

# Groton Daily Independent

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## **Saturday, Aug. 3**

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance: Vacation Bible School, 6:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

State Legion Baseball Tournament in Salem. Groton plays Big Stone City after the 10 a.m. game.

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

## **Sunday, Aug. 4**

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Pastor at Bethesda, Aberdeen, 2 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.; St. John's voters meeting, 9:45 a.m.; VBS at St. John's, 5:30 p.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:30 a.m., and Groton, 10:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

Special Needs Family Fun Night, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Groton Pool

Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance: Vacation Bible School, 6:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

State Legion Baseball Tournament in Salem

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

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# 1440

**Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.**

## **Jobs Slowdown Hits Stocks**

US employers added fewer-than-expected nonfarm jobs in July as the country's unemployment rate ticked up for the fourth consecutive month to 4.3%, the highest since October 2021, according to government data released yesterday. The latest report spurred a sell-off in the US stock markets, with all three major indexes closing down and the Nasdaq composite entering correction territory (S&P 500 -1.8%, Dow -1.5%, and Nasdaq -2.4%).

US employers added 114,000 jobs last month, below economist estimates of 185,000 and down from the downwardly revised 179,000 jobs in June. Average hourly earnings in July rose 0.2% month-over-month and 3.6% year-over-year, both below economist estimates. The data comes after the Federal Reserve on Wednesday signaled an interest rate cut was likely in September. Analysts say the report suggests the Fed could slash rates by half a percent.

Meanwhile, the average rate on the 30-year fixed mortgage dropped to 6.4% Friday, the lowest since April 2023. The average rate on a 15-year fixed mortgage dropped to 5.9%, the lowest since May 2023.

## **US regulators sue TikTok over child privacy violations.**

The Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission filed the challenge against the video-sharing app and its Chinese parent company, ByteDance, Friday. The regulators allege TikTok breached a federal law requiring services to obtain parental consent to collect personal information from children under 13. TikTok has roughly 170 million active US users, while ByteDance faces a legal deadline from the US government to sell TikTok or withdraw from the US market.

## **Harris secures Democratic nomination for president.**

Vice President Kamala Harris made history Friday as the first Black woman and Asian American to become a presidential nominee from a major party in the US. Harris secured a majority of the votes (at least 2,350) needed for the nomination a day after voting opened. She will accept the nomination next week.

## **Hunter Biden to be sentenced in November for gun conviction.**

The younger Biden became the first convicted child of a sitting US president in June when a jury found him guilty of three felony charges related to lying about his drug use in 2018 when purchasing a gun. Hunter Biden will be sentenced Nov. 13 in the gun case and faces a different trial in September for separate tax-related charges.

## **Intel shares plunge the most in 50 years.**

Intel's shares fell 26% Friday, marking the chipmaker's second-largest single-day drop, behind a 31% drop in July 1974. The company's shares were trading at a level last seen in 2013. The decline came a day after Intel announced it would cut 15% of its workforce and pause dividends beginning in the fourth quarter as part of cost-cutting measures.

## **Chevron to relocate to Texas from California.**

America's second-largest oil and gas company is moving its global headquarters from California—its home state for more than 140 years—to Houston, Texas, considered the US energy capital. The announcement comes weeks after Elon Musk said X (formerly Twitter) and SpaceX would move their headquarters from California to Texas and follows a growing trend.

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## **Tropical storm warning issued for parts of Florida.**

As of this writing, a developing system in the eastern Gulf of Mexico is expected to turn into Tropical Storm Debby today and drench the west coast of Florida this weekend. Up to a foot of rain is possible in some areas of the state, with flash flooding and heavy rainfall to continue through next week.

## **Humankind(ness)**

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Suzanne B. in St. Louis, Missouri.

"I was 9.5 miles into a training walk for the Portuguese Camino when I stepped in a pothole and went down. I got up and sat on a grassy area to look myself over. A young woman came running out of a restaurant to see how I was. She went back in to get a first aid kit and bring me a glass of water. She waited while I patched up my knee and called for a ride. Jenna was my Florence Nightingale."

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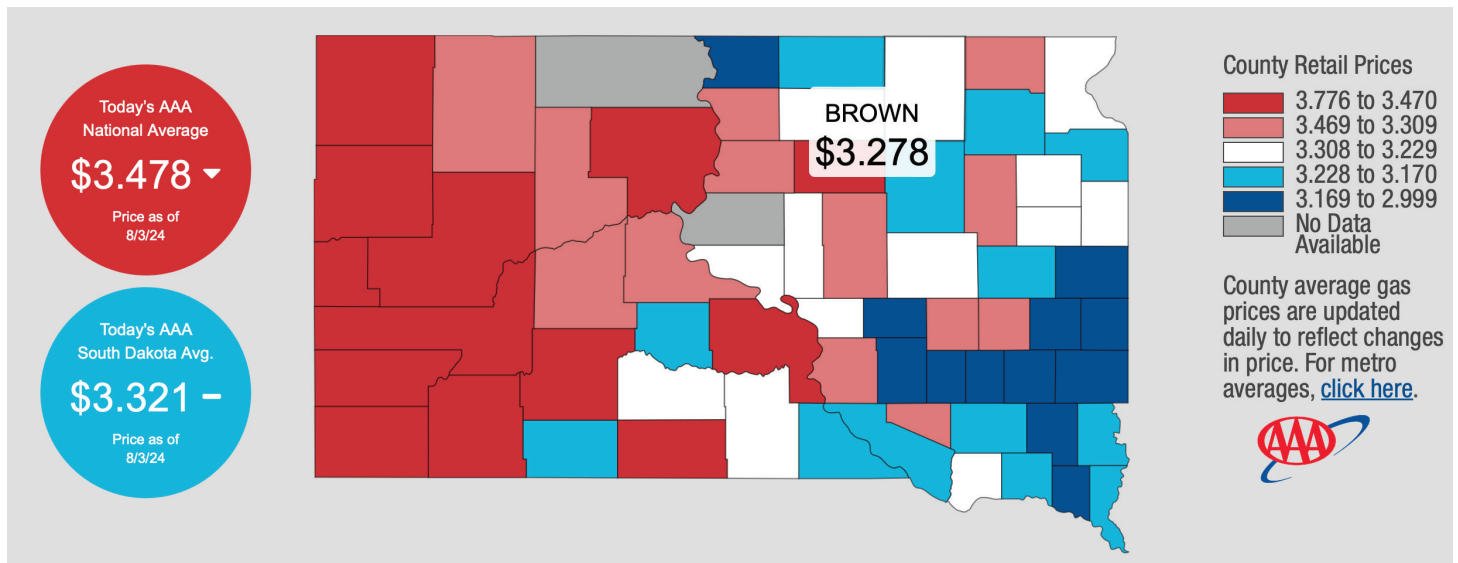
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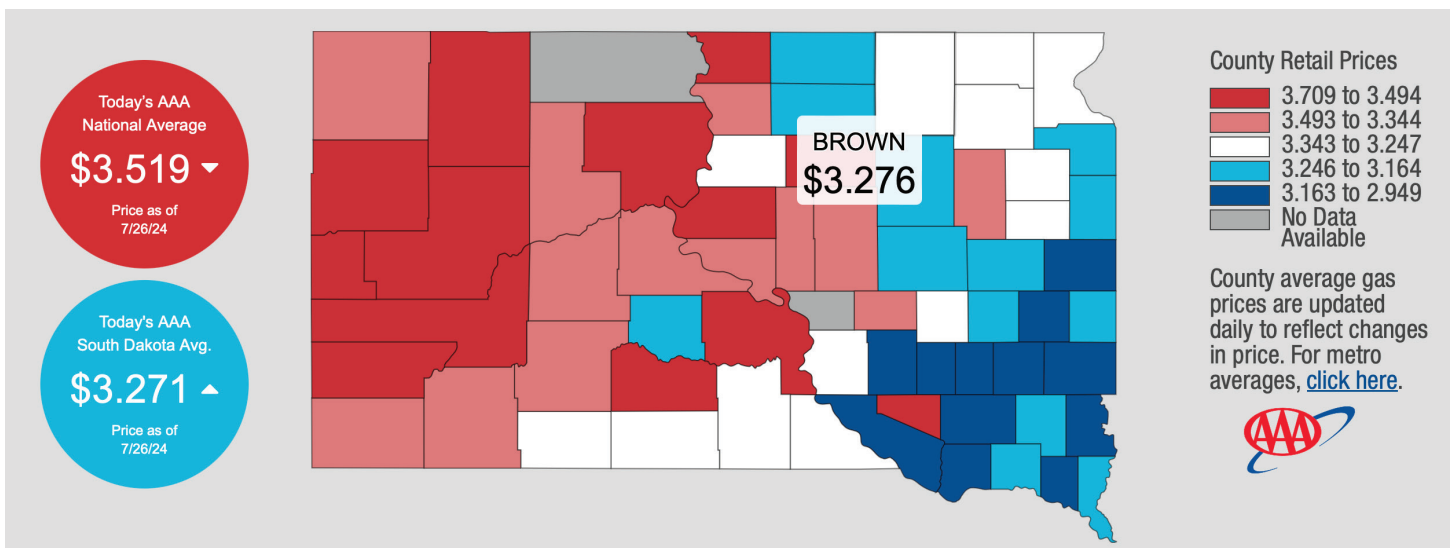
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

Current Avg.	\$3.321	\$3.519	\$3.970	\$3.457
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.321	\$3.511	\$3.955	\$3.458
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.280	\$3.471	\$3.899	\$3.455
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.245	\$3.446	\$3.853	\$3.449
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.792	\$3.938	\$4.394	\$3.965

### This Week



### Last Week

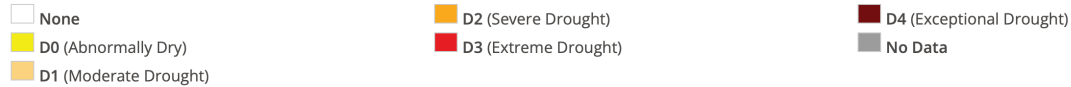




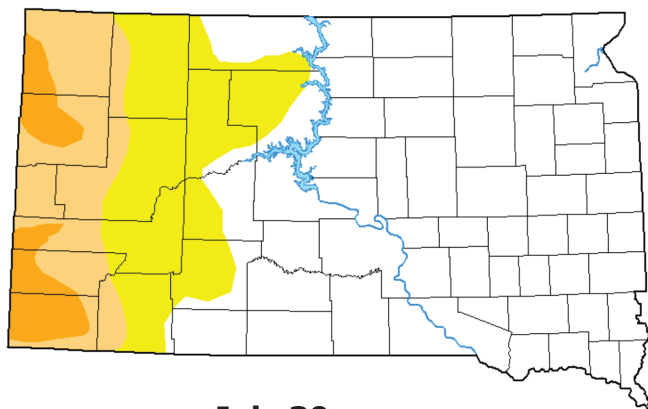
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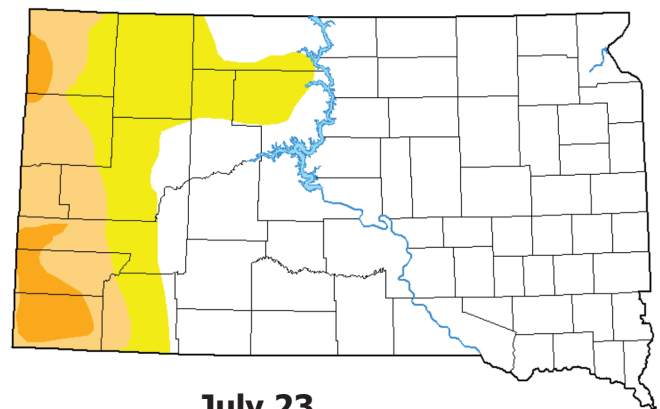
## Drought Classification



## Drought Monitor



July 30



July 23

The High Plains received trace amounts of precipitation, leading to already dry conditions in the western and southern High Plains to further deteriorate. Poor soil moisture in much of Kansas brought about widespread 1-category degradations. In eastern Kansas, along the Missouri border there have been reports dryness and heat stress. Central Kansas has also seen reports of dry ponds and fear of total crop failures. Some of these drier conditions spilled northward into southern Nebraska, which also saw areas of the northeast and western Panhandle deteriorate because of an extended period of dry conditions, dry vegetation, and low streamflow values. Similar conditions were seen across western South and North Dakota and Wyoming. Colorado saw deterioration in the northern Front Range, where extreme temperatures and low humidity made for perfect conditions for wildfires. Two fires were reported on Monday July 29: the Alexander Mountain Fire west of Loveland, the Stone Mountain Fire southeast of Estes Park.

## State Legion Tournament

### **Sixth-Inning Burst Enough To Lead SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova) Past Groton Post 39**

**By GameChanger Media**

SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova) defeated Groton Post 39 9-1 on Friday thanks in part to six runs in the sixth inning.

SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova) opened the scoring in the first after Jackson Grady doubled, scoring two runs.

A ground out by Jackson Remmers extended the SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova) lead to 3-0 in the bottom of the second inning.

SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova) scored six runs on four hits in the bottom of the sixth inning. Kade Shumaker was struck by a pitch, driving in a run, Carter Randall singled, scoring two runs, Grady drew a walk, scoring one run, and Shea Klinkhammer singled, scoring two runs.

Dillon Abeln stepped on the mound first for Groton Post 39. The righty surrendered seven hits and nine runs (eight earned) over five and two-thirds innings, striking out seven and walking four. Luke Koepsell opened the game for SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova). The southpaw allowed four hits and one run over four and two-thirds innings, striking out four and walking none.

Karsten Fliehs went 1-for-2 at the plate as they led the team with one run batted in. Ryan Groebelinghoff, Fliehs, Teylor Diegel, and Colby Dunker each collected one hit for Groton Post 39.

Grady drove the middle of the lineup, leading SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova) with three runs batted in. The outfielder went 1-for-3 on the day. Owen Alley and Klinkhammer each collected two hits for SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova). SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova) turned one double play in the game. SMC Post 140 (Salem/Montrose/Canova) were sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Weston Remmers made the most plays with 10.

Groton Post 39 will play Big Stone City in the double elimination tournament today. They will play 30 minutes after the conclusion of the 10 a.m. game.

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**SOUTH DAKOTA  
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## SD Supreme Court sends abortion lawsuit back to lower court

**Anti-abortion group Life Defense Fund will have another chance to plead its case in front of Circuit Court Judge John Pekas in Minnehaha County.**

By Stu Whitney

South Dakota News Watch

The South Dakota Supreme Court on Friday reversed a circuit judge's dismissal of a lawsuit filed by an anti-abortion group seeking to keep an abortion rights amendment from reaching the November ballot.

That means Life Defense Fund will have another chance to plead its case in front of Circuit Court Judge John Pekas in Minnehaha County. The group contends that Amendment G's sponsor, Dakotans for Health, violated state laws with improper petition circulation and that the amendment shouldn't have been certified.

Rather than addressing specific charges in the complaint, Pekas questioned why the South Dakota Secretary of State's office wasn't named as a party in the lawsuit. The Supreme Court ruled Friday that was a mistake on the judge's part.

"This Court ... concluded that the circuit court erred in dismissing the matter based on its determination that (Life Defense Fund) should have brought the case as a quo warranto action to challenge the Secretary of State's authority," the Supreme Court's order of reversal read. Such an action requires someone to show they have the authority to do something.

At the same time, the Supreme Court denied Life Defense Fund's request for a different circuit judge and also rejected a request to expedite the matter in circuit court, noting that "this exceptional level of supervision over a circuit court's calendar is not supported by the current state of the record."

If passed by voters, Amendment G would enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution.

Jim Leach, the Rapid City lawyer representing Dakotans for Health, said that the organization "will continue to fight for the right of South Dakota citizens to vote on the Roe v. Wade initiative – and we will continue to oppose those who are trying to stop them from voting."

Leslee Unruh, co-chair of Life Defense Fund, issued the following statement: "Rick Weiland and his paid posse have broken laws, tricked South Dakotans into signing their abortion petition, left petitions unattended, and much more. Dakotans for Health illegally gathered signatures to get Amendment G on the ballot, therefore this measure should not be up for a vote this November."



**Sara Frankenstein of Rapid City, S.D., representing anti-abortion group Life Defense Fund, prepares for a July 15, 2024, hearing at the Minnehaha County Courthouse in Sioux Falls, S.D. Circuit Judge John Pekas ruled in favor of Dakotans for Health, the organization behind Amendment G, by granting a motion to dismiss Life Defense Fund's lawsuit.** (Photo:

Stu Whitney / South Dakota News Watch)

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**Dakotans for Health co-founder Rick Weiland talks to supporters at a press conference May 1, 2024, at the downtown library in Sioux Falls, S.D. Weiland's group collected 55,000 signatures for a ballot amendment to enshrine the right to abortion in the South Dakota Constitution.** (Photo: Stu Whitney / South Dakota News Watch)

## Judge's legal conclusion challenged

Life Defense Fund's push for an expedited timetable is based on the Aug. 13 deadline for the secretary of state to certify copies of all ballot questions to county auditors for ballots to be properly printed.

Sara Frankenstein, the Rapid City lawyer representing Life Defense Fund, did not respond to a request for comment from News Watch on Friday afternoon.

Pekas dismissed the complaint at a July 15 hearing at the Minnehaha County Courthouse, saying from the bench that "I don't know how Dakotans for Health can control the secretary of state. They submitted the (petition) information to the state of South Dakota and it has been accepted."

In appealing to the state Supreme Court two days later, Frankenstein called that a misinterpretation of state law, which states that a summons and complaint "shall be served on each petition

sponsor as a party defending the validated petition being challenged."

The appeal stated that "the circuit court failed to apply the statute requiring Life Defense Fund to file a summons and complaint against Dakotans for Health. The court should move swiftly to reverse and remand the case to permit discovery to commence and the case to proceed forward over the next four weeks."

The Supreme Court ruling on Friday stressed that "the Court has not decided and expresses no opinion on any issues raised by the parties, including whether the Secretary of State is an indispensable party to this action. Any such issues can be resolved ... by the circuit court on remand."

Weiland, co-founder of Dakotans for Health, told News Watch after the appeal that he stands by comments portraying Life Defense Fund's legal gambit as another in a series of attempts to block the measure from reaching voters.

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

## Amendment set for Nov. 5 ballot

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

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

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



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physician.

On May 16, South Dakota Secretary of State Monae Johnson's office certified the measure for the Nov. 5 ballot, saying that a random sample showed 46,098 of the 54,281 submitted signatures were deemed valid, well over the threshold of 35,017.

Nearly a month later, Life Defense Fund and Frankenstein filed a complaint in state circuit court asking that the amendment be disqualified. It also asked the court to prohibit "Dakotans for Health and those who worked with or for it" from being involved in petition or ballot measure campaigns for a period of four years.

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

## **Federal judge declined to intervene**

Life Defense Fund, led by Republican state Rep. Jon Hansen and Unruh, alleged in their lawsuit that petition circulators violated a residency affidavit requirement introduced into state law in 2018, among other charges.

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

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

## **Actions of petitioners questioned**

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

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

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

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

"People want to vote," he said. "People signed petitions to vote. (Life Defense Fund) is saying that people shouldn't be able to vote. Well, this is America. People should be able to vote."

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

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



**Republican state legislator Jon Hansen, co-chair of the Life Defense Fund, listens to Gov. Kristi Noem give the State of the State address on Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024, at the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre, S.D.** (Photo: Argus Leader)

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**BROWN COUNTY  
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA  
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY**

**August 6, 2024 8:45 A.M.**

**COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD**

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity of Public Comment
4. Public Hearing for Temporary Alcohol (Malt Beverage) Permit in conjunction with Special Event for Boys & Girls Club of Aberdeen Area
5. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign drawdown request for Landfill Loader
6. Mike Scott, Landfill Manager
  - a. Waive fees for Fall Residential Clean-up
7. Approve updated Brown County Fair Promo List
8. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
  - a. Resolution to Request Extension for Sand Lake Funding
  - b. Right of way for Northern Electric
  - c. Right of ways for NVC (2)
9. Consent Calendar
  - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of July 30, 2024
  - b. Claims
  - c. HR Report
  - d. Travel Requests
  - e. Landfill Tonnage Report for July 2024
10. Other Business
11. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
12. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

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Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission but may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board).

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

**Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at**

<https://www.brown.sd.us/departments/commission>

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## Brand New Program at

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## **Sewer rates to take a jump starting with the upcoming bill**

The Groton City sewer rates on your utility bill may seem high. That's because the city is taking an increase in the rates to help pay for major infrastructure updates.

Previously, you had 2,000 gallons included in your minimum bill. Rates are based on water usage between November and April. It was \$3.25 for anything used over 2,000 gallons and up to 7,000 gallons and anything over 7,000 gallons was charged at \$2 per thousand gallons.

The 2,000 gallons will no longer be included in your minimum. The rate is now \$5 per thousand gallons. So if you use 1,000 gallons of water, your sewer rate will increase by \$5. If you use 3,000 gallons, your sewer rate will increase by \$11.75. If you use 7,000 gallons per month, your sewer rate will increase by \$18.75. If you use 10,000 gallons per month, your sewer rate will increase by \$27.75. If you use 50,000 gallons per month, your sewer rate will increase by \$147.75.

## **Names Released in Butte County Fatal Crash**

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: US 85 and SD Highway 168, 30 miles north of Belle Fourche, SD

When: 12:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 30, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2017 Harley Davidson Trike

Driver 1: James Eugene Luchi, 73-year-old male from Watford City, ND, fatal injuries

Helmet Use: No

Vehicle 2: 2002 Chevrolet Venture

Driver2: Alex Lynn Rundell, 20-year-old male from Pine Bluffs, WY, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seatbelt Use: Under investigation

Butte County, S.D.- One man died and another was injured Tuesday afternoon in a two vehicle crash on US 85, 30 miles north of Belle Fourche, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates James E. Luchi, the driver of a 2017 Harley Davidson trike, was northbound on US 85 near the intersection of SD Highway 168. Alex L. Rundell, the driver of a Chevrolet minivan, was southbound in the same location. The minivan turned left onto SD 168 in front of the trike and they collided. Luchi was thrown from the trike and pronounced deceased on scene. He was not wearing a helmet.

Rundell suffered serious, non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to a nearby health center.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.



## We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

### Biden's Calls for Supreme Court Restraints Steeped in Irony

President Joe Biden's sweeping proposals to reform the US Supreme Court and the American Presidency are steeped in irony. It is not lost on the citizenry that the Court's own acts have inspired Biden's proposals to rein in presidential power and curb the excesses of the nation's High Bench. The Court's creation in *Trump v. United States* of absolute executive immunity from criminal prosecution for a president's official acts stunned the nation, betrayed the rule of law and left a sitting president, of all officials, to complain that it gives the presidency too much power. Thus Biden has proposed a constitutional amendment—"No One is Above the Law Amendment"—to restore what the Framers of the Constitution intended, and what has always been understood, at least until the Trump decision, that a president is amenable to the judicial process and possesses no immunity from criminal prosecution.

Nor is it lost on Americans that Alexander Hamilton's description in *Federalist No. 78* of the judiciary as "the least dangerous branch" is not always true and, indeed, has been undercut by the current version of the Supreme Court. Rulings that have overturned long standing precedents and stripped citizens of voting rights and abortion rights, combined with the behavior of Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito that flaunt judicial ethics, affirm the increasingly bi-partisan calls for Supreme Court reforms. Accordingly, President Biden is proposing term limits for the Justices and congressional passage of an enforceable code of judicial ethics.

President Biden's initiatives are, at this moment, long shots in this deeply divided nation, particularly in an election year, but they are timely and should generate serious discussions in Congress and across the country. There is in Biden's calls for reform the echo of constitution-making, the very essence of the work of delegates to the Constitutional Convention who shaped the doctrine of checks and balances to empower and restrain both the American Presidency and the Supreme Court. The Framers agreed that they were reacting to historical patterns of abuse of power, as well as weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation, while anticipating the twists and turns of growth in the nation that encouraged them write, to borrow from the majestic words of Chief Justice John Marshall, a "Constitution that will endure for the ages."

Governmental problems in 1787, like those in 2024, encourage thoughtful consideration, discussion and debate, reforms and remedies. Structural remedies of the sort that have defined the Constitution, in both its origins and amendments—term eligibility, voting rights, enumeration of powers and restraints—are the product of vision, ingenuity and political compromise. In the beginning, there was no limitation on term eligibility for the presidency, just as there was no limit on the years of service on the Supreme Court, save for the provision in Article III that a Justice would hold the seat "during good behavior." Reaction to the sweeping authoritarianism that engulfed the planet and gave rise to World War II, however, persuaded Americans to ratify the 22nd Amendment, which imposed a two-term ceiling on those holding the Office of the Presidency. The concern, then, was to prevent the aggrandizement of power that often accompanies lengthy service in an office or post.

The focus of term limits in the 22nd Amendment was curbing executive power, which is the same concern that drives President Biden's proposal for a constitutional amendment to correct the Supreme Court's invention of executive immunity from criminal prosecution. The Court's unprecedented and inexplicable expansion of executive power in the Trump case converts the chains of the constitutional limitations on the presidency, in Thomas Jefferson's phrase, into "mere ropes of sand." The Framers' fear of unbridled

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presidential power dominated their discussions in Philadelphia, but that deep-seated concern seems to have escaped the Court's reasoning.

The focus of President Biden's call for term limits on Supreme Court Justices is judicial power, but the considerations that motivated ratification of the 22nd Amendment are equally compelling. The temptation to abuse power, whether by presidents or judges, to achieve one's ends is an enduring challenge to constitutional government and requires, from time to time, changes in our legal landscape. This is such a time. In the weeks ahead, we will explore these proposals in detail.

*David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota NewsMedia Association and this newspaper.*

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## National and South Dakota Legislative News Connection

Washington- Last week, a panel of witnesses testified before the House Committee on Agriculture. The panel included producers, a lender, an input supplier, and an extension economist. They warned of dire outlooks facing our agricultural supply chain. During the committee, they discussed plummeting crop prices, high production costs, high interest rates, and natural disasters across the country. Some of the key takeaways from the testimony include:

In 2023, the agriculture sector accounted for almost 20% of the country's economic activity and represented over \$9.6 trillion in outputs. It generated \$181.4 billion in exports, \$1.3 trillion in tax revenue, \$2.8 trillion in wages, and provided 48.6 million jobs.

Farm sector net income is forecasted to drop for the second consecutive year in 2024. Net farm income is expected to decrease by \$43.1 billion (27.1%) to \$116.1 billion in 2024, marking history's most significant two-year decline.

Cash receipts are declining, while production expenses are expected to increase by \$16.7 billion from 2023 to 2024, totaling \$455.1 billion.

According to a recent Purdue University and CME Group barometer survey, farmers' long-term farmland value outlook weakened in June. The rise in concern over interest rates may have contributed to the decline in farmers' future expectations, outlook on capital investments, and long-term farmland values compared to the previous month.

Washington- The pesticide manufacturer Syngenta has applied to the EPA to register its dicamba-based pesticide, Tavium, under FIFRA. Tavium was one of three dicamba products approved directly on dicamba-resistant soybean and cotton seeds. However, in February 2024, a federal court vacated the registration for all three products after concluding that the EPA had failed to comply with FIFRA procedures when approving the products. Registering Tavium is the third application for over-the-top use of dicamba pesticide submitted to the EPA following the February ruling. Bayer and BASF have already applied for reapproval of XtendiMax and Engenia. A comment period for Syngenta's application will be open through August 22.

### South Dakota News

Pierre - On Tuesday, the South Dakota Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations gathered to discuss Initiated Measure 28, also known as the Prohibit Food and Grocery Taxes Initiative. This measure aims to prevent imposing a state sales tax on items sold for human consumption, excluding alcoholic beverages and prepared food. The South Dakota Legislative Research Council issued a memorandum highlighting the ambiguity in the definition of "human consumption." One potential interpretation strictly limits the phrase to food items, even though the measure does not explicitly outline this restriction. The other interpretation suggests a broader scope, encompassing nondurable goods, services, and food.

Depending on how "human consumption" is interpreted, state revenues are predicted to decrease by an estimated range of \$133.6 million to \$646.2 million. Under a food-only interpretation, revenue could decline by \$133.6 million, 9.3% of the state's sales tax. On the other hand, a broader interpretation might lead to a revenue decrease of \$646.2 million, which would compromise up to 46.5% of the state's sales tax and 100% of tobacco taxes.

### South Dakota Planting & Production Progress

According to an updated news release from the National Agricultural Statistic Service (USDA, Northern Plains Region) the current percentages across South Dakota:

Corn Silking- 57%, up from 23% the previous week

Corn Dough- 18%, up from 2% the previous week

Corn Condition- 2% very poor, 5% poor, 21% fair, 56% good, 16% excellent

Soybean Blooming- 57%, up from 38% the previous week

Soybeans Setting Pods-26%, up from 3% the previous week

Soybean Condition-3% very poor, 7% poor, 32% fair, 44% good, 16% excellent

Sorghum Headed- 25%, up from 16% the previous week

Sorghum Condition- 1% poor, 22% fair, 68% good, 9% excellent

Winter Wheat Harvested- 63%, up from 31% the previous week

Spring Wheat Headed- 95%

Spring Wheat Condition- 1% very poor, 4% poor, 25% fair, 65% good, 5% excellent

Pasture and Range Condition- 3% very poor, 10% poor, 33% fair, 43% good, 11% excellent

Days Suitable for Field Work-6.7

Topsoil Moisture Condition-4% very short, 22% short, 68% adequate, 6% surplus

Subsoil Moisture Condition- 3% very short, 26% short, 70% adequate, 1% surplus



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### State Supreme Court revives legal challenge to abortion-rights ballot measure

BY: SETH TUPPER - AUGUST 2, 2024 5:47 PM

An anti-abortion group won the latest round in a court battle over South Dakota's abortion-rights ballot question.

The Life Defense Fund is attempting to disqualify the measure from the Nov. 5 ballot. A circuit court judge in Minnehaha County dismissed the group's lawsuit last month. But on Friday, the state Supreme Court reversed that decision and sent the case back to the circuit court for further proceedings.

A sparsely worded order signed by Supreme Court Chief Justice Steven Jensen said "the circuit court erred in dismissing the matter." The lower court had ruled that the Life Defense Fund should have targeted the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office with its litigation instead of Dakotans for Health, which is the group that petitioned the measure onto the ballot.

Although the Supreme Court ruled for the Life Defense Fund on that issue, the high court denied the group's request for a new circuit court judge to be assigned to the case.

Leslee Unruh, co-chair of the Life Defense Fund, hailed the reversal of the circuit court's dismissal. She signaled the group's eagerness to continue pressing its claims that Dakotans for Health failed to follow all of the state's laws governing the circulation of ballot petitions.

"Dakotans for Health illegally gathered signatures to get Amendment G on the ballot, therefore this measure should not be up for a vote this November," Unruh's statement said, in part.

One of the Life Defense Fund's allegations is that Dakotans for Health failed to abide by the requirements of a 2018 state law. The Republican-dominated Legislature adopted the law to prevent out-of-state residents from circulating ballot petitions in South Dakota. Among other things, the law required petition circulators to file a sworn statement with various pieces of information proving their residency.

Dakotans for Health has argued that the 2018 law was invalidated by a series of court decisions that struck down restrictions on ballot petition circulators.

Dakotans for Health Chairman Rick Weiland said his group will fight to keep the abortion-rights measure on the ballot.

"This is just another hurdle put forth by a desperate campaign attempting to stop the will of the voters," Weiland said.

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

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

As the legal fight continues, the clock is ticking toward a Sept. 18 deadline for ballots to be printed and in the possession of county auditors' offices.

*South Dakota Searchlight's Joshua Haiar contributed to this report.*

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



## Suicides in South Dakota decline for second consecutive year

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 2, 2024 3:04 PM

SIOUX FALLS — South Dakota's suicide rate has decreased for the second consecutive year, and officials think that means suicide prevention work in the state is making a difference.

The number of suicides fell from 202 in 2021 to 192 in 2022, and further to 180 in 2023. The statistics were shared by Department of Health Secretary Melissa Magstadt during the state's third annual Suicide Prevention Conference.

Magstadt emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum.

"I'm telling you that the long game is starting to be a trend that we want to see continue," Magstadt said.

She highlighted successes including lawmakers giving schools \$2 million for K-12 suicide prevention work in 2023, and the state's gun lock program distributing 3,500 locks since last July.

Magstadt also noted that South Dakota continues to face challenges, including the eighth-highest suicide rate in the country. The suicide rate among Native Americans in the state is 2.7 times higher than the average for all South Dakotans.

The conference underscored several efforts aimed at reducing suicides, including expanded mental health resources and public awareness campaigns.

Governor Kristi Noem made a surprise guest speaker appearance at the event. She shared that after a close friend committed suicide, she spent years wondering what she could have said or done differently.

"I remember thinking if somebody would just tell me what I should have done, or what I can do the next time, to have a different outcome, I would feel so much better," she said.

When Noem became governor, a couple of members of her staff who'd recently lost family members to suicide asked if the administration could do something different to make a difference.

"That's how this conference got started," she said. "By people coming to me, and us sharing our personal stories and that people need to know a plan, or something to say, or how specific they should talk to individuals, or a tool in their toolbox that they could use."

Some tools in the state are getting a lot of use, officials said.

The 988 crisis line, launched two years ago, provides immediate support for those in need. The line has received about 20,000 calls and texts. Ninety-seven of the interactions were resolved without requiring further intervention. About a third were an immediate crisis; the rest were individuals seeking advice for themselves or loved ones.

If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, help is available anytime by dialing 988. The service is free and confidential.

*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.*

## Former Democratic operative settles \$1.2 million debt with South Dakota cannabis growers

BY: MAX NESTERAK, MINNESOTA REFORMER - AUGUST 2, 2024 12:03 PM

Former Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party political operative Will Hailer paid \$1.2 million to settle a lawsuit brought by two South Dakota cannabis companies and their investors accusing him of fraud.

The case ends a two-year saga that began when Hailer approached 605 Cannabis founder Ned Horsted with an attractive business opportunity for him and the two founders of another cannabis company, Dakota Natural Growers.

Hailer promised he would bring in an additional \$7.5 million in investment for the cannabis growers if they gave him the \$3.54 million they raised from friends, family and acquaintances.

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Hailer, who previously worked for the Democratic National Committee and for Attorney General Keith Ellison, met Horsted years before through Democratic politics.

"He tells a great story," Horsted said of Hailer in an interview earlier this year. "It made sense in my mind. If you're well connected, and you could pick up the phone and get someone to give \$100,000 to a campaign, you could probably get that same kind of money for a business venture."

The additional investment never materialized despite months of promises that the money was just days or weeks away, according to court documents.

Hailer returned \$1.86 million in August 2022 and another \$500,000 in October 2023 after the cannabis business owners and their investors sued Hailer and three of his companies, eST Ventures, Badlands Fund and Badland Ventures.

The latest settlement and \$1.2 million payment means the cannabis entrepreneurs and investors have received all of their own money back after giving Hailer control of it in early 2022.

Jason Tarasek, the attorney for the cannabis companies, declined to comment beyond that they "amicably resolved their dispute." The case was settled in Nebraska, where Hailer lives.

It's unclear how Hailer was able to pay the settlement. As the Reformer reported in June, discovery documents in the case showed Hailer had less than \$750 combined across various business and personal bank accounts.

Hailer did not respond to an email seeking comment.

Hailer still faces litigation — along with his business partner Tim Mynett, husband of U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar — by an investor in the pair's California winery, eStCru.

In that case, investor Naeem Mohd gave Mynett \$300,000 for a winery on the promise Mohd would receive \$900,000 back in just 18 months. Mohd only received his \$300,000 back.

Mynett was a founder of eSt Ventures, which was named in the cannabis lawsuit, but he said he left the company before the deal with the South Dakota cannabis companies.

Although the business is typically called eSt Ventures, Omar listed spousal income from "EstVenture LLC" of \$5,001-\$15,000 in 2021 and \$15,001-\$50,000 in 2022.

In her latest congressional financial disclosure filed in May, Omar reported spousal income in 2023 of \$201-\$1,000 from eStCru and \$15,000-\$50,000 from Rose Lake Capital, a venture capital management firm founded by Mynett and Hailer.

*Max Nesterak is the deputy editor of the Minnesota Reformer and reports on labor and housing. Most recently he was an associate producer for Minnesota Public Radio after a stint at NPR. He also co-founded the Behavioral Scientist and was a Fulbright Scholar to Berlin, Germany.*

## Kamala Harris will be the Democratic presidential nominee, DNC announces

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - AUGUST 2, 2024 1:55 PM

WASHINGTON — Enough Democratic delegates selected Kamala Harris to make her the party's presidential nominee by Friday, during an ongoing virtual vote that began less than two weeks after President Joe Biden ended his reelection campaign.

The vote, which will not officially close until Monday evening, was held in advance of the Democratic National Convention, scheduled to take place in Chicago later this month, to assuage concerns about state registration deadlines that begin in August.

The DNC began laying the groundwork for the virtual nomination months before Biden announced his decision to step aside.

Harris said on a call with supporters Friday that she was happy to have surpassed the threshold needed to win the nomination.

"Of course, I will officially accept your nomination next week once the virtual voting period has closed,

but already I'm happy to know that we have enough delegates to secure the nomination," Harris said.

DNC Chair Jaime Harrison encouraged DNC delegates to keep sending in their ballots during the Zoom call, but said the support for Harris so far has been overwhelming.

"I am so proud to confirm that Vice President Harris has earned more than a majority of votes from all convention delegates and will be the nominee of the Democratic Party following the close of voting on Monday," he said.

"The outpouring of support we have witnessed for the vice president has been unprecedented," Harrison added. "We knew your ballots would come back quickly. But the fact that we can say today, just one day after we opened voting, that the vice president has crossed the majority threshold and will officially be our nominee next week — folks, that is simply outstanding."

The virtual roll call vote began Thursday at 9 a.m. Eastern and will conclude Monday at 6 p.m. Eastern. Harris was the only candidate to qualify.

The DNC plans to announce the final results afterward, including a state-by-state breakdown.

One of Harris' first official acts will be selecting a running mate from a list that holds several governors as well as at least one senator. Her decision will set the tone for the sprint to the ballot box.

Harris and her running mate are expected to hold rallies in swing states next week, including Pennsylvania on Tuesday, Wisconsin and Michigan on Wednesday, North Carolina on Thursday, Georgia and Arizona on Friday, and Nevada on Saturday.

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

## Lackluster investigations may perpetuate high Native infant mortality rate

**A new study cites missing autopsies and a lack of details on where and how bodies were found**

**BY: NADA HASSANEIN, STATELINE - AUGUST 2, 2024 6:00 AM**

When Jessica Whitehawk helped start a women's health support center over a decade ago, her team worked out of a tiny room in the back of a nonprofit office on the Yakama Nation Reservation in Washington state.

Pregnant women traveled to that room from the farthest reaches of the 1.3 million-acre reservation because they had nowhere else to go for health care or prenatal advice, Whitehawk said.

Many tribal communities have a similar lack of resources, which contributes to American Indian and Alaska Native infants being twice as likely as non-Hispanic white babies to die before their first birthday.

A recent study suggests another reason for the high infant mortality rate among Native babies: the way that law enforcement authorities investigate possible cases of sudden unexpected infant deaths, known as SUIDs, in tribal communities. Researchers found that compared with other racial groups, American Indian and Alaska Native SUIDs were most likely to result in police investigations, which were often incomplete, as opposed to the more thorough investigations conducted by medical examiners or coroners' forensic staff.

As a result, experts say, less is known about those cases, and so less can be done to help prevent future infant deaths in tribal communities that might have scant access to prenatal care or whose cultural practices call for sensitivity.

Medical examiners are pathologist physicians who are trained to explore all causes of death, while law enforcement agencies are trained to explore criminal circumstances. Rural Native communities often don't have medical examiners, and they frequently have strained relationships with police.

Pathologist Dr. Nicole Jackson, the former associate medical examiner for King County, Washington, said that during her training in New Mexico, she saw many tribal infant deaths. Police, often tribal law enforcement agencies, were frequently the ones leading those investigations, she said.

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"The medical, legal death investigation system in America is just so understaffed and underfunded," said Jackson, now an assistant professor at the University of Washington and director of Autopsy and After Death Services at the UW Medical Center.

"If it was better staffed and better funded, we would not have to rely on law enforcement in certain regions conducting these delicate investigations," she said.

The authors of the recent SUIDs study looked at more than 3,800 cases between 2015 and 2018. They categorized investigations as incomplete if there was no autopsy or no investigation of the scene, or if details were missing on where and how the body was found.

That lack of data can hamper prevention efforts.

In many of the incomplete cases, for example, investigators didn't ask the caregivers to use baby dolls to show the position in which they found the deceased infant — even though that exercise is recommended by experts including the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Association of Medical Examiners.

These doll "reenactments" help investigators determine whether unsafe conditions or sleep practices might have led to suffocation.

Sometimes, for example, babies could be sleeping in poor housing situations. Abigail Echo-Hawk, executive vice president at the Seattle Indian Health Board and director of the Urban Indian Health Institute, recalled one baby's death on a high-poverty reservation with a shortage of housing. The baby's family members all slept on the floor in a single room.

She added that because the reenactments can be so traumatizing, it's critical for investigators to be culturally sensitive. Additionally, untrained investigators may misinterpret a family's culture: For example, some tribes refrain from speaking the name of the baby for a year after the death.

"Our public health data system collects the lowest quality information on the groups that have the worst health outcomes, when those are the groups we should be collecting the most information about," said Naomi Harada Thyden, a public health research scientist at the University of Minnesota and the lead author of the study, which was published this spring in the Journal of Public Health Management & Practice.

Whitehawk, who is a member of the Winnebago and Santee Tribes of Nebraska, said those disparities led her and co-founders to launch the Ttáwaxt Birth Justice Center 12 years ago. The center now operates a clinic that offers reproductive health care, lactation education and support groups that center tribal traditions. The team plans to eventually launch a birthing facility.

Whitehawk tied the high infant mortality rates to structural racism and a lack of investment in tribal communities.

"Two hundred years of systemic racism and systemic violence against women and children — don't we think that might have an impact on why [our] infants are dying all across the nation?"

## **Strained relationships**

Janelle Palacios is an attending nurse-midwife and an associate professor at Montana State University who studies parenthood in tribal communities. As a mother herself, she saw firsthand how incomplete data collection can skew public health statistics.

Palacios is an enrolled member of the Salish and Kootenai tribes, but when her last two children were born in California, she had to insist that "Native American" be added to their birth certificates, as their race had only been recorded as Hispanic.

Palacios said medical examiners should lead SUIDs investigations, because the relationships between tribal communities and local law enforcement agencies often are strained. As a result, many Native families are reluctant to share information with police, she said.

"Tribal communities have a long memory," Palacios said, referring to the history of the U.S. government removing Native children from homes and placing them in boarding schools, often with deadly outcomes, along with Native children's current disproportionate representation in foster care.

"We have this tension over land and resources, tension over people, tension over the children," Palacios



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said.

Dr. Reade Quinton, a Minnesota medical examiner and vice president of the National Association of Medical Examiners, likewise said that “many of these communities are distrustful of law enforcement, and understandably so.”

Quinton said Native parents might wonder, when investigators ask routine questions about a cause of death, “Are you really trying to answer that question, or are you trying to blame me for something?”

## Cultural competence

In Wyoming’s Fremont County, coroner Erin Ivie has handled death investigations at the neighboring Wind River Reservation for two decades. Ivie said her staff members, who are not Indigenous, have taken training courses for cultural sensitivity. Her office also returns to a family months later and asks how they felt about the interactions to make sure the questioning is done in an “appropriate manner.”

She added that her office works in tandem with law enforcement agencies on investigations.

“We treat every case as a homicide until we can rule it otherwise,” Ivie said. “We’re not leaving any question or stone unturned, and consulting with both our forensic pathologist and the child’s primary care provider.”

That approach, of treating each case as a homicide from the start, can affect how the investigation is conducted, said Jackson, the University of Washington assistant professor.

“We never want to miss a homicide,” she said. But a more holistic approach, with social workers and trained medical examiner staff, can “better connect with families during that very delicate time, because as we know, most of these aren’t homicides.”

Jackson said her job of studying unexpected deaths is ultimately “to serve the living.”

A “life is lost, but hopefully, collectively, we can study and learn some things, feed public health systems” to improve lives, she said.

At Ttáwaxt, breaking down barriers to help parents and babies is a core mission. In interviews with new mothers and families, Whitehawk’s team found that families were less likely to lose their babies if there are elders living in the household. Infant health, she said, is a marker of the health of a community.

“The advocacy, the education, the quality care, the caring around mothers and children, it changes the narrative of the whole entire community,” Whitehawk said. “We center building community around birth ... the birth of a child or bringing new life into the world.”

*Nada Hassanein is a health care reporter for Stateline with a focus on inequities.*

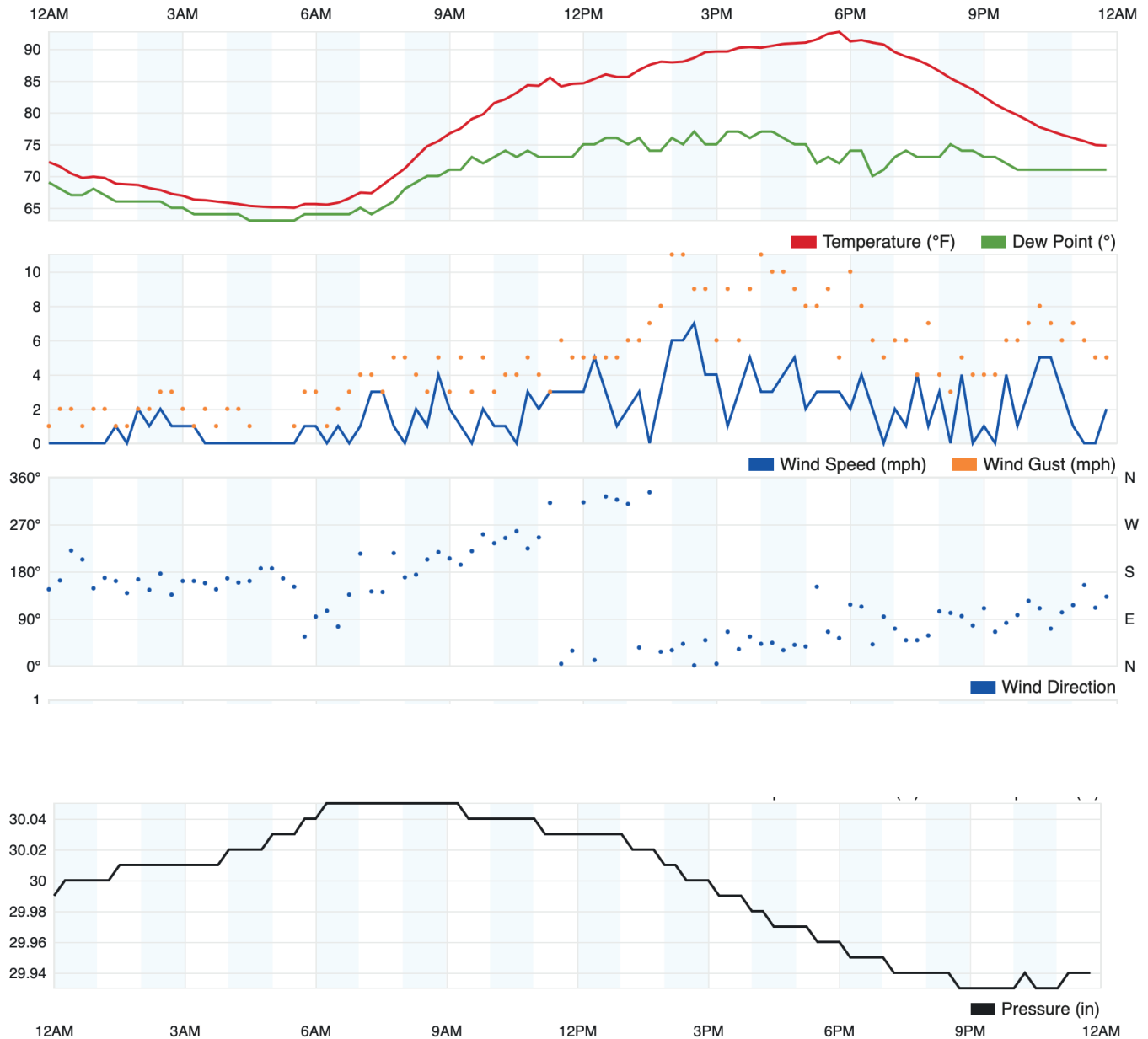


**Wall calendars are hot off the press! Now available at MJ’s Sinclair, Groton Dairy Queen, Lori’s Pharmacy, Groton Legion, and the laundromat. Other locations coming soon. Also available at [397news.com](http://397news.com) and click on activities calendar on the black bar.**

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs




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Heat Advisory

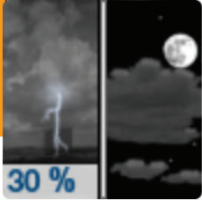
Today



High: 95 °F

Sunny then  
Slight Chance  
T-storms


Tonight



Low: 64 °F

Chance  
T-storms then  
Partly Cloudy

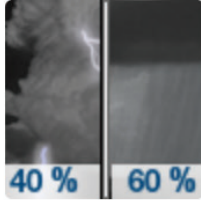
Sunday



High: 82 °F

Slight Chance  
T-storms

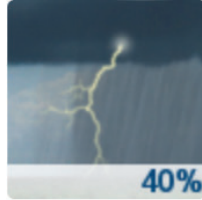
Sunday Night



Low: 61 °F

Chance  
T-storms then  
Showers

Monday



High: 71 °F

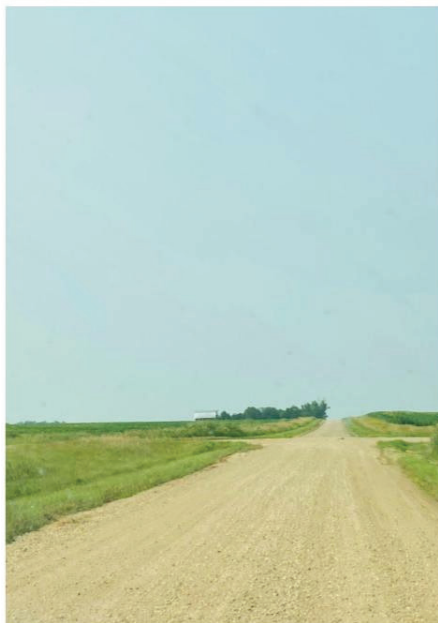
Chance  
T-storms



## July 2024 Climate Summary

August 2, 2024  
3:31 PM

Near Normal Temperatures and Above Normal Rainfall



	Aberdeen (since 1893)	Pierre (since 1933)	Mobridge (since 1911)	Watertown (since 1898)
<b>Average Temp</b>	74°	74.6°	75.3°	71.6°
<b>Departure</b>	+1.7°	-0.3°	+0.8°	+0.6°
<b>Warmest</b>	96° (7/26)	104° (7/26)	98° (7/25 & 7/26)	92° (7/26)
<b>Coldest</b>	54° (7/7 & 7/18)	56° (7/11 & 7/22)	57° (7/17 & 7/18)	52° (7/7 & 7/18)
<b>Rainfall</b>	3.78"	3.48"	2.19"	3.17"
<b>Departure</b>	+0.69"	+1.09"	-0.14"	+0.12"
<b>Greatest Daily Rainfall</b>	1.26" (7/31)	0.96" (7/29)	0.40" (7/3 & 7/4)	1.61" (7/4)



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Near normal temperatures occurred across central and northeastern SD, except for Aberdeen, which saw temperatures around a degree and a half warmer than normal. There was above normal rainfall for these areas as well, except for Mobridge, which saw slightly less than normal rain.

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## Severe Weather Threat Overview

August 3, 2024

4:27 AM

This Afternoon and Evening

### Timing/Location

Storms developing this afternoon, mainly after 4:00 PM. Best chance for strong to severe storms will be along and east of the James River Valley.

### Tornado



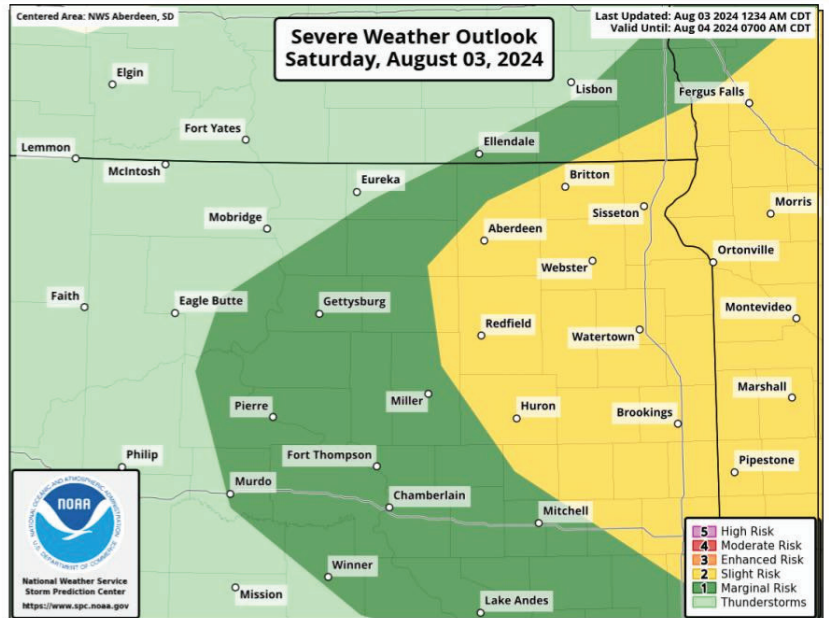
### Hail



### Wind



### Flooding



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

There is a slight risk (2 of 5) for severe weather late this afternoon into the evening. Any storm that develops have a chance for damaging winds and large hail.



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## Heat Index Forecast (°F)

8/3

Sat

	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm
<b>Aberdeen</b>	85	89	94	97	100	100	100	100	96	92	87	79	75	74
<b>Britton</b>	84	88	91	94	96	97	96	95	90	88	83	75	72	70
<b>Brookings</b>	82	85	88	91	96	98	98	99	98	95	89	85	77	74
<b>Chamberlain</b>	86	90	96	101	103	105	105	104	103	103	98	91	86	82
<b>Clark</b>	83	86	91	93	95	96	96	96	95	91	87	79	76	74
<b>Eagle Butte</b>	86	89	93	96	97	98	97	97	95	92	90	85	82	77
<b>Ellendale</b>	85	89	94	96	97	99	97	94	92	87	83	76	72	70
<b>Eureka</b>	84	88	93	95	97	98	95	94	90	86	83	77	73	71
<b>Gettysburg</b>	84	88	93	96	98	99	97	97	94	90	87	82	75	73
<b>Huron</b>	83	88	91	95	99	100	102	101	100	96	91	85	79	77
<b>Kennebec</b>	85	89	93	97	100	101	101	100	99	97	92	87	85	83
<b>McIntosh</b>	83	87	90	94	94	94	93	93	90	88	85	79	75	73
<b>Milbank</b>	83	89	95	97	99	101	100	98	97	95	87	78	74	73
<b>Miller</b>	85	90	93	97	99	101	101	101	98	96	91	86	79	76
<b>Mobridge</b>	85	90	94	96	99	99	97	95	94	92	89	83	78	76
<b>Murdo</b>	84	89	94	97	99	100	99	98	97	95	92	87	84	82
<b>Pierre</b>	86	90	96	100	103	104	103	103	100	98	94	89	86	84
<b>Redfield</b>	85	89	93	97	99	101	101	100	99	96	91	84	77	75
<b>Sisseton</b>	85	89	94	97	98	99	98	96	92	88	83	76	73	71
<b>Watertown</b>	84	88	92	94	96	96	97	97	94	91	85	79	76	74
<b>Webster</b>	83	87	90	92	94	95	95	94	92	88	84	77	72	71
<b>Wheaton</b>	78	85	90	94	96	97	97	96	93	88	84	76	73	71



Heat Index Forecast (°F)  
Created: 3 am CDT Sat 8/3/2024 |

### What to Know:

• Warmer temperatures today • “Feels like” temperature will be over 100 • Humidity will be high across the whole region

### What to Do:

• Plans for outdoor activities should include extra water and frequent breaks



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 93 °F at 5:40 PM**

**Low Temp: 65 °F at 4:57 AM**

**Wind: 11 mph at 2:00 PM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 14 hours, 40 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 107 in 1947

Record Low: 39 in 1971

Average High: 85

Average Low: 59

Average Precip in Aug.: .22

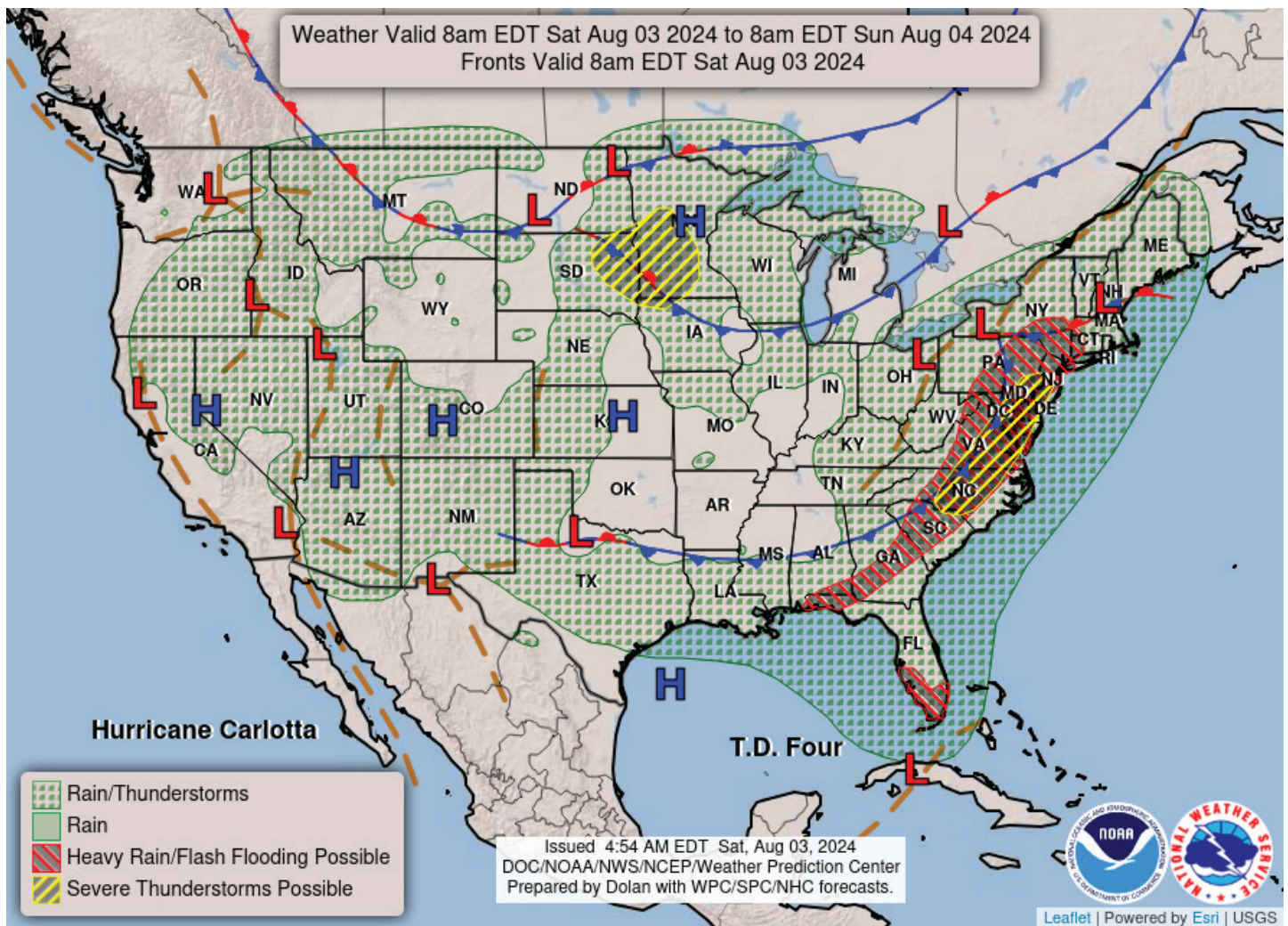
Precip to date in Aug.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 14.32

Precip Year to Date: 14.89

Sunset Tonight: 8:58:51 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:19:24 am



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## Today in Weather History

August 3, 1984: During the morning hours, estimated four to six inches of rain fell from west of Garden City in Clark County to north of Henry in Codington County. Low lying areas were flooded, and a potato field west of Garden City was washed out.

August 3, 1989: Strong thunderstorm winds gusted to 70 mph, driving golf ball size hail through most the windows on the west side of buildings in Amherst, Marshall County. Corn crops were stripped off their leaves with an estimated 1800 acres being severely damaged.

August 3, 1996: High winds up to 90 mph uprooted and damaged many trees in Mobridge. The roofs of two buildings were blown off while other roofs received some damage. Windows were broken out in eight vehicles at the South Dakota Winds up to 90 mph also caused damage in Herreid where doors on a concrete elevator were blown out.

August 3, 2008: Severe thunderstorms moved across north-central South Dakota during the early morning hours bringing large hail and damaging thunderstorm winds to the area. Isabel, Timber Lake, and Selby were among the hardest hit locations. Isabel in Dewey County saw eighty mph winds which damaged or downed several trees, damaged carnival equipment, destroyed some sheds, and rolled some large hay bales. High winds up to 80 mph severely damaged a barn, downed some power poles along with many trees and branches in and around Timber Lake. Also, several vehicles and many acres of crops were damaged by the hail and high winds. The Little Moreau Elk Lodge roof was destroyed, and some windows were broken. One-hundred mph winds downed six power poles and caused considerable damage to sunflowers, corn, wheat, and beans in and around Selby in Walworth County. Also, an empty grain bin was blown over and damaged. Numerous trees were snapped off. The coop seed building in Selby sustained considerable damage with many trees uprooted or damaged throughout town.

August 3, 2009: A cold front moving southeast across the area brought many severe thunderstorms to parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Large hail up to golf ball size along with wind gusts nearing 80 mph occurred across the area. Brown, Hyde, Lyman, and Gregory Counties were among the hardest hit locations. Hail and sixty mph winds significantly damaged many acres of soybeans and corn near Putney in Brown County. Seventy to 80 mph winds brought down several large trees along with many large tree branches in and around Highmore in Hyde County. The high winds also tipped over a semi, a gravity wagon, and a grain auger along with damaging several fences. There were also power outages in Highmore. Golf ball size hail combined with strong winds broke many windows in the house and dented several vehicles south of Kennebec in Lyman County. The house pet was also injured. Large hail, up to two inches in diameter, fell in a swath a few miles wide from northwestern to south-central Gregory County. The hail broke numerous windows, severely damaged siding and roofs of homes and other buildings, and severely damaged vehicles, while covering the ground in several places. Property damage has been particularly severe in the town of Gregory. Crop damage was also severe along the swath, with corn crops in some areas destroyed to the point of only small stubble left.

1885 - A tornado hit Philadelphia and Camden along its eight mile path. (David Ludlum)

1970: Hurricane Celia was the costliest tropical cyclone in Texas history until Hurricane Alicia in 1983. Hurricane Celia made landfall near Port Aransas as a major Hurricane, Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson scale with sustained winds of 130 mph.

1987 - A severe thunderstorm moved across Cheyenne, WY, during the mid afternoon. The thunderstorm produced hailstones up to two inches in diameter causing more than 37 million dollars damage. The eastern U.S. sweltered in the heat. A dozen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Paducah KY with a reading of 102 degrees. Beckley WV established an all-time record with an afternoon high of 93 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a slow moving cold front produced severe weather from the Central High Plains to the Upper Great Lakes Region. Thunderstorms around Fort Collins, CO, produced wind gusts to 74 mph along with marble size hail. Sixteen persons were injured in the storm, most of whom were accidentally locked out of their office building, having evacuated it when the fire alarm went off, apparently triggered by lightning. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



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## DECREASE TO INCREASE

A nearby church called a new pastor. He was well received and in a short time the church began to grow. The attendance at Sunday school and worship services increased beyond expectations. Even the number of people at prayer meeting surprised everyone.

"Congratulations on the way your church is responding to you," I said after being introduced to him. "What are you doing differently than most other churches to see such growth?"

"I'm decreasing," was his strange reply.

"Decreasing?" I asked with a question mark on my face.

"Yes," came his quick reply. "It's what John said about Jesus: 'He will increase if I will decrease.'"

John's willingness to decrease is an important first step in humility. Those of us who want to serve God with the gifts He has given us are always tempted to do what John did in reverse order: we want the attention and focus to be upon us and what we are doing when blessings occur and success arrives.

We must never forget that it is always about Him. If we want to see Him at work in our lives, we must do as John did so successfully: point to Him and make Him the "main attraction." We must never put ourselves first. We must stand aside and let His Kingdom grow!

Prayer: Lord, it's difficult to get out of the way and not want to be praised in what we do for You. We pray for hearts that are humble and lives that are surrendered to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less. John 3:30

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



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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
08.02.24

6 7 24 44 54 13

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$374,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.31.24

15 27 28 49 51 1

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$6,340,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 23 Mins 51  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
08.02.24

11 13 16 27 33 16

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 38 Mins 50  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.31.24

9 18 25 31 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$54,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 38 Mins 50  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.31.24

10 24 41 48 61 9

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 17 Hrs 7 Mins 51  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.31.24

23 34 37 50 58 7

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$171,000,000**

NEXT 17 Hrs 7 Mins 51  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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## Upcoming Groton Events

07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center  
07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm  
07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm  
07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day  
07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm  
07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start  
07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm  
08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center  
**CANCELLED:** 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 **AP** Associated Press

### **Two women drowned while floating on a South Dakota lake as a storm blew in**

DE SMET, S.D. (AP) — Two women floating on a South Dakota lake drowned after the wind suddenly picked up and waves became treacherous, authorities said.

The women, both from outside of South Dakota and both in their 60s, were in the water on flotation devices at Lake Henry Wednesday night, the Kingsbury County Sheriff's Office said. A storm hit and authorities believe they were overcome by waves.

Both victims were found on the shore. Their names have not been released.

### **Israeli airstrike in northern West Bank kills 5, who army says were planning an attack**

By AREF TUFAHA and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

ZEITA, West Bank (AP) — An Israeli airstrike on a vehicle in the occupied West Bank killed five Palestinians, according to Israel's army and Palestinian health authorities, as violence flares in the Israeli-occupied territory.

The Israeli army said its forces struck a vehicle carrying five militants in a rural area northwest of the city of Tulkarem in the northern West Bank early Saturday morning, as the occupants were on their way to carry out an attack. The Health Ministry later confirmed that five men were killed in the strike and were taken to nearby Tulkarem hospital.

According to an Associated Press journalist and witnesses, the blast took place along a road connecting the Palestinian villages of Zeita and Qaffin.

"I was going to work in the morning and I heard an explosion here next to the house," said Taiser Abdullah, a Zeita resident.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said four of the bodies were "burned and charred beyond recognition" from the blast.

Over 590 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war erupted in Gaza in October, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry, which tracks the deaths. Most have been killed during Israeli raids and violent protests, but the dead also include bystanders and Palestinians killed in attacks by Jewish settlers.

The northern West Bank has seen some of the territory's worst violence over the past 10 months. Tulkarem, and its two refugee camps, has become one of the territory's main flashpoints, and is regularly raided by Israeli forces. Palestinian militant groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, are active in the city.

The strike came just days after the consecutive assassinations of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran early Wednesday, and top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr in Beirut the evening before, escalations that threaten to plunge the region into a full-fledged regional war. Iran and its proxies, including Hezbollah, vowed to retaliate. Major airlines canceled flights to Tel Aviv, Israel, and Beirut, Lebanon.

While Israel has said it is responsible for the killing of Shukr, it has not confirmed or denied a role in the targeted killing of Haniyeh.

The Pentagon announced late Friday that the U.S. military will move a fighter jet squadron to the Middle East and maintain an aircraft carrier in the region. The previous day, President Joe Biden said he had urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to seize the chance for a cease-fire with Hamas, adding that Haniyeh's killing in Iran had "not helped" efforts to negotiate an end to the war.

At least 39,480 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza in the nearly 10 months since Hamas' brutal Oct. 7 attack on Israel triggered the latest Israel-Hamas war. The Palestinian health authorities that provide the casualty tolls do not differentiate between civilians and combatants.



## US and Russia tout prisoner swap as a victory. But perceptions of the deal show stark differences

By JOANNA KOZLOWSKA Associated Press

President Vladimir Putin strode along the red carpet between two rows of rifle-toting honor guards and warmly greeted intelligence operatives freed in the biggest prisoner swap with the West since the Cold War.

"The Motherland hasn't forgotten about you for a minute," Putin said, embracing each of them after they walked down the steps of the jetliner that ferried them home.

Putin, who rarely — if ever — travels to the airport to greet foreign heads of state these days, was delivering a clear, morale-boosting message to his security services: If you get caught, Russia will bring you home.

For the Kremlin, Vadim Krasikov, the hitman imprisoned in Germany for killing a former Chechen militant in Berlin, was perhaps the most important component in the exchange that saw eight Russians swapped for 16 Westerners and Russian dissidents who had been imprisoned in recent years.

Moscow freed American journalists Evan Gershkovich and Alsu Kurmasheva, former U.S. Marine Paul Whelan and a group of top dissidents.

Washington extolled it as a major diplomatic victory. But so did Moscow.

"Putin is sending a signal that those working abroad will have maximum protection, and that if they are arrested, the state will fight for their return and roll out the red carpet for them," said Tatyana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center.

She noted that Russian and Western perceptions of the deal were starkly different.

"In the West, it's being viewed from a humanitarian and political perspective, closely followed by media, significant for society," Stanovaya told The Associated Press. "In Russia, it's not an issue for society, it's an issue for the state."

The average Russian probably "doesn't even know the names of those who returned," she added. "But for Putin, those who returned to Russia are real heroes, patriots who worked for the state and defended the national interest."

Krasikov was convicted in the Aug. 23, 2019, killing of Zelimkhan "Tornike" Khangoshvili, a 40-year-old Georgian citizen who had fought Russian troops in Chechnya and later claimed asylum in Germany.

At his sentencing to life in prison in 2021, German judges said Krasikov had acted on the orders of Russian authorities, who gave him the resources to carry out the killing.

In 2019, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied any Russian involvement in the killing. But on Friday, he said Krasikov is an officer of the Federal Security Service and once served in the FSB's special forces Alpha unit, along with some of Putin's bodyguards.

By including Krasikov in the deal, "Putin has shown how important it is to him to secure the return of imprisoned Russian spies," said Nigel Gould-Davies, senior fellow for Russia and Eurasia at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

He noted the Russian leader's "determination to get Krasikov back was key to this exchange."

Russia released twice as many people as the West in what Gould-Davies described as a "striking departure from the strict parity (or better) that Russia always insisted on in previous swaps."

When it suits him, Putin has occasionally accepted unequal exchanges.

In September 2022, Ukraine agreed to free jailed opposition leader Viktor Medvedchuk, whom Putin had personally known, and dozens of other people in exchange for over 200 Ukrainians and foreigners in Russian captivity.

Gould-Davies said Putin, a KGB veteran, could have been driven by a strong personal loyalty to the undercover agents in Thursday's swap.

"Putin now places such a high value on his spies that he is prepared to agree to an unfavorable exchange," he said.

Abbas Gallyamov, a political analyst and former Putin speechwriter, described the swap as a way to ensure the loyalty of Russian operatives abroad and make them realize that he "will make every effort to

pull them out of prison.”

“Putin showed to all his spies, killers and other people who he uses abroad that he’s like their father,” Gallyamov said. “It’s important because it ensures their loyalty.”

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of the Putin-chaired Security Council, declared on his messaging app channel that while “it would be desirable to see the traitors of Russia rot behind bars ... it’s more useful to get our guys out.”

The anti-Western hawk added ominously that “the traitors should now frantically be choosing new names and hiding under witness protection programs.”

Among those released by Russia were Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer serving 25 years on a treason conviction widely seen as politically motivated; opposition activist Ilya Yashin, imprisoned for his criticism of the war in Ukraine; associates of the late opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and Oleg Orlov, a veteran human rights campaigner.

While some have voiced hope the freed activists could reinvigorate Russia’s beleaguered and fragmented opposition that has lacked a charismatic leader since Navalny’s death, others point to steep challenges they will face.

Stanovaya said it would be hard for them to make their voices heard in Russia, where most people lack access to independent media and liberal views are shared by a relatively narrow segment of the public.

She predicted the Kremlin will portray them as serving Western interests, especially Kara-Murza, a dual Russian-British citizen who was a vocal supporter of sanctions against Moscow.

Gallyamov also said the Kremlin doesn’t view the freed activists as a major threat.

“Released opposition figures won’t cause any additional issues” for the Kremlin, he said, adding that the messages that Yashin and others sent from prison evoked more sympathy and interest. “The Kremlin wins from this deal.”

## Marseille and the sea: A portrait of the millennia-old port city that is hosting Olympic sailing

By GIOVANNA DELL’ORTO Associated Press

MARSEILLE, France (AP) — Her black headscarf flying up, a teen jumped into the sparkling Mediterranean from a concrete pier at a city marina, then scrambled back to shore and onto a giant paddle board for a quick tour with a dozen excited comrades.

They were bused in for a swimming camp from a social services center in the mostly Muslim, North African-origin neighborhoods that ring Marseille, which is hosting the 2024 Olympicsailing competition at the opposite end of its spectacular, monument-fringed bay.

The millennia-old port is a crossroads of cultures and faiths, where the sea is ever present but not equally accessible, and the beauty and cosmopolitan flair rub shoulders with enclaves of poverty and exclusion even more intimately than in the rest of France.

“There are kids who see the sea from home, but have never come,” said Mathias Sintès, a supervisor at the Corbière marina for the Grand Bleu Association, which has held camps for about 3,000 marginalized children — 50% of whom, he estimates, didn’t know how to swim. “The first goal is to teach them to save themselves.”

### SINK OR SWIM

Brahim Timricht, who grew up in the northern neighborhoods known as the “quartiers nord,” founded the association more than two decades ago to bring children to enjoy the sea that shimmers below their often-dilapidated high-rises on the rocky cliffs.

Then he realized that many weren’t learning basic swimming in school — a requirement for elementary students in France — and figured he could take advantage of the warm summer months to introduce them to that skill.

“Then the mothers told me they still wouldn’t go to the beach, because they didn’t know how to swim and were afraid, so we started programs with them,” Timricht said as dozens of children happily splashed

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under the hot July sun a few days before the opening of the Olympic sailing competition.

The lack of pools for school programs is a sign of “social and economic segregation,” said Jean Cugier, who teaches physical education in a high school in the quartiers nord and belongs to the national union of PE teachers.

Over the past academic year, he’s been taking 30 sixth-graders 45 minutes by bus to a pool where two lanes were reserved for them — an unsustainable model, he said, that he’s hoping to modify with pool-based summer camps.

While the city has discussed using the Olympic marina after the Games — as Paris plans to do with an Olympic pool — the sea is too chilly to swim in during most of the school year. So the only concrete answer to the pool shortage is building more infrastructure, Cugier believes.

Another issue complicating swimming education, according to the Ministry of Education, has been the medical certificates that parents bring to excuse children from class. Officials say these are often fake and driven by the desire of some conservative Muslim families not to have boys and girls together at a pool.

Pools have become a flashpoint in France’s struggle over its unique approach to “laïcité” — loosely translated as “secularism” and strictly regulating the role of religion in the public space, including schools and even the Olympics.

But sports are also a way out of the margins. One of France’s soccer greats, Zinedine Zidane, who carried the Olympic torch in the Paris opening ceremony, was born in the most notorious of Marseille’s quartiers nord. And soccer remains the unifying passion of Marseille’s residents, who routinely flock to cheer home team Olympique de Marseille at the Vélodrome stadium — one of the venues for Olympic soccer matches.

For the boys and girls at the Corbière marina, the overall seaside experience has been a chance to meet new people from outside their neighborhood.

“They don’t want to leave,” said one of the group leaders, Sephora Saïd, on the camp’s last day. She had worn a hijab during the outing, including while paddle-boarding.

## SEA, SEA EVERYWHERE

The sea as an entry and a meeting point is engrained in the very DNA of Marseille. Founded by Greek colonists 2,600 years ago as a trading post, it is France’s oldest city, and its second largest.

“Before it’s a city, Marseille is a port,” said Fabrice Denise, director of the Museum of Marseille History, built next to the Greek archeological site in what is still the city’s center. “If you want to understand all that’s extraordinary about it, including the realities of cosmopolitanism, you need to understand its multi-century history as a port.”

Today’s port, the Mediterranean’s third largest in cargo tonnage, includes everything from refineries to a busy cruise ship area and extends along nearly 40 kilometers (25 miles). But it all started in a small inlet that is today’s top tourist attraction, the Vieux Port.

Large boats built of wood and caulked with cotton and fiber carried transforming cargos like grapevines, Denise said. The trade expanded north along the Rhone River in what is now one of France’s most celebrated wine-producing regions.

At the end of the harbor, a small boatyard still restores a handful of boats built in the old way. They were used for fishing until a few decades ago but now are too expensive to maintain for utilitarian purposes.

Not far away are the forts that King Louis XIV added in the 17th century to protect the port and the military arsenal he established. The small city became a metropolis.

Religious diversity arrived by sea too — Christians in reality and in myth, one of the most popular ones being that Mary Magdalen herself sailed to Marseille, which is commemorated with a large boat procession each year.

Centuries later, and increasingly since decolonization, Muslims from North Africa flocked to Marseille’s shores. Of the city’s 870,000 residents, some 300,000 trace their roots to Algeria alone.

In the narrow streets uphill from the Vieux Port, Arabic rings from market stalls, cafés and couscous restaurants — the second-most spoken language in the city. Marseille’s French itself is unique, incorporating not only a distinctive accent but words from the countryside’s Provençal language, said Médéric Gasquet-

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Cyrus, a linguist and professor at the University of Aix-Marseille. He is co-author of the French-language book "Marseille for Dummies."

On its cover, as on the background of most photos including those of the Olympic regattas, stands the hilltop black-and-white-striped 19th century basilica of Notre Dame de la Garde, topped by a nearly 10-meter (33-foot) gold-covered statue of the Virgin Mary looking out to sea. It's known as "la Bonne Mère" — the good mother.

"The Bonne Mère, it's almost a pagan symbol," quipped Gasquet-Cyrus, who says he is an atheist but still goes to visit. "She's the protector of the city."

The church welcomes around 2.5 million visitors a year, many for its daily Masses and more on its wide terrace. Its 360-degree views encompass the new and old ports, the villa-studded neighborhoods where the Olympic marina is nestled as well as the blocky towers of the quartiers nord.

"You can see Marseille, and the sea, and the horizon, all under her benevolent gaze," said the basilica's rector, the Rev. Olivier Spinosa. "It's easier to see beauty from up high, and it invites us to work on beautiful things when we're down below."

## AP review of Venezuela opposition-provided vote tallies casts doubt on government's election results

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, JOSHUA GOODMAN and ANGELIKI KASTANIS Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — An AP analysis of vote tally sheets released Friday by Venezuela's main opposition indicates that their candidate won significantly more votes in Sunday's election than the government has claimed, casting serious doubt on the official declaration that President Nicolás Maduro won.

The AP processed almost 24,000 images of tally sheets, representing the results from 79% of voting machines. Each sheet encoded vote counts in QR codes, which the AP programmatically decoded and analyzed, resulting in tabulations of 10.26 million votes.

According to the calculations, the opposition's Edmundo González received 6.89 million votes, nearly half a million more than the government says Maduro won with. The tabulations also show Maduro received 3.13 million votes from the tally sheets released.

By comparison, updated results from the governmental National Electoral Council made public Friday said that based on 96.87% of tally sheets, Maduro had 6.4 million votes and Gonzalez 5.3 million. National Electoral Council President Elvis Amoroso attributed the delay in updating results to "massive attacks" on the "technological infrastructure."

The AP could not independently verify the authenticity of the 24,532 tally sheets provided by the opposition. The AP successfully extracted data from 96% of the provided vote tallies, with the remaining 4% of images too poor to parse.

González and opposition leader María Corina Machado said Monday that they had secured the tally sheets from polling centers nationwide and that they showed Maduro lost his bid for a third six-year term by a landslide.

The opposition first offered voters the opportunity to look up scanned copies of the tally sheets online. But following criticism and threats from Maduro and his inner circle, the campaign on Friday released its scans.

The tally sheets, known in Spanish as "actas," are lengthy printouts that resemble shopping receipts. They have long been considered the ultimate proof of election results in Venezuela.

Earlier Friday, a half dozen masked assailants ransacked the opposition's headquarters in an escalation of violence after several countries called for proof of Maduro's claim of victory.

Assailants broke down doors and hauled away valuable documents and equipment in the raid around 3 a.m., Machado and González's party said. Several walls were covered in black spray paint.

The raid follows threats by top officials, including Maduro, to arrest Machado, who has gone into hiding while still urging Venezuelans and the international community to challenge Sunday's election results.



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The Biden administration has thrown its support firmly behind the opposition, recognizing González as the victor and discrediting the National Electoral Council's official results. González was tapped in April as a last-minute stand-in for Machado, who was barred from running for political office.

The U.S. announcement late Thursday followed calls from multiple governments, including Maduro's close regional allies, for Venezuela's electoral authorities to release precinct-level vote counts, as it has during previous elections.

"Given the overwhelming evidence, it is clear to the United States and, most importantly, to the Venezuelan people that Edmundo González Urrutia won the most votes in Venezuela's July 28 presidential election," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

González, whose location is also unknown, posted a message on X thanking the U.S. "for recognizing the will of the Venezuelan people reflected in our electoral victory and for supporting the process of restoring democratic norms in Venezuela."

Maduro said during a news conference Friday that the U.S. should stay out of Venezuela's politics.

Maduro also alleged that members of the opposition "plan to carry out an attack" in a Caracas neighborhood near where Machado called on supporters to gather with their families Saturday. He played audio and showed an image of a purported WhatsApp chat that he said was proof of the planned attack.

He said he has ordered the armed forces to guard the neighborhood. That order could limit the ability of opposition supporters to gather, but it would not affect the planned demonstration of ruling party supporters elsewhere in the city.

There has been a flurry of diplomatic efforts by Brazil, Colombia and Mexico to convince Maduro to allow an impartial audit of the vote. On Thursday, the governments of the three countries issued a joint statement calling on Venezuela's electoral authorities "to move forward expeditiously and publicly release" detailed voting data.

On Friday, Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of the lower house of the Russian parliament, said Russian election monitors witnessed Maduro's legitimate victory and accused the U.S. of stirring tensions in the country.

Venezuela sits atop the world's largest proven crude reserves and once boasted Latin America's most advanced economy, but it entered into a free fall marked by 130,000% hyperinflation and widespread shortages after Maduro took the helm in 2013. More than 7.7 million Venezuelans have fled the country since 2014, the largest exodus in Latin America's recent history.

U.S. oil sanctions have only deepened the misery, and the Biden administration — which had been easing those restrictions — is now likely to ramp them up again unless Maduro agrees to some sort of transition.

"He's counting on being able to wait this out and people will get tired of demonstrating," said Cynthia Arnson, a distinguished fellow at the Wilson Center, a Washington think tank. "The problem is, the country is in a death spiral and there's no chance the economy will be able to recover without the legitimacy that comes from a fair election."

Thousands of opposition supporters took to the streets Monday after the National Electoral Council declared Maduro the winner, and the government said it arrested hundreds of protesters.

On Wednesday, Maduro asked Venezuela's highest court to conduct an audit of the election, but that request drew almost immediate criticism from foreign observers who said the court — which like most institutions is controlled by the government — lacks the independence to perform a credible review.

On Friday afternoon, González was notably absent — an empty chair beside Maduro — when the court convened the nine presidential candidates.

Supreme Tribunal President Carylslia Rodríguez called on the candidates and their parties to provide all required documents as the court seeks to audit the results.

Maduro took the opportunity to call González "the candidate of fascism" and promised to hand over all the voting tallies.

Later, Maduro and his campaign manager, National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez, attempted to discredit the tally sheets posted online by the opposition, arguing that they were missing signatures from the electoral council representative as well as poll workers and party representatives.

They didn't acknowledge that soldiers, civilian militia, police and loyalists of the ruling United Socialist

Party of Venezuela, on Sunday blocked some opposition representatives from entering the polls, witnessing the vote, and signing and obtaining copies of tally sheets.

## Parties in lawsuits seeking damages for Maui fires reach \$4B global settlement, court filings say

By AUDREY McAVOY and JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — The parties in lawsuits seeking damages for last year's Maui wildfires have reached a \$4 billion global settlement, a court filing said Friday, nearly one year after the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century.

The term sheet with details of the settlement is not publicly available, but the liaison attorneys filed a motion saying the global settlement seeks to resolve all Maui fire claims for \$4.037 billion. The motion asks the judge to order that insurers can't separately go after the defendants to recoup money paid to policyholders.

The settlement was reached amid fears that Hawaiian Electric, the power company that some blame for sparking the blaze, could be on the brink of bankruptcy. The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is investigating the Aug. 8, 2023 fires that killed 102 people and destroyed the historic downtown area of Lahaina.

Gilbert Keith-Agaran, a Maui attorney who represents victims, including families who lost relatives, said the amount was "woefully short." But he said it was a deal plaintiffs needed to consider given Hawaiian Electric's limited assets and potential bankruptcy.

The agreement was the first step toward getting fire victims compensation, said Jake Lowenthal, a Maui attorney selected as one of four liaisons for the coordination of the cases. More work needs to be done on how to divvy up the amount.

"We're under no illusions that this is going to make Maui whole," Lowenthal told The Associated Press. "We know for a fact that it's not going to make up for what they lost."

Thomas Leonard, who lost his Front Street condo in the fire and spent hours in the ocean behind a seawall hiding from the flames, welcomed the news.

"It gives us something to work with," he said. "I'm going to need that money to rebuild."

Hawaiian Electric said the settlement will help reestablish the company's financial stability. Payments would begin after final approval and were expected no earlier than the middle of next year, it said.

"For the many affected parties to work with such commitment and focus to reach resolution in a uniquely complex case is a powerful demonstration of how Hawaii comes together in times of crisis," CEO Sheelee Kimura said in a statement.

The seven defendants will pay the \$4.037 billion to compensate those who already have brought claims, Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said. He called the proposed settlement an agreement in principle and said it would "help our people heal."

"My priority as governor was to expedite the agreement and to avoid protracted and painful lawsuits so as many resources as possible would go to those affected by the wildfires as quickly as possible," he said in a statement.

He said it was unprecedented to settle lawsuits like this in only one year.

"It will be good that our people don't have to wait to rebuild their lives as long as others have in many places that have suffered similar tragedies," Green said. On Wednesday, Green told the AP in an interview the settlement money would be important for Lahaina's recovery.

More than 600 lawsuits have been filed over the deaths and destruction caused by the fires, which burned thousands of homes and displaced 12,000 people. In the spring, a judge appointed mediators and ordered all parties to participate in settlement talks.

Defendant Maui County said the agreement represents a shared commitment between the parties to continue negotiating in good faith towards a larger, detailed resolution that would seek to equitably distribute the settlement money.

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The state's largest landowner, Kamehameha Schools, a charitable trust formerly known as the Bishop Estate, said it's agreed to contribute a portion of the settlement assuming a final binding agreement is reached.

Two other defendants, Hawaiian Telcom and West Maui Land Co., did not immediately respond to email messages or phone calls seeking comment.

Spectrum/Charter Communications declined to comment.

## **Trump and Vance return to Georgia days after a Harris event in the same arena**

By BILL BARROW and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Former President Donald Trump returns Saturday to Georgia, which he lost four years ago, to campaign in a state that both Democrats and Republicans see as up for grabs yet again.

Trump's 5 p.m. EDT event alongside his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, comes just days after Vice President Kamala Harris rallied thousands in the same basketball arena at Georgia State University in Atlanta.

Both parties are focusing on Georgia, a Sun Belt battleground that just two weeks ago, Democrats had signaled they would sideline in favor of a heavier focus on the Midwestern "blue wall" states. President Joe Biden's decision to end his campaign and endorse Harris fueled Democratic hopes of an expanded electoral map.

"The momentum in this race is shifting," Harris told a cheering, boisterous crowd on Tuesday. "And there are signs Donald Trump is feeling it."

Biden beat Trump in the state by 11,779 votes in 2020. Trump pressured Georgia's Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" enough votes to change the outcome. Trump was later indicted in Georgia for his efforts to overturn the election, but the case remains on hold while courts decide whether the Fulton County district attorney can continue to prosecute it.

In announcing Saturday's rally, the Trump campaign accused Harris of costing Georgians money due to inflation and higher gas prices, which have risen from pandemic-era lows at the end of the Trump administration. The campaign also noted the case of Laken Riley, a nursing student from the state who was killed while jogging in a park on Feb. 22. A Venezuelan citizen has been indicted on murder charges in her death.

Trump and his allies have repeatedly labeled Harris the current administration's "border czar," a reference to her assignment leading White House efforts on migration.

But in recent days, Trump has lobbed false attacks about Harris' race and suggested she misled voters about her identity. Harris has stated for years in public life that she is Black and Indian American.

At her rally in Atlanta, Harris called Trump and Vance "plain weird" — a lane of messaging seized on by many other Democrats of late — and taunted Trump for wavering on whether he'd show up for their upcoming debate, currently on the books for Sept. 10 on ABC.

Saying earlier that he would debate Harris, Trump has more recently questioned the value of a meetup, calling host network ABC News "fake news," saying he "probably" will debate Harris, but he "can also make a case for not doing it."

The fact that both Harris and Trump have been focusing resources on Georgia underscores the state's renewed significance to both parties come November. Going to Atlanta puts Trump in the state's largest media market, including suburbs and exurbs that were traditional Republican strongholds but have become more competitive as they've diversified and grown in population.

In a strategy memo released after Biden left the race, Harris campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon — who held the same role for Biden — reaffirmed the importance of winning the traditional Democratic blue wall trio of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania but also argued that Harris' place atop the ticket "opens up additional persuadable voters" and described them as "disproportionately Black, Latino and under 30" in places like Georgia.

Next week, along with her eventual running mate, Harris plans to visit that Midwestern trifecta, along with North Carolina, Arizona and Nevada. On Friday, she will make another stop in Georgia.

## **Defense secretary overrides plea agreement for accused 9/11 mastermind and two other defendants**

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Friday overrode a plea agreement reached earlier this week for the accused mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and two other defendants, reinstating them as death-penalty cases.

The move comes two days after the military commission at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, announced that the official appointed to oversee the war court, retired Brig. Gen. Susan Escallier, had approved plea deals with Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and two accused accomplices, Walid bin Attash and Mustafa al-Hawsawi, in the attacks.

Letters sent to families of the nearly 3,000 people killed in the al-Qaida attacks said the plea agreement stipulated the three would serve life sentences at most.

Austin wrote in an order released Friday night that "in light of the significance of the decision," he had decided that the authority to make a decision on accepting the plea agreements was his. He nullified Escallier's approval.

Some families of the attack's victims condemned the deal for cutting off any possibility of full trials and possible death penalties. Republicans were quick to fault the Biden administration for the deal, although the White House said after it was announced it had no knowledge of it.

Republican Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas, a member of the Armed Services Committee, earlier Friday had condemned the plea deal on social media as "disgraceful." Cotton said he had introduced legislation that would mandate the 9/11 defendants face trial and the possibility of the death penalty.

Mohammed, whom the U.S. describes as the main plotter of the attack that crashed hijacked passenger planes into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field, and the other two defendants had been expected to formally enter their pleas under the deal as soon as next week.

The U.S. military commission overseeing the cases of five defendants in the Sept. 11 attacks has been stuck in pre-trial hearings and other preliminary court action since 2008. The torture that the defendants underwent while in CIA custody has been among the challenges slowing the cases, and left the prospect of full trials and verdicts still uncertain, in part because of the inadmissibility of evidence linked to the torture.

J. Wells Dixon, a staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights who has represented defendants at Guantanamo as well as other detainees there who have been cleared of any wrongdoing, had welcomed the plea bargains as the only feasible way to resolve the long-stalled and legally fraught 9/11 cases.

Dixon accused Austin on Friday of "bowing to political pressure and pushing some victim family members over an emotional cliff" by rescinding the plea deals.

Lawyers for the two sides have been exploring a negotiated resolution to the case for about 1 1/2 years. President Joe Biden blocked an earlier proposed plea bargain in the case last year, when he refused to offer requested presidential guarantees that the men would be spared solitary confinement and provided trauma care for the torture they underwent while in CIA custody.

A fourth Sept. 11 defendant at Guantanamo had been still negotiating on a possible plea agreement.

The military commission last year ruled the fifth defendant mentally unfit to stand trial. A military medical panel cited post-traumatic stress disorder and psychosis, and linked it to torture and solitary confinement in four years in CIA custody before transfer to Guantanamo.

## **US to boost military presence in Mideast, sending fighter jet squadron and keeping carrier in region**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. will move a fighter jet squadron to the Middle East and maintain an aircraft carrier in the region, the Pentagon said Friday, beefing up the American military presence to help



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defend Israel from possible attacks by Iran and its proxies and safeguard U.S. troops.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has also ordered additional ballistic missile defense-capable cruisers and destroyers to the European and Middle East regions and is taking steps to send more land-based ballistic missile defense weapons there, the Pentagon said in a statement Friday evening.

The shifts make good on a promise President Joe Biden made to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In a call Thursday afternoon, Biden discussed new U.S. military deployments to protect against possible attacks from ballistic missiles and drones, according to the White House. In April, U.S. forces intercepted dozens of missiles and drones fired by Iran against Israel and helped down nearly all of them.

U.S. leaders worry about escalating violence in the Middle East in response to recent attacks by Israel on Hamas and Hezbollah leaders, which triggered threats of retaliation. Iran also has threatened to respond after Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in Tehran on Wednesday, a day after senior Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukur was killed in Beirut.

Israel has vowed to kill Hamas leaders over the group's Oct. 7 attack, which sparked the war in Gaza.

Austin is ordering the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group to the Middle East to replace the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group, which is in the Gulf of Oman but scheduled to come home later this summer. That decision suggests the Pentagon has decided to keep a carrier consistently in the region as a deterrent against Iran at least until next year.

The Pentagon did not say where the fighter jet squadron was coming from or where it would be based in the Middle East. A number of allies in the region are often willing to base U.S. military forces but don't want it made public.

The Pentagon has options to provide additional land-based ballistic missile defense, such as the Patriot or the terminal high altitude area defense, known as THAAD, both of which launch interceptor missiles from specialized trailer-based mobile launching systems. The Pentagon did not identify what system it would be deploying to augment defenses in the region.

The White House in a statement said Biden "reaffirmed his commitment to Israel's security against all threats from Iran, including its proxy terrorist groups Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis."

Earlier Friday, Sabrina Singh, Pentagon spokeswoman, told reporters that moves were in the works. She said Austin "will be directing multiple" force movements to provide additional support to Israel and increase protection for U.S. troops in the region.

Military and defense officials have been considering a wide array of options, from additional ships and fighter aircraft squadrons to added air defense systems or unmanned weapons. In many cases the U.S. does not provide details because host nations are very sensitive about the presence of additional U.S. forces and don't want those movements made public.

It's unclear what new ships would move to the Middle East.

The U.S. has had a consistent warship presence there and in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, including two Navy destroyers, the USS Roosevelt and the USS Bulkeley, as well as the USS Wasp and the USS New York. The Wasp and the New York are part of the amphibious ready group and carry a Marine expeditionary unit that could be used if any evacuation of U.S. personnel is required.

In addition, a U.S. official said that two U.S. Navy destroyers that are currently in the Middle East will be heading north up the Red Sea toward the Mediterranean Sea. At least one of those could linger in the Mediterranean if needed. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss troop movements.

## **Mourners bury Hamas chief Haniyeh in Qatar as more escalation looms over the Middle East**

By ISABEL DEBRE and JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Thousands of mourners converged around the flag-draped coffin of Hamas' slain political chief, Ismail Haniyeh, in the emirate of Qatar on Friday as the fallout surged from his death in an alleged Israeli attack.

The funeral ceremony in Doha, Qatar's capital, attended by members of Gaza's militant Hamas and

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Islamic Jihad groups as well as Qatari and Iranian officials, was subdued. But across the Muslim world — from Jordan and Morocco to Yemen and Somalia — angry crowds waving Palestinian flags rushed out of mosques after midday Friday prayers, chanting for revenge.

“Let Friday be a day of rage to denounce the assassination,” said Izzat al-Risheq, a senior Hamas official. Haniyeh had lived in Qatar, along with other senior members of Hamas’s political leadership.

Following the back-to-back assassinations of Haniyeh in Tehran early Wednesday and top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr in Beirut the evening before, international diplomats have scrambled to head off a full-fledged regional war. Iran and its proxies vowed to retaliate. Major airlines canceled flights to Tel Aviv, Israel, and Beirut, Lebanon.

Cyprus said Friday it was preparing for possible mass evacuations of foreign citizens via the island nation, in case of a wider war. France beefed up security for Jewish communities nationwide. Poland warned its citizens against traveling to the Mideast.

Pakistan and Turkey lowered their flags to half-staff, prompting Israel to summon Turkey’s deputy ambassador for a “stern reprimand.”

Turkey’s foreign ministry spokesperson, Oncu Keceli, shot back that Israel “cannot achieve peace by killing the negotiators” — a reference to Haniyeh’s role in cease-fire talks — while hundreds of Turks gathered at the historic Hagia Sophia to pay tribute to the slain Hamas leader as his funeral service got underway in Doha.

“We are sure that his blood will bring out victory, dignity and liberation,” senior Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya, seen as a possible successor to Haniyeh, said from the Doha mosque where Haniyeh’s coffin was displayed beside that of his bodyguard who was also killed in the attack in Tehran.

Israel has not confirmed or denied its role in the targeted killing of Haniyeh.

Hamas said Haniyeh was killed in a strike on a guesthouse in Tehran where he was staying after the swearing-in ceremony of the new Iranian president.

Khaled Kaddoumi, Hamas’ representative in Iran, was staying on a lower floor. Kaddoumi said he woke up shortly before 2 a.m. when his room was shaken and he saw a flash out the window.

At first, Kaddoumi said he thought it was thunder and lightning or an earthquake. By the time he got out of his room, smoke was everywhere and his colleagues told him Haniyeh was killed. Kaddoumi saw Haniyeh face down, on the floor. He spotted the body of Haniyeh’s bodyguard, holding a bloody Quran. No one else was injured, he said.

There was so much dust and smoke in the room, Kaddoumi had to wear a mask. The roof and the walls overlooking the exterior were destroyed, he said.

Kaddoumi said it looked like the room was hit by a missile. A photo that he said was of the building after the attack appeared to show less structural damage than would typically be seen from a large airstrike. The damage appeared more consistent with a smaller explosive, potentially delivered by a drone or planted at the site.

Kaddoumi said Haniyeh had stayed in the same guesthouse in May, when he attended the funeral of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, killed in a plane crash.

Haniyeh’s killing was another blow to the Hamas leadership.

On Thursday, Israel announced that it killed the shadowy leader of Hamas’ military wing, Mohammed Deif, in a July airstrike. Hamas had previously claimed Deif survived last month’s targeted airstrike in the besieged Gaza Strip, and did not comment on Israel’s more recent claim.

The deadly pattern of Israeli airstrikes and skirmishes continued in Gaza, where Palestinian Civil Defense rescuers said a barrage of airstrikes Friday in southern Gaza City killed five Palestinians, including three children. The Israeli military said it had destroyed rocket launchers used by Hamas hours earlier.

There were no services held for Haniyeh in the enclave, where the extent of loss has become so overwhelming that Palestinians are forced to inter their dead family members hurriedly and without last rites.

“We can’t memorialize any of our loved ones anymore, funerals are too risky for fear of being killed in bombing ourselves,” said Ahmed Qamar, 35, displaced in a shelter in northern Gaza.

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At least 39,480 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza in the nearly 10 months since Hamas' brutal Oct. 7 attack on Israel triggered the latest Israel-Hamas war. Palestinian health authorities providing the casualty tolls do not differentiate between civilians and combatants.

Tensions also ran high on Israel's northern border days after Israel claimed responsibility for killing Shukr, the Hezbollah commander. On Friday, Hezbollah claimed a series of rocket and artillery attacks on Israel, causing a fire but no casualties in an evacuated Israeli town. Israel claimed its warplanes struck two Hezbollah militants in southern Lebanon who it said had fired the volley of rockets.

The exchange was more of the same tit-for-tat that has flared along the Lebanese-Israeli border throughout the Israel-Hamas war. But Israelis and Lebanese braced for more after Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on Thursday declared that Shukr's killing had pushed the conflict into a "new phase."

Across the region, vows by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, that Israel would pay a price for killing Haniyeh on Iranian soil quickly led to calls for intense diplomacy to prevent further escalation.

Late Thursday, U.S. President Joe Biden said he had urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to seize the chance for a cease-fire, adding that Haniyeh's killing in Iran had "not helped" efforts to negotiate an end to the war.

Netanyahu has portrayed Israel's recent targeting of Hamas leaders as victories that bring Israel closer to a deal that would free the roughly 110 remaining Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

Tor Wennesland, the U.N. special coordinator for the Mideast peace process, said he was racing to work with Lebanon, Qatar, Egypt and other nations to "prevent a spillover of the conflict."

U.K. Defense Secretary John Healey and Foreign Secretary David Lammy visited Israel on Friday "to push for an immediate cease-fire," while Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said he spoke with his American counterpart, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

"The unprecedented security cooperation between Israel and the United States against Iran and its proxies is critical," Gallant said.

Though approvals are still pending, Austin is preparing to provide additional military support to Israel and boost protection for U.S. troops in the region, against any threats from Iran and its regional proxies, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said Friday. That could involve deploying additional military units, she said, declining to provide details.

## **Few Americans trust the Secret Service after a gunman nearly killed Trump, an AP-NORC poll finds**

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX Associated Press

Most Americans have doubts about the Secret Service's ability to keep presidential candidates safe after last month's attempt on former President Donald Trump's life, a new poll from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds.

Only around 3 in 10 Americans are extremely or very confident that the Secret Service can keep the presidential candidates safe from violence before the election, according to the poll. The survey also found that about 7 in 10 Americans think the Secret Service bears at least a moderate amount of responsibility for the assassination attempt.

The law enforcement agency tasked with protecting presidents for more than a century is under intense scrutiny after a gunman got within 150 yards of Trump and fired several bullets from an AR-style rifle. Trump was injured in one ear but was millimeters away from being killed.

The poll was conducted after the resignation of director Kimberly Cheatle, who faced intense questioning at a congressional hearing that was broadcast live last week and in which she gave evasive answers. The new acting director Ronald Rowe said earlier this week that he was "ashamed" after the July 13 attack in Butler, Pennsylvania, saying he considered it indefensible that the roof used by the gunman was not secured.

During a news conference Friday, Rowe acknowledged the agency's loss of trust from the American people. He said people generally only know about the agency's failures — not its successes. He praised the agency's staff who are quietly "working in the background" to protect political rallies, inauguration

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day and other events.

"We will earn back your trust," he vowed.

The poll revealed that Americans were most likely to say that political division in the U.S. had "a great deal" of responsibility for the assassination attempt.

Half of U.S. adults say that, while about 4 in 10 say the Secret Service bears a high level of responsibility, and about 4 in 10 say the widespread availability of guns is greatly responsible.

Democrats were far more likely to blame the availability of guns while Republicans were more likely to blame the Secret Service.

Roger Berg, a 70-year-old farmer from Keota, Iowa, is planning to vote for Trump, the Republican nominee, in November. But he expressed discontent about Republicans blaming President Joe Biden for issues he thought Biden had no control over. Biden ended his reelection bid eight days after the shooting and has endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris, now the likely Democratic nominee.

"The people that are making everything about politics, I wish they would just quit," Berg said. "They pin it all on Biden, and I don't believe in that."

Democrats, meanwhile, are substantially more likely than independents or Republicans to say the availability of guns bears a great deal of responsibility. Six in 10 Democrats say this, compared to about one-third of independents and 15% of Republicans.

Republican respondents were more likely than independents and Democrats to blame the Secret Service: About half of Republicans think the Secret Service has a great deal of responsibility, compared to around 4 in 10 Democrats and independents.

George Velasco, a 65-year-old Navy veteran from Tucson, Arizona, said he thought both the Secret Service and local law enforcement were to blame along with poor communication and a lack of proper planning. The Secret Service's acting director said earlier this week that it was regrettable that local law enforcement had not alerted his agency before the shooting that an armed subject had been spotted on a roof, while also recognizing the Secret Service assumed that state and local police had presence.

"It was as if the Secret Service expected those guys to know what they had to do," Velasco said. "It was a very small area, a small town. How did they expect them to know how to prepare for something huge like that rally?"

The poll found that half of Americans think local law enforcement in Pennsylvania had at least a moderate amount of responsibility for the assassination attempt, although only about 2 in 10 said it had "a great deal" of responsibility.

The Secret Service was first created as part of the Treasury Department to investigate the counterfeiting of U.S. currency during the Civil War. The agency began informally protecting presidents in 1894, according to the its records. Congress requested Secret Service protection of U.S. presidents after the assassination of William McKinley in 1901.

Protection was extended to the president's immediate family, presidents-elect and vice presidents after a White House police officer was shot and killed while protecting President Harry S. Truman in 1950. It was later extended to former presidents in 1965. After the 1968 assassination of U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, who was running for the Democratic presidential nomination, Congress authorized protection of major presidential and vice presidential candidates.

About one-third of Americans are extremely or very confident that the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the Secret Service, will conduct a full and fair investigation of the assassination attempt, while about one-third are somewhat confident and about 3 in 10 are not very confident or not at all confident.

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The poll of 1143 adults was conducted July 25-29, 2024, using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points.



## **An assassin, a Putin foe's death, secret talks: How a sweeping US-Russia prisoner swap came together**

By ERIC TUCKER, ZEKE MILLER AND MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was December 2022 and the U.S. government's chief hostage negotiator had just delivered Brittney Griner back to America after her 10-month imprisonment in Russia. Roger Carstens went to his hotel room anticipating a quick snooze after several sleepless days and had just put his head on the pillow when the phone rang.

On the other end was Paul Whelan from Russia, asking why the trade that brought home Griner had left him behind.

The call was a reminder that a deal heralded for bringing home a celebrated professional athlete had left neither side fully satisfied. The U.S. still needed to bring back Whelan, who was serving a lengthy prison sentence on espionage charges that Washington considered bogus. Russia had its eyes set on someone too: an assassin jailed in Germany named Vadim Krasikov. Further negotiations were needed, culminating Thursday in a 24-person blockbuster swap.

That the latest exchange included both Whelan and Krasikov was no small thing.

It required the U.S. to regroup after the unexpected death in February of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who'd been seen as a cog in a potential exchange. It depended on the willingness of Germany to release a Russian who just five years earlier had committed a cold-blooded killing on its soil, and for other European countries to give up prisoners. And it forced Russia to part with Americans, including Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, it had stockpiled as trade bait.

And just like every other deal before it, it required the U.S. and its allies to reluctantly accept that the price of freeing people they regarded as clearly innocent was to release prisoners determined to be clearly guilty.

U.S. officials had known for some time that Krasikov would be essential to any deal for Whelan — and later Gershkovich.

Russia raised him relentlessly. President Vladimir Putin called him a "patriot," perhaps sensing an opportunity to signal how far Russia would go to bring home anyone who might get caught acting on the country's behalf.

When Krasikov was sentenced in 2021, German judges determined that his killing two years earlier of a Georgian citizen who'd fought Russian troops in Chechnya was no random hit but rather ordered by the Russian secret services, which had given him a false identity, passport and the resources to carry out the murder. On Friday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov identified Krasikov as an officer of the Federal Security Service, or FSB — a fact reported in the West even as Moscow denied state involvement.

"Over the course of this negotiation, we did reach the conclusion that Krasikov was a key," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters.

The U.S. had previously shown a willingness to release from its own prisons significant criminals, including a Taliban drug lord and notorious arms trafficker Viktor Bout, as part of prisoner swaps. But Krasikov was held by Germany, where government officials initially balked at the idea.

The ground changed with the emergence of an unlikely candidate for Russia to trade.

Navalny, Russia's best-known opposition politician, was serving a 19-year sentence on extremism charges that he rejected as politically motivated. He had close ties with Germany and had been treated there while recovering from a Russian poisoning attempt. The parties pressed forward on a deal involving Navalny and Krasikov that would unlock Gershkovich and Whelan and satisfy a core and unshakeable Russian demand.

In January, President Joe Biden called German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and invited him to the Oval Office with plans to discuss the detainees. They met in early February. Speaking about the prospect of a prisoner deal, Scholz told Biden words to the effect of "For you, I will do this," according to Sullivan and a senior administration official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity.

But Navalny's unexpected death later that month in an Arctic penal colony left U.S. officials feeling like

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"the wind had been taken out of our sails," given the way it stalled momentum, said the senior administration official. Even Putin after Navalny's death said he had supported the idea of a swap involving Navalny.

On the day of Navalny's death, Sullivan was coincidentally scheduled to meet with Gershkovich's family about the outlines of the emerging deal. After the Russian opposition leader was found dead, officials were forced back to the drawing board to develop an arrangement acceptable to all parties.

Furtive swap discussions continued unfolding between U.S. officials, including Sullivan and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and their European counterparts.

Various foreign ministers were asked who they had in custody that the Russians might want. During the course of negotiations, the White House developed lists of political prisoners in Russia who might be of interest to Germany and also proposed to Germany exchanges that didn't include Krasikov.

By spring, Sullivan and the U.S. team thought they had a workable plan. What they needed was approval from Germany. Sullivan drafted a letter for Biden to send to Scholz with the outlines of the proposal.

In recent weeks, a series of unusual confluences suggested that a deal was in the air, including a startlingly quick trial for Gershkovich last month that resulted in him being sentenced to 16 years in a maximum-security prison.

In a trial that concluded in two days in secrecy in the same week as Gershkovich's, Alsu Kurmasheva, a Russian-American journalist who was also included in the deal, was convicted on charges of spreading false information about the Russian military — allegations that her family, employer and U.S. officials rejected. And several other figures imprisoned in Russia for speaking out against the war in Ukraine or over their work with Navalny were moved from prison to unknown locations.

Biden later said Germany asked for nothing in return, holding the conversation up as a testament to the need for strong and stable alliances, though the final deal did include the release of multiple German nationals.

There were still other pieces to work out.

Even as Biden was making one of the most consequential decisions of his political life — to abandon his reelection bid — he was simultaneously working to build cooperation from allies to get a deal done. An hour before he posted his letter on July 21 announcing he wouldn't seek another term, Sullivan said, Biden was on the phone with his Slovenian counterpart seeking to secure her agreement to release a pair of Russian sleeper agents as part of the deal. (Norway and Poland also each released prisoners to Russia).

In an interview with The Associated Press, Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide said he viewed the deal as a means to support democratic forces and human rights activists inside Russia, but also as a way to strengthen solidarity between Western allies.

"Maybe one day in the future we will be remembered when we have somebody we need to get out," he said.

In recent days, CIA Director Bill Burns visited Turkey to meet with his counterpart to negotiate the handoff logistics.

Early Thursday, six U.S.-registered private jets converged on Ankara, the Turkish capital, from Washington Dulles International Airport, Poland, Slovenia, Germany and Norway carrying the Russian prisoners to be handed over and preparing to take the freed Americans and other detainees back to their home countries.

The Biden administration had quietly summoned the families of the detained Americans to the White House in the days before the swap, insisting on secrecy. While a complicated dance played out to complete the swap on the tarmac half a world away, the families waited in the White House for the first word their loved ones were out of Russian hands.

Biden himself broke the news to the families in the Oval Office once he got firm confirmation by speaking to the Americans in Ankara.

"I said, 'Welcome almost home,'" Biden told reporters later. He then swiftly turned the phone over to their loved ones. Joined by the families at a news conference trumpeting the deal, he led the audience in singing "Happy Birthday" to one of Kurmesheva's daughters.

Hovering over the deal was a recognition of its innate imbalance: The U.S. and other Western nations had given up people seen as properly convicted, or at least charged, of crimes including murder; Russia

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released journalists, dissidents and others regarded by the West as held on trumped-on charges.

"It is difficult to send back a convicted criminal to secure the release of an innocent American," Sullivan conceded to reporters Thursday. Even The Wall Street Journal's top editor, Emma Tucker, acknowledged that reality, writing in a letter published online that the swap's terms were "predictable as the only solution given President Putin's cynicism."

For the families, though, the immediate focus remained on being reunited with their loved ones.

A plane carrying the American detainees touched down before midnight at Joint Base Andrews just outside Washington, with Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on hand for their arrival.

Gershkvovich hugged both, then turned his attention to his mother, Ella Milman, who quickened her pace as she approached him with wide-open arms. He embraced her, hoisting her into the air in celebration.

The freed Americans lingered on the steamy tarmac to soak up the moment of their return to the U.S. They took selfies with family members and friends, shared hugs with Biden and Harris, and patted loved ones on the back. At one point, Biden gave Whelan the flag pin off his own lapel.

"I feel great," Whelan said. "It's a long time coming."

## **Kamala Harris is interviewing six potential vice president picks this weekend, AP sources say**

By SEUNG MIN KIM and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris is interviewing a half-dozen potential running mates this weekend ahead of a formal announcement and a battleground tour with her new No. 2 next week.

Her interview list includes Govs. Andy Beshear of Kentucky, J.B. Pritzker of Illinois, Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania and Tim Walz of Minnesota, as well as Sen. Mark Kelly of Arizona and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, according to two people with knowledge of Harris' selection process. The people were granted anonymity to discuss private campaign deliberations.

Shapiro and Kelly had been viewed as among the front-runners during her truncated selection process, which began with the vetting of about a dozen names. Some have publicly withdrawn from consideration, such as North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, who is close with Harris from their shared time as state attorneys general but expressed concern about regularly traveling out of the state if he were to be on the national Democratic ticket.

Her deadline for picking a running mate is effectively Tuesday, when Harris will launch a tour of seven key battleground states, starting in Philadelphia.

President Joe Biden told reporters Friday that he has spoken to Harris about her search for a vice presidential candidate, but when asked whether he had advice for the qualities she should look for in a running mate, the president publicly demurred.

"I'll let her work that out," Biden said on the South Lawn of the White House before departing for Wilmington, Delaware, for the weekend.

Some of the people on Harris' short list had abruptly cancelled their plans for this weekend, signaling that something could be afoot in the vice-presidential selection process. For example, Shapiro scrapped three weekend fundraisers in the seaside communities on the coast of Long Island, New York, and his press secretary, Manuel Bonder, offered little explanation as to why.

"The governor's trip was planned several weeks ago and included several fundraisers for his own campaign committee," Bonder said in a statement. "His schedule has changed and he is no longer traveling to the Hamptons this weekend."

One Shapiro fundraiser was to be hosted by Michael Kempner, a member of President Joe Biden's national finance committee. Kempner said in a note to invitees that the gathering had been postponed and openly advocated for Shapiro to be Harris' No. 2, writing that "many are speculating that this is a sign he will be the vice president."

Meanwhile, a video put on social media by Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker -- who is publicly supporting Shapiro for vice president -- caused a stir Friday. It showed a number of Philadelphia-area officials

and Democrats promoting Harris for president, but also touting Shapiro for vice president, suggesting to some that Parker may have inside knowledge about Harris' decision.

However, a person with knowledge of the mayor's thinking said the video was simply the mayor showing support for both Harris and the potential that Shapiro, Parker's friend, will be her vice presidential running mate. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

## **Dissidents freed in prisoner swap vow to keep up fight against Putin, recount details of release**

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — When Kremlin critic Vladimir Kara-Murza was suddenly moved to a detention center in Moscow from a Siberian prison, he thought he was being taken there to be shot. Opposition activist Ilya Yashin said he was warned by a security operative that he would die in prison if he returned to Russia.

Neither was told they were being freed in a massive prisoner exchange with the West — the largest since the Cold War — when they were put on a bus to the airport Thursday, some still in prison garb.

"It is very difficult to shake (the feeling) of absolute surrealism of what is happening," Kara-Murza, a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer who had been serving 25 years in prison, told a news conference Friday in the German city of Bonn.

In their first public appearance since their release a day earlier, President Vladimir Putin's foes vowed to keep fighting for a free and democratic Russia they could one day return to.

They also talked about how their newly found freedom left a bittersweet aftertaste as they were effectively expelled from their own country, where hundreds of other political prisoners continued to languish behind bars.

"I'm not viewing what happened to me ... as an exchange. I'm viewing it as an expulsion from Russia, an illegal expulsion from Russia against my will. And I'll say frankly, as it is: The thing I want the most right now is to go home," said Yashin, who had been sentenced to 8 1/2 years for criticism of the Ukraine war.

He and Kara-Murza both told reporters no one asked them if they consented to the swap, and emphasized they refused to request a pardon from Putin — a formality they said prison officials had insisted upon.

Still, Kara-Murza stressed that such prisoner swaps are, in effect, "the saving of people's lives." The death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny in an Arctic prison on February underscores that "very terribly," he said.

Kara-Murza, Yashin and opposition figure Andre Pivovarov were among 16 prisoners that Russia and its ally Belarus released on Thursday — Americans, Germans and Russian dissidents, most of whom were imprisoned on charges widely seen as politically motivated.

The historic trade was in the works for months and unfolded despite relations between Washington and Moscow being at their lowest point since the Cold War after Putin's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Those released included journalists Evan Gershkovich and Alsu Kurmasheva and former U.S. Marine Paul Whelan, who were greeted by their families and President Joe Biden when they arrived in Maryland on Thursday night.

Moscow in return got eight Russians jailed in the West for spying, hacking computers and even a brazen daylight murder. The Kremlin confirmed on Friday that some of them were its security and intelligence officers.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday that Vadim Krasikov, a Russian assassin who was serving a life sentence in Germany for the 2019 killing of a former Chechen fighter in a Berlin park, is an officer of the Federal Security Service, or FSB — a fact reported in the West even as Moscow denied state involvement.

He also said Krasikov once served in the FSB's special forces Alpha unit, along with some of Putin's bodyguards.

"Naturally, they also greeted each other yesterday when they saw each other," Peskov said, underscoring



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Putin's determination to include Krasikov in the swap. Earlier this year, Putin stopped short of identifying Krasikov, but referenced a "patriot" imprisoned in a "U.S.-allied country" for "liquidating a bandit" who had killed Russian soldiers during fighting in the Caucasus.

Peskov also confirmed that a couple released in Slovenia — Artem and Anna Dultsev — were undercover intelligence officers. Posing as Argentine expats, they used Ljubljana as their base since 2017 to relay Moscow's orders to other sleeper agents and were arrested on espionage charges in 2022.

Yashin said at the news conference in Bonn that "it is hard to realize that you have been released because a murderer has been released. It is difficult, it is very emotionally difficult."

It's also difficult, he said, because there are other Russians still behind bars.

Still, he vowed to continue the fight against Putin's rule — despite the risks.

"When we were flying with FSB officers to Ankara, one FSB officer turned to Vladimir and me and said: 'Well, don't get too carried away there, because Krasikov might come back for you,'" — a comment he said sent "chills" through his spine.

Kara-Murza and Pivovarov echoed Yashin's resolve.

"My friends and I will use all our strength so that our country could become free and democratic, and all those people who are behind bars are freed," said Pivovarov, who had been serving a four-year prison term.

Kara-Murza added that there are still "hundreds of people in prison solely for their political views, and more and more are on the lists of political prisoners."

"These are our fellow citizens who, like all of us, oppose the cruel, criminal, aggressive war that the Putin regime unleashed against Ukraine," he said.

The Nobel Peace Prize-winning human rights group Memorial said Friday that 766 people it has designated as political prisoners remain behind bars in Russia.

To supporters and relatives of those released, the swap also came as a surprise.

Pivovarov's wife, Tatyana Usmanova, told The Associated Press on Friday that when she learned he had disappeared from his prison in northern Russia, she imagined both bad and good outcomes.

She started to suspect a possible swap when reports appeared about other prisoners missing from their facilities, she said, but only felt "good and clear" about an exchange when she heard his voice on the phone Thursday, telling her to fly to Germany.

Artist and musician Sasha Skochilenko, convicted last year of an anti-war protest, disappeared Monday night from a detention center in St. Petersburg, her partner Sophya Subbotina said on Telegram. Subbotina told AP on Tuesday that "Sasha simply disappeared and we don't know where she is." Prison officials said she probably was in Moscow.

Subbotina rushed to Moscow to check detentions centers but couldn't find Skochilenko, who finally called her on Thursday from Ankara, Turkey, where the swap took place. She said she had not known she was part of the exchange until it was underway, Subbotina added in remarks to the Russian news outlet Bumaga.

Oleg Orlov, the 71-year-old co-chair of the human rights group Memorial who was also released in the swap, called his wife, Tatyana Kasatkina, from Germany on Friday, and she said he "still hasn't processed that he ended up being so far from Russia," the group quoted her as saying.

Orlov recounted to her that no one asked for his consent or explained why he was being moved from a detention center, and he only realized he was part of a swap when he got on a bus to the airport. According to Memorial, Orlov also didn't sign a request for presidential pardon.

## **Unemployment rise spurs fears of slowdown, yet recession signals have been wrong — so far**

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — A surprising rise in the U.S. unemployment rate last month has rattled financial markets and set off new worries about the threat of a recession — but it could also prove to be a false alarm.

Friday's jobs report, which also showed hiring slowed last month, coincides with other signs the economy

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is cooling amid high prices and elevated interest rates. A survey of manufacturing firms showed activity weakened noticeably in July. Hurricane Beryl, however, hit Texas during the same week the government compiles its job data and could have held back job gains.

The U.S. economy used to flash reliable signals when it was in or near a recession. But those red lights have gone haywire since the COVID-19 pandemic struck and upended normal business activity. Over the past two or three years, they've signaled downturns that never arrived as the economy just kept rolling along.

Worries about a recession are also quickly politicized, even more so as the presidential election intensifies. Former President Donald Trump's campaign on Friday said the jobs report is "more evidence that the Biden-Harris economy is failing Americans."

For his part, President Joe Biden said that since he and Vice President Kamala Harris took office, the economy has added nearly 16 million jobs, while the unemployment rate fell to half-century lows. Some of those job gains reflect a bounce-back from the pandemic, but the U.S. now has 6.4 million more jobs than it did before COVID-19.

Even so, Friday's report from the U.S. Labor Department is raising recession fears again. The Dow Jones average tumbled more than 600 points, or 1.5%, Friday and the broader S&P 500 fell almost 2%.

Markets likely panicked in part because when the unemployment ticked up to 4.3% last month — the highest since October 2021 — it set off the so-called Sahm Rule.

Named for former Fed economist Claudia Sahm, the rule holds that a recession is almost always underway already if the three-month average unemployment rate rises by half a percentage point from its low of the past year. It's been triggered in every U.S. recession since 1970.

But Sahm herself doubts that a recession is "imminent." Speaking before the numbers came out Friday, she said: "If the Sahm Rule were to trigger, it would join the ever-growing group of indicators, rules of thumb, that weren't up to the task."

Other previously trustworthy recession indicators that have flopped in the post-pandemic era include:

- A bond market measure with a dry-as-dust label: The "inverted yield curve."

- The rule of thumb that two consecutive quarters of falling economic output amounts to a "technical recession."

On Wednesday, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said he is aware of the Sahm Rule and its implications, but noted that other recession signals, such as changes in bond yields, haven't been borne out in recent years.

"This pandemic era has been one in which so many apparent rules have been flouted," Powell said at a news conference. "Many received pieces of received wisdom just haven't worked, and it's because the situation really is unusual or unique."

Powell spoke after Fed officials kept their key interest rate unchanged but signaled that they could reduce the rate as soon as their next meeting in September.

Powell also downplayed the impact of the Sahm Rule, calling it a "statistical regularity."

"It's not like an economic rule where it's telling you something must happen," he said.

For four years, economists have struggled to make sense of an economy that was first shut down by the COVID-19 pandemic, then roared back with such strength that it revived inflationary pressures that had lain dormant for four decades. When the Federal Reserve moved to tame price increases by aggressively raising interest rates starting in March 2022, economists almost uniformly predicted that the higher borrowing costs would cause a recession. It never came.

Post-pandemic trends in the American jobs market may have at least temporarily sapped the Sahm Rule of its potency.

Unemployment has been rising steadily not so much because companies are slashing jobs but because so many people have poured into the job market. Not all of them have found work right away. The new arrivals have been dominated by immigrants — many of whom entered the country illegally. They are less likely to respond to Labor Department jobs surveys and therefore can go uncounted as employed.

The inverted yield curve, meanwhile, is also seen as a recession signal because of the expectation that

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a recession occurs when the Fed rapidly boosts its benchmark interest rate, which it raised 11 times in 2022 and 2023. An inverted yield curve occurs when the interest rate on shorter-term Treasury bonds, such two-year notes, rises above the rate on a longer-term bond, such as the 10-year Treasury. The switch happened in July 2022 and yields have been inverted ever since, the longest inversion on record.

Typically, longer-term bonds have higher yields to compensate investors for locking up their money for an extended period of time. When shorter-term bonds start paying out higher yields instead, it usually occurs because markets expect the Fed to crank up its short-term rate to quell inflation or cool the economy. Such steps often lead to a recession.

An inverted yield curve has preceded each of the last 10 recessions, according to Deutsche Bank, usually by about one to two years. It did provide one false signal in 1967, when an inversion occurred but no downturn followed.

Why hasn't it been right, so far, this time?

David Kelly, chief global strategist at J.P. Morgan Asset Management, says that historically the yield curve inverts in part because longer-term yields fall on the expectation that the Fed will cut rates once the economy falls into recession.

Yet investors have been expecting the Fed to cut rates because inflation is falling, Kelly said, not in anticipation of a downturn.

"The perception of why the Federal Reserve might cut short rates right now is quite different to the past, and that's why the yield curve is not nearly as ominous as it has been in previous episodes," Kelly said.

And Tiffany Wilding, an economist and managing director at bond giant PIMCO, says the government's huge financial assistance packages, totaling roughly \$5 trillion in 2020 and 2021, enriched consumers and business alike. As a result, they have been able to spend and invest without borrowing as much, muting the impact of the Fed's rate hikes and dulling the signal from the inverted yield curve.

Also in 2022, the government reported that gross domestic product — the economy's output of goods and services — had fallen for two straight quarters, a long-time rule of thumb that has nearly always accompanied a recession. Then-House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said the U.S. economy was in recession that month. He turned out to be wrong.

True, the top-line economic numbers showed that output was falling. But another measure in the GDP report told a different story: Stripping out volatile items such as inventories, government spending and imports, it showed that the underlying economy continued to expand at a healthy pace.

Economists are concerned that last month's rise in the jobless rate could portend a broader slowdown. Yet consumers, particularly higher-income ones, are still increasing their spending, and as long as layoffs remain low, they are likely to keep doing so.

"It doesn't seem to me like the U.S. economy has fallen out of bed," said Blerina Uruci, chief U.S. economist at T. Rowe Price's fixed income division. "I'm still not in the camp that the U.S. economy is headed for a hard landing."

## Venezuela's opposition secured over 80% of crucial vote tally sheets. Here's how they did it.

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — The statement that upended Venezuela came 24 hours after polls closed in the presidential election.

With the reassuring tone of someone who has consistently been considered an underdog, opposition powerhouse Maria Corina Machado announced that her coalition had gathered more than two-thirds of vote tally sheets from polling centers nationwide, and that they show President Nicolás Maduro had lost his reelection bid.

The tally sheets known as actas — printouts measuring several feet that resemble shopping receipts — have long been considered the ultimate proof of election results in Venezuela. Opposition members knew

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they had to obtain as many of them as possible to refute the unfavorable election outcome they expected electoral authorities to announce.

Months of preparations and thousands of volunteers participated in the herculean task.

Their effort earned Maduro and his loyal National Electoral Council global condemnation, including from close regional allies, and fueled the anger of Venezuelans fed up with their nation's cascading economy. In response, the government called for opposition leaders to be arrested, capping an election season marked by repression and irregularities.

This account of the opposition's effort is based on public statements, as well as interviews with party representatives, volunteers and others involved, all of whom spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of government retribution.

## Discipline

Tens of thousands of volunteers participated in training workshops nationwide in recent months. They learned that under the law they could be inside polling centers on Election Day, stationed near voting machines, from before polls opened until the results had been electronically transmitted to the National Electoral Council in the capital, Caracas.

Organizational discipline was key to their success because the ruling party wields tight control over the voting system. Polling places are guarded by soldiers, civilian militia, police and loyalists of the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela.

On Sunday, officials attempted to block opposition volunteers from voting centers, and in some places, they succeeded. But elsewhere, the volunteers were unshakable, and once inside voting centers, they did not leave, in some cases until after 11 p.m.

"They took courage with their law in hand, with the polling station manual in hand, and they managed to enter," Machado said Sunday, before the polls closed. She called party representatives and other volunteers "the heroes of this process."

The 90,000 party representatives were taught to obtain a copy of the tally sheets — printed from electronic voting machines after polls close — before the results were transmitted to the council.

"Our representatives have the right to their tally sheet," Machado said. "No representative leaves their voting center without the document in hand."

The volunteers were also trained to use a custom-made app to report voting center irregularities such as opening delays or power outages, and to scan a QR code printed on every tally sheet.

## The "chorizo"

Venezuelans have used electronic voting machines for about two decades. The machines record votes, provide a paper receipt for each voter and — after polls close — print copies of the tally sheets, whose length has led to the nickname, "chorizo," or "sausage" in Spanish.

The tallies show vote totals broken down by candidate, the QR code and the signatures of party representatives, an employee of the electoral body and poll workers who are drawn by lot to participate.

Every party representative is entitled to a tally sheet, while another copy is placed in an envelope and delivered to the National Electoral Council headquarters.

Infighting and disorganization had consistently limited the ability of government opponents to secure and safeguard the tallies in previous elections. But Machado said the opposition had obtained more than 70% of sheets. That number would eventually grow to over 80%.

The QR code scans gave a team of campaign workers immediate access to voting results, which they tabulated Sunday night and Monday.

The National Electoral Council has not yet shared the tallies on its website, which has been down since Monday. While it is not obligated to post images of the tally sheets, it has previously shared each sheet's totals.

The council on Monday reported that Maduro received 5.1 million votes, while Edmundo González, representing the Unitary Platform opposition coalition, earned more than 4.4 million. Council President Elvis Amoroso on Friday provided updated results from 96.87% of tally sheets, gave Maduro 6.4 million votes



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and Gonzalez 5.3 million.

Eight other men vied for the presidency, including Enrique Márquez, a former member of the electoral council, who decried the official results and lambasted authorities for the lack of transparency.

"Most of our witnesses ... were prevented from accessing the voting centers," he told reporters. "Those who were able to enter witnessed the process and waited for the tally sheets, but they were not given to them as required by law and its regulations. Not only does it violate the law, it generates obscurity, opacity, lack of transparency."

The opposition, electoral experts and foreign governments questioning the official results, including President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil and President Gustavo Petro of Colombia, both Maduro allies, who have urged him to make the sheets public.

By bike, motorcycle, car or boat

Securing the "chorizo" from each of the 30,000 voting machines was only half the battle. The campaign needed to get them all fully scanned using equipment especially designed to copy the tally sheets.

That's when yet more volunteers came into play. If the party representatives did not feel safe or were unable to reach the places where the scanners were housed, volunteers met the representatives, grabbed the sheets and transported them via motorcycle, car, bike and even boat to the appropriate locations.

By the time National Electoral Council President Elvis Amoroso was shown on television handing Maduro a document certifying his victory, the opposition had scanned more than half of the tally sheets. Hours later, Machado and González stood before reporters and announced the numbers that shook the country: The vote tallies show González received roughly 6.2 million votes versus Maduro's 2.7 million. The scanned tallies were also uploaded to a searchable website, and anyone who voted could use their government identification number to check out the tally sheet belonging to the machine they used to vote.

The government then claimed that the electoral council's website had been hacked. National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez insisted Maduro was the indisputable winner and called his opponents violent fascists. He called for Machado and González to be arrested.

Maduro has faced a cascade of criticism ever since. International observers say they were unable to verify the results. Regional allies urged the government to publish the complete vote tallies. On Thursday, the U.S. government congratulated González on his victory.

"At least 12 million Venezuelans peacefully went to the polls and exercised one of the most powerful rights given to people in any democracy: the right to vote," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. "Unfortunately, the processing of those votes and the announcement of results by the Maduro-controlled National Electoral Council (CNE) were deeply flawed, yielding an announced outcome that does not represent the will of the Venezuelan people."

## **Heat deaths of people without air conditioning, often in mobile homes, underscore energy inequity**

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Mexican farm worker Avelino Vazquez Navarro didn't have air conditioning in the motor home where he died last month in Washington state as temperatures surged into the triple digits.

For the last dozen years, the 61-year-old spent much of the year working near Pasco, Washington, sending money to his wife and daughters in the Pacific coast state of Nayarit, Mexico, and traveling back every Christmas.

Now, the family is raising money to bring his remains home.

"If this motor home would have had AC and it was running, then it most likely would have helped," said Franklin County Coroner Curtis McGary, who determined Vazquez Navarro's death was heat-related, with alcohol intoxication as a contributing cause.

Most heat-related deaths involve homeless people living outdoors. But those who die inside without sufficient cooling also are vulnerable, typically older than 60, living alone and with limited income.

Underscoring the inequities around energy and access to air conditioning as summers grow hotter, many

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victims are Black, Indigenous or Latino, like Vazquez Navarro.

"Air conditioning is not a luxury, it's a necessity," said Mark Wolfe, executive director of the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, which represents state energy assistance programs. "It's a public health issue and it's an affordability issue."

People living in mobile homes or in aging trailers and RVs are especially likely to lack proper cooling. Nearly a quarter of the indoor heat deaths in Arizona's Maricopa County last year were in those kinds of dwellings, which are transformed into a broiling tin can by the blazing desert sun.

"Mobile homes can really heat up because they don't always have the best insulation and are often made of metal," said Dana Kennedy, AARP director in Arizona, where many heat-related deaths occur.

Research shows mobile home dwellers are particularly at risk in blistering hot Phoenix, where 113-degree Fahrenheit (45 Celsius) weather is forecast for this weekend.

"People are exposed to the elements more than in other housing," said Patricia Solís, executive director of the Knowledge Exchange for Resilience at Arizona State University, who worked on mapping hot weather impacts on mobile home parks for a state preparedness plan.

Worse, some parks bar residents from making modifications that could cool their homes, citing esthetic concerns. A new Arizona law required parks for the first time this summer to let residents install cooling methods such as window units, shade awnings and shutters.

In Arizona's Maricopa County, home to Phoenix, 156 of 645 heat-related deaths last year occurred indoors in uncooled environments. In most cases, a unit was present but was not working, was without electricity or turned off, public health officials said.

One victim was Shirley Marie Kouplen, who died after being overcome by high temperatures inside her Phoenix mobile home amid a heat wave when the extension cord providing her electricity was unplugged.

Emergency responders recorded the 70-year-old widow's body temperature at 107.1 F (41.7 C). Kouplen, who was diabetic and had high blood pressure, was rushed to a hospital, where she died.

Kouplen apparently was struggling financially, if the shabby condition of her mobile home was any indication. It still sits on Lot 60, surrounded by a chain-link fence with a locked gate and a dirt driveway overgrown with weeds.

It's unclear how the cord got unplugged, if Kouplen had an electricity account or how she got her power.

"Losing your air conditioning is now a life-threatening event," said Texas A&M University climate scientist Andrew Dessler, who grew up in hot, humid Houston in the 1970s. "You didn't want to lose your air conditioning, but it wasn't going to kill you. And now it is."

Arizona's regulated utilities have been banned since 2022 from cutting off power during the summer, following the 2018 death of a 72-year-old woman after Arizona Public Service disconnected her electricity over a \$51 debt.

Ann Porter, spokesperson for Arizona Public Service, which provides electricity to homes in the park where Kouplen lived, said "due to privacy concerns" the company could not say if she had an account at the time of her death or in the past. Porter said the utility does not cut power from June 1 to Oct. 15.

Cutoffs can occur after those dates if mounting debts are not paid.

Arizona is among 19 states with shut-off protections, leaving about half of the U.S. population without safeguards against losing electricity during the summer, the National Energy Assistance Directors Association said in a new study.

Almost 20% of very-low income families have no air conditioning at all, especially in places like Washington state where they weren't commonly installed before climate-fueled heat waves grew increasingly stronger, frequent and longer lasting.

In the Pacific Northwest, several hundred people died during a 2021 heat wave, prompting Portland, Oregon, to launch a program to provide portable cooling units to vulnerable, low-income people.

Chicago, better known for its cold winters, saw a heat wave kill 739 mostly older people over five days in 1995. Amid high humidity and temperatures over 100 degrees (37.7 C), most victims had no air conditioning or couldn't afford to turn on their units.

In 2022, Chicago adopted a cooling ordinance after three women died in their apartments in a building

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for older adults on an unusually warm spring day. Certain residential buildings must now have at least one air conditioned common area for cooling when the heat index exceeds 80 degrees (26.6 C) and cooling is unavailable in individual units.

Nonprofits in historically hotter areas like Arizona also are trying to better address the inequities low-income people face during the sweltering summers. The Phoenix-based community agency Wildfire recently raised money to buy over \$2 million worth of air conditioning equipment to help 150 households statewide over three years, Executive Director Kelly McGowan said.

Laws protect renters in some places. Phoenix landlords must ensure air conditioning units cool to 82 degrees (28 C) or below and that evaporative coolers lower the temperature to 86 degrees (30 C).

Palm Springs, California, and Las Vegas, both desert cities, have ordinances requiring landlords to offer air conditioning in rental dwellings. Dallas, where temperatures can pass 110 degrees (43.3 C) in the summer, has a similar law.

But most renters pay their own electricity costs, leaving them to agonize whether they can afford to even turn on the cooling or how high to set the thermostat.

A new report estimates the average cost for U.S. families to keep cool from June to September will grow nationwide by 7.9% this year, from \$661 in 2023 to \$719 this summer.

Wolfe noted the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which grants money to states to help families pay for heating and cooling, is underfunded, with 80% going to heat homes in winter.

At Kouplen's mobile home park, Spanish-speaking neighbors had little interaction with "Señora Shirley," who used a walker to take her two small dogs outside. Neighbors said the animals were adopted after her death.

Kouplen was buried in northern Phoenix at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona alongside her husband, JD D. Kouplen, who died in 2020.

"Never Forgotten," their shared marker reads.

## **The Olympics are giving breaking a global stage in Paris. Not everyone is celebrating**

By NOREEN NASIR and TOM NOUVIAN Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — In the basement of a sports complex in Paris, dozens of breakers, or break dancers, gathered almost every weeknight in July to freestyle, practicing classic moves like the windmill, freezes and headspins to the soundtrack of steady breakbeats from a playlist called "100% Flow." They warmed up with footwork — "toprocking" — and catching the beat before diving into floor moves. Samy Vongphrachanh, 19, was cheered on by a peer when he took risks and encouraged when he couldn't quite land a power move.

They are part of Paris' local breaking and hip-hop community, and while international buzz is centered on breaking debuting as an Olympic sport in the Paris Games, for these b-boys and b-girls, it's about preserving a lifestyle.

"We come, we chill, we cypher — it's like the main essence of breaking," said Vongphrachanh, referring to the informal circle formed by breakers in which they enter one by one to dance and battle. "It's sharing peace, unity, love and having fun."

Is breaking losing its essence on the Olympic stage?

The breakers in this gymnasium are just one small section of a much larger community across France. The country is regarded as the second-largest hip-hop market in the world after the U.S., and Olympic organizers are playing up the popularity of the street dance in France. Breaking is debuting as a sporting event in the Paris Olympics after its success at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires as part of an effort to attract younger viewers.

But outside the Olympic arena, some in Paris' local breaking scene feel skeptical of the subculture being co-opted by officials, commercialized and put through a rigid judging structure, when the spirit of breaking has been rooted in local communities, centered around street battles, cyphers and block parties. For some, the fear is that the essence of breaking, as an improvisational art form born and rooted in communities

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of color who came together under the context of racial and economic inequality, will be diluted through mass appeal on the global stage.

"It's a huge step for hip-hop and the breaking community," said Rémi Chean-Len Heng, or "b-boy Fly Lin," a breaker based in Paris who uses the dance as a form of therapy for new migrants arriving in France. "But for some, this is really a threat to the essence of the culture. We see all the politics and money behind it — it's all about making the youth watch the Olympics more. But some in the community are scared that the culture won't be well represented."

Vongphrachanh is hopeful that the attention from the Olympics will inspire a new generation to get involved in the culture. He gives breaking lessons to children and younger teens. But while he appreciates the recognition, "we are asking ourselves questions about the fact that we are distorting our discipline a bit. It's becoming too much of a competition," he said.

**A fraught relationship with mainstream pop culture**

It's a tension that has long existed in the broader hip-hop community, according to historian Samir Meghelli, who is writing a book called "Hip Hop between New York and Paris: A Transatlantic History."

"Hip-hop from its very beginning has had a fraught relationship with mainstream institutions and with pop culture," said Meghelli.

What began as an outlet and form of reprieve from the daily socio-economic struggles of Black and brown youth in the Bronx in the 1970s and '80s has since expanded to a multi-billion dollar global industry.

"Hip-hop was not initially welcomed in mainstream television, radio and film, and yet it's been incorporated into those spaces over time. But there have always been a lot of tensions," said Meghelli. "Breaking becoming a part of the Olympics is just the culmination of the most recent chapter in that longer history of tensions."

**From the Bronx to Paris**

On this side of the Atlantic, it all started in Seine-Saint-Denis. Before the glitz and glamor of corporate-sponsored dance competitions catching the eyes of curious kids scouring YouTube, there was the novelty and fame factor of an iconic hip-hop group from New York — Rock Steady Crew — performing in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis in 1982. By then, the music had already made its way over from its birthplace in the Bronx, playing in nightclubs in and around Paris. But it was in communities of color in the housing projects of Saint-Denis that the culture of breaking first took hold in the country, and is still considered to be the heart of France's hip-hop scene. Hip-hop resonated with young people of color in Saint-Denis in a way that parts of broader French culture did not.

"I saw some break dancers and all of a sudden, something clicked in my head," said Hugo Malanda-Malaki, 19, who was introduced to the dance as a child at a block party in his neighborhood in Saint-Denis. "I saw their movement, I saw the way they danced and I wanted to replicate that."

**Regulating hip-hop in France**

The mixed feelings among Paris' local hip-hop community over breaking's Olympic debut are intertwined with concerns over a French law that seeks to regulate the teaching of hip-hop dances — including breaking, popping and locking — through an amendment to a 1989 law that requires a state diploma for those teaching classical dance and jazz. The existing law imposes a 15,000-euro (\$16,100) fine on instructors who teach those dances without the required diploma and includes provisions for the administrative closure of non-compliant establishments.

This is not the first attempt to include hip-hop in the law. Similar proposals were made in 2013 and 2015, but were rejected due to strong opposition from professionals within the hip-hop community. This time, the law passed in March 2024.

"It's a good thing if it brings stability to some people, but in the end, you don't need a diploma to be a teacher of breakdance. I'm pretty sure the breakers that I saw when I was a kid never had a diploma. They still brought me to the dance," said Malanda-Malaki.

**Some celebrate the Olympic buzz around hip-hop**

Organizers of the breaking competition at the Olympics are adamant that they are paying homage to the



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roots of breaking. The official website details the history of the movement and the art from originating in the Bronx. Flyers in the media press center document the introduction of hip-hop and breaking in France, describing Seine-Saint-Denis as "the birthplace of breaking in France" with battles still regularly organized in the suburb. Some breakers from Paris' larger hip-hop scene have also been brought into the fold, with many benefitting from opportunities to show off their skills.

Large, judged breaking contests also aren't new. International competitions, like the Red Bull BC One World Final, have put breaking and battling on the global stage for 20 years.

The buzz around breaking's Olympic debut is indeed being celebrated by many across the global hip-hop community, from early pioneers of the genre to fans of the culture. Rappers Ice-T and Snoop Dogg expressed their excitement over the breaking competition, with Ice-T tweeting the event "could possibly be one of the HipHop culture's proudest moments."

Many of the Olympic breakers themselves are navigating their roles as ambassadors of hip-hop to the Olympic world, seeing it as a "duty" to represent the authenticity of breaking and the broader culture's heritage.

"Black and Latino people are the ones that birthed this culture," said Logan Edra, or b-girl Logistx, representing Team USA. "It's a big moment for all of us, but I'm not doing this for myself. This is for breaking and for our culture."

## **UK police brace for more far-right protests as government warns of tough response**

By BRIAN MELLEY and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Several suspects arrested in violent protests that erupted after the fatal stabbing of three children in northwest England made court appearances Friday as officials braced for more clashes that Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned and blamed on "far-right hatred."

Starmer vowed to end the mayhem and said police across the U.K. would be given more resources to stop "a breakdown in law and order on our streets."

Demonstrations are being promoted online over the coming days in towns and cities including Sunderland, Belfast, Cardiff, Liverpool and Manchester, using phrases including "enough is enough," "save our kids" and "stop the boats."

John Woodcock, the British government's adviser on political violence and disruption, said there was a "concerted and coordinated" attempt to spread the violence.

"Clearly, some of those far-right actors have got a taste for this and are trying to provoke similar in towns and cities across the U.K.," he told the BBC.

The attack Monday on children at a Taylor Swift-themed summer holiday dance class shocked a country where knife crime is a long-standing and vexing problem, though mass stabbings are rare.

A 17-year-old, Axel Rudakubana, has been charged with murder over the attack that killed Alice Dasilva Aguiar, 9, Elsie Dot Stancombe, 7, and Bebe King, 6, in the seaside town of Southport in northwest England. He also has been charged with 10 counts of attempted murder for the eight children and two adults who were wounded.

Starmer visited Southport on Thursday for the second time this week, meeting with police, community leaders and residents and then going to the children's hospital where many of victims were treated.

His office announced a vague support package to help the victims and bring the community closer, but the announcement did not mention how that would be accomplished or if funding was being provided.

A violent demonstration in Southport on Tuesday was followed by others around the country — fueled in part by online misinformation that said the attacker was Muslim and an immigrant. Rudakubana was born in Britain to Rwandan parents and lived close to the scene of the attack.

Suspects who are under 18 are usually not named in the U.K., but judge Andrew Menary ordered that Rudakubana could be identified, in part to stop the spread of misinformation.

Far-right demonstrators have held several violent protests, ostensibly in response to the attack, clashing

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with police outside a mosque in Southport on Tuesday and hurling beer cans, bottles and flares near the prime minister's office in London the next day.

The violence has put the Muslim community on edge and hundreds of mosques across the nation are increasing security after the Southport attack, Zara Mohammed, secretary-general of the Muslim Council of Britain, said.

At the Southport Mosque, Muslim, Jewish and Christian leaders gathered to say they were "united to defeat all forms of hatred and extremism in our country."

Merseyside Police, which is responsible for Southport, said it had made seven arrests so far and had a team of specialists reviewing hundreds of hours of footage to identify anyone involved.

"If you took part in this disorder, you can expect to receive a knock on your door by our officers," Detective Chief Inspector Tony Roberts said.

Police officers were pelted with bottles and eggs Wednesday in the town of Hartlepool in northeast England.

Sixteen people, so far, have been arrested in the uproar, including an 11-year-old boy accused of torching a police car. A 13-year-old boy and a woman were also arrested on suspicion of violent disorder.

Five of those arrested were held in custody after appearing in Teesside Magistrates' Court on violent disorder charges. Two others admitted they were involved in the disorder and were bailed until sentencing next month.

Ryan Sheers, who a prosecutor said was bitten by a police dog after repeatedly trying to push through a line of officers, wept during the hearing.

Outside court, Sheers, a former McDonald's worker, denied being involved despite admitting he had done so in court.

"Didn't get involved in nothing," Sheers said. "We didn't smash no town up."

At a news conference Thursday, the prime minister said the street violence was "clearly driven by far-right hatred" as he announced a program enabling police to better share intelligence across agencies and move quickly to make arrests.

"This is coordinated; this is deliberate," Starmer said. "This is not a protest that has got out of hand. It is a group of individuals who are absolutely bent on violence."

Starmer said his so-called National Violent Disorder Program would enable police to move between communities — just as the "marauding mobs" do. Officers will harness facial recognition technology to identify culprits and use criminal behavior orders often imposed on soccer hooligans that prevent them from going to certain places or associating with one another.

Starmer put some of the blame on social media companies, though he didn't announce any measures to address that and said there was a balance to be struck between the value they offer and the threat they can pose.

"Violent disorder, clearly whipped up online, that is also a crime. It's happening on your premises," he said.

## **Harris has secured enough Democratic delegate votes to become their party's nominee, chair says**

By WILL WEISSERT, SEUNG MIN KIM and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris has secured enough votes from delegates to become her party's nominee for president, Democratic National Committee Chair Jaime Harrison said Friday.

The announcement was made before the online voting process ends on Monday, reflecting the breakneck speed of a campaign that is eager to maintain momentum after President Joe Biden ended his reelection bid and endorsed Harris as his successor less than two weeks ago.

Harris is poised to be the first woman of color at the top of a major party's ticket, and she joined a call with supporters to say she is "honored to be the presumptive Democratic nominee."

"It's not going to be easy. But we're going to get this done," she added. "As your future president, I know we are up to this fight."

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Harrison pledged that Democrats “will rally around Vice President Kamala Harris and demonstrate the strength of our party” during their convention in Chicago later this month.

The Democratic National Committee did not provide details of the delegate vote count, including a number or state-by-state breakdowns, during a virtual event that had the flavor of a telethon, with campaign officials keeping tabs on a delegate-counting process whose result is a foregone conclusion.

No other candidate challenged Harris for the nomination, and she swiftly solidified Democratic support in the days after Biden endorsed her.

Democrats still plan a state-by-state roll call during the party’s convention, the traditional way that a nominee is chosen. However, that will be purely ceremonial because of the online voting.

As Harris prepares to face off with Republican nominee Donald Trump, her campaign is reorganizing its senior staff and bringing on a coterie of veterans of President Barack Obama’s successful campaigns.

David Plouffe will serve as a senior adviser focused on Harris’ pathway to the 270 Electoral College votes she needs to win the election. To take the role, he will stop consulting for TikTok, the social media app, as well as a podcast that he was hosting with Kellyanne Conway, the former Trump campaign manager, according to a person familiar with his plans.

In addition, Stephanie Cutter will advise on messaging and strategy, while Mitch Stewart will serve as senior adviser for battleground states. Brian Nelson, who until recently was an undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the Treasury Department, has shifted to the campaign to advise Harris on policy.

Despite the new additions, many aspects of the campaign remain the same from when Biden was the candidate. Jen O’Malley Dillon still serves as chairwoman and will oversee the entire staff structure.

Other unchanged senior roles include Julie Chavez Rodriguez as campaign manager, Quentin Fulks as principal deputy campaign manager and Michael Tyler as communications director.

Sheila Nix will continue as Harris’ senior adviser and chief of staff on the campaign. Former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge, who was recently brought on as a campaign co-chair, is expanding her portfolio to include outreach and strategy.

Brian Fallon, who had been Harris’ campaign communications director when Biden was still on the ticket, will now serve as senior adviser of communications.

Elizabeth Allen, most recently an undersecretary at the State Department, will be chief of staff for Harris’ running mate, who has not yet been chosen. Harris is expected to interview candidates over the weekend.

Democratic officials have said the accelerated roll call process was necessary because of an Aug. 7 deadline to ensure candidates appear on the Ohio ballot.

Ohio state lawmakers have since changed the deadline, but the modification doesn’t take effect until Sept. 1. Democratic attorneys said that waiting until after the initial deadline to determine a presidential nominee could prompt a legal challenge.

## **Who is Imane Khelif? Algerian boxer facing gender outcry had modest success before Olympics**

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

VILLEPINTE, France (AP) — Algerian boxer Imane Khelif has landed in the middle of a divide about gender in sports after her Italian competitor, Angela Carini, pulled out seconds into their bout at the Paris Olympics.

Outcry has come from conservatives like former U.S. President Donald Trump and Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni. Khelif was disqualified from the 2023 world championships after failing unspecified and untransparent eligibility tests for women’s competition from the now-banned International Boxing Association.

Khelif was assigned female at birth and it says so on her passport, which is the International Olympic Committee’s threshold for eligibility for boxing because of the rift between the sport’s governing body and the IOC.

Khelif is a formidable athlete with respected fighting skills, contending in top international events — including major amateur boxing tournaments over the past six years, such as the Tokyo Olympics. She’s

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won a few regional gold medals.

But Khelif was decidedly not known as a dominant champion, an overpowering force or even a particularly hard puncher at her weight — not until this week in Paris.

Khelif defeated Carini in just 46 seconds Thursday, with the Italian boxer's tearful abandonment of the fight leading to innumerable portrayals of Khelif as an unstoppable punching machine whose presence threatens the health of her opponents.

The reality, to those who actually watch or participate in Olympic-style boxing, is quite different. Here's what to know about Khelif and the controversy:

Who is Imane Khelif?

Born in 1999, Khelif is from rural northwestern Algeria. Her father initially didn't approve of girls participating in boxing, but Khelif said she gave up soccer as a teenager to pursue her new passion, even though she had to travel 10 kilometers each way to the gym.

Khelif eventually caught the attention of Algeria's national team, making her major tournament debut in 2018 with a first-round loss at the AIBA — now the International Boxing Association — world championships. She lost five of her first six elite-level bouts, but improved and excelled.

Khelif was one of Algeria's first three Olympic women's boxers sent to Tokyo three years ago. She won her opening bout but lost her second to eventual gold medalist Kellie Harrington of Ireland.

She also raised her profile by doing well in the next two world championships, and she even became a UNICEF national ambassador early this year.

Why was she disqualified from the world championships?

Khelif reached the final of the 2023 world championships before she was abruptly disqualified by the IBA, which cited high levels of testosterone in her system. The circumstances of that disqualification have been considered highly unusual ever since it happened, and Khelif called it "a big conspiracy" at the time.

She had previously competed without issues and was disqualified by the sport's governing body only after she defeated Russian boxer Azalia Amineva in the 2023 tournament. The IBA is controlled by Umar Kremlev, who is Russian and brought in the state-owned energy supplier Gazprom as its primary sponsor and moved much of the governing body's operations to Russia.

This week, the IOC described it as "a sudden and arbitrary decision by the IBA" in which Khelif and Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan "were suddenly disqualified without any due process." Lin was suspended for failing to meet unspecified eligibility requirements in a biochemical test.

The reasons for the two disqualifications are extremely murky, as is almost always the case with the IBA. The governing body has revealed little about the nature of the tests, including what was tested and who tested it. This lack of transparency would be unacceptable in major Olympic sports, and the IBA has been banned from the Olympics since 2019.

The IOC noted Thursday that the boxing association's own documents say the decision was made unilaterally by the IBA's secretary general. Those documents also say the IBA went on to resolve at a meeting that it should "establish a clear procedure on gender testing" after it had already disqualified the two fighters.

Why is there outcry about Khelif competing?

Trump, Meloni and others like "Harry Potter" author J.K. Rowling have complained about Khelif being allowed to compete.

For the political far-right in Italy, which has been targeting issues such as LGBTQ+ rights, Khelif's participation was just the latest evidence of "woke" culture infecting sport. Meloni, who met Friday with IOC President Thomas Bach, warned "ideology" taken to extremes can discriminate and harm women's rights.

IOC spokesman Mark Adams told reporters Friday that there has been "a lot of misinformation around on social media particularly, which is damaging."

Boxing in Paris is being run by a special IOC-appointed unit that the Olympic body says is applying rules, including eligibility decisions, that are based on the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro following the split with the sports governing body.

The IOC insisted this week that no scientific or political consensus exists on gender and fairness issues.



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It gave updated guidance to sports governing bodies in 2021.

Several sports bodies have updated their eligibility rules since the Tokyo Olympics were held in 2021, including World Aquatics, World Athletics and the International Cycling Union. They all decided to bar athletes from women's events who have transitioned from male to female and went through male puberty.

World Athletics also tightened rules last year to include testosterone testing for some athletes legally identified as female at birth though with a medical condition that leads to some male traits.

Is Khelif too good for Paris?

Carini's unusual actions aside — she later apologized for not shaking Khelif's hand after the bout and told an Italian newspaper that "all this controversy makes me sad" — it's highly unlikely anyone else in the women's 66-kilogram division thinks Khelif is unfightable.

"I'm not scared," her next opponent, Anna Luca Hamori of Hungary, said Thursday. They will face off Saturday. "I don't care about the story or social media."

Khelif is a medal contender in a sport where the Olympic draw can often determine the semifinal field by randomly pitting top fighters against each other too early in the competition.

But Khelif isn't yet considered to be at the level of defending Olympic champion Busenaz Surmeneli of Turkey or 2023 world champion Yang Liu of China, the top two seeds in Paris.

What do other fighters think about Khelif?

Opinions about Khelif's presence in Paris have ranged widely, often directly correlated with awareness of the news cycle raging outside the athletes' village.

Marissa Williamson Pohlman of Australia lost to Khelif in the Netherlands last May, and she said Khelif was particularly strong.

"I did notice it, but you just keep fighting, though, don't you?" Williamson Pohlman said. "It's just a part of the sport. All you want to do is win, so you just keep chucking punches."

Khelif also received support from peers like Amy Broadhurst, the accomplished Irish amateur who beat Khelif in the 2022 IBA world championships.

"Personally I don't think she has done anything to 'cheat,'" Broadhurst wrote on social media. "I (think) it's the way she was born & that's out of her control. The fact that she has been (beaten) by 9 females before says it all."

## **After Trump's appearance, the nation's largest gathering of Black journalists gets back to business**

By GARY FIELDS and CHEYANNE MUMPHREY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A day after Donald Trump's contentious interview at the National Association of Black Journalists conference, the organization was back to business as usual.

Thousands of journalists spoke with recruiters or networked at the career fair. Meeting rooms overflowed with attendees listening to panel discussions on career growth and industry changes, including conversations around artificial intelligence and new considerations in criminal justice coverage.

Many passed by the people at the Dow Jones desk to congratulate them on Wall Street Journal colleague Evan Gershkovich's release from prison in Russia in a massive prisoner swap deal.

But members of the nation's largest group for Black journalists were still grappling with the tension created by Trump's Wednesday interview, in which he made false claims about Vice President Kamala Harris' race and repeatedly insulted ABC News correspondent Rachel Scott after she asked him a tough question about his past attacks on Black people.

Fred Sweets, a contributing editor at The St. Louis American and a former Associated Press photographer, said Thursday that the Republican ex-president's interview raised an age-old question for the group's membership: "Are we Black first, or are we journalists?"

"He made news, but that works both ways," said Sweets, 76, who was in the initial meetings to form NABJ a half-century ago. "He sunk his ship as far as I could see. But for his followers, he was a hero."

Sweets said he would like to have heard questions asking Trump's interpretation of amendments passed

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in the aftermath of the Civil War since "he believes ostensibly in the Constitution."

He also would have asked about the Central Park Five, Black and Latino men wrongly convicted in the beating and rape of a white female jogger. Trump famously took out a newspaper ad in New York City after the 1989 attack calling for their executions. They were later exonerated.

The invitation to Trump was contentious

The appearance by the 2024 Republican presidential nominee roiled NABJ when it was announced, with one high-profile journalist, Washington Post columnist Karen Attiah, resigning as convention co-chair in protest. In a column in the paper Attiah wrote that her resignation was more than a protest of the invitation, "I objected to the format, which I rightly feared would allow a White politician to make our Black press advocacy organization into an instrument of his agenda." She, like Sweets, was disappointed that journalists in the audience were not allowed to ask a variety of questions on issues like Black infant mortality and foreign policy in Africa and the Caribbean.

Harris, the first Black woman and person of Asian descent to serve as vice president, did not attend. She is expected to appear in person or virtually at an NABJ event later this year.

Christian De'Vine, a student at the University of Missouri-Columbia and first-time NABJ attendee, said he felt as though Trump wasn't at the convention for the Black media representatives in the room but for his own public relations.

"Although the interview rubbed some people the wrong way, it doesn't change what we are here for. We are fostering a community of Black excellence," De'Vine said, reiterating NABJ's longstanding mission to strengthen ties between Black media professionals, journalists included, and celebrate industry contributions and achievements.

DeWayne Wickham, a retired longtime columnist at USA Today, said Trump had lost the spotlight in the past two weeks "so what better way for him to get it back than to go to the National Association of Black Journalists and stand on the stage before 4,000 assembled Black journalists and insult them and insult Black America?"

"I think Donald Trump came here with no intention to speak to Black America. I think he saw this as an opportunity to gin up his base," said Wickham, 78, who is a founder of the organization as well as the former founding dean of the School of Global Journalism & Communication at Morgan State University in Baltimore.

Black journalists created the NABJ 'out of a need for survival'

The NABJ came into existence in 1975, in part, because media outlets began hiring Black journalists after the 1968 Kerner Commission report that spoke about how media neglect of communities of color and the lack of diversity in the field contributed to the unrest of the times, Wickham said.

By 1975, the few Black journalists who had been hired were often isolated at their outlets and decided to band together "out of a need for survival," he said. The result was an organization in which Black journalists could mentor one another, share ideas and talk safely about issues they were facing in their newsrooms, as well as in the subjects they covered.

The association began inviting presidential candidates in 1976, Wickham said. Former Presidents Bill Clinton, Barack Obama and George W. Bush have attended the convention as president or as candidates. Nominee Bob Dole and his running mate, Jack Kemp, both attended the 1996 convention.

Marcus Craig, a 16-year-old high school journalist from Washington, D.C., said he was attending his first convention to network.

"Of course we should allow presidential candidates to come and be scrutinized, because not only is it an opportunity for the journalists, but it is also an opportunity for the candidate to explain themselves and why we should vote for or vote against them," he said.

Craig added that Trump's interview did not alter why the young journalist had attended the Chicago convention. "I don't think that someone who is not actually in NABJ can influence it being a safe space," he said.

Other NABJ speakers have also caused controversy

Past conventions have not been without controversial figures or comments. In 1986, then-Chicago Mayor

Harold Washington spoke at the NABJ convention in Miami about the lack of diversity and its impact on storytelling that reflected the realities of cities and communities of color.

Nation of Islam Leader Louis Farrakhan made more pointed remarks on the subject at the NABJ convention in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1996, when he said journalists did not control the stories at the white-owned media where many of them worked. Farrakhan has been accused by critics of promoting antisemitic tropes, a criticism he has disputed.

Wickham said over the organization's decadeslong history, "the best and the brightest and sometimes the most controversial of Black America have shown up at our doors. They want to come in. They want to talk to us. They want to be heard."

"Sometimes the crazy uncle from the attic will come down and add to the mix," he said. "But at the end of the day, there's still family."

## **For college students arrested protesting the war in Gaza, the fallout was only beginning**

By NAMU SAMPATH of The Springfield Republican, MONICA OBRADOVIC of The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, HILARY BURNS of The Boston Globe, and CHRISTOPHER L. KELLER of The Associated Press undefined AMHERST, Mass. (AP) — Since her arrest at a protest at the University of Massachusetts, Annie McGrew has been pivoting between two sets of hearings: one for the misdemeanor charges she faces in court, and another for violations of the college's conduct code.

It has kept the graduate student from work toward finishing her dissertation in economics.

"It's been a really rough few months for me since my arrest," McGrew said. "I never imagined this is how UMass (administration) would respond."

Some 3,200 people were arrested this spring during a wave of pro-Palestinian tent encampments protesting the war in Gaza. While some colleges ended demonstrations by striking deals with the students, or simply waited them out, others called in police when protesters refused to leave.

Many students have already seen those charges dismissed. But the cases have yet to be resolved for hundreds of people at campuses that saw the highest number of arrests, according to an analysis of data gathered by The Associated Press and partner newsrooms.

Along with the legal limbo, those students face uncertainty in their academic careers. Some remain steadfast, saying they would have made the same decisions to protest even if they had known the consequences. Others have struggled with the aftermath of the arrests, harboring doubts about whether to stay enrolled in college at all.

In St. Louis, Valencia Alvarez is waiting to hear what will come of the potential charges she and 99 others could face for a protest April 27 that lasted less than half a day at Washington University.

Twenty-three of those arrested were students. In June, the university gave them two options: They could face a hearing with the Office of Student Conduct, or they could "accept responsibility" and forgo further investigation. Alvarez took the first option.

"I don't really plan on being quiet about this, and I think that's the goal of the second option," Alvarez said.

The demonstrations swept public and private universities, on campuses large and small, urban and rural. As students return this fall, colleges are bracing for more protests against both Israel's military and Hamas, and strategizing over tactics including when to call in law enforcement — decisions that have had lasting reverberations.

Some college leaders said calling police was the only option to end protests that stood in the way of commencement ceremonies, disrupted campus life and included instances of antisemitic signs and language.

Student groups and some faculty members have blasted college leaders for inviting police inside their gates. In their view, the police actions often trampled peaceful demonstrations with unnecessary levels of force.

Which charges are worth pursuing?

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The vast majority of the cases against the demonstrators — ranging from students and faculty to people without any ties to the colleges — involve misdemeanors or lower-level charges. Examples include trespassing, failure to disperse, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

More serious charges were filed against demonstrators who occupied a campus building at Columbia University, where some were arrested initially on felony trespassing charges. Those were lowered to misdemeanors, and dozens of students have had their charges dropped. In a decision criticized by Jewish groups, prosecutors said there was a lack of evidence tying them to acts of property damage, and none of the students had criminal histories.

Prosecutors in several cities are still evaluating whether to pursue charges. But in many cases, officials have indicated they do not intend to pursue low-level violations, according to AP's review of data on campuses with at least 100 arrests.

In upstate New York, the Ulster County district attorney asked judges to dismiss 129 cases stemming from arrests at the State University of New York at New Paltz.

"I have concluded that it is best to dismiss these charges now and relieve all concerned and the courts of any further burdens, expenses, and expenditures of scarce public and judicial resources," District Attorney Emmanuel Nneji wrote in June.

New Paltz students said they were sitting with their arms interlocked when officers hauled them away on May 2.

"It was handled very brutally," said Maddison Tirado, a student whose trespassing charge has been dismissed. Tirado said protesters were treated as if authorities saw them "like little terrorists running around."

One student demonstrator, Ezra Baptist, said he was taken to a hospital with a concussion and a cut after being thrown forward and hitting his head during his arrest by state troopers. He was supposed to avoid looking at screens because of his injury and could not complete one class he needed to graduate in May.

State police said if anyone believes troopers acted inappropriately, they should file a complaint so it can be investigated. Another police agency at the scene, the county sheriff's office, said officers showed restraint and that a trooper was injured when demonstrators threw bottles.

Tensions have run high on college campuses since Oct. 7, when Hamas militants assaulted southern Israel and killed 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took about 250 hostages. Israel's offensive has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities.

Arrests put students' degrees on hold

For some students, the impact on their academic careers has affected them more than any legal jeopardy.

At Washington University, conduct hearings for arrested students began recently but have yet to result in disciplinary decisions. In the meantime, Alvarez does not have the master's degree in public health she would have received by now if not for her arrest.

Alvarez, who hopes to branch into social justice and community organizing, said she doesn't have regrets. But that's not to say the protest didn't come at a cost.

"I want that degree," Alvarez said. "I worked four jobs throughout my two years at Wash U to be able to afford tuition without pulling out any loans."

At Emerson College in Boston, 118 people were arrested when police were asked to enforce a city ordinance against camping on public property. All were charged with disturbing the peace and granted "pre-arraignment diversion," which means no charges will be filed in exchange for 40 hours of community service, prosecutors said.

Owen Buxton, an Emerson student, said he suffered a concussion when police shoved him into a bronze statue. It was his second arrest of the semester for protesting the war in Gaza. The experience made it hard for him to concentrate or participate in classes.

"It stifled all my creativity — I didn't make anything for months, which is not typical of me," said Buxton, a filmmaker.

Emerson allowed students to take the semester pass-fail following an outcry over the arrests.

A spokesperson for the Boston Police Department said anybody with concerns can file complaints with the



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internal affairs office. The department previously said there were no injuries during the Emerson arrests. A reckoning over inviting police to campus

At the UMass campus in Amherst, students recalled a peaceful demonstration with singing and dancing before police arrived. It was the second tent encampment students had put up that week. UMass Chancellor Javier Reyes said he ordered the sweep after discussions broke down with protesters.

"Let me be clear — involving law enforcement is the absolute last resort," Reyes wrote to the campus community.

The law enforcement response, including 117 police vehicles on campus, unsettled protesters. McGrew remembers seeing police with riot gear rushing the crowd of students. A total of 134 people were arrested.

As arrestees were processed at the university's sports arena, graduate student Charles Sullivan, who is transgender, said they felt humiliated by campus police. An officer, Sullivan said, forced them to loudly describe their genitalia to gain access to a restroom.

Sullivan has since decided to leave the university to continue their studies, in part because of the arrest. Wrapping up a master's degree in anthropology, Sullivan will move to Ohio in the fall to pursue a Ph.D., instead of continuing at UMass.

"I think mostly I'm just kind of ready to get out of this place," Sullivan said.

Many campus organizations have rebuked Reyes for deploying police, including the UMass faculty senate, which passed a vote of no confidence against the chancellor.

In June, Reyes announced a task force to review campus policies on demonstrations, including the land-use policy many arrestees were charged with violating.

The group is just getting started with their work, said Anthony Paik, a member of the faculty senate and co-chair of the task force. It would have more information by the end of August, he said, just before the start of the new school year.

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## **Masked assailants ransack Venezuela opposition leader's headquarters as post-election tensions mount**

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, JOSHUA GOODMAN, GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA and E. EDUARDO CASTILLO  
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — A half dozen masked assailants ransacked the headquarters of Venezuelan

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opposition leader Maria Corina Machado in the latest escalation of violence against opponents of Nicolás Maduro following the country's disputed presidential election.

The raid occurred at around 3 a.m., Machado's party said, adding that the assailants broke down doors and hauled away valuable documents and equipment. Images published by Machado's party on social media show several walls covered in black spray paint.

The arrest comes as top officials, including Maduro himself, have threatened to arrest the opposition leader, who has gone into hiding as she seeks to rally Venezuelans to challenge last Sunday's election results.

The Biden administration has thrown its support firmly behind the opposition, recognizing last minute candidate Edmundo González as the victor, discrediting the official results of the vote proclaiming Maduro the winner.

The U.S. announcement late Thursday followed calls from multiple governments, including close allies of Maduro, for Venezuela's electoral authorities to release precinct-level vote counts, as it has done during previous elections.

The electoral body declared Maduro the winner Monday, but the main opposition coalition revealed hours later that it had collected copies of 80% of the country's 30,000 voting tallies and that they show González prevailed by a more than 2-to-1 margin.

"Given the overwhelming evidence, it is clear to the United States and, most importantly, to the Venezuelan people that Edmundo González Urrutia won the most votes in Venezuela's July 28 presidential election," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

Maduro responded with a quick admonishment: "The United States needs to keep its nose out of Venezuela!"

The U.S. government announcement came amid a flurry of diplomatic efforts by Brazil, Colombia and Mexico to convince their fellow leftist to allow an impartial audit of the vote. On Thursday, the governments of the three countries issued a joint statement calling on Venezuela's electoral authorities "to move forward expeditiously and publicly release" detailed voting data.

But it's unclear what leverage the countries have over Maduro, who has shown little inkling to rethink his entrenched position.

While no ally or anyone in the crucial armed forces has yet to break with Maduro over the contested elections, he faces huge obstacles righting Venezuela's economy without the legitimacy that can only come from a credible election result.

Venezuela sits atop world's largest proven crude reserves and once boasted Latin America's most advanced economy, but it entered into free fall marked by 130,000% hyperinflation and widespread shortages after Maduro took the helm in 2013. More than 7.7 million Venezuelans have left the country since 2014, the largest exodus in Latin America's recent history.

U.S. oil sanctions have only deepened the misery and the Biden administration — which had been easing those restrictions — is now likely to ramp them up again unless Maduro backs down and agrees to some sort of transition.

"He's counting on being able to wait this out and people will get tired of demonstrating," said Cynthia Arnson, a distinguished fellow at the Wilson Center, a Washington think tank. "The problem is the country is in a death spiral and there's no chance the economy will be able to recover without the legitimacy that comes from a fair election."

On Monday, after the National Electoral Council declared Maduro the winner of the election, thousands of opposition supporters took to the streets. The government said it arrested hundreds of protesters and Venezuela-based human rights organization Foro Penal said 11 people were killed. Dozens more were arrested the following day, including a former opposition candidate, Freddy Superlano.

Machado — who was barred from running for president — and González addressed a huge rally of their supporters in the capital, Caracas, on Tuesday, but they have not been seen in public since. Later that day, the president of the National Assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, called for their arrest, describing them as criminals and fascists.

On Wednesday, Maduro asked Venezuela's highest court to conduct an audit of the election, but that

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request drew almost immediate criticism from foreign observers who said the court, which like most institutions is controlled by the government, lacks the independence to perform a credible review.

Asked why electoral authorities have not released detailed vote counts, Maduro said the National Electoral Council has come under attack, including cyberattacks, without elaborating.

In an op-ed published Thursday in the Wall Street Journal, Machado said she is "hiding, fearing for my life, my freedom, and that of my fellow countrymen." She reasserted that the opposition has physical evidence that Maduro lost the election and urged the international community to intervene.

"We have voted Mr. Maduro out," she wrote. "Now it is up to the international community to decide whether to tolerate a demonstrably illegitimate government."

Machado later posted a video on social media calling on supporters to gather Saturday across the country.

## **After the end of Roe v. Wade, a new beginning for maternity homes**

By TIFFANY STANLEY Associated Press

ORANGE, Va. (AP) — On the wall of the maternity home is the motto: "Saving Babies, One Mom at a Time."

For founders Randy and Evelyn James, the home started with one baby — their own.

Paul Stefan was the last of their six children, born with a fatal condition. They had not aborted the pregnancy as doctors advised. He lived just over 40 minutes, long enough to be baptized and named after their Catholic priest.

In the nearly two decades since, the Jameses have channeled their son's memory and their anti-abortion beliefs into running maternity homes. Evelyn James said they knew they "were going to do something for women in crisis pregnancies."

In August, their Paul Stefan Foundation plans to open a new floor with seven more rooms at their headquarters in a former hotel in Orange, Virginia.

Their momentum is part of a larger trend: There has been a nationwide expansion of maternity homes in the two years since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and the federal right to abortion.

"It's been a significant increase," said Valerie Harkins, director of the Maternity Housing Coalition, an anti-abortion network of 195 maternity homes that has grown 23% since the court's ruling.

There are now more than 450 maternity homes in the U.S., according to Harkins; many of them are faith-based. Anti-abortion advocates want to open more of these transitional housing facilities, believing they are the next step in helping women who carry pregnancies to term.

The reasons for the surge in interest in maternity homes are complex and go beyond abortion restrictions. Harkins said unaffordable housing, paychecks cut by inflation and higher birthrates in some states have all contributed.

"It created a perfect storm," she said. "There's quite a need."

### **A Painful Legacy**

The heyday of American maternity homes came during the three decades before Roe, when more than 1.5 million infants were surrendered for adoption during the "Baby Scoop Era." Many unwed pregnant women were sent to maternity homes, where they were often coerced into relinquishing their babies.

"Our children were stolen," said Karen Wilson-Buterbaugh, who lived in a Washington, D.C., maternity home in 1966.

When residents returned to their hometowns without a baby, they were supposed to pretend as if nothing happened.

But few could forget.

"It's a mother losing her child," said Ann Fessler, who collected oral histories from Baby Scoop Era mothers in her book, "The Girls Who Went Away."

Fessler said, "The women, especially the ones that did not feel like they had a part in the decision, live



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with this trauma the rest of their lives.”

Harkins said the Maternity Housing Coalition takes ownership of this history.

“We are very intentional about what happened and want to ensure we don’t get to that point again,” she said.

Most residents in modern maternity homes choose to keep their children. They are there to receive housing and financial support.

There are homes, though, that continue to prioritize adoptions – which can still result in painful outcomes.

Abbi Johnson was 17 in 2008 when her parents sent her to Liberty Godparent Home, founded by the late evangelical leader Jerry Falwell. The Lynchburg, Virginia, home was connected to an adoption agency.

From a conservative Christian family, Johnson felt her unplanned pregnancy was treated as “the most cardinal sin,” but she still desperately wanted to parent her son.

“But everyone told me this isn’t playing house,” she said. “He’s not a doll. He deserves a married couple who has their life together.”

The home said in a statement that every resident is educated on parenting and adoption “and has the freedom to choose.”

In the end, Johnson felt pressured into placing her son for adoption. She hopes one day he might know how much she misses him.

“Half my head resides in that maternity home,” she said, “playing the memories again and again and again.”

“Where can I live with this baby?”

Before she moved into a maternity home, Meryem Bakache considered an abortion.

Newly arrived in the United States from Morocco, Bakache spoke little English and lived in a crowded apartment with family in northern Virginia while her husband attended college.

“Where can I live with this baby?” she recalled thinking. “What can I give him? I don’t have nothing.”

Without health insurance, she looked for medical care and found an anti-abortion counseling center — often called a crisis pregnancy center — which provided her with an ultrasound.

“When I see my baby, just like everything changed,” she said.

Through a friend, she found Mary’s Shelter, a maternity home in Fredericksburg, an hour east of the Paul Stefan home.

Many homes receive referrals from similar centers, which exist to divert women from getting abortions. The Maternity Housing Coalition, to which both Paul Stefan and Mary’s Shelter belong, is a project of Heartbeat International, a large association of anti-abortion counseling centers.

Holding her infant son this winter, Bakache described her relief at seeing the beauty of the quaint blue home where Mary’s Shelter assigned her to live.

Her housemate Jasmine Heriot had also been looking for a safe living space before the birth of her second child. She lost employment and housing after a life-threatening first pregnancy and premature birth.

“Everything was just so clean. The room was all set up,” Heriot said.

Across the country, maternity homes are sprouting up. In Nebraska, an old college campus is becoming maternity housing. In Arizona, a home has added to one property and opened another. In Georgia, lawmakers recently made it easier to open maternity homes.

Mary’s Shelter also recently expanded by opening another house. Like the Jameses, founder Kathleen Wilson was inspired by her Catholic and anti-abortion beliefs to begin the ministry, which includes more than 30 bedrooms in six houses and four apartments.

She is aware the anti-abortion movement is often derided as championing only unborn children, but she thinks maternity homes are one answer to that criticism.

“They defy that lie that we only care about the baby in the womb,” she said.

Finding a Village

Danielle Nicholson lived at Paul Stefan for almost five years. She is one of its success stories, now raising a soon-to-be sixth grader.

But she had arrived as a surly 20-year-old, six months pregnant and feeling abandoned. “You don’t end

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up in a maternity home because you have a big, huge, loving village of a family," she said.

Evelyn and Randy James became and remain like parents to her. "Women are not numbers here. Or case files," she said.

She found not everyone was well-suited for the facility or parenthood, though.

"Living with the not-so-fantastic moms put something in my heart," Nicholson said. "Like I need to help. How do I help women not create abused and neglected children?"

It inspired her to become a social worker after she finished college.

Her time as a case worker for vulnerable families has complicated her views of the anti-abortion movement, even though it's foundational to the maternity home that did so much for her.

"My heart was really broken when Roe v. Wade was overturned," she said later.

She didn't choose an abortion, and still wouldn't. But she doesn't judge those who do.

Abortion is "one of those choices that women have to face every day, for whatever reason," she said. "There's grace for those women too."

## **After the end of Roe, a new beginning for maternity homes**

By TIFFANY STANLEY Associated Press

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There are now more than 450 maternity homes in the U.S., according to Harkins; many of them are faith-based. As abortion restrictions increase, anti-abortion advocates want to open more of these transitional housing facilities, which often have long waitlists. It's part of what they see as the next step in preventing abortions and providing long-term support for low-income pregnant women and mothers.

"This is what supports the women in following through on their yes to carry that pregnancy to term," Harkins said. "Whether that's a yes that they chose or maybe they felt like they didn't have a choice."

The reasons for the surge in interest in maternity homes are complex and go beyond narrowing abortion access. Harkins said unaffordable housing, paychecks cut by inflation and higher birthrates in some states have all contributed.

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### **A Painful Legacy**

The heyday of American maternity homes came during the three decades before Roe v. Wade. In what became known as the "Baby Scoop Era," more than 1.5 million infants were surrendered for adoption. Many unwed pregnant women and girls were sent to live in maternity homes, where they were often coerced into relinquishing their babies.

"Our children were stolen," said Karen Wilson-Buterbaugh. She was 17 in 1966 when her parents sent her to a Washington, D.C., home run by Florence Crittenton, a large chain of maternity homes started by Progressive-era Episcopal reformers.

Back then, maternity homes were secretive places, meant to hide pregnancies. Residents often used

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aliases. Some wore fake wedding rings in public. When they returned to their hometowns after birth and without a baby, they were supposed to pretend as if nothing happened.

But few could forget.

"It's a mother losing her child," said Ann Fessler, who collected oral histories from Baby Scoop Era mothers in her book, "The Girls Who Went Away."

Fessler, herself an adoptee, said, "The women, especially the ones that did not feel like they had a part in the decision, live with this trauma the rest of their lives."

Harkins said the Maternity Housing Coalition takes ownership of this history. It's often discussed among members and at conferences.

"It is very dear to our hearts," Harkins said. "We are very intentional about what happened and want to ensure we don't get to that point again."

The number of domestic infant adoptions has fallen sharply since the 1970s. When denied an abortion, women in one study overwhelmingly chose parenthood (91%) over adoption (9%), according to a 2016 analysis from researchers at the University of California San Francisco.

As the stigma of single parenthood has waned, most residents in modern maternity homes choose to keep their children. Where maternity home residents once were largely middle-class, now poverty is a driving factor: Mothers are there to receive housing and financial support during and after their pregnancies, sometimes for years after giving birth.

There are now maternity homes that specialize in keeping children out of the foster care system. Others have honed their expertise in addiction recovery. And while many will help with adoptions, some continue to prioritize them and have ties to adoption agencies — which can still result in painful outcomes.

Abbi Johnson was 17 and pregnant in 2008 when her parents sent her to Liberty Godparent Home, a project of the late Jerry Falwell, the evangelical founder of the Moral Majority and Liberty University. The Lynchburg, Virginia, maternity home was connected to an adjacent adoption agency.

Homeschooled and raised in a conservative Christian family, Johnson felt her unplanned pregnancy was treated as "the most cardinal sin," but she still desperately wanted to parent her son.

"But everyone told me this isn't playing house. He's not a doll. He deserves a married couple who has their life together," she said.

The home said in a statement that every resident is educated on parenting and adoption "and has the freedom to choose."

In the end, Johnson felt pressured into placing her son for adoption. She posts on social media under the handle "voicelessbirthmother," hoping that one day her son might know how much she misses him.

"Half my head resides in that maternity home," she said, "playing the memories again and again and again."

"Where can I live with this baby?"

Before she moved into a maternity home, Meryem Bakache considered an abortion.

Newly arrived in the United States from Morocco, Bakache spoke little English and lived in a crowded apartment with family in northern Virginia while her husband attended college in West Virginia.

"Where can I live with this baby?" she recalled thinking. "What can I give him? I don't have nothing."

Without health insurance, she looked for medical care and found an anti-abortion counseling center — often called a crisis pregnancy center — which provided her with an ultrasound.

"When I see my baby, just like everything changed," she said.

The center's staff encouraged her to keep the child and look for housing. Through a friend, she found Mary's Shelter, a maternity home in Fredericksburg, an hour east of the Paul Stefan home.

Many maternity homes receive referrals from similar centers, which exist to divert women from getting abortions. The Maternity Housing Coalition, to which both Paul Stefan and Mary's Shelter belong, is a project of Heartbeat International, one of the largest associations of anti-abortion counseling centers in the country.

It's one indication that maternity homes are now intertwined with the anti-abortion movement — and

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one reason critics say the coercive nature of maternity homes lives on in a different form.

"I'm in favor of housing and supportive housing for lots of people. I don't think it should be contingent on somebody's decision to give birth or not," said Andrea Swartzendruber, a reproductive health researcher at the University of Georgia who studies anti-abortion counseling centers.

Holding her infant son this winter, Bakache described her relief at seeing the beauty of the quaint blue home where Mary's Shelter assigned her to live. And she was waiting for the day she could make a home elsewhere with her husband and baby.

Her housemate Jasmine Heriot had also been looking for a safe place to live before the birth of her second child. A certified nursing assistant, she lost employment and housing after a life-threatening first pregnancy and premature birth.

"Everything was just so clean. The room was all set up. It was really a breath of fresh air," Heriot said, as her newborn slept in her arms and her toddler played beside her.

In the absence of a robust social safety net, maternity homes are filling a void with needed services for women and children. While residents may use public assistance, neither Mary's Shelter nor Paul Stefan accept state or federal funds for their general operations. Other homes do take public money: There are federal grants available and at least five states have directed taxpayer dollars to maternity homes.

Across the country, maternity homes are sprouting up or expanding. In Nebraska, an old college campus is becoming maternity housing. In Arizona, a home has added to one property and opened another. In Georgia, lawmakers recently made it easier to open new maternity homes with fewer state regulations.

Mary's Shelter also recently expanded by opening another house. Like the Jameses, founder Kathleen Wilson was inspired by her Catholic and anti-abortion beliefs to begin the ministry, which over 18 years has grown to include more than 30 bedrooms in six houses and four apartments.

They welcome women with multiple children, and despite their faith-based roots, have no religious requirements for residency. Residents sign a covenant for "healthy living," though Wilson says they try never to kick anyone out.

She is aware the anti-abortion movement is often derided as championing only unborn children, with little care given to families after birth.

Wilson thinks maternity homes are one answer to that criticism: "They defy that lie that we only care about the baby in the womb."

## Finding a Village

At Paul Stefan, churches and civic groups decorate each bedroom, some in shades of blush and blue. Murals line a sunny yellow hallway, where a painted giraffe peers from one side.

Downstairs, Danielle Nicholson recounted living at Paul Stefan for almost five years, back when residents were spread across different houses. She is one of its success stories, now raising a soon-to-be sixth grader.

But she had arrived as a surly 20-year-old, six months pregnant and feeling abandoned. "You don't end up in a maternity home because you have a big, huge, loving village of a family," she said.

Evelyn and Randy James became and remain like parents to her. "Women are not numbers here. Or case files," she said.

She found not everyone was well-suited for the facility or parenthood, though.

"Living with the not-so-fantastic moms put something in my heart," Nicholson said. "Like I need to help. How do I help women not create abused and neglected children?"

It inspired her to become a social worker after she finished college.

Her time as a case worker for vulnerable families has complicated her views of the anti-abortion movement, even though it's foundational to the maternity home that did so much for her.

"My heart was really broken when Roe v. Wade was overturned," she said later.

She didn't choose an abortion, and still wouldn't. But she doesn't judge those who do.

Abortion is "one of those choices that women have to face every day, for whatever reason," she said. "There's grace for those women too."



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## **Today in History: August 3, deadly Walmart shooting in El Paso**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Aug. 3, the 216th day of 2024. There are 150 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On August 3, 2019, a gunman opened fire at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, resulting in the deaths of 23 people; after surrendering, the gunman told detectives he targeted "Mexicans" and had outlined the plot in a screed published online shortly before the attack.

Also on this date:

In 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos, Spain, on his first voyage that took him to the present-day Americas.

In 1852, in America's first intercollegiate sporting event, Harvard rowed past Yale to win the first Harvard-Yale Regatta.

In 1916, Irish-born British diplomat Roger Casement, a strong advocate of independence for Ireland, was hanged for treason.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the United States won the first of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he took the 100-meter sprint.

In 1972, the U.S. Senate ratified the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In 1977, the Tandy Corporation introduced the TRS-80, one of the first widely-available home computers.

In 1981, U.S. air traffic controllers went on strike, seeking pay and workplace improvements (two days later, President Ronald Reagan fired the 11,345 striking union members and barred them from federal employment).

In 2004, the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty opened to visitors for the first time since the 9/11 attacks.

In 2018, Las Vegas police said they were closing their investigation into the Oct. 1, 2017 shooting that left 58 people dead at a country music festival without a definitive answer for why Stephen Paddock unleashed gunfire from a hotel suite onto the concert crowd.

In 2021, New York's state attorney general said an investigation into Gov. Andrew Cuomo found that he had sexually harassed multiple current and former state government employees; the report brought increased pressure on Cuomo to resign, including pressure from President Joe Biden and other Democrats. (Cuomo resigned a week later.)

Today's Birthdays: Football Hall of Fame coach Marv Levy is 99. Actor Martin Sheen is 84. Football Hall of Famer Lance Alworth is 84. Lifestyle guru Martha Stewart is 83. Film director John Landis is 74. Actor JoMarie Payton (TV: "Family Matters") is 74. Actor Jay North (TV: "Dennis the Menace") is 73. Hockey Hall of Famer Marcel Dionne is 73. Actor John C. McGinley is 65. Rock singer/guitarist James Hetfield (Metallica) is 61. Actor Lisa Ann Walter (TV: "Abbott Elementary") is 61. Rock musician Stephen Carpenter (Deftones) is 54. Hip-hop artist Spinderella (Salt-N-Pepa) is 54. Former NFL quarterback Tom Brady is 47. Actor Evangeline Lilly is 45. Olympic swimming gold medalist Ryan Lochte is 40. Model Karlie Kloss is 32.