late and early tackles are prohibited, and anything above the shoulders is off-limits.

The field is never empty

Chief Ben, like many here, was given a pair of sticks as soon as he could walk. Some recall sleeping with them above their pillows and a ball underneath. Boys and girls play together in the youth tournaments the night before the men's and women's championship games every year at the Choctaw Indian Fair. All over town you will see kids with sticks poking out of their backpacks.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 37 of 66

The field is never empty. Children play stickball before every game — living out their fantasy of one day claiming victory on the same field. Between that, the snow-cone stand, and the almost fanatical way the assistant coaches scream from the sidelines, it's as familiar as any Friday night high-school football game.

This year, Koni Hata, the 2023 men's champion and one of the most dominant teams in the modern era of stickball, defended its dynasty in both the men's and women's title games against neighboring Choctaw communities such as Pearl River and stickball powerhouse Bok Cito.

The finals started with the women's championship, Bok Cito Ohoyo taking on Koni Hata Ohoyo, which was looking for its second threeppeat in the last seven years. Scoreless at the end of regulation play, the game was decided in sudden death when Bok Cito Ohoyo center shooter Leia Phillips scored with a running midfield shot.

"I said, 'yeah, it's my time to shine, this is my shot right here, you worked all year for this,'" Phillips, the women's tournament MVP, said after the game.

Blood, gashes and breaks

The men's game between Koni Hata and Pearl River was highly physical, and several skirmishes for the ball ended with sticks shooting through the air "like my 9-iron," one announcer said. Several players were treated by medics for a variety of injuries including a bleeding eye and a gash across the forehead. Earlier in the tournament a player suffered from a broken nose.

Pearl River had no trouble scoring during tournament play, racking up an impressive 41 points in its first three games. They scored in the first half, but the point was negated for having 31 players on the field. Koni Hata scored in the second half but that point was also taken away for having too many players on the field. But Pearl River scored late in the fourth quarter and took home the ceremonial drum presented by Chief Ben.

As the Choctaw Indian Fair was winding down, Jackie Morris, the coach of the team from the community of Bok Cito, waited in line for a hot dog. He made sure that every passing Bok Cito player had a chance to sign the drum slung over his shoulder.

"This is what we play for," he said, patting the trophy. On the field nearby, drums and sticks beat together.

Salt Lake City celebrates expected announcement that it will host the 2034 Winter Olympics

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Salt Lake City is expected to be formally awarded the 2034 Winter Olympics following a Wednesday vote by the International Olympic Committee in Paris, which would give Utah its second Games after hosting in 2002.

A watch party is planned at 3 a.m. local time — 11 a.m. in Paris — to celebrate the announcement. Large crowds are expected at the event that coincides with a state holiday marking the date Mormon pioneers discovered the Salt Lake Valley in northern Utah. Olympic fanatics were already starting to gather downtown and pitch tents before sunset Tuesday.

Salt Lake City is the lone contender the Olympic committee is considering for 2034. Climate change and high operational costs have reduced the number of cities willing and able to welcome the Winter Games. Utah has capitalized on low interest elsewhere, pitching itself to Olympic officials as an enthusiastic repeat host if the committee goes forward with a proposed permanent rotation of Winter Olympic cities. Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi has said Salt Lake City would be a prime candidate for such a plan.

Local leaders have had their sights set on hosting multiple times even before Salt Lake City welcomed its first Games, bid team spokesperson Tom Kelly said. Remnants of the 2002 Games are nestled throughout the city and have kept the Olympic fever alive for more than two decades. Organizers of the 2034 Games touted that enduring enthusiasm throughout the selection process and showed visiting Olympic officials how they've preserved the venues used in 2002.

In their final presentation to the Olympic committee Wednesday morning, the bid team is expected to

outline its plan for one of the most compact layouts in Olympic history, with all venues within a one-hour drive of the athletes village on the University of Utah campus. The plan requires no new permanent construction, with all 13 venues already in place and each having played a role when the city first hosted.

For Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, securing the bid is central to his goal of cementing the state as North America's winter sports capital. He and other local leaders are in Paris for the bid presentation, while many winter Olympians stayed in town to train and join in the festivities.

American freestyle skier Christopher Lillis, a gold medalist at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, said the 2034 games would be a dream come true for young people with Olympic aspirations. Salt Lake City has grown a lot since 2010, when Lillis said his family started visiting, and it's become more expensive. Lillis has been training at nearby Utah Olympic Park and said the sports facilities in the area are "top notch."

Matthew Lindon, a 45-year resident of the ski resort community of Park City, Utah, where many events would be held, said the city has expanded considerably since he arrived.

"With the 2002 Olympics, the motto was, 'The world is welcome here.' And really what happened was we brought Utah to the world, and now we're a world-class destination skiing resort," he said.

Netanyahu looks to boost US support in speech to Congress, but faces protests and lawmaker boycotts

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks before Congress Wednesday in hopes of bolstering U.S. support for continuing Israel's fight against Hamas and other adversaries, even as the Biden administration is urging him to focus on closing a deal ending the devastating nine-month war in Gaza.

Netanyahu is assured a warm welcome from Republican lawmakers who arranged his speech in the House chamber, an appearance making him the first foreign leader to address a joint meeting of Congress four times, surpassing Winston Churchill.

But many Democrats and independents plan to boycott his appearance. The most notable absences will be behind Netanyahu as Vice President Kamala Harris, who serves as president of the Senate and traditionally would sit behind whatever dignitary is speaking, says a long-scheduled trip will keep her away. The next Democrat in line, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, is declining to attend.

Republicans targeted the absence of Harris — the new Democratic front-runner for the presidency — as a sign of disloyalty to an ally. But Donald Trump's running-mate, JD Vance, said campaigning would also make him a no-show for the Israeli leader's speech.

And outside the Capitol, demonstrators angry over the deaths of nearly 40,000 Palestinians, or over Netanyahu's inability to free Israeli and American hostages, are promising massive protests.

In anticipation, House Speaker Mike Johnson warned of a "zero-tolerance policy" for any signs of disturbances in the Capitol building. "It is our tradition to acknowledge every guest speaker's right to free expression even if we disagree with their viewpoint," the Louisiana Republican wrote to members Tuesday.

Johnson arranged the address, an honor that marks both the two countries' historically warm bonds and the political weight that support for Israel has long carried in U.S. politics. But the attention for the visit has been diminished some by American political turmoil of recent weeks, including the assassination attempt against Trump and President Joe Biden's decision not to seek another term.

Netanyahu hopes to project the image of a tough, respected statesman for an increasingly critical domestic audience back home in Israel. That may be difficult given the wide division among Americans over Netanyahu's conduct of the war.

Many Democrats who support Israel but have been critical of Netanyahu see the address as a Republican effort to cast itself as the party most loyal to Israel and to provide the prime minister with a much-needed political reprieve.

"I don't know all the motivations for Speaker Johnson initiating the invitation but clearly he wanted to throw a political lifeline to Netanyahu whose popularity is very low in Israel right now," Sen. Chris Van

Hollen, among the dozens of Democrats set to boycott, said Tuesday.

Netanyahu also is to meet with Biden and Harris on Thursday, and Trump at Mar-a-Lago on Friday.

The United States is Israel's most important ally, arms supplier and source of military aid as Israel battles to break Hamas since the group attacked Israel on Oct. 7. Netanyahu's visit is his first abroad since the war started, and comes under the shadow of arrest warrants sought against him by the International Criminal Court over alleged Israel war crimes against Palestinians. The United States does not recognize the ICC.

Netanyahu says his aims for the U.S. visit are to press for freeing hostages held by Hamas and other militants in Gaza, to build support for continuing Israel's battle against the group, and to argue for continuing to confront Hezbollah in Lebanon and other Iranian-allied groups in the region. The U.S., France and others are seeking to calm border fighting between Hezbollah and Israel, fearing a larger war.

Netanyahu in his speech also may address a new China-brokered deal between Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah to form a government together. The agreement was an attempt to resolve a rivalry that could make it even harder for Palestinians to secure a role governing Gaza whenever the war ends. Israel immediately denounced the pact, and State Department spokesman Matthew Miller called Hamas a terror group that should have no role in governing Palestinians.

Some Democrats are wary about Netanyahu, who used a 2015 joint address to Congress to denounce then-President Barack Obama's pending nuclear deal with Iran. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan has said he does not expect Wednesday's speech to be a repeat of 2015's.

As the prime minister speaks, multiple protests are planned in and around the Capitol. The largest is set for Wednesday morning, with organizers planning to march around the Capitol demanding Netanyahu's arrest on war crimes charges. Relatives of Israeli hostages are planning a vigil on the National Mall.

Republican leaders urge colleagues to steer clear of racist and sexist attacks on Harris

By LISA MASCARO and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican leaders are warning party members against using overtly racist and sexist attacks against Vice President Kamala Harris, as they and former President Donald Trump's campaign scramble to adjust to the reality of a new Democratic rival less than four months before Election Day.

At a closed-door meeting of House Republicans on Tuesday, National Republican Congressional Committee chairman Richard Hudson, R-N.C., urged lawmakers to stick to criticizing Harris for her role in Biden-Harris administration policies.

"This election will be about policies and not personalities," House Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters after the meeting.

"This is not personal with regard to Kamala Harris," he added, "and her ethnicity or her gender have nothing to do with this whatsoever."

The warnings point to the new risks for Republicans in running against a Democrat who would become the first woman, first Black woman and first person of South Asian descent to win the White House. Trump, in particular, has a history of racist and misogynistic attacks that could turn off key groups of swing voters, including suburban women, as well as voters of color and younger people Trump's campaign has been courting.

The admonitions came after some members and Trump allies began to cast Harris, a former district attorney, attorney general and senator, as a "DEI" hire — a reference to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

"Intellectually, just really kind of the bottom of the barrel," Wyoming Rep. Harriet Hageman said in a TV interview. "I think she was a DEI hire. And I think that that's what we're seeing and I just don't think that they have anybody else."

Since Biden announced he was exiting the campaign, Republicans have rolled out a long list of attack lines against Harris, including trying to tie her to the most unpopular Biden policies and his handling of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 40 of 66

the economy and the Southern border. Trump campaign officials and other Republicans have accused Harris of being complicit in a cover-up of Biden's health issues, and they have been mining her record as a prosecutor in California as they try to paint her as soft on crime.

Johnson said both Trump and Harris have records in White House policy and said voters can compare how families were doing under the Trump administration with how they're doing now under Biden.

"She is the co-owner, co-author, co-conspirator in all the policies that got us into the mess," Johnson said.

Biden announced Sunday that he was withdrawing from the race. In a memo on the state of the race Tuesday, Trump campaign pollster Tony Fabrizio argued the fundamentals of the campaign had not changed now that Harris appears increasingly likely to be the Democratic nominee.

"The Democrats deposing one Nominee for another does NOT change voters discontent over the economy, inflation, crime, the open border, housing costs not to mention concern over two foreign wars," he wrote. "As importantly, voters will also learn about Harris' dangerously liberal record before becoming Biden's partner."

In similar messaging, Hudson told members at the Tuesday meeting that the NRCC is focusing on how Harris is even more progressive than Biden and essentially "owns" all the administration's policies, according to a person familiar with the conversation and granted anonymity to discuss it.

Sen. Steve Daines, who chairs the National Republican Senatorial Committee, echoed that criticism, calling Harris "too liberal."

"She's not an Irish Catholic kid who grew up in Scranton. She's a San Francisco liberal," Daines said.

Trump offered a similar argument in call with reporters Tuesday.

"She's the same as Biden but much more radical. She's a radical left person and this country doesn't want a radical left person to destroy it. She's far more radical than he is," he said.

"So I think she should be easier than Biden because he was slightly more mainstream, but not much," he added.

Later, in an interview on Newsmax, Trump claimed Harris "destroyed the city of San Francisco," though she left her job as district attorney there in 2011, and called her "the worst at everything."

"Kamala Harris is just as weak, failed and incompetent as Joe Biden — and she's also dangerously liberal," the Trump campaign said in a statement. "Not only does Kamala need to defend her support of Joe Biden's failed agenda over the past four years, she also needs to answer for her own terrible weak-on-crime record in California."

Trump has a long history of launching particularly caustic and personal attacks against women, from former Fox News host Megyn Kelly to his 2016 primary opponent Carly Fiorina to New York Attorney General Letitia James, who successfully sued him and his business for fraud.

In a sign of what could come, Trump in a Fourth of July message on his Truth Social network took a jab at Harris' poor performance in the 2020 Democratic primary, adding "that doesn't mean she's not a 'highly talented' politician! Just ask her Mentor, the Great Willie Brown of San Francisco." Harris dated Brown in the mid-1990s.

Strong and intelligent women who attack him seem to get especially under Trump's skin, said Stephanie Grisham, a 2016 campaign aide who served for a time as Trump's White House press secretary, before breaking with him after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

"She's going to get a real rise out of him," predicted Grisham, noting that when Trump is attacked, he "punches 1,000 times harder. He's not going to be able to help himself."

When it comes to women, she added: "His go-to is to attack looks and to call women dumb. It's his go-to and I don't expect this to be any different."

Rep. Maxine Waters of California, who is a prominent member of the Congressional Black Caucus and was among the early Democrats to confront Trump, said she is well-braced for what's ahead as the Republicans turn the campaign toward Harris.

"The first thing I think about are the attacks that are going to come from the Trump, the MAGA right wing — that have already started," Waters told the AP. "They're going to be nasty they're going to be bad."

She predicted that approach might backfire on Trump.

"The danger is that he's so arrogant and egotistical that he's going to step on women and it's going to backfire," she said.

The dynamics could be heightened on the debate stage, if Trump goes through with debating Harris, as he said Thursday he would.

Republican pollster Neil Newhouse said Trump was unlikely to debate Harris in the same way he would debate Biden — or the same way he debated another female rival, Democrat Hillary Clinton, in 2016.

"I don't think Trump can approach a debate against Kamala Harris with the same tone that he approached the debate with Hillary Clinton. Kamala Harris does not have the negatives that Hillary had and she is a relatively new political face," he said. "Caution might be warranted."

Clip resurfaces of Vance criticizing Harris for being 'childless,' testing Trump's new running mate

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

Comments JD Vance made in 2021 questioning Vice President Kamala Harris' leadership because she did not have biological children have resurfaced, testing the young conservative senator in his early days campaigning as part of the Republicans' presidential ticket.

During Vance's bid for the Senate in Ohio, he said in a Fox News interview that "we are effectively run in this country via the Democrats," and referred to them as "a bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they've made and so they want to make the rest of the country miserable, too." He said that included Harris, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a New York Democrat.

"How does it make any sense that we've turned our country over to people who don't really have a direct stake in it?" asked Vance, who is now Donald Trump's running mate. Harris became stepmother to two teenagers when she married entertainment lawyer Douglas Emhoff in 2014. And Buttigieg announced he and his husband adopted infant twins in September 2021, more than a month before Vance made those comments.

The clip has started to spread online, with Hillary Clinton sharing it in a Tuesday post on X and adding sarcastically "what a normal, relatable guy who certainly doesn't hate women having freedoms."

The recirculated comment may be a sign of the GOP ticket's troubles appealing to women voters, and on the issue of reproductive rights. It follows the explosive entrance in the race of Harris, who secured the support of enough delegates to become the official nominee in less than 32 hours after President Joe Biden ended his reelection bid.

It also lays out some of the fears expressed by strategists that Trump took a political risk in picking a running mate who has been in Congress less than two years and is largely untested on a bigger stage. Trump liked Vance's telegenic qualities and said he reminded him of "a young Abraham Lincoln."

The Harris campaign contested Vance's stance, saying "every single American has a stake in this country's future."

"Ugly, personal attacks from JD Vance and Donald Trump are in line with their dangerous Project 2025 agenda to ban abortion, decimate our democracy, and gut Social Security," said James Singer, a Harris campaign spokesman, referring to a policy and personnel plan for a second Trump term that was crafted by a host of former administration officials. Trump has been trying to distance himself from it. Project 2025 says the Department of Health and Human Services should "pursue a robust agenda" to protect "the fundamental right to life." However, the document contains no proposals to cut Social Security, though the Heritage Foundation that oversaw it has long pushed for changes to the entitlement. The plan outlines a dramatic expansion of presidential power and a plan to fire as many as 50,000 government workers.

Vance's spokesperson said the Harris campaign is lying about Vance's views, noting her record is "littered with countless failures and disasters."

"It's well known that Senator Vance found success in life due in large part to the influence of strong

female role models like his grandmother," spokesperson Taylor Van Kirk said.

Vance, 39, is a former Marine and businessman who was first elected to public office in 2022. He wrote the 2016 bestseller "Hillbilly Elegy," and developed a strong rapport with Trump, his son Donald Trump Jr. and leading MAGA figures with his personal story of growing up in Appalachia in poverty with a mother battling drug addiction could resonate with voters.

One of the major questions Vance is facing is on his abortion stance. Vance previously said he would support a federal bill to prohibit abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, but believes in certain exceptions.

In 2021, Vance floated an idea to allow parents to cast ballots on behalf of their children, saying during a speech at the conservative nonprofit Intercollegiate Studies Institute in Virginia that people who don't have children "don't have as much of an investment in the future of the country."

"When you go to the polls in this country as a parent, you should have more power, you should have more of an availability to speak your voice in our democratic republic than people who don't have kids," he said.

"Doesn't this mean that non parents don't have as much of a voice as parents?" he said critics would then ask. "Doesn't this mean that parents get a bigger say in how a democracy functions? Yes, absolutely."

Officers left post to go look for Trump rally gunman before shooting, state police boss says

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER, CLAUDIA LAUER and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two local law enforcement officers stationed in the complex of buildings where a gunman opened fire at former President Donald Trump left to go search for the man before the shooting, the head of Pennsylvania State Police said Tuesday, raising questions about whether a key post was left unattended as the shooter climbed onto a roof.

Pennsylvania State Police Col. Christopher Paris told a congressional committee that two Butler County Emergency Services Unit officers were stationed at a second-floor window in the complex of buildings that form AGR International Inc. They spotted Thomas Matthew Crooks acting suspiciously on the ground and left their post to look for him along with other law enforcement officers, he said.

Paris said he didn't know whether officers would have been able to see Crooks climbing onto the roof of an adjacent building had they remained at the window. A video taken by a lawmaker who visited the shooting site on Monday shows a second-story window of the building had a clear view of the roof where Crooks opened fire; it was unclear if the video showed the window where the officers had been stationed.

The Pennsylvania State Police commissioner's testimony before the House Homeland Security Committee provides new insight into security preparations for the Trump rally in Butler, Pennsylvania on July 13, but raises further questions about law enforcement's decisions before Crooks opened fire.

Butler County District Attorney Richard Goldinger, who oversees the emergency services unit, didn't immediately respond to a text message Tuesday from The Associated Press. A Secret Service spokesperson didn't respond to questions from the AP, including who gave the command for those officers to leave their post.

The revelation comes amid growing questions about a multitude of security failures that allowed the 20-year-old gunman to get onto the roof and fire eight shots with an AR-style rifle into the crowd shortly after Trump began speaking. One spectator was killed and two others were injured. Trump suffered an ear injury but was not seriously hurt.

Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle resigned earlier Tuesday, a day after she was berated for hours by Democrats and Republicans over the agency's failure to protect the Republican presidential nominee. Cheatle told lawmakers on the House Oversight and Accountability Committee on Monday that the assassination attempt was the Secret Service's "most significant operational failure" in decades.

The Homeland Security Committee also had asked Cheatle to testify but lawmakers said she refused. Cheatle's name was on a card on a table in front of an empty chair during the hearing, which began shortly before her decision to step down became public.

Several investigations into the shooting by the Biden administration and lawmakers are underway. Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson and Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said Tuesday they are supporting a bipartisan task force to investigate the attempt on Trump's life. The House could vote as soon as Wednesday to establish the task force, which will be comprised of seven Republicans and six Democrats.

Local law enforcement began to search for Crooks after they noticed him acting strangely and saw him with a rangefinder, a small device resembling binoculars that hunters use to measure distance from a target. Officers didn't find him around the building and a local officer climbed up to the roof to investigate. The gunman turned and pointed his rifle at him. The officer did not — or could not — fire a single shot. Crooks opened fire toward the former president seconds later, officials have said.

Cheatle acknowledged that the Secret Service was told about a suspicious person two to five times before the shooting, but there was no indication at that time that he had a weapon. She also revealed that the roof from which Crooks opened fire had been identified as a potential vulnerability days before the rally. Cheatle said Trump would never have been brought onto the stage had Secret Service been aware there was an "actual threat," but Crooks wasn't deemed to be a "threat" until seconds before he began shooting.

Authorities have been hunting for clues into what motivated Crooks but have not found any ideological bent that could help explain his actions. Investigators who searched his phone found photos of Trump, President Joe Biden and other senior government officials. He also searched for the dates for the Democratic National Convention as well as Trump's appearances and searched for information about major depressive disorder.

A group of 2,000 migrants advance through southern Mexico in hopes of reaching the US

By RAÚL VERA Associated Press

TAPACHULA, Mexico (AP) — A group of 2,000 migrants from dozens of countries set out on foot Tuesday through southern Mexico as they attempt to reach the U.S., although recent similar attempts have failed, with groups disbanding after a few days without leaving the region.

Several members of the group said they hoped to reach the U.S. before the November presidential election as they fear that if Donald Trump wins, he will follow through on a promise to close the border to asylum-seekers.

Entire families, women with baby strollers, children accompanied by their parents and adults started walking before sunrise from Tapachula, considered the primary access point to Mexico's southern border, in an effort to avoid the high temperatures. They hoped to advance 40 kilometers (24 miles).

Several hundred migrants left the Suchiate River on Sunday, a natural border with Guatemala and Mexico, encouraged by a call to join a caravan that began to spread on social media a couple of weeks earlier.

The formation of the new caravan comes at the heels of U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to drop out of the 2024 race for the White House. While some migrants said they weren't aware of Biden's announcement, many said they feared that if Trump was elected their situation would become more complicated.

"All of us here are hard-working human beings, we're fighters," said Laydi Sierra, a Venezuelan migrant traveling with dozens of family members. She said she has not been following the U.S. campaign, but wishes that Trump loses "because he wants nothing to do with migrants."

Almost daily, dozens of people leave Tapachula on their way to the U.S. border. However, the formation of larger groups with hundreds or thousands of people moving through southern Mexico has become regular in the last few years and tends to occur with changes in regional migration policy.

These groups are sometimes led by activists, but also by the migrants themselves who get tired of waiting for any kind of legal documents to allow them to move inside Mexico.

Carlos Pineda, a Salvadorian migrant who left his country because he couldn't find work, said there are about 30 people organizing the group, but did not provide further details.

On Tuesday, as they passed by one of the closed migration checkpoints, several migrants chanted, "Yes, we can; yes, we can."

Demonstrators stage mass protest against Netanyahu visit and US military aid to Israel

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Protesters against the Gaza war staged a sit-in at a congressional office building Tuesday ahead of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address to Congress, with Capitol Police making multiple arrests.

Netanyahu arrived in Washington Monday for a visit that includes meetings with President Joe Biden and a Wednesday speech before a joint session of Congress. Dozens of protesters rallied outside his hotel Monday evening, and on Tuesday afternoon, hundreds of demonstrators staged a flashmob-style protest in the Cannon Building, which houses offices of House of Representatives members.

Organized by Jewish Voice for Peace, protesters wearing red T-shirts that read "Not In Our Name" took over the building's rotunda, sitting on the floor, unfurling signs and chanting "Let Gaza Live!"

After about a half-hour of clapping and chanting, officers from the U.S. Capitol Police issued several warnings, then began arresting protesters — binding their hands with zip ties and leading them away one-by-one.

"I am the daughter of Holocaust survivors and I know what a Holocaust looks like," said Jane Hirschmann, a native of Saugerties, New York, who drove down for the protest along with her two daughters — both of whom were arrested. "When we say 'Never Again,' we mean never for anybody."

The demonstrators focused much of their ire on the Biden administration, demanding that the president immediately cease all arms shipments to Israel.

"We're not focusing on Netanyahu. He's just a symptom," Hirschmann said. "But how can (Biden) be calling for a cease-fire when he's sending them bombs and planes?"

As of 8 p.m. Tuesday night, the Capitol Police said they did not have a final tally of the number of people arrested. But JVP claimed in a statement that 400 people, "including over a dozen rabbis," had been arrested.

Mitchell Rivard, chief of staff for Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Mich., said in a statement that his office called for Capitol Police intervention after the demonstrators "became disruptive, violently beating on the office doors, shouting loudly, and attempting to force entry into the office."

Kildee later told The Associated Press that he was confused why his office was targeted, saying he had voted against a massive supplemental military aid package to Israel earlier this year.

Netanyahu's American visit has touched off a wave of protest activity, with some demonstrations condemning Israel and others expressing support but pressuring Netanyahu to strike a cease-fire deal and bring home the hostages still being held by Hamas.

Families of some of the remaining hostages held a protest vigil Tuesday evening on the National Mall, demanding that Netanyahu come to terms with Hamas and bring home the approximately 120 Israeli hostages remaining in Gaza. About 150 people wearing yellow shirts that read "Seal the Deal NOW!" chanted "Bring Them Home" and listened to testimonials from relatives and former hostages. The demonstrators applauded when Biden's name was mentioned, but several criticized Netanyahu — known by his nickname "Bibi" — on the belief that he was dragging his feet or playing hardball on a proposed cease-fire deal that would return all of the hostages.

"I'm begging Bibi. There's a deal on the table and you have to take it," said Aviva Siegel, 63, who spent 51 days in captivity and whose husband, Keith, remains a hostage. "I want Bibi to look in my eyes and tell me one thing: that Keith is coming home."

Multiple protests are planned for Wednesday, when Netanyahu is slated to address Congress. In anticipation, police have significantly boosted security around the Capitol building and closed multiple roads for most of the week.

Biden and Netanyahu are expected to meet Thursday, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of the White House announcement. Vice President Kamala Harris will also meet with Netanyahu separately that day.

Harris, as Senate president, would normally sit behind foreign leaders addressing Congress, but she'll be away Wednesday, on an Indianapolis trip scheduled before Biden withdrew his reelection bid and she became the likely Democratic presidential candidate over the weekend.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump announced on Truth Social that he would meet with Netanyahu on Friday.

How employers are taking steps to safeguard workers from extreme heat

By DORANY PINEDA and KENDRIA LaFLEUR Associated Press

McKINNEY, Texas (AP) — At the start of every work day, construction worker Charles Smith puts on the essentials: hard hat. Safety glasses. A reflective vest. And a small, watch-like band for his wrist.

But rather than track time, its purpose is to ensure he doesn't overheat while working during sweltering summer days in Texas. The wristband monitors his heart rate, core body temperature, stress level and more. If it detects signs of overheating, it warns him and his safety manager, advising Smith to rest and hydrate. The device serves as an early warning system to prevent heat-related injuries and illnesses.

The technology is one way that workplaces are setting up employee protections as summers grow hotter, longer and more extreme due to climate change. On Sunday, the Earth reached the hottest day ever measured, according to a European climate service group. And in the absence of federal heat rules for workers, which the Biden administration recently proposed, some employers in states without rules are taking it upon themselves to safeguard employees from extreme heat dangers.

"We can catch it before it happens," said Seth Campbell, safety manager for the construction company Rogers-O'Brien, Smith's employer, of monitoring signs of heat-related illnesses. Their team started using the technology last summer.

UPS recently equipped delivery drivers with cooling hats and sleeves that provide relief from heat — and increased access to ice, cold water and electrolytes for employees, according to its website. They have also added more cooling equipment to its vehicles and facilities, said vice president of global communications Genny Bowman in an email. That includes installing exhaust heat shields to lower vehicle floor temperatures, as well as fans in package cars and more fans in its facilities.

Some greenhouse companies, including Eden Green and Cox Farms, have said they adjust workers' schedules to account for excessive heat, such as starting them earlier in the morning, breaking during peak heat, and returning in the evening as temperatures cool.

During June's record-breaking heat wave in the Midwest and Northeast, an organization in Columbus, Ohio, prepared frozen towels and cold water for their workers to stay cool and hydrated.

And in some California warehouses, where indoor temperatures can reach above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (about 32 Celsius), employers have provided cooling vests with ice packs in them and bandanas that can get cool when wet, according to Tim Shadix, legal director for the Warehouse Worker Resource Center, a nonprofit dedicated to improving working conditions in Southern California's warehouse industry.

Such measures can help keep workers cool and comfortable, but Shadix said they're not enough to protect them from worsening heat dangers. "Under standard workplace safety practices, those are meant to be responses of last resort," he said, "but when you're addressing a hazard, including heat, you usually try to start with what's most effective," which can include installing air conditioning, slowing down the workplace schedule or providing more breaks.

Last summer, during a historic heat wave, the Texas-based Rogers-O'Brien launched a pilot program that gives workers the option to wear a heat sensor paired with a software called SafeGuard. If the worker's heart rate or body temperature are too high, Campbell is among the people who receives an alert to check on them. He then assesses ways to cool them down, such as putting ice packs under their armpits.

"Last year we had two alerts and we were able to get that employee to the shade inside, get (them) plenty of electrolytes, and we didn't have any clinic visits with anyone wearing the technology," he said.

On really hot days coupled with intense physical exertion, Smith's wristband has warned him and the

safety manager that his body temperature and heart rate were high. It served as a signal to take a shaded break and drink water. And he did.

"The importance of it could stretch very far," said Smith on a day of triple-digit temperatures. "Making sure that workers stay at levels where they could actually go home every night and see their families, making sure that workers are able to recover properly. I think it could be a great benefit to the industry and just about any other industry."

State election directors fear the Postal Service can't handle expected crush of mail-in ballots

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — State election directors from across the country voiced serious concerns to a top U.S. Postal Service official Tuesday that the system won't be able to handle an expected crush of mail-in ballots in the November election.

Steven Carter, manager of election and government programs for the postal service, attempted to reassure the directors at a meeting in Minneapolis that the system's Office of Inspector General will publish an election mail report next week containing "encouraging" performance numbers for this year so far.

"The data that that we're seeing showing improvements in the right direction," Carter told a conference of the National Association of State Election Directors. "And I think the OIG report is especially complimentary of how we're handling the election now."

But state election directors stressed to Carter that they're still worried that too many ballots won't be delivered in time to be counted in November. They based their fears on past problems and a disruptive consolidation of postal facilities across the country that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has put on hold until after the elections.

Monica Evans, executive director of the District of Columbia Board of Elections, recounted how she never received her mail ballot for her own June primary. She ended up voting in person.

"We had, at last count, over 80 ballots that were timely mailed as early as May for our June 4 primary election," Evans said, noting that her office could have accepted them as late as June 14, but they still arrived too late. "We followed up and we just kept getting, 'We don't know what happened. We don't know what happened.'"

While former President Donald Trump has complained without foundation that fraudulent mailed ballots cost him a second term in 2020, mail-in voting has become a key component of each party's strategy to maximize the turnout of their voters in 2024. Now Republicans, sometimes including Trump, see it as necessary for an election that is likely to be decided by razor-thin margins in a handful of swing states. Republicans once were at least as likely as Democrats to vote by mail, but Trump changed the dynamics in 2020 when he began to argue against it months before voting began.

Bryan Caskey, the elections director for Kansas who's also the association's incoming president, asked Carter to consider a hypothetical jurisdiction that has a 95% on-time rate for mail deliveries, which he said is better than what almost all states are getting.

"That still means that in the state that sends out 100,000 ballots, that's 5,000 pissed-off, angry voters that are mad about the mail service," Caskey said, adding, "Actual elections are being determined by these delays, and I just want to make sure that you're hearing why we're so upset."

"It's totally understandable," Carter said. "The frustration is understandable."

The association's current president, Mandy Vigil, the elections director for New Mexico, said in an interview afterward that she appreciated that the service was at least willing to engage with the state officials, but that she's concerned that there isn't enough time before the general election.

"I think that we are at a place where we really need them to pay attention," Vigil said. "You know, we've been voicing our concerns since last November. But we just aren't seeing the changes as we're working through our primary elections. And when it comes to November, like, we need to see a difference."

Nineteen senators wrote to DeJoy last month asking the postmaster general about the service's policies

and plans to prepare for the 2024 election cycle. They pointed out how the first regional consolidation, in Virginia last year, led to delivery delays that led some local election officials there to direct residents to bypass the mail and place their primary election ballots in designated drop boxes. They noted that Virginia's on-time delivery rate fell below 72% for fiscal 2024, or over 15% below the national average.

Other consolidations have been blamed for degraded service in Oregon, Virginia, Texas and Missouri. The consolidation has also created concern among lawmakers in Utah, where state law requires that ballots be mailed from within Utah, but the postal service now processes mail from some counties in Nevada after moving some operations from Provo to Las Vegas. The entire Minnesota and North Dakota congressional delegations wrote to DeLoy last month after an inspector general's audit documented nearly 131,000 missing or delayed pieces of mail at six post offices over the course of just two days.

DeJoy paused the cost-cutting consolidations until January 2025 in the wake of bipartisan criticism, but lawmakers want a commitment that the resumption won't lead to further delivery delays.

US is investigating Delta's flight cancellations and faltering response to global tech outage

By DAVID KOENIG and MATT OTT AP Business Writers

U.S. regulators are investigating why Delta Air Lines failed to recover as quickly as other airlines from a global technology breakdown and whether Delta's treatment of passengers stranded by canceled and delayed flights violated federal rules.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg on Tuesday announced the investigation into Delta's response to the outage, which he said has affected more than half a million of the airline's passengers.

A Delta official said the airline expects to return to normal operations by the end of the week.

Delta and its Delta Connection partners canceled more than 500 flights Tuesday. That was down by more than half from Monday but still accounted for nearly two-thirds of all canceled flights in the United States, according to tracking platform FlightAware.

Many airlines were affected when cybersecurity company CrowdStrike sent a faulty update to more than 8 million Microsoft computers around the world late last week. Most of them reduced cancellations to roughly normal levels by the end of the weekend.

Atlanta-based Delta and its partners have canceled more than 6,500 flights since Friday, far more than any other airline, according to figures from FlightAware and travel-data provider Cirium.

Buttigieg said his department will investigate "how it could be that days after the other airlines are back to normal, Delta is still canceling hundreds of flights."

At a news conference, Buttigieg said the Transportation Department will also examine Delta's customer service, including "unacceptable" lines for customer service and reports that unaccompanied minors were stranded at airports. He said the department has received more than 3,000 complaints about the airline's breakdown.

Delta said it was cooperating with the investigation.

"We remain entirely focused on restoring our operation after cybersecurity vendor CrowdStrike's faulty Windows update rendered IT systems across the globe inoperable," an airline spokesperson said in a statement. "Across our operation, Delta teams are working tirelessly to care for and make it right for customers" affected by the disruptions.

John Laughter, Delta's chief of operations, said the airline was moving planes, pilots and flight attendants "to where they need to be so we can return to normal operations by the end of the week."

The collapse at Delta has been stunning for an outfit that was widely viewed as the best big U.S. airline — the most profitable before and after the pandemic, and the best-run. In recent years, Delta has almost always ranked near the top among all U.S. carriers for on-time performance.

Delta appears to rely more than other airlines on systems that run on Microsoft Windows. The airline said upward of half its technology systems are Windows-based, including a key tool used to schedule pilots and flight attendants. That system could not keep up with the high number of changes triggered

by the outage.

Delta said late Tuesday that a backlog of “issues” in the crew-scheduling system was reduced by 75% over the last 36 hours, and the airline was also making progress in returning lost bags to their owners.

In addition to probing the cause of Delta’s collapse, investigators are likely to focus on whether Delta is complying with federal requirements such as offering prompt refunds to passengers whose flights are canceled or significantly delayed. The refunds are supposed to be in the form the customer used to pay for their ticket — typically a credit card — and not just a voucher.

In a text provided to The Associated Press, a Delta passenger whose flight was canceled Saturday was told, “If you prefer not to rebook your trip, your ticket value will automatically be available as an eCredit that can be used towards a future Delta ticket.”

In Washington, lawmakers are beginning to weigh in. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., chair of the Senate committee that oversees airlines, said in a letter to Delta CEO Ed Bastian that she is “concerned” that Delta is not complying with passenger rights contained in a law that Congress passed in May.

“While the technology outage was clearly not caused by Delta or any airline, I am nevertheless concerned that Delta is failing to meet the moment and adequately protect the needs of passengers,” Cantwell wrote.

Delta’s meltdown mirrors that of Southwest Airlines, which canceled nearly 17,000 flights over 15 days in December 2022. A Transportation Department investigation ended with Southwest agreeing to pay a \$35 million fine as part of a \$140 million settlement.

Southwest blamed its breakdown on a winter storm, but other airlines recovered in a couple days while Southwest did not. Consumer advocates see the same pattern with Delta this month — the airline continues to blame the CrowdStrike outage while rivals such as American recovered quickly. Even United Airlines, the second-worst at cancellations, was back on track Monday.

“It’s not about the thing that caused the problem, it’s about how you recover from the problem. That’s the test of an airline,” said William McGee, a former aircraft dispatcher who is a consumer advocate at the American Economic Liberties Project, a group critical of large corporations.

Netanyahu is in Washington at a fraught time for Israel and the US. What to know about his visit

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, ASHRAF KHALIL and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s visit to Washington this week is looming as a fraught one between the two allies, coming at a moment of extreme political flux in the United States and wariness among American leaders about Netanyahu’s history of interjecting himself into U.S. domestic politics.

The main purpose of Netanyahu’s visit is a speech to a joint meeting of Congress. But at stake, in meetings with administration officials, are hopes for progress in U.S.-led efforts to mediate an end to the nine-month Israel-Hamas war. The visit comes as the toll of Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza nears 40,000. It’s also in a week when new deaths were reported among the surviving hostages — who include Israelis, Americans and other nationalities — held by Hamas and other militants since the first hours of the war.

Netanyahu planned his trip weeks before the ground abruptly started heaving under U.S. politics this summer. That includes a July 13 assassination attempt against Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, and President Joe Biden’s decision Sunday to give up his faltering reelection campaign and endorse Vice President Kamala Harris for the presidency instead.

Protests are planned for Netanyahu’s planned speech to both houses of Congress on Wednesday.

A look at the visit:

Why Netanyahu is coming

The political aspect for Netanyahu is that his popularity has plummeted at home, and the visit — at least originally — was seen as giving him a chance to show himself as a global statesman, welcomed by the lawmakers and leaders of Israel’s closest ally and the world’s only superpower.

House Speaker Mike Johnson helped bring about Netanyahu’s address to lawmakers, highlighting firm

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 49 of 66

Republican support for the Israeli leader. Netanyahu has had tense relations with Biden despite the administration's military and diplomatic support for Israel's war.

Biden and Netanyahu are expected to meet Thursday, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of the White House announcement. Harris will also meet with Netanyahu separately that day.

Speaking for the White House side of things, national security adviser Jake Sullivan said at a security conference in Colorado last week that Biden planned to focus on working out what it will take for the United States, Israel and others to get a hostage-release and cease-fire deal done in the coming weeks.

Biden called in to a meeting of campaign staffers Monday, telling them, "I think we're on the verge" of ending the war.

For his part, Netanyahu pointed to longer-term issues before flying out of Israel Monday. He said he wanted to talk to Biden about continuing the war against Hamas, and confronting other Iran-backed armed groups in the region, as well as freeing hostages.

Why Netanyahu's visit is controversial

Israel's war has been intensely divisive in the United States, spurring protests and resulting in arrests on college campuses, alienating some voters on both sides of the issue, and frustrating months of effort by Biden to bring the fighting to a close.

The trip is the first time Netanyahu has traveled abroad since the war broke out Oct. 7. It's also his first since the International Criminal Court said it was seeking his arrest in what it said were possible war crimes in Israel's offensive in Gaza. Israel denies wrongdoing, and the U.S. does not recognize the ICC.

Netanyahu faces complaints in Israel that he is avoiding closing a cease-fire and hostage-release deal so as to stay in power, a charge repeated Monday by a relative of one hostage.

Netanyahu also has not been shy about criticizing Democratic administrations, including Biden's. In 2015, the Israeli leader used a speech to both houses of Congress to try to torpedo lawmaker and popular support for President Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Iran. He condemned it as a bad and dangerous deal, angering administration officials.

Sullivan said administration officials don't expect this week to be a repeat of 2015.

Netanyahu's timing

It appears bad. Even as Netanyahu was headed for Washington on Monday, American politics and voters were still adjusting to the abrupt shift of focus from Biden to Harris in the Democratic presidential race. Biden was still in Delaware getting over COVID-19.

Harris, as Senate president, would normally sit behind foreign leaders, but she'll be away Wednesday, on an Indianapolis trip scheduled before she became the leading Democratic presidential candidate over the weekend.

Trump agreed to a Friday meeting with the Israeli leader. Trump announced it on Truth Social, using it to promote what he wrote was his "PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH Agenda" abroad.

Trump has had a mixed relationship with Netanyahu, including cursing him for what Trump portrayed as Netanyahu's quick recognition of Biden's victory in the 2020 elections.

Protests are planned

Netanyahu's joint address to Congress will look a bit different from previous such addresses, in part due to opposition among Democrats to his conduct of the war in Gaza.

With Harris away, Senate Pro Tempore Patty Murray, a Washington Democrat, is next in line to fill the seat behind Netanyahu, but she is among the lawmakers declining to attend. Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Ben Cardin will sit there instead. He told The Associated Press he hoped Netanyahu would use the speech to lay out a future for both Israelis and Palestinians.

While families of some hostages were reported to be traveling with Netanyahu, other relatives who fault his handling of the crisis said they would also be sitting in the chamber.

Some lawmakers who planned to boycott the address said they would spend the time talking with the families of those held by Hamas.

Multiple protests are planned outside the Capitol, with some condemning the Israeli military campaign

overall, and others expressing support for Israel but pressing Netanyahu to strike a cease-fire deal and bring home hostages.

The largest protest is set for Wednesday morning, with organizers planning to march around the Capitol building demanding Netanyahu's arrest on war crimes charges. A permit application submitted to the National Park Service estimated at least 5,000 participants.

Protests were held Tuesday and were to continue throughout the day Wednesday. Relatives of Israeli hostages are planning a vigil on the National Mall.

Security is tight

Fencing was up around entry points to the Capitol and the hotel along the Potomac River where Netanyahu is staying. Capitol Police and Secret Service were out in greater numbers, stepping up screening and protection for the Israeli leader's visit.

The Metropolitan Police Department announced an extended series of street closures that will last most of the week.

The visit comes at a moment the Secret Service, which handles protection of visiting foreign leaders, is under greater security and intense political criticism from both parties over security failures in the attack on Trump. Kimberly Cheatle, director of the Secret Service, quit Tuesday over the failures.

Iowa law banning most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy to take effect Monday

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — An Iowa judge has ruled the state's strict abortion law will take effect Monday, preventing most abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy, before many women know they are pregnant.

The law passed last year, but a judge had blocked it from being enforced. The Iowa Supreme Court reiterated in June that there is no constitutional right to an abortion in the state and ordered the hold to be lifted. That translated into Monday's district court judge's decision ordering the law to into effect July 29 at 8:00 a.m. Central time.

Lawyers representing abortion providers asked Judge Jeffrey Farrell for notice before allowing the law to take hold, saying a buffer period was needed to provide continuity of services. Iowa requires pregnant women to wait 24 hours for an abortion after getting an initial consultation. Abortion had been legal in the state up to 20 weeks of pregnancy.

The high court's order gave a decisive win to Iowa's Republican leaders after years of legislative and legal battles.

Iowa will join more than a dozen states where abortion access has been sharply curbed in the two years since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Currently, 14 states have near-total bans at all stages of pregnancy and three states — Iowa will make four — ban abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy.

Abortion access stands to be a major issue in the 2024 election, especially as Vice President Kamala Harris aims to lead the Democratic Party. Harris has said "everything is at stake" with reproductive health in November's election and has traveled across the country to draw attention to the issue, including in Des Moines roughly a year ago after the stricter law initially passed.

Iowa's Republican-controlled Legislature passed the law in a special session last July, and a legal challenge was immediately filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa, Planned Parenthood North Central States and the Emma Goldman Clinic. The law was in effect for just a few days before a district court judge temporarily blocked it.

"Today is a victory for life," Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds said in a statement Tuesday.

There are limited circumstances under the Iowa law that would allow for abortion after six weeks of pregnancy: rape, if reported to law enforcement or a health provider within 45 days; incest, if reported within 145 days; if the fetus has an abnormality "incompatible with life"; or if the pregnancy endangers

the mother's life.

The state's medical board defined standards of practice earlier this year, though the rules do not outline how the board would determine noncompliance or what the appropriate disciplinary action might be.

Representatives from Planned Parenthood and the Emma Goldman Clinic have indicated they will continue to provide abortion services in Iowa in compliance with the law when it takes effect.

Before that point, Planned Parenthood said Tuesday it will continue to operate "under current protocols," and take as many appointments as possible.

In June, Ruth Richardson, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood North Central States, also said the organization has spent the last year making "long-term regional investments" in preparation for this outcome, including expanding facilities in Mankato, Minnesota, and in Omaha, Nebraska, — both cities near Iowa.

Planned Parenthood in Iowa has ceased abortion services in two Iowa cities in the last year, including in Des Moines. Two of the state's five Planned Parenthood clinics offer in-person abortion services, and three offer abortion through medication.

People in and around Des Moines seeking an abortion have been traveling about 35 miles (56 kilometers) north to Ames.

Alex Sharp, who manages the Ames facility, said conversations with patients will be difficult once the ban lifts and staff will be empathetic. There is "the sensitivity of being told you're too far along and it's too late now: 'You have to, you know, leave and go somewhere else and you have to travel and you're going to have to miss work again.'"

"A lot of people don't know this happened," Sharp said of the stricter law.

Sarah Traxler, the Planned Parenthood region's medical director, said a law prohibiting abortions after cardiac activity can be detected is "tricky."

Since six weeks is approximate, Traxler said, "we don't necessarily have plans to cut people off at a certain gestational age."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 44% of the 3,761 total abortions in Iowa in 2021 occurred at or before six weeks' gestational age. Only six abortions were at the 21-week mark or later.

In other states with bans that kick in around six weeks into pregnancy, the number of abortions has fallen by about half.

In its 4-3 opinion last month, Iowa Supreme Court's majority determined that abortion laws in Iowa are to be judged by whether the government has a legitimate interest in restricting the procedure, rather than whether there is too heavy a burden for people seeking abortion access.

The decision was celebrated by Iowa's conservative leaders who have advocated for decades against access to abortion. Chuck Hurley, vice president of the conservative Christian organization, The Family Leader, said "bad judges for over 51 years" allowed access to abortion in Iowa.

While Hurley celebrated the victory and the "great strides in protecting the most innocent among us," he alluded to the work still to be done.

"Fourteen states now protect babies from the moment of conception," he said, "and Iowa should be the 15th."

Secret Service director steps down after assassination attempt against ex-President Trump at rally

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The director of the Secret Service resigned Tuesday in the aftermath of the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump that unleashed an outcry about how the agency failed in its core mission to protect current and former presidents.

Kimberly Cheatle, who had served as Secret Service director since August 2022, faced growing calls to resign and several investigations into how a gunman was able to get so close to the Republican presidential

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 52 of 66

nominee at an outdoor campaign rally in Pennsylvania.

"I take full responsibility for the security lapse," she said in an email to staff obtained by The Associated Press. "In light of recent events, it is with a heavy heart that I have made the difficult decision to step down as your director."

Cheatle's departure was unlikely to end the scrutiny of the long-troubled agency after the failures of July 13, and it comes at a critical juncture ahead of the Democratic National Convention and a busy presidential campaign season. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have promised more investigations. An inspector general probe and an independent, bipartisan effort launched at President Joe Biden's behest will keep the agency in the spotlight.

Cheatle's resignation came a day after she appeared before a congressional committee and was berated for hours by both Democrats and Republicans for the security failures. She called the attempt on Trump's life the Secret Service's "most significant operational failure" in decades, but she angered lawmakers by failing to answer specific questions about the investigation.

Biden said in a statement that "what happened that day can never happen again," and he planned to appoint a new director soon, but he did not discuss a timeline.

The president and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas thanked Cheatle for her service. Mayorkas appointed Deputy Director Ronald Rowe as acting director. He has worked for the agency for 23 years.

"At this moment in time, we must remain focused," Rowe said in a note to staff obtained by AP. "We will restore the faith and confidence of the American public and the people we are entrusted to protect."

Congressional questioning

At the hearing Monday, Cheatle remained defiant that she was the "right person" to lead the Secret Service, even as she said she took responsibility for the failures. When Republican Rep. Nancy Mace suggested Cheatle begin drafting her resignation letter from the hearing room, Cheatle responded, "No, thank you."

The 20-year-old shooter, Thomas Matthew Crooks, was able to get within 135 meters (157 yards) of the stage where the former president was speaking when he opened fire. That's despite a threat on Trump's life from Iran that led to additional security for the former president in the days before the rally.

Cheatle acknowledged Monday that the Secret Service was told about a suspicious person two to five times before the rally shooting. She also revealed that the roof from which Crooks fired had been identified as a potential vulnerability days earlier. But she failed to answer many questions about what happened, including why there were no agents on the roof.

A bloodied Trump was quickly escorted off the stage by Secret Service agents, and agency snipers killed the shooter. Trump said part of his right ear was pierced in the shooting. One rallygoer was killed, and two others were critically wounded.

Details continue to emerge about signs of trouble that day and the roles of the Secret Service and local authorities. The agency routinely relies on local law enforcement to secure the perimeter of events. Former top Secret Service agents said the gunman should never have been allowed to gain access to the roof.

After Cheatle's resignation, Trump posted on his social media network: "The Biden/Harris Administration did not properly protect me, and I was forced to take a bullet for Democracy. IT WAS MY GREAT HONOR TO DO SO!"

The House Homeland Security Committee had asked Cheatle to testify Tuesday for another hearing on the assassination attempt, but lawmakers said she refused. Cheatle's name was on a card on a table in front of an empty chair during the hearing, which began shortly before her decision to step down became public.

Investigating an ever-growing number of threats

The Secret Service is a part of the Department of Homeland Security, which includes immigration, transportation security and the Coast Guard. The department was formed after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

A few years ago, there was a movement to shift the agency back to the Treasury Department, where it

was housed before Sept. 11, particularly because Homeland Security's intense focus on immigration added to the growing divide between what the Secret Service sees as its dual missions — protecting the president and investigating financial crime — and the mission of its parent department. But that movement stalled.

Roughly half of the Secret Service's \$3 billion budget is spent on protective services. It also has a robust cybercrime division, state-of-the-art forensic labs and a threat-assessment center that studies how to mitigate and train against threats.

With a workforce of 7,800 special agents, uniformed officers and other staff, the Secret Service has investigated an ever-increasing number of threats against the president and other officials under its protection. It has also managed a growing number of high-profile government figures asking for support. Staffing has not kept pace with the workload increase. Around Sept. 11 there were about 15 full-time protectees. That number has now more than doubled.

Trump is the first modern ex-president to seek another term, and because of his high visibility, his protective detail has always been larger than some others. That protective bubble got tighter in recent months as he drew closer to the nomination. All major party nominees are granted enhanced details with counterassault and countersniper teams similar to the president.

Calls for accountability

There were calls for accountability across the political spectrum, with congressional committees immediately moving to investigate and issuing subpoenas. Top Republican leaders from both the House and the Senate said Cheatle should step down.

Biden, a Democrat, ordered an independent review into security at the rally, and the Secret Service's inspector general opened an investigation. The agency is also reviewing its countersniper team's "preparedness and operations."

On Tuesday, Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson said Cheatle's resignation was "overdue."

"Now we have to pick up the pieces. We have to rebuild the American people's faith and trust in the Secret Service as an agency," Johnson said.

Meanwhile, Sens. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, and Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., introduced legislation Tuesday to require Senate confirmation of future Secret Service directors.

Cheatle served in the Secret Service for 27 years. She left in 2021 for a job as a security executive at PepsiCo before Biden asked her to return in 2022 to head the agency.

She took over amid a controversy over missing text messages from around the time thousands of Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, following his 2020 election loss to Biden.

During her time at the agency, Cheatle was the first woman to be named assistant director of protective operations, the division that protects the president and other dignitaries, where she oversaw a \$133.5 million budget. She was the second woman to lead the agency.

When Biden announced Cheatle's appointment, he said she had served on his detail when he was vice president and he and his wife "came to trust her judgment and counsel."

France's Macron says he'll keep the centrist caretaker government on through the Olympics

By SYLVIE CORBET and THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday he will keep a centrist caretaker government on through the Olympics to avoid "disorder," brushing aside an 11th-hour prime minister nomination by the country's leftist coalition.

Macron made his widely expected announcement in a TV interview late Tuesday. Just prior to that appearance, the leftist coalition that won the most votes in this month's parliamentary elections selected little-known civil servant Lucie Castets as their choice for prime minister.

But Macron told the France 2 network that the current government, who resigned last week to take on a purely caretaker role, would "handle current affairs during the Olympics," which are being staged in Paris and elsewhere in France through Aug. 11.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 54 of 66

"Until mid-August, we're not in a position to be able to change things because it would prompt disorder," Macron said. "I have chosen the stability" to safeguard the Games, which will soon gather about 10,500 athletes and millions of fans.

Party leaders in the leftist coalition immediately slammed Macron's unwillingness to immediately consider their prime minister candidate.

There is no firm timeline for when Macron must name a new prime minister, following legislative elections that left the National Assembly, France's influential lower house of parliament, with no dominant political bloc in power for the first time in France's modern Republic.

Asked about the leftist coalition's choice, Macron said "the issue is not a name provided by a political group," adding that there must be a parliamentary majority behind the candidate to "pass reforms, pass a budget and move the country forward."

France has been on the brink of government paralysis since the National Assembly elections resulted in a split among three major political blocs: the leftist New Popular Front, Macron's centrist allies and the far-right National Rally of Marine Le Pen.

Macron, who has a presidential mandate until 2027, has the ultimate say in who is appointed prime minister. However, that person would need enough support from lawmakers to avoid a no-confidence vote.

Macron urged politicians from both the moderate left, the center and the moderate right to "work together" during the summer, arguing that with no outright majority, none of the main blocs can implement their political platforms.

He said "compromises" are needed.

Macron said he'd like to form a government as soon as possible, but that "Obviously, until mid-August, we need to be focused on the Games."

The leftist coalition has repeatedly demanded the right to form a government after it won the most seats in the National Assembly, yet deep internal divisions have prevented its members from agreeing on a prime minister candidate for more than two weeks. The coalition is composed of three main parties — the hard-left France Unbowed, the Socialists and the Greens.

On Tuesday, they appeared to rush to propose Castets before Macron made his first televised interview since the elections.

Following Macron's comments, hard-left leader of France Unbowed, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, said on X that "the President refuses to accept the results of the election and wants to ... force us to abandon our platform and form an alliance with him. This is out of the question. Respect the French people's vote."

"Emmanuel Macron needs to get out of denial," the Greens' secretary general Marine Tondelier said. "We have won, we have a program, we have a prime minister... The president can't just stand in the way."

Castets, a 37-year-old senior civil servant, graduated from France's elite school Sciences Po and the École Nationale d'Administration as well as the London School of Economics. She has worked at the General Directorate of the Treasury and Tracfin, the anti-money laundering unit of the Finance Ministry.

The New Popular Front described her as "a leader of associative struggles for the defense and promotion of public services, actively involved in the battle of ideas against raising the retirement age to 64 (years old)." They also highlighted her efforts in combating tax fraud and financial crime.

Sébastien Chenu, a lawmaker and vice-president of the far-right National Rally, criticized the selection of Castets, calling it "a joke in bad taste."

Last year, Macron struggled to pass an unpopular plan to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64, prompting months of mass protests that damaged his leadership.

Biden will address the nation Wednesday on his decision to drop his 2024 Democratic reelection bid

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will address the nation from the Oval Office on Wednesday evening on his decision to drop his 2024 Democratic reelection bid.

Biden posted on X that he would speak “on what lies ahead” and how he will “finish the job for the American people.” He will speak at 8 p.m. ET.

He declined to preview his message after he returned to Washington, telling reporters to “watch and listen.”

“Why don’t you wait and hear what I say?” he said.

The president departed Delaware shortly before 2 p.m. on Tuesday, after nearly a week of isolating at his Rehoboth Beach home after his second bout with COVID-19. Biden is now testing negative for the virus and his symptoms have resolved, according to a letter from his doctor, Kevin O’Connor, released Tuesday.

Holding a blue paper mask, he told reporters that “I am feeling well” but did not answer other questions, such as whether Vice President Kamala Harris can defeat Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

Biden has not been seen publicly since July 17, but he called into a campaign meeting on Monday to address staff and express his support for Harris’ bid to replace him a day after announcing he would leave the race.

Kamala Harris faces a major test as she looks for a running mate for her White House run

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris is zeroing in on four potential candidates as she races to choose a running mate for her fledgling campaign, fast-tracking a process that usually takes months but must be finalized in only a few weeks.

Eric Holder, the former U.S. attorney general, and a team of lawyers at his firm Covington & Burling are taking the lead on vetting potential choices, according to two people with knowledge of the matter who requested anonymity because the process is being closely held.

The political conversation has centered on an assortment of white men — Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly, Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper — who would provide demographic balance for the first major party ticket that would be topped by a woman of color. Three of them are from battleground states.

The list of possibilities could expand or shift. But Harris, who has locked up the delegates she will need to be the Democratic nominee, hopes to finish the process in time for delegates to also vote on her running mate when they hold a virtual roll call vote in the first few days of August, ahead of the Democratic National Convention. The goal, according to one of the people with knowledge of the matter, is to keep the process drama-free, as Harris and Democrats try to project confidence after an extraordinarily tumultuous few weeks for the party.

Choosing a vice president is among the first major tests for Harris, and few people know the importance of the choice better than her. Four years ago, after Harris’ own presidential campaign imploded, Joe Biden revived her political career by selecting her as his running mate.

Now that Biden has abruptly ended his bid for a second term less than four months before Election Day, Harris has swiftly established herself as his successor with the help of the president’s endorsement. If Democrats formally nominate Harris, she would face off with Republican candidate Donald Trump in a race that’s viewed by both parties as an existential battle over the country’s future.

California Sen. Laphonza Butler, a longtime Harris ally, said the vice president views the choice as an “urgent but deliberate decision,” and said Harris’ own experience as a running mate would be a “grounding force.”

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 56 of 66

Harris has seen "the importance of the working relationship, the trust, the energy and connection, as well as the shared values," Butler said.

Paul Begala, a longtime Democratic strategist, said Harris is lucky that the party has the "best bench I've ever seen in my entire career," providing an array of options for running mates.

He said there should only be one consideration for the choice.

"Forget the electoral college. Forget the polls," Begala said. "Pick the person that, if something happens, they can step into the job."

Begala recalled disagreeing with Bill Clinton's choice of Al Gore as vice president in 1992, arguing that the decision did nothing to expand the appeal of the ticket by pairing one moderate white man from a southern state with another.

Clinton rejected the advice, Begala said, by saying "I might die." The message was clear — Clinton thought that Gore could do the job if necessary and voters needed that assurance.

Dan Pfeiffer, a former adviser to President Barack Obama, said John McCain fumbled that test when he chose Sarah Palin, an inexperienced Alaska governor, in 2008.

"I know it's cliché, but the most important thing by far is the readiness test," Pfeiffer said. "It's table stakes."

Nine vice presidents have unexpectedly ascended to the presidency in American history. Eight of them did so after the president died from illness or assassination. Only one, Gerald Ford, became president because of a resignation, when Richard Nixon stepped down over the Watergate scandal in 1974.

The role of vice president, and the process for choosing a running mate, has evolved since the country's founding. Originally they were chosen not by the presidential candidates themselves but by convention delegates, usually in a deal intended to unify the party along geographic or ideological lines after a fractious primary.

"It often meant that the ticket consisted of two people who had different views on important issues," said Joel Goldstein, a vice presidential historian.

Goldstein said that began to change in 1940, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt demanded to choose his own running mate before he agreed to run for a third term.

One of the vice president's only constitutional duties is to preside over the Senate. But that role has become largely ceremonial except for the occasional tie breaking vote, and vice presidents more commonly serve as a top adviser, troubleshooter and emissary for the president.

"The consequences of the choice are greater because the expectation is that the vice president is going to be in the room and do consequential things," Goldstein said. "You can't dismiss him or her as easily as in the old days."

Trump chose his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, at the start of the recent Republican convention.

Vance is 39 years old, providing a jolt of youth to a ticket led by a 78-year-old man. A former venture capitalist who wrote a bestselling memoir, he's served just two years in the Senate.

Democrats swiftly criticized Vance as an extremist because of his support for strict abortion limits and for Trump's efforts to overturn his election loss in 2020.

Harris appears likely to choose a more moderate running mate, which could counterbalance her reputation as a liberal from California.

A few of the potential choices are, like Harris, former state attorneys general.

Beshear, the Kentucky governor, gained national recognition by beating Trump-endorsed Republicans in a red state. The son of a former governor, he's backed abortion rights and distinguished himself as an adept political communicator.

Shapiro has been a key advocate for Biden, and he's governor of the key battleground state of Pennsylvania. He would be the first Jewish person elected to the role of vice president.

Mark Kelly, a senator from Arizona, is a former astronaut and military pilot. He's also the husband of Gabby Giffords, the former Democratic representative who was grievously wounded in a 2011 shooting.

Cooper is a longtime North Carolina politician who has won six statewide elections. He's finishing his second term as governor, and he successfully worked with Republicans to expand Medicaid access under the Affordable Care Act.

Nashville grapples with lingering neo-Nazi presence in tourist-friendly city

By JONATHAN MATTISE and KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Among the throngs of tourists in cowboy attire who flock to Nashville's famed downtown honky-tonks, a small but unsettling group has distracted locals and visitors from the neon lights lately with Nazi salutes and white supremacist rhetoric.

For weeks, neo-Nazis have livestreamed antisemitic antics for shock value in Nashville — waving swastika flags through crowded streets, singing hate songs on the downtown courthouse steps and even briefly disrupting a Metro Council meeting with jeers.

Their continued presence has sparked hard questions about why Music City is attracting groups amplifying Nazi beliefs and what, if anything, can help stop them.

"What's significant is that so many of groups feel so emboldened," said Jon Lewis, a George Washington University Program on Extremism research fellow. "They're a symptom of the broader disease that is mainstreaming."

Elsewhere in the country, white supremacist groups have made similar — but often isolated — appearances this year. Some have rallied at the South Dakota Capitol, rented billboards in the Detroit area to celebrate Adolf Hitler's birthday and projected a swastika on a dorm at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

But in Nashville, the groups have stuck around, peppering neighborhoods with propaganda leaflets. Dozens of masked white nationalists marched through downtown early this month, and Republican Gov. Bill Lee condemned the group for its antisemitic views. The uptick in activity comes after Neo-Nazis also marched downtown in February.

Rabbi Dan Horwitz, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Nashville, said the city is an amazing place for the Jewish community, and a unity rally Sunday drew hundreds of supporters. Yet part of the reason neo-Nazis have picked Nashville could simply be its draw for tourists, he said.

"I'm not surprised that white supremacists would also say, 'Hey, this seems like a great fun place that we can go and meet up and get to do our honky-tonking at night,'" Horwitz said.

Nashville's touristy attraction may be a factor, but the state's embrace of anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-immigrant policies may also play a role, Lewis said.

Tennessee's GOP lawmakers have enacted more anti-LGBTQ+ laws more than any other state since 2015, including banning gender-affirming care for minors, limiting drag performances in public spaces and allowing LGBTQ+ foster children to be placed with families that hold anti-LGBTQ+ beliefs.

Separately, Tennessee has aligned with other Republican-led states that have tasked their authorities with more immigration duties. And a 2023 failed mayoral candidate in a city near Nashville made national news for her white supremacist supporters, including a couple who openly signaled their embrace of Nazism.

"When there are local and state lawmakers using language that it is not out of place in any of the chats for any groups that are coming to the city, that's always going to be a concern," Lewis said.

The neo-Nazis didn't provide much clarity when several gathered outside Nashville's courthouse last week and a WTVF-TV journalist asked, "Why did you guys choose Nashville?"

"It's the only place that respects freedom of speech," said Nicholas Bysheim, a member of neo-Nazi Goyim Defense League.

City leaders are poring through regulations to see which, if any, may apply to extremist gatherers. Some include limitations on wearing masks in public to conceal someone's identity or require permission for larger groups to march through the city. But Mayor Freddie O'Connell stressed that any ordinance enforcement would need to withstand a possible court challenge, with delicate implications on constitutional free speech rights.

"These groups, obviously, they are sophisticated in their awareness of where the boundaries of their protections are, and we want to make sure that if we are challenging their testing of those boundaries that we're going to pass that test," O'Connell told reporters.

According to Nashville police, the most recent faction of neo-Nazis largely traveled from outside Tennessee.

Known for using the public comment period of local meetings to spread anti-Jewish hate messages, some signed up to speak at the Nashville council meeting last Wednesday.

"I want to say to all these visitors from out of town: You're not welcome here," council member Zulfat Suara said. "You have the right to march, but there is no room for hate here."

Suara's remarks drew jeers from the neo-Nazis, who hurled racist and sexually explicit comments before the audience was temporarily booted. When the public was allowed back into the meeting, the neo-Nazis had left.

A few days earlier, a neo-Nazi had been charged with using his flag to attack a downtown bar worker, who also is charged in the tussle.

Roberta Kaplan, who represented plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit that secured a \$26 million verdict against two dozen white nationalists and organizations in the 2017 Charlottesville, Virginia, demonstrations, said she sees parallels between that city and Nashville.

Kaplan said the Charlottesville demonstrations — where a white supremacist deliberately drove his car into counterprotesters, killing one person and injuring dozens — were preceded by dress rehearsals organized by various white nationalist groups starting earlier that spring. Both cities are progressive surrounded by deep-red countryside, which could aid their ultimate goal to provoke violence and start a "race war," and have large groups of visitors, some of whom they hope will be receptive to their views, Kaplan added.

"What's truly frightening is that we as a nation do not seem to have learned any lessons from the death of Heather Heyer or the injuries of my clients," Kaplan said. "To the contrary, white Christian nationalists now feel emboldened, encouraged by the 'coded' or not-so-coded statements of elected officials."

'We were built for this moment': Black women rally around Kamala Harris

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Four years ago, a Zoom meeting to build support for Kamala Harris as the Democratic vice presidential nominee attracted just 90 participants. On Sunday night, an estimated 90,000 Black women and allies logged on at the same time to support her brand-new presidential campaign.

Zoom typically maxes out at 1,000 participants but a female executive at the video conferencing company stepped in to increase the capacity to 40,000, said Aimee Allison, who has attended many of the weekly calls organized by the #WinWithBlackWomen network over the years. And organizers said the meeting was streamed to another 50,000 women on other platforms.

"It was thrilling," Allison said. "It wasn't chaos. The infrastructure was there amongst Black women to be able to scale and meet the moment. And I think this is the difference-maker Kamala Harris is injecting into the race."

The discussion just hours after President Joe Biden announced the end of his reelection campaign and endorsement of Harris had the feel of a revival meeting, said Allison, who founded "She the People" to advocate for women of color in politics in 2018. Woman after woman described in detail what needs to be done before Election Day while also celebrating one of their own.

"We're together. We're beautiful, we're strong, we're capable. We're ready. We have incredible power in this group," she said. "People just were so hungry for that community and for that feeling of hope."

On Monday night, a "Black Men for Harris" online streaming event co-hosted by #WinWithBlackMen, a similar networking group for Black men, drew tens of thousands who pledged to support Harris, and featured speeches from Black male leaders from elected offices, in the civil rights community and business. More than 53,000 people had registered for the call, according to Roland Martin, a Black media leader who moderated the virtual event.

Black voters in general, and women in particular, were key to Biden's victories in both the 2020 primaries and general election. While Donald Trump had a modest advantage among white women, Biden won overwhelmingly among Black women, 93% to Trump's 6%, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 110,000 voters.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 59 of 66

Just last week, more than 1,300 Black female leaders and allies published a letter supporting Biden and Harris. But if Sunday and Monday's calls are any indication, they're now all-in for Harris, who is of Black and Indian descent.

"This wasn't just policy people or legislative people or elected officials. This was across the board. Everybody came with their toolbox and was like, okay, so how do we pitch in?" said Angelique Roche, a writer and consultant who described the call as powerful and galvanizing.

"These were different generations with different education levels, different jobs, different backgrounds, different industries, all coming to the table and saying, we're ready, we're in," she said.

Earlier this month, Harris herself extolled "the power of sisterhood and service" when she addressed the annual gathering of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, which she joined as a student at Howard University, one of the nation's most storied historically Black colleges.

"Our nation is counting on the leaders in this room to guide us forward," she told the crowd of Black women, some shaking pompoms to cheer her on. "When we mobilize, nations change. And when we vote, we make history."

Gemeem Davis, a Democratic convention delegate from Bridgeport, Connecticut, echoed that sentiment Monday.

"Black women have really been the backbone of the Democratic Party. We show up. We vote. We volunteer. We register people to vote, there's lots of organizing on the ground," she said.

"Along with working class folks and progressives, we are the base of this party, and our voices have to be heard."

Harris, Davis said, is qualified and ready to be president. But other Black female voters expressed concerns about her ability to win should she become the nominee. Brianna Smith, a 24-year-old school counselor from Decatur, Georgia, said she's been reading more about Harris since Biden's announcement and has been impressed. But she remains nervous.

"I don't see America actually accepting the fact that a Black woman is running for president," she said.

While Harris' path to the potential nomination may be unusual, Harris herself "is not a unicorn" who sprang out of nowhere and is unprepared for this moment, said Martha Jones, author of a book about Black women in American political history. Rather, she has learned from those who came before her.

"A part of her political identity is a kind of nimbleness and a kind of adaptability," said Jones, a history professor at Johns Hopkins University.

Likewise, many Black women are already pivoting to help Harris, said Glynda Car, president of Higher Heights, an organization that bills itself as a "political home for Black women."

"We were built for this moment," she said.

Allison, the "She the People" founder, agreed.

"We didn't have to get ready, because we stay ready," she said.

1,000 people suspected of spying have been blocked from Olympics, French official says

By SYLVIE CORBET and BARBARA SURK Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Three days before the start of the 2024 Olympics, France's interior minister said about 1,000 people suspected of possibly meddling for a foreign power have been blocked from attending the Olympics — one of the security challenges that Paris is cracking down on in its goal to keep Games safe for athletes and fans.

About 1 million background checks have scrutinized Olympic volunteers, workers and others involved in the Games as well as those applying for passes to enter the most tightly controlled security zone in Paris — along the banks of the Seine — ahead of the opening ceremony on the river Friday.

The checks blocked about 5,000 people from attending, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said Tuesday. Out of them, "there are 1,000 people whom we suspect of foreign interference — we can say spying," Darmanin said.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 60 of 66

Darmanin, who is staying on in a caretaker role until a new government is formed following legislative elections this month that denied President Emmanuel Macron's centrist coalition a majority, has repeatedly pointed to suspicions of Russia-backed interference.

"We're here to make sure ... that sport isn't used for spying, for cyberattacks or to criticize and sometimes even lie about France and the French," Darmanin said.

He added that "interfering and manipulating information" is not coming from Russia only but from some other countries, too, which he did not name. He also didn't give more information on the suspected meddling.

"That's why we're on the alert, and we want them to know that we're not naive," he said.

Others blocked from the Olympics after background checks were flagged for suspected Islamic radicalization, left- or right-wing political extremism, significant criminal records and other security concerns, Darmanin said.

"These people, we didn't think it was a good idea for them to be stadium stewards, volunteers or that they accompany (sports) teams. Out of 1 million people, 5,000 is not a lot, and it shows the deep work of the Interior ministry," he said.

Paris is deploying 35,000 police officers each day for the Olympics, which run Friday to Aug. 11, with a peak of 45,000 for the opening ceremony. In addition, 10,000 soldiers are taking part in security operations in the Paris region.

France also is getting help from more than 40 countries that together have sent at least 1,900 police reinforcements.

"Of course, we're particularly protective of the Ukrainian team, which is obviously under considerable threat," Darmanin said.

The interior minister had previously said Israeli athletes would be protected 24 hours a day by elite police unit GIGN, which is in charge of counterterrorism and the protection of government officials, among other things.

Darmanin also praised the security work of tens of thousands of police officers, firefighters, bomb disposal experts, intelligence services agents and private security personnel.

In a handwritten note to them, Darmanin said "the largest global event that a country can organize" is "finally" here after four years of preparation but noted the unprecedented security challenges.

"Your task will not be easy," Darmanin said in the letter posted on the social platform X late Monday. Paris has repeatedly suffered deadly extremist attacks, and international tensions are high because of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

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 that they fear may remain in place beyond the Olympics.

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 staging the opening ceremony along the Seine makes those protections more complex.

Kamala Harris is preparing to lead Democrats in 2024. There are lessons from her 2020 bid

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Kamala Harris was greeted by a massive, cheering crowd during the first rally of her newly announced presidential campaign in 2019. Speaking on a late January day outside city hall in her hometown of Oakland, California, she framed her bid as part of something bigger than simply winning an election.

"We are here at this moment in time because we must answer a fundamental question," Harris said, invoking Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 call for "moral leadership." "Who are we as Americans?"

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 61 of 66

The early days of Harris' campaign were wrapped in historical significance. She formally launched her bid on Martin Luther King Jr. Day with references to Shirley Chisholm, the first Black person and woman to seek a major party's presidential nod.

At the time, with Democrats in despair over Donald Trump's presidency, the first-term California senator appeared to be an ideal cure. The daughter of an Indian mother and a Black Jamaican father, Harris evoked comparisons to Barack Obama, whose powerful biography and soaring rhetoric galvanized Democrats more than a decade earlier.

But the early promise of Harris' campaign met a more complicated reality as she spent the next 10 months struggling to break through a crowded field of candidates and churning through staff and cash. She ultimately withdrew from the race weeks before the Iowa caucuses, a disappointment mitigated only when nominee Joe Biden selected her as his running mate.

Now, after Biden ended his reelection bid, Democrats say Harris has grown into a more savvy candidate who will avoid repeating mistakes from her first campaign.

"Look, there's been no roadmap for Kamala Harris," said Donna Brazile, a former Democratic National Committee chair and one of the prominent Black Democrats who urged Biden to pick Harris in 2020. "But she's really found her voice and has been going non-stop since the 2022 midterm campaign, especially. I think she's become a generational figure and proven she can bring ... leadership to the party and the country."

Harris began her campaign as a favorite

A former prosecutor and state attorney general, Harris launched her 2020 campaign with the slogan: "Kamala Harris: For the People." She spoke in sweeping terms about an "inflection point" for a country riven with social fissures, economic disparities and political strife. She emphasized her biography and her "stroller's-eye view" of her parents' activism in the Civil Rights Movement.

An early entrant to the race, Harris' initial media blitz and massive opening rally solidified her status as a presumed favorite.

Her aides outlined a wide path to the nomination.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders led Democrats' progressive wing, with Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren offering his biggest challenge. Biden, then the 76-year-old former vice president, had yet to announce but was expected to anchor the more centrist wing, and he stood strong among Black voters who figured so prominently in the first-in-the-South primary in South Carolina and many Super Tuesday states that followed.

Harris came to the campaign having hit her stride during Senate Judiciary Committee sessions, especially when questioning Trump's judicial nominees. She'd also signed on as a co-sponsor to Sanders' push for a "Medicare for All" national health insurance system. She was a regular on cable news and social media.

Some younger progressives distrusted her record as a prosecutor. "Kamala is a cop" became a tag line on social media. That contingent, however vocal, was not viewed as large enough to sway a national primary contest — and its opposition actually affirmed one of Harris' arguments: "My entire career has been focused on keeping people safe," she told ABC News. "It is probably one of the things that motivates me more than anything else."

At her full potential, Harris' aides reasoned, she could appeal to nearly all branches of the party. It was, more or less, a campaign intended to chip away and eventually overtake Biden's coalition, presuming he joined the race, bolstered with a leftward reach that Biden, the white, male veteran of the Washington establishment, could never manage.

'That Little Girl Was Me'

There's an art in presidential politics to enticing voters in ways that allow them to see what they want to see: "Hope and Change" from Obama, "Make America Great Again" from Trump. The risk in aiming everywhere, though, is that a candidate may not stick anywhere.

Harris' early appearances in Iowa, first up in the nominating calendar, and South Carolina were dominated by working-age women, a key Democratic demographic. In South Carolina, far more diverse than overwhelmingly white Iowa, her audiences were racially diverse.

But as the overall field widened, Harris faded from de facto front-runner status. She became one of many

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 62 of 66

candidates vying for money, media attention and votes — especially once Biden announced in the spring. She raised \$12 million in the first quarter of 2019, a solid sum but not one that reflected the electricity of her opening salvo in Oakland.

“That thing was a free-for-all,” said Boyd Brown, a former Democratic National Committee member who backed former Texas Rep. Beto O’Rourke for the nomination. “Everybody was trying to catch Biden.”

The argument for a Harris presidency never crystallized. Her “For the People” motto notwithstanding, she did not project Sanders’ or Warren’s economic populism. Entreaties about democracy were not central to her brand compared with Biden, whose “Soul of the Nation” pitch framed 2020 as a singular mission: sparing the country another Trump term.

And there was another contender Harris did not account for: Pete Buttigieg, the 37-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, built a grassroots network in Iowa, enjoyed glowing national media attention and became a generational counter to Biden in the primary’s moderate lane.

Harris managed a hit moment in the primary’s first debate in June, criticizing Biden for having opposed court-ordered busing in the 1970s as an answer to continued public school segregation. She personalized her broadside, telling of a young minority student who attended an integrated school only because of federal action.

“That little girl was me,” she told Biden.

Harris’ campaign immediately marketed campaign merchandise with the quote, drawing some criticism that the line was canned.

A sputtering finish

The debate gave Harris her best fundraising surge since her launch. But the good news was short-lived. She clarified in succeeding days that she did not necessarily support federally mandated busing — the position Biden held as a young U.S. senator. And even with the boost, her second-quarter fundraising haul was only \$12 million, well behind Biden, Sanders and Buttigieg, who doubled her mark.

In the summer, Harris unveiled her health care plan, proposing to add a Medicare-like public option to existing private health insurance exchanges. It was a shift that abandoned her single-payer position in the Senate and highlighted her difficulty finding a core message. In debates, rivals attacked her record as a prosecutor, especially her aggressiveness against drug offenders. By the fall, her speaking time on stage was middle of the pack, making it difficult to change the dynamics.

Biden was faltering in Iowa and New Hampshire. But Biden’s support among Black voters remained steady, and Harris could not afford television ads. Harris’ ideal scenario — an impressive start in Iowa, then moving ahead of Biden in South Carolina and on Super Tuesday — was closed.

“Joe Biden has always been our guy,” said Antjuan Seawright, a prominent Black Democratic consultant in South Carolina, explaining that it was never a rejection of Harris.

She ended her campaign on Dec. 3, 2019, saying, “In good faith, I can’t tell you ... that I have a path forward if I don’t believe I do.”

Still enough for the No. 2 spot — and now No. 1

The harshest assessment is that Harris ran a bad campaign that reflected the principal — a warning about her 2024 prospects.

“She’s just a horrible candidate who could not communicate a rationale for her candidacy,” said Republican pollster Whit Ayres, who mused that Biden, at 81 years old, may have been quicker to set aside his own reelection ambitions if he had more confidence in his vice president.

Most Democrats are more charitable with their hindsight. Certainly, Biden was as he considered his options for second in command.

“We made the case that she could bring the right energy and help make the case. ... Clearly, he saw something there, too,” Brazile said.

Biden himself ran “a lousy presidential campaign” in 2007-08, Brown noted, only to become Obama’s vice president and eventually take down Trump. Now, Harris has that chance.

“Politics,” Brown said, “is all about timing.”

As doctors leave Puerto Rico in droves, a rapper tries to fill the gaps

By CORAL MURPHY MARCOS Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — On a recent morning in an Afro-Caribbean community in northeast Puerto Rico, Dr. Pedro Juan Vázquez went door-to-door as part of his medical rounds. He greeted the elderly residents the town with a cheerful “Good afternoon!” and a smile and casually asked if they’d like their vitals taken.

Many were surprised at being approached with an offer of medical care. A man in a gray tank top opened his screen door and said, “Of course,” and took a seat on his porch to be checked out.

Though a physician, Vázquez is better known in Puerto Rico as a rapper who uses the stage name PJ Sin Suela.

The 34-year-old is trying to fulfill his passion for music while helping those in need — and raise awareness about a health crisis on the island of 3.2 million residents. The U.S. territory is facing power outages as well as a shortage of medical professionals, with many having fled to the U.S. mainland for better wages.

Puerto Rico lost over 8,600 doctors out of nearly 18,800 in just over a decade, according to a 2023 report by the think tank The Center for a New Economy. The problem is expected to grow more dire in coming years.

“We have a huge exodus of young people,” Vázquez told The Associated Press. “In Puerto Rico, we have a crisis much bigger than people think.”

He travels from San Juan, the capital, to the island’s remote areas at least once a week to treat underserved communities struggling in the aftermath of hurricanes, earthquakes and a frail economy.

After hanging up his doctor’s scrubs, Vázquez spends his time producing and performing music that grapples with issues like social inequality, poverty and gun violence, with many deaths in Puerto Rico caused by domestic violence and stray bullets hitting innocent victims.

“A bullet is flying, lost like a child ... the wind caresses it, seeks to make news, falling into a skull, without any kind of justice,” he raps in “Las Balas Lloran” (“Bullets Cry”).

In “Somos Más” (“We are More”) he taps into the distressing economic conditions on the island, singing: “The debt has been placed before the worker, the one who goes outside under the rain and the sun, public servers, teachers and nurses.”

His focus on social inequality resonates at home and with homesick Puerto Ricans abroad.

Vázquez comes from a background of leaving and returning to the island, a back-and-forth familiar to many Puerto Ricans since they hold U.S. passports. He doesn’t criticize those who have left Puerto Rico for the U.S. mainland, though he has done the reverse.

“You can’t judge anybody, everybody has their story,” he said. “I’m blessed to have two careers that I can do and live off of.”

He was born in the Bronx in New York City, but moved with his family to the southern town of Ponce, Puerto Rico. He later went to Pennsylvania, then returned to Bayamón, Puerto Rico, to study medicine, becoming a doctor in 2015.

Vázquez became a household name for a younger generation in Latin America in 2018 with the single “Cuál Es Tu Plan?” The song was a collaboration with Puerto Rican icon Bad Bunny and reggaeton singer Ñejo. The recognition he gained led to collaborations with Broadway star Lin-Manuel Miranda and René Pérez, known by the stage name Residente, the frontman of the former reggaeton duo Calle 13.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, he switched from holding a microphone to a stethoscope, working full-time at a hospital in Ponce for a year. As a general practitioner, he treated patients of all ages excited to be cared for by the popular rapper.

Vázquez said some doctors at first doubted his qualifications after years of touring and rapping, despite him keeping up his medical qualifications.

“After a month, everybody knew that this wasn’t a joke for me, and that I’m really good at what I do,” he said. “I shut up whoever doubted me.”

Dr. Carlos Díaz Vélez, president of Puerto Rico’s Association of Surgical Doctors, said Vázquez has helped put a spotlight on Puerto Rico’s health crisis.

"He's expressed his criticism about what's happening here because he himself knows what the problems are within the health system," Díaz said.

In 2023, Vázquez's work earned him a humanitarian award in the Premios Tu Música Urbano, an awards ceremony that recognizes urban music artists.

Milagros Martínez, a community leader in the western town of Hormigueros, recalls when Vázquez arrived in September 2022 after Hurricane Fiona to provide medical check-ups to families without power or water.

"The younger people recognized him," Martínez said. "But he knew how to separate his medical role from his role as an artist."

Since then Vázquez has been working on an album he hopes to release soon, reducing his shifts as a doctor from full time to once or twice a week in a mobile clinic with a nonprofit called Direct Relief.

Meanwhile, Vázquez faces a problem that plagues both his clinic and his recording studio: frequent power outages.

He's had to leave his studio several times because it has no generator, but what troubles him most are the outages that affect his patients.

In June, towns in central and southern parts of the island faced a prolonged power outage during extreme heat.

"You'll go and see people don't have power for two days, going through the heat we have, and we have a huge transportation problem that people don't talk about, where a lot of people can't reach hospitals," Vázquez said.

Now more than ever, he feels the need to juggle his passion to sing and care for others, something that's come easier with time.

When he needs an extra set of hands, he calls for volunteers to assist with mobile clinics in Puerto Rico, and his fans step up.

"They sign up to treat patients for free all day with me," he said. "I come out of (the clinic) crying sometimes."

Data shows hurricanes and earthquakes grab headlines but inland counties top disaster list

BY SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

Floyd County keeps flooding and the federal government keeps coming to the rescue.

In July 2022, at least 40 people died and 300 homes were damaged when the eastern Kentucky county flooded. It was the 13th time in 12 years that the rural county was declared a federal disaster. These are disasters so costly that local governments feel they can't pay for it all, so the governor asks the president to declare a disaster freeing up federal funds.

"After that flood I had 500 homeless people looking at me, 'Judge what are we going to do?'" recalled Judge Robbie Williams, administrator for the county of a bit more than 35,000 people. "It's overwhelming and it's just a matter of time before it happens again."

It did. In 2023, Floyd County was declared a disaster again for 14th time, starting in 2011. And Floyd County isn't even the nation's most disaster-prone county. Neighboring Johnson County has 15 disasters declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency since 2011.

When it comes to extreme weather and other so-called natural disasters, people generally look to the hurricane or earthquake-prone coasts and say that's where the danger is. But that's not where the highest concentration of federally declared disasters are, according to an atlas of 713 FEMA declared disasters created by Rebuild by Design and New York University. While most people in disasters think about federal government direct financial help to individual victims to pay for lost housing and businesses, the atlas focuses on the \$60 billion pot of FEMA aid to governments.

Eight of the nine counties with the most federal declared disasters since 2011 — more than a dozen each — are in Kentucky, with the one in Vermont. These counties have four to five times the number of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 65 of 66

disaster as the national average of three in the past 13 years.

"California and Louisiana and I would say now even Texas, Florida, for sure, they soak up all the oxygen when you hear about these giant storms," said atlas creator Amy Chester, director of the disaster prevention-focused Rebuild By Design nonprofit group. "But what you're not hearing about are these storms that are happening all the time, and that's just becoming like, regular to places like Vermont." Chester also mentioned Tennessee, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Iowa and Alaska as hotspots.

"We want to show that climate change is already here," Chester said of the data covers 2011 to 2023, but doesn't include heat waves, drought or COVID. "Communities are suffering all over."

Before she crunched the data, Chester said she figured Vermont would be a haven from climate change. Cooler. Inland. Instead it's a disaster hot spot.

"It's awful" Chester said. "It just keeps happening to them."

Days after she said that Vermont flooded again, this time from the remnants of Hurricane Beryl.

Flooding is the most common disaster in the United States, according to FEMA. Since 2011, FEMA handed out more than \$41 billion in aid following hurricanes, the most of any disaster type.

"What the data tell us is that the frequency and severity of disasters at local-state scales is increasing with rural, suburban, and urban places being affected nationwide," Susan Cutter, co-director of the Hazards Vulnerability and Resilience Institute at the University of South Carolina, said in an email. She wasn't part of Chester's research. "More needs to be done to enhance resilience to reduce their impacts on people."

The largest county in the nation that has not had a federally declared disaster since 2011 is Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, where the city of Charlotte is.

"We've been blessed," said Charlotte emergency management chief Robert Graham, who attributes the lack of federal disasters to good luck, good government and good geography.

"We are protected from the coast somewhat," Graham said of the inland county. "We don't get all the impacts from the mountains. Charlotte seems to be in a, somewhat of a sweet spot."

Graham said a cushy reserve fund and planning have prevented the city from having to go to the federal government for financial help after disasters like a 2019 flood. But he said he knows it's only a matter of time before the city's luck runs out.

Luck long abandoned eastern Kentucky.

In Floyd County, geography and government regulations make it tough, Williams said. The mountain-heavy county has people living in the narrow valley floor in old coal camps, he said. And when it rains, the ever-shallower creeks overflows.

"We're seeing historic levels of flooding," Williams said. "It's only getting worse."

Environmental regulations won't let local officials dredge the creeks, which keep getting built up with silt coming down the mountains, often from development, Williams said. Some creeks decades ago were 20 feet deep but are now shallow enough to walk across, he said.

The problem is there is nowhere for the rain to go," Williams said.

National Weather Service data shows that Floyd County now averages more than 50 inches of rain a year, up from 42 to 43 inches a year in the mid 1980s. Warmer air holds more moisture, with studies and statistics showing the Eastern United States is not only getting more rain, but more intense downpours that cause floods.

Floyd County's government received more than \$35 million in FEMA disaster aid since 2011. That's not even near the top, where the big money went to places devastated by hurricanes.

Five counties — three of them in New York — received more than \$1 billion in FEMA aid, led by Manhattan's New York County, which got \$8.9 billion, nearly all of it due to 2012's Hurricane Sandy. All of the top five counties were struck by one or more hurricanes.

Chester's group decided to look at congressional districts and how they compared in disasters, especially with a nearly evenly split House of Representatives.

Nearly 60 counties have had at least 10 federally declared disasters since 2011 and nearly 70% of them are represented in Congress by Republicans. About 280 counties have had no disasters in that time periods

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 030 ~ 66 of 66

and 87% of them are represented by Democrats, according to the NYU data.

Chester noted that Republicans aren't talking about climate change on the campaign trail, but said "research shows that extreme weather is not a partisan issue."

More important is how state and local policies create or minimize risk for future disasters, said Samantha Montano, a professor of emergency management at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. And in Floyd County the government using FEMA money is buying the homes of 150 residents to move them out of harm's way, but some don't want to leave, Williams said.

"Until we get those homes out of these flood ways... we're still going to have these issues," Williams said.

Today in History: July 24, Apollo 11 returns home from the moon

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, July 24, the 206th day of 2024. There are 160 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 24, 1969, the Apollo 11 astronauts — two of whom had been the first humans to set foot on the moon — splashed down safely in the Pacific.

Also on this date:

In 1567, Mary, Queen of Scots, was forced to abdicate her throne to her one-year-old son James.

In 1847, Mormon leader Brigham Young and his followers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in present-day Utah.

In 1866, Tennessee became the first state to be readmitted to the Union after the Civil War.

In 1915, the SS Eastland, a passenger ship carrying more than 2,500 people, rolled onto its side while docked at the Clark Street Bridge on the Chicago River. An estimated 844 people died in the disaster.

In 1932, the "Bonus Army," a group of thousands of WWI veterans and their supporters who gathered in Washington D.C. to protest the US government's refusal to redeem cash bonus certificates given to the veterans for their service, clashed with D.C. police; two protesting veterans were shot and killed.

In 1959, during a visit to Moscow, Vice President Richard Nixon engaged in his famous "Kitchen Debate" with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that President Richard Nixon had to turn over subpoenaed White House tape recordings to the Watergate special prosecutor.

In 1975, an Apollo spacecraft splashed down in the Pacific, completing a mission which included the first docking with a Soyuz capsule from the Soviet Union.

In 2010, a stampede inside a tunnel crowded with techno music fans left 21 people dead and more than 500 injured at the famed Love Parade festival in western Germany.

In 2013, a high-speed train crash outside Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain killed 79 people.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian Ruth Buzzi is 88. Actor Dan Hedaya is 84. Actor Chris Sarandon is 82. Actor Robert Hays is 77. Actor Michael Richards is 75. Actor Lynda Carter is 73. Movie director Gus Van Sant is 72. Former Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., is 71. Country singer Pam Tillis is 67. Basketball Hall of Famer Karl Malone is 61. Retired MLB All-Star Barry Bonds is 60. Actor Kadeem Hardison is 59. Actor-singer Kristin Chenoweth is 56. Actor Laura Leighton is 56. Actor-singer Jennifer Lopez is 55.. Director Patty Jenkins ("Wonder Woman") is 53. Actor Eric Szmanda is 49. Actor Rose Byrne is 45. Country singer Jerrod Niemann is 45. Actor Elisabeth Moss is 42. Actor Anna Paquin is 42. Former NHL center Patrice Bergeron is 39. Actor Mara Wilson is 37. TV personality Bindi Irwin is 26.